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|  | **The Gift of Tongues and Today's Babel**  Are we to speak in tongues today, in this dispensation of grace? There are many that would say "yes" and just as many that would say "no".  The gift of tongues (1 Corinthians 12:10) was the supernatural imparting of language, which gave the recipient the ability to speak languages he never learned. It is the most sought after and the most misunderstood of all the gifts. The best way to understand speaking in tongues is to find out how *tongues* came to be and what the purpose was for the*gift of tongues.*  (Jeremiah 23:31-32 KJV) Behold, I *am*against the prophets, saith the LORD, that use their tongues, and say, He saith.*{32}*Behold, I *am*against them that prophesy false dreams, saith the LORD, and do tell them, and cause my people to err by their lies, and by their lightness; yet I sent them not, nor commanded them: therefore they shall not profit this people at all, saith the LORD.  Today, those that teach contrary to what God is doing are not doing the people any profit; there is no benefit in their teaching.  **Origination of Tongues**  Where did tongues come from?  (Genesis 9:7 KJV) And you, be ye fruitful, and multiply; bring forth abundantly in the earth, and multiply therein.  God told Noah to multiply two times, physically and in the earth. This command is similar to what God told Adam, to be fruitful and fill the earth.  **Tower of Babel**  (Genesis 11:1-4 KJV) And the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech.*{2}*And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar; and they dwelt there.*{3}*And they said one to another, Go to, let us make brick, and burn them thoroughly. And they had brick for stone, and slime had they for mortar.*{4}*And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top *may reach*unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth.  This is the account of what we know as the Tower of Babel. At this time, everyone spoke the same language and was in rebellion to what God wanted them to do. They were building a tower so that they could remain in one place, according to the command God gave Noah they were to fill the earth.  They were building a tower, not as a means to gain access to the heavens but as a high place for image worship.  (1 Kings 14:23 KJV) For they also built them high places, and images, and groves, on every high hill, and under every green tree.  The Tower of Babel was based on a religious system that centered on image worship. (See Romans 1:21-23) After the flood, the world rebelled against what God wanted them to do, changed the truth into a lie and worshipped the creation rather than the creator. The people's unity was focused on image worship.  (Genesis 11:5-9 KJV) And the LORD came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men builded.*{6}*And the LORD said, Behold, the people *is*one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do.*{7}*Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech.*{8}*So the LORD scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth: and they left off to build the city.*{9}*Therefore is the name of it called Babel; because the LORD did there confound the language of all the earth: and from thence did the LORD scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth.  God caused the people to separate by confusing the language and the people congregated together with those that they understood. In Genesis 9, we see the descendants of Noah listed and how they were divided:  (Genesis 10:5 KJV) By these were the isles of the Gentiles divided in their lands; every one after his tongue, after their families, in their nations.  (Genesis 10:20 KJV) These *are*the sons of Ham, after their families, after their tongues, in their countries, *and*in their nations.  (Genesis 10:31-32 KJV) These *are*the sons of Shem, after their families, after their tongues, in their lands, after their nations.*{32}*These *are*the families of the sons of Noah, after their generations, in their nations: and by these were the nations divided in the earth after the flood.  Tongues refers to the language they spoke. Tongues are languages spoken by people. The people were divide by their tongues (languages). Today, the nations; are still divided by a language barrier.  **Note**: At this time the nation of Israel did not exist.  **The Nation of Israel**  God created the nation of Israel.  (Genesis 12:1-3 KJV) Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee:*{2}*And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing:*{3}*And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.  God tells Abram that he will make of him a great nation, one of which all families of the earth shall be blessed. All through out the Old Testament, it is seen that Israel was to be a testimony of the true and living God. The nations were to know that there is only one God. (See Isaiah 45)  **Israel, Jehovah's witnesses - Israel's purpose**  Although the nations were scattered because of their rebellion, God did not leave them without hope. Israel was to win the nations back to God (Isaiah 61:6) because of the nation of Israel the nations would see the errors of their ways.  (Isaiah 44:8 KJV) Fear ye not, neither be afraid: have not I told thee from that time, and have declared *it?*ye *are*even my witnesses. Is there a God beside me? yea, *there is*no God; I know not *any.*  Although Israel was to be a witness of the true and living God to all nations, there was an appointed time when this would happen. At this time, Israel has yet to become what God intends Israel to be, an instrument to the world.  (Acts 17:26-27 KJV) And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation;*{27}*That they should seek the Lord, if haplythey might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us:  While in training, they were not to immediately go to all the nations.  (Matthew 10:5-8 KJV) These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into *any*city of the Samaritans enter ye not:*{6}*But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.*{7}*And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand.*{8}*Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give.  When Jesus first sent the twelve out to minister to the people He told them not to go to the Gentiles. Yet, in Matthew 24, Jesus tells them that the end shall come when all nations receive the message of the kingdom.  (Matthew 24:3-14 KJV) And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what *shall be*the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?*{4}*And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you.*{5}*For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.*{6}*And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all *these things*must come to pass, but the end is not yet.*{7}*For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places.*{8}*All these *are*the beginning of sorrows.*{9}*Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake.*{10}*And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another.*{11}*And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many.*{12}*And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.*{13}*But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.*{14}*And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.  Before the end shall be Israel was to preach the gospel of the kingdom (the good news that Jesus Christ will come back and establish a kingdom on earth) unto all nations. God's purpose for Israel was to be a witness. He tells them that it will be a difficult time (tribulation) and that those who endure until the end will be saved; this refers to the tribulation, those who endure until the end shall be saved.  Those days were foretold by the prophets:  (Acts 3:24-26 KJV) Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days.*{25}*Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed.*{26}*Unto you first God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.  The time is yet to be fulfilled that Israel will be a blessing to all nations. God first has to bless the nation of Israel; once they are blessed with the blessings that God has for them then they will be a blessing to the nations.  (Acts 1:8 KJV) But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.  Israel becomes the witness after the Holy Spirit came upon them. There is an order in which they are to be the witness, first in Jerusalem, then all Judaea, then in Samaria and finally unto the uttermost part of the earth.  **Day of Pentecost**  (Acts 2:1-5 KJV) And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.*{2}*And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.*{3}*And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them.*{4}*And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.*{5}*And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven.  Three times a year the Jews that were in dispersion came to Jerusalem for the feasts. The Jews that were living among the Gentile nations had been assimilated into other countries and spoke the language from that country of which they came.  (Acts 2:6-12 KJV) Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language.*{7}*And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galilaeans?*{8}*And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?*{9}*Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judaea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia,*{10}*Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes,*{11}*Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God.*{12}*And they were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another, What meaneth this?  From this passage, we can conclude that language and tongue are interchangeable terms, verse 6 and 11. They are hearing their native language, not some heavenly language. They were hearing the language wherein they were born.  (Acts 2:4 KJV) And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.  They began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance, the ability to speak clearly, so others can understand. All those heard them speak in their own language. In order to be a witness they needed to be able to speak the language of those they were to be a witness. They people were amazed at the power. Why did they have that power? They received the power so that they will be able to be witnesses to all nations.  Jesus and the twelve had already ministered to the Jews of the homeland and now all the Jews that had been scattered are they are getting the information that God is now fulfilling His promises to Israel.  **Day of Judgement**  When Stephen was stoned in Acts 7, he saw Jesus **standing** on the right hand of the Father.  (Acts 7:56 KJV) And said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God.  Standing indicates judgement.  (Isaiah 3:13 KJV) The LORD standeth up to plead, and **standeth to judge**the people. (Also Isaiah 2:19, Revelation 5:6)  At the stoning of Stephen, Jesus stood to judge the nations. It is during this time of judgement that Israel is to be a witness to the nations. But the nations were not judged and Israel did not become a witness to all the nations.  What we see instead is the salvation of Saul of Tarsus. This was not in Israel's prophetic program. God interrupted what He was doing and began to do something new.  **Something New**  **Peter and Cornelius**  In Acts 10, we read that Peter had a vision in which a sheet came down from heaven and Peter was to eat from the animals that he had thought to be unclean. Peter, in his vision, refused to eat. While he thought about what the vision could mean, three men from Cornelius came and requested Peter to return with them.  Up until this time, it was still unlawful for a Jew to keep company with a Gentile; Cornelius was a Gentile.  (Acts 10:28 KJV) 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 showed me that I should not call any man common or unclean.  Peter understood what the vision meant and went to the house of Cornelius. When he began to tell those of Cornelius' household what God was doing among the nation of Israel, the Holy Ghost fell on all which heard the word and the Gentiles spoke with tongues. This astonished the Jews present  (Acts 10:43-46 KJV) To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.*{44}*While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word.*{45}*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.*{46}*For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. ...  In Acts 11, when Peter went back to Jerusalem, he was forced to explain why he went to a Gentile's house.  (Acts 11:15-18 KJV) And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning.*{16}*Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost.*{17}*Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as *he did*unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; what was I, that I could withstand God?*{18}*When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.  The Jews has a difficult time accepting the fact that God was granting the Gentiles repentance unto life. Why? Because up until this time it was to the Jews exclusively. Israel was not yet a blessing to all the nations.  **Tongues for a sign for unbelievers**  **A sign of judgement**  Paul write to those in Corinth that tongues were for a sign to those Jews that do not believe. God would speak to Israel in another tongue yet Israel will still not hear.  (1 Corinthians 14:20-22 KJV) Brethren, be not children in understanding: howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men.*{21}*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.*{22}*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.  (Isaiah 28:11-12 KJV) For with stammering lips and another tongue will he speak to this people.*{12}*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.  Tongues were for a sign to the unbelieving Jews, when they heard Gentiles speak in tongues they were to understand that they were in judgement of God.  **Two-fold Witness of Paul**   1. God was now offering salvation to the Gentiles. 2. Paul's testimony to Israel was that the Jew was now cut off (Romans 11)   It is Paul who went to the outermost part of the earth and the reason for that was because the Jews were cut off and God was doing something different. When God resumes His plan and purpose with Israel it will pick up right where it left off, the time of judgement.  **Charismatic Teaching of Tongues**  **If saved, you should speak in tongues**  Charismatics teach that tongues are for believers and if one is saved then one should speak in tongues. But is that what the scriptures say?  (1 Corinthians 12:28-31 KJV) And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.*{29} Are*all apostles? *are*all prophets? *are*all teachers? *are*all workers of miracles?*{30}*Have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret?*{31}*But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet show I unto you a more excellent way.  Paul asks if all speak in tongues? Does this imply that not all speak in tongues? So why is it taught that tongues are for every believer?  **Heavenly language**  It is apparent that the Charismatics think of tongues as something other that a sign for unbelievers and refer to it as a heavenly language.  (1 Corinthians 13:1-3 KJV) Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become *as*sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.  Paul is not saying that he spoke in an angelic tongue, he said "though I" and in "even if" . He also stated, "though I give my body to be burned". We have no record of Paul doing that. Paul is using these things as examples, not stating things he did to point out a more excellent way, charity.  (1 Corinthians 14:2 KJV) 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.  **Unknown tongue**  (1 Corinthians 14:2 KJV) 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.  This is the verse that is used to say that you will not understand what you speak and that no one else will either. But the word unknown is meant that speaker does not understand the language. This does not mean it is an*unknowable*language. On the day of Pentecost, those that heard them speak recognized their native language (tongue). This is not referring to an angelic language.  (1 Corinthians 14:6 KJV) Now, brethren, if I come unto you speaking with tongues, what shall I profit you, except I shall speak to you either by revelation, or by knowledge, or by prophesying, or by doctrine?  If one spoke tongues and no one understood the language spoken, it does not do the listener any good at all.  **Prayer language**  (Romans 8:26 KJV) Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.  This is the verse that is used to say that the Spirit prays for us when we pray in tongues. But notice it says that the Spirit ... makes intercession for us with groaning **which cannot be uttered**. The Spirit does not need our voice to speak to God.  **Conclusion**  (Isaiah 8:19-20 KJV) And when they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep, and that mutter: should not a people seek unto their God? for the living to the dead?*{20}*To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, *it is*because *there is*no light in them.  Many people seek the gifts of tongues because of (1) intimidation, they are told that if they are truly saved then they should speak in tongues; (2) the frenzy of the moment, they heard a sermon that just got the crowd all excited; (2) they copy someone else, many are instructed on how to speak in tongues by following the leader; (4) most do it because they heard a fable, something not in accordance to God's revealed plan and purpose.  Reference used: Charismatic Miracles, Gifts, Signs and Wonders, and the Bible Biblical Tongues and Today's Babble Speaker: Tom Bruscha |