

✍ **We are running across some major mountain peaks in the mountain range of biblical truth and doctrine. One major peak is the topic and doctrine of love, one of the highest peaks in Scripture. Another major peak will be that of the Resurrection, another very high peak of doctrine in 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15. Sandwiched in between these two major peaks is a far more minor peak, in comparison, speaking in tongues. I realize that, for some, tongues is a major peak or very important which only demonstrates how far off they are from what the Scriptures emphasize. In fact, majoring on the minors, like tongues, was part of why the Corinthian church was as messed up as it was.**

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## **1. Tongues Defined**

- ✓ Very simply, Tongues are the Spirit's enabling to speak a language or languages that the person has never learned. These are human languages, or possibly, angelic languages 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 13:1. The tongues at Pentecost were clearly human, Acts 2:7-8. In Acts 10 and 19, the tongues that were spoken were unclear and were not to communicate a verbal message as in the case of Pentecost but were a sign to the Jews that salvation had come to the Gentiles, Acts 10:45-46. In 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 14 tongues appear to be falling into a third category where they were restricted to private use unless there was an interpreter, 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 14:2-5. Believers tend to fall into one of three categories when it comes to this issue of tongues speaking:
  - 1) They believe in tongues and believe that everyone should speak in tongues which tells me that they haven't been reading their bibles too carefully, 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 12:30.
  - 2) They believe that tongues have ceased and therefore no one should speak in tongues. I find no biblical evidence of cessation, and, also find it hard to believe that, if tongues have ceased, an entire section as large as 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 14 would cease to apply to the Church.
  - 3) They believe that tongues exist up to this day but that they operate only in those who have that gift.

## **2. Tongues in the history of the Church**

- ✓ There is very scant evidence of tongues operating outside of the first century other than a few isolated incidences, and they were almost entirely found among those who were marginal or heretical in nature. Montonus claimed to be the Holy Spirit and spoke in tongues in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century. In 1855 tongues broke out among the Mormons, remember that tongues are easily counterfeited by Satan since he and his demons can speak many languages. Tongues have also been reported among the Quakers and Shakers, two groups that are not known for their sound doctrines. Very little happens with regards to tongues throughout church history until what has been called "The Azusa Street Revival" that took place in Los Angeles, California in 1906. During that revival, many spoke in unknown tongues, and from there many modern denominations sprang up that emphasized tongues speaking. Today, tongues and those that claim to be able to speak in tongues are found in most major denominations. What can we learn from history? First understand that this evidence proves nothing because truth can be suppressed (just ask the reformers!). Error can be and is followed by vast numbers of people. The lack of tongues in the past and their greater prevalence today actually proves nothing.
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### 3. Tongues in the Bible

- ✓ We have to be careful to form our opinions based on the teachings of God's Word being careful to major on the major things and minor on the minor things. Tongues speaking is highlighted only five times in the Bible in Acts 2, 10, 19; 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 12-14 and Mark 16. Jesus never spoke in tongues as recorded anywhere in the Bible. The Apostles spoke in tongues only once in Acts 2 and are never said to repeat that experience. Paul was the only exception to this: 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 14:18. Tongues are not mentioned at all in the Old Testament. Tongues are not mentioned by Jesus in any of His extensive teachings on the Holy Spirit in the Gospels. Tongues are not mentioned in any of Paul's other teachings or in the other epistles or the book of Revelation.

### 4. Tongues in the text

- ✓ This carries a word for the extreme charismatic: Love is the sign of a disciple not tongues, 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 14:1 This also carries a word for the extreme non-charismatic: it is okay to seek after spiritual gifts. Tongues that are unknown lend themselves to being not of human origin since they are not spoken to humans but to God, 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 14:2. This type of tongues seems to be used for four things according to the text: 1. Prayer 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 14:14, 2. Singing 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 14:15, 3. Blessing 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 14:16 and 4. Thanksgiving 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 14:17 Also, with interpretation, these can be shared with the entire church. Juxtaposed to tongues is prophecy which is telling forth of God's truth or applying God's truth, 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 14:3-4. Prophecy is a superior gift to tongues because: Tongues are addressed to God who doesn't need edifying, but prophecy is addressed to people who do. Tongues are not understandable unless interpreted whereas prophecy is understandable by all. Tongues edify self-most of the time, but prophecy edifies the church. Tongues are not bad but there is something better and more desirable, 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 14:5. The important thing is not a tongues meeting but a Bible Study!, 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 14:6-12. There is actually a huge tongues movement sweeping the globe that we should all be a part of and that is Bible translation into every tongue so that people can have God's Word in their own language. The only way tongues can edify the church, 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 14:13. The Corinthian church was full of immature, carnal believers, so, they were more accustomed to edifying themselves instead of others. In 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 14:18-19 "in the church" that is, in the assembly each Sunday which equals Plain English (or whatever language is being used in that region). The point is never to exercise a gift but build up others whatever that requires, that's the way love acts. Children give little thought for anyone but themselves, in fact, to think of others is a sign that someone is growing up, 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 14:20.

**The gift of tongues is a minor issue in Scripture, but the use of our tongues is a major issue. In that respect, we need a major tongues movement: moved with the gospel, with forgiveness, with love, with encouragement, and Biblical correctness.**

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