Understanding the Bible

Miracles of the Bible

Tom Wilson

DRAFT

A Bible Study Guide

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The back cover caricature of the author was drawn by the well-known artist Jan van Haasteren as a favor to Els Rooswinkel, who maintained a web site dedicated to puzzles with artwork drawn by Jan. I originally created a version of this web site and handed it over to Els, who developed the site far beyond its initial content. In appreciation of my effort, Els asked Jan to draw me.

The latest edition of this e-book is available via `https://thechurchoforlando.org`.

Draft Edition		This draft is intentionally incomplete (see the Preface)
— Update A	6/29/26	Chapter "Tongues"

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Preface

This draft has been made available in an incomplete form to provide the material that is referenced by completed study guides. Material not referenced might also appear in the draft simply because it is nearly complete. The content of this draft may not be fully developed nor polished.

Upcoming chapters will define what miracles, signs, and wonders are, how these things worked during grace (and stopped working), and the enemy's use of these miracles.

CHAPTER

1 Israel's Signs (planned)

CHAPTER

2

Healing All for the Kingdom (planned)

CHAPTER

3 Tongues

When people think of *tongues*, they think of the miraculous, spiritual gift. But, tongues can be much simpler than that. Understanding the basics of tongues will bring the gift out of the realm of the imagination and into reality (albeit, it is still supernatural). But our objective is to understand the gift of tongues and the associated gift of the interpretation of tongues. From a miraculous gift perspective, these essentially mean:

1. Tongues: the ability to talk in a language that one does not know.
2. Interpretation: the ability to understand something said in a language that one does not know.

It will follow that when one speaks in a (foreign) tongue that he does not understand what he said. Otherwise, it would not be necessary for someone to interpret it; the speaker could just tell you what he said.

The gift of tongues appears in both the prophecy and the mystery programs (see the *Respecting Distinctions* study guide [2] for details on those programs).[1] Some might teach that the gift of tongues might be significantly different in the two programs. What we will learn is that the mystery program will bring greater detail to something that is also happening in the prophecy program.

Since we already know that miraculous gifts have ended,we should understand that no one is speaking miraculously in tongues today. Anyone doing so is simply faking it. But, let's start with the basics.

3.1 What Are Tongues?

We will step back from the miraculous and understand what *tongues* means. We will look at the dictionary and the concordance for definitions. Of course, we will use scripture to confirm the applicable definitions.

3.1.1 What Does the Dictionary Say?

The first step in this study is to look at the dictionary definition.

Dictionary Definition: tongue

1. In man, the instrument of taste, and the chief instrument of speech; and in other animals, the instrument of taste
2. Speech; discourse; sometimes, fluency of speech
3. The power of articulate utterance; speech
4. Speech, as well or ill used; mode of speaking
5. A language; the whole sum of words used by a particular nation
6. Speech; words or declarations only; opposed to thoughts or actions
7. A nation, as distinguished by their language
8. A point; a projection; as the tongue of a buckle or of a balance
9. A point or long narrow strip of land, projecting from the main into a sea or a lake
10. The taper part of any thing; in the rigging of a ship, a short piece of rope spliced into the upper part of standing backstays

[1] I will generally refer to *prophecy* and *mystery* rather than dispensations. The dispensation of grace aligns with the mystery, whereas prophecy has multiple dispensations.

Example scriptures for definition #1 are:

Judges 7:5

5 So he brought down the people unto the water: and the LORD said unto Gideon, Every one that lappeth of the water with his tongue, as a dog lappeth, him shalt thou set by himself; likewise every one that boweth down upon his knees to drink.

Luke 16:24

24 And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.

Exodus 4:10

10 And Moses said unto the LORD, O my Lord, I *am* not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since thou hast spoken unto thy servant: but I *am* slow of speech, and of a slow tongue.

Examples of definition #7 are:

Genesis 10:5

5 By these were the isles of the Gentiles divided in their lands; every one after his tongue, after their families, in their nations.

Revelation 9:11

11 And they had a king over them, *which is* the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue *is* Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath *his* name Apollyon.

Revelation 16:16

16 And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon.

Here is another passages that provides a powerful analogy:

James 3:4-5

4 Behold also the ships, which though *they be* so great, and *are* driven of fierce winds, yet are they turned about with a very small helm, whithersoever the governor listeth.
5 Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth!

No definition seems to tells us that the plural of the word is a miraculous gift. Let's look at the definition for *language* to see if it tells us anything else:

Dictionary Definition: language

1. Human speech; the expression of ideas by words or significant articulate sounds, for the communication of thoughts
2. Words duly arranged in sentences, written, printed or engraved, and exhibited to the eye
3. The speech or expression of ideas peculiar to a particular nation
4. Style; manner of expression
5. The inarticulate sounds by which irrational animals express their feelings and wants
6. Any manner of expressing thoughts
7. A nation, as distinguished by their speech

3.1.2 What Does the Concordance Say?

Here's a Greek word that can mean both *language* and *tongue*:

***dialektos* (G1258)**

From G1256; a (mode of) discourse, i.e., "dialect":–language, tongue.

This passage has the Greek word twice:

Acts 2:6-8

6 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?

In verse 6, it is translated as "language" and, in verse 8, it is translated as "tongue". Both verses have a similar phrase: "every man. . . in his/our own language/tongue". Someone present already knew the language intimately.

Here's a word from the old testament:

***'ărâmîyth* (H762)**

Feminine of H761; (only adverbial) in Aramean; in the Syrian language (tongue), in Syriac.

It is translated as "Syrian language" and as "Syrian tongue" in these two verses:

Isaiah 36:11

11 Then said Eliakim and Shebna and Joah unto Rabshakeh, Speak, I pray thee, unto thy servants in the Syrian language; for we understand *it*: and speak not to us in the Jews' language, in the ears of the people that *are* on the wall.

Ezra 4:7

7 And in the days of Artaxerxes wrote Bishlam, Mithredath, Tabeel, and the rest of their companions, unto Artaxerxes king of Persia; and the writing of the letter *was* written in the Syrian tongue, and interpreted in the Syrian tongue.

Here is another word that is translated as "language" and as "tongue":

***lâshôn* | *l^{e}shônâh* (H3956)**

From H3960; the tongue (of man or animals), used literally (as the instrument of licking, eating, or speech), and figuratively (speech, an ingot, a fork of flame, a cove of water); + babbler, bay, + evil speaker, language, talker, tongue, wedge.

If you are learning how to use your concordance, then you can find the verses where H3956 occurs.

Here are some other concordance numbers according to the translated word:

- language: H1697, H3066, H3937, H3961, and H8193; and
- tongue: H2013, H2790, G1100, G1447, and G2084.

You can also look for the word *speech*. Here are two verses showing that *speech* is used synonymously with *language*:

2 Chronicles 32:18

18 Then they cried with a loud voice in the Jews' speech unto the people of Jerusalem that *were* on the wall, to affright them, and to trouble them; that they might take the city.

Nehemiah 13:24

24 And their children spake half in the speech of Ashdod, and could not speak in the Jews' language, but according to the language of each people.

3.2 What Is Interpretation?

Let's now consider what the dictionary definition is for *interpretation*.

Dictionary Definition: interpretation

1. The act of interpreting; explanation of unintelligible words in language that is intelligible. Interpretation is the design of translation
2. The act of expounding or unfolding what is not understood or not obvious; as the interpretation of dreams and prophecy
3. The sense given by an interpreter; exposition
4. The power of explaining

Of course that appears self-defining since the root shows up in the definitions. Let's see the definition for *interpret*:

Dictionary Definition: interpret

1. To explain the meaning or words to a person who does not understand them; to expound; to translate unintelligible words into intelligible ones; as, to interpret the Hebrew language to an Englishman
2. To explain or unfold the meaning of predictions, vision, dreams or enigmas; to expound and lay open what is concealed from the understanding; as, Joseph interpreted the dream of Pharaoh
3. To decipher
4. To explain something not understood; as, to interpret looks or signs
5. To define; to explain words by other words in the same language

We are predominately interested in definition #1. Definition #2 is a point of focus in the *The Language of Prophecy* study guide [5].

There are many words that are translated *interpret*, *interpreter*, or *interpretation*. Most of them are not translated as other English words. So, we will just give one example and leave the investigation of the others as an exercise.

***diermēneuō* (G1329)**

From G1223 and G2059; to explain thoroughly, by implication, to translate:–expound, interpret(-ation).

Here is a verse where the word is translated as "interpret":

1 Corinthians 14:27

27 If any man speak in an *unknown* tongue, *let it be* by two, or at the most *by* three, and *that* by course; and let one interpret.

Here is what you will have to decide for yourself: Is an interpreter necessary because the tongue talker doesn't know what he said? or does the interpreter just provide a second witness? I think it is the former.

3.3 The Beginning of Languages

We know that Adam and Eve talked to one another, and they talked to God. They also talked with angels—well, at least one: the serpent. But what language did they speak? The bible doesn't tell us, but some assume it is Hebrew. We will see why it probably wasn't Hebrew in a moment. It probably doesn't have a name in the bible.

This verse may refer to that language:

1 Corinthians 13:1

1 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.

One tongue of angels is probably this original language. It might be that some angels knew other languages because of what happened to man at Babel.

Genesis 11:1-9

1 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 throughly. And they had brick for stone, and slime had they for morter.
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.
5 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.

Verse 1 makes a connection between *language* and *speech*.

It is at this point in history that God introduced new languages to man. It was a punishment that caused man to scatter.

Side Study 3.1: Nations and Their Languages (Advanced Study)

Genesis 10 give us more details about how the earth was divided into nations with different languages. Genesis 10 uses the word *tongue(s)* while Genesis 11 uses the word *language(s)*. It requires study to make the connection.

Genesis 10:5

5 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

20 These *are* the sons of Ham, after their families, after their tongues, in their countries, *and* in their nations.

Genesis 10:31

31 These *are* the sons of Shem, after their families, after their tongues, in their lands, after their nations.

Abraham is called a *Hebrew* in Genesis 14:13. Looking at the concordance for the word *Hebrew* reveals:

***'ibrîy* (H5680)**

patronymic from H5677; an Eberite (i.e., Hebrew) or descendant of Eber; Hebrew(-ess, woman).

Since *Hebrew* is named after *Eber*, it is unlikely that it was the language that Adam spoke. It isn't known if the original language was retained by a man on the earth, but I would guess that it wasn't. It is likely that angels did.

See *The Biblical Angels* study guide [3] for much more information: the appendix "The Tower of Babel" discusses what happened at Babel and the appendix "Satan as Lightning Fell" discusses the nations and how devils were assigned to the nations. Perhaps, these devils (or, angels) spoke the languages of the nations that they ruled. It is also true that some angels can speak the language of the people that they talked to.

Let's see references to unknown or strange (i.e., foreign) tongues or languages:

Psalms 114:1

1 When Israel went out of Egypt, the house of Jacob from a people of strange language;

Ezekiel 3:5-6

5 For thou *art* not sent to a people of a strange speech and of an hard language, *but* to the house of Israel;
6 Not to many people of a strange speech and of an hard language, whose words thou canst not understand. Surely, had I sent thee to them, they would have hearkened unto thee.

Psalms 81:5

5 This he ordained in Joseph *for* a testimony, when he went out through the land of Egypt: *where* I heard a language *that* I understood not.

3.4 Natural Interpretation of Tongues

The natural interpretation of tongues is simply what we would call *translation*. It is a natural process when a person knows (at least) two languages: the language of the speaker and the language of the audience. Let's see many examples of this.

Genesis 42:23

23 And they knew not that Joseph understood *them*; for he spake unto them by an interpreter.

In this story, Joseph knew Hebrew but he didn't speak to his brothers using it. He spoke Egyptian and had someone translate what he said into Hebrew. This was part of the deception that he was maintaining.

Sometimes, interpretation simply explains what a word means in the audience's language. In these examples, we have a Hebrew word translated into Greek (but both are translated into English for us in the *King James Bible*).

Matthew 1:23

23 Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.

Mark 15:22

22 And they bring him unto the place Golgotha, which is, being interpreted, The place of a skull.

John 1:41

41 He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messias, which is, being interpreted, the Christ.

Acts 1:19

19 And it was known unto all the dwellers at Jerusalem; insomuch as that field is called in their proper tongue, Aceldama, that is to say, The field of blood.

Other times, interpretation translates a phrase or more:

Mark 5:41

41 And he took the damsel by the hand, and said unto her, Talitha cumi; which is, being interpreted, Damsel, I say unto thee, arise.

Mark 15:34

34 And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani? which is, being interpreted, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

Side Study 3.2: Translation in the Bible

Esther provides good examples of how one language is translated into other languages. Nothing miraculous takes place. Of course, this takes time and requires someone to know multiple languages.

Esther 1:22

22 For he sent letters into all the king's provinces, into every province according to the writing thereof, and to every people after their language, that every man should bear rule in his own house, and that *it* should be published according to the language of every people.

Esther 3:12

12 Then were the king's scribes called on the thirteenth day of the first month, and there was written according to all that Haman had commanded unto the king's lieutenants, and to the governors that *were* over every province, and to the rulers of every people of every province according to the writing thereof, and *to* every people after their language; in the name of king Ahasuerus was it written, and sealed with the king's ring.

Esther 8:9

9 Then were the king's scribes called at that time in the third month, that *is*, the month Sivan, on the three and twentieth *day* thereof; and it was written according to all that Mordecai commanded unto the Jews, and to the lieutenants, and the deputies and rulers of the provinces which *are* from India unto Ethiopia, an hundred twenty and seven provinces, unto every province according to the writing thereof, and unto every people after their language, and to the Jews according to their writing, and according to their language.

These verses help us understand that God's word can be accurately translated into other languages (see *The English Bible* study guide [4]). For someone to claim the opposite, he should have verses to support the claim.

3.5 The Gift of Tongues During Prophecy

We will look at a prominent passage involving tongues during the program of prophecy. This passage is often misunderstood, but really shouldn't be. Careful study should prevent that.

Acts 2:1-4

1 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.

The apostles were all in a house and this manifestation of the Holy Ghost occurred. All of them began to speak in other tongues, or languages. But, notice it says "as the Spirit gave them utterance": This should mean that the Spirit was deciding what language they each spoke in. This is an important clue for understanding the gift correctly. *Cloven* means "divide" or "partition"; remember what happened at Babel.

Side Study 3.3: What Pentecost Really Meant

If you study the feast of weeks in the old testament (refer to the *Biblical Time* study guide [1] for details), you will probably struggle to understand its connection to what happened at Pentecost as described in *Acts*. It was obviously meant to be an important event to Israel, since all males were to be in Jerusalem to experience it.

Late in Jesus' ministry, he told the apostles that they would receive the Comforter, or the Holy Ghost, after he departed (or ascended to heaven):

Luke 24:49

49 And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.

Acts 1:4-5

4 And, being assembled together with *them*, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, *saith he*, ye have heard of me.
5 For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.

If you are a good student of the bible, you will note that evidently some people already had the Holy Ghost, most notably the apostles:

John 20:22

22 And when he had said this, he breathed on *them*, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost:

But the "power from on high" that Luke 24:49 spoke of was the ability to speak in tongues. This is signified by the manifestation of the "cloven tongues as of fire". *Cloven* is an interesting word. It means "to be divided" (not necessarily in two). Recall that the nations were divided by languages.

What should also be noted is that no church started at Pentecost; the existing kingdom church grew:

Acts 2:41

41 Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added *unto them* about three thousand souls.

To better understand the various churches in the bible, refer to the *Respecting Distinctions* study guide [2].

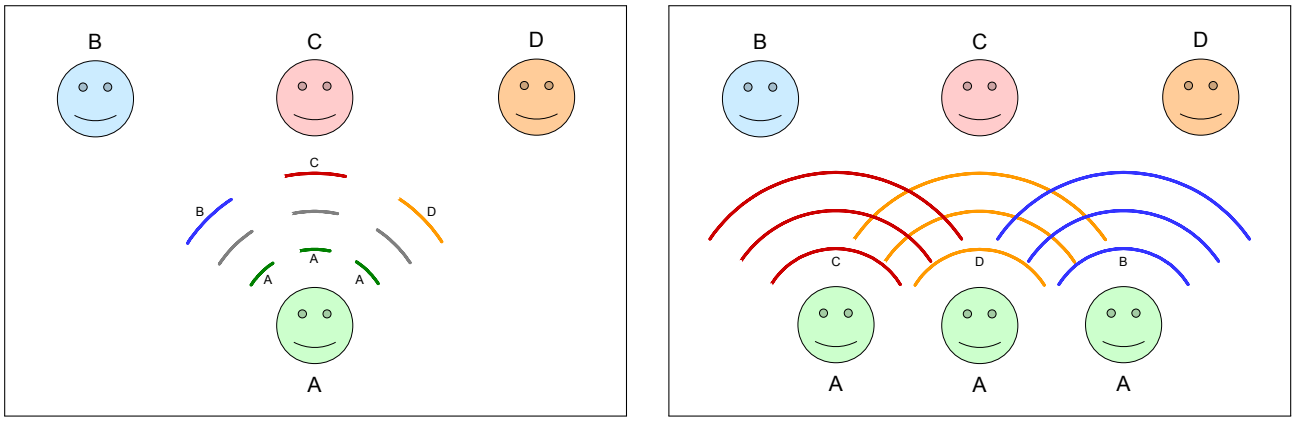
Acts 2:5-8

5 And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven.
6 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?

There were Jews from every nation there because the law required that they be in Jerusalem for the feast of weeks (or, Pentecost). The reason why they were from other nations is because Israel was scattered several hundred years earlier and many did not return to Israel as they should have.

Verse 6 is an important *time* verse: "when it was noised abroad". The event where speaking in tongues occurred was very localized. It occurred in the house and perhaps just outside of it. There were likely a number of witnesses of it. These witnesses carried the story around the city such that those who heard came quickly to where it happened. So, a multitude came together and heard the speaking in tongues as it continued. But this probably didn't go on for very long as we will speculate from later elements of the story. Also notice the usage of the word "confounded"; it occurred in Genesis 11:7.

Now, verse 8 is where some controversy lies. What some will say is that as someone spoke in "tongues", each man heard in his own language. What they want that to mean is that each hearer heard in his own language even though only one person spoke one time. While "God can do anything", that is not likely to be how it worked. Figure 3.1 shows two explanations for the miracle.



(a) The Gift of Hearing? **(b)** The Gift of Speaking?

Figure 3.1: How did tongues work? Here are two possibilities: In **(a)**, the speaker speaks in language A, but each hears in his own language. But, this associates the gift with the hearer, who does not already have the Spirit of God. Wow! There could be multiple speakers, but why bother since everyone can understand this speaker? In **(b)**, each speaker speaks in one language other than language A. Some present hear and understand that language. If necessary, a speaker can subsequently speak in another language as the Spirit gives him utterance. It is the latter that appears to align with the scriptures.

In Figure 3.1(a), one person speaks in one language, but each hearer hears in a different language. That's quite a miracle, and that miracle doesn't coincide with the speaker. You can claim that God is modifying sound as it travels to each person. Or, you can say that the hearer has the gift of hearing (or really, interpretation). Note, that most hearers definitely do not have the Holy Ghost yet as the purpose of this gift is to reach lost Jews. This view of the gift is like watching a movie dubbed in another language: the speaker's mouth does not match what he is saying! (Of course, you can also claim that God changed what they saw—i.e., the mouths matched the words!) We will see more evidence as to why this is not how the gift worked.

In Figure 3.1(b), multiple people are speaking in tongues. Each speaks in one tongue (as the Spirit gives him utterance) and some people hearing understand that tongue. Because there are many speakers, there will be many languages covered at a time. Each speaker will likely speak in more than one language, but only one at a time, as the Spirit gives him utterance. We would expect this to be quite chaotic. In 1 Corinthians 14, Paul will give us increased understanding that this is how the gift worked.

As far as interpretation goes, that gift was not needed here because there were many speakers and the Holy Ghost was giving utterance to cover all of the languages necessary for the Jews that were present. Yes, the passage doesn't say that, but it is the logical inference given all of the information provided by all scripture.

Acts 2:9-11	
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.

The previous passage just iterates a number of places that the foreign Jews were from. This is probably just a sample. We should also note that they heard some kind of message about what God has been doing. It is not the sermon that Peter will preach later.

Acts 2:12-15

12 And they were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another, What meaneth this?
13 Others mocking said, These men are full of new wine.
14 But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judaea, and all *ye* that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words:
15 For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is *but* the third hour of the day.

This passage gives you more evidence of how the gift is working. The reason that people would claim that the men were drunk is because they could not understand many things that they heard (because those were foreign languages to them) although they did hear something in their own languages. If the "gift of hearing" (as I've called it) was actually happening, then every man would hear everything perfectly and no accusation would follow. Why would someone claim that a man was drunk if the man spoke clearly? (Of course, you could say he appeared drunk because his mouth didn't match what he said.) Tie this evidence with verse 4 that said that the Spirit gave them utterance.

Paul seems to associate hearing foreign language with madness:

1 Corinthians 14:23

23 If therefore the whole church be come together into one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in *those that are* unlearned, or unbelievers, will they not say that ye are mad?

The idea seems related to drunkenness, as well as the meaning of "confounded".

Verse 14 calls attention to Peter speaking: This began his sermon that got many saved. It doesn't tell us that he was speaking in tongues here. I assume that he was talking in either Hebrew or Greek, probably the former. Peter called attention to it being the third hour of the day. That was the hour of the morning sacrifice and morning prayer.[2] The Holy Ghost could not have come much earlier, so this all transpired in a short amount of time.

Side Study 3.4: Pouring Out the Spirit

The pouring out of the Spirit brought more than the gift of tongues, although that was the initial manifestation and empowerment. Let's see the verses relevant to this. We already saw in Acts 1:5 that there would be a baptism of the Holy Ghost. It is also mentioned in each of the gospel accounts (here's one):

Luke 3:16

16 John answered, saying unto *them* all, I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire:

There are several old testament verses that mention the same idea. The most notable in Joel 2:28-32 is quoted by Peter in *Acts*:

Acts 2:16-21

16 But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel;
17 And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams:
18 And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy:
19 And I will shew wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke:

[2] To understand the events of the third hour, refer to the *Biblical Time* study guide [1].

20 The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come:
21 And it shall come to pass, *that* whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.

Before Pentecost, few had the Holy Ghost. After Pentecost, it was possible for any in Israel to have it. Prophesying would also come to many.

Also, although not the focus at this point, the baptism of the Holy Ghost is a type of the anointing of a priest, since Israel was supposed to be a kingdom of priests. Refer to the *Respecting Distinctions* study guide [2] for more information on this baptism.

If you want to pursue the "gift of hearing" explanation, you can try to use these verses:

1 Samuel 1:12-15

12 And it came to pass, as she continued praying before the LORD, that Eli marked her mouth.
13 Now Hannah, she spake in her heart; only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard: therefore Eli thought she had been drunken.
14 And Eli said unto her, How long wilt thou be drunken? put away thy wine from thee.
15 And Hannah answered and said, No, my lord, I *am* a woman of a sorrowful spirit: I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but have poured out my soul before the LORD.

I don't think it helps, but you might think differently. Here's another where babbling is tied to drunkenness:

Proverbs 23:29-30

29 Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath babbling? who hath wounds without cause? who hath redness of eyes?
30 They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine.

Side Study 3.5: Tongues As a Sign of Belief

Before Jesus' ascension, he said this:

Mark 16:17-18

17 And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues;
18 They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.

While tongues is given as sign to unbelievers, it was also evidence of being a believer. This is demonstrated in two separate stories in *Acts*. The first involved a Gentile named Cornelius:

Acts 10:44-46

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. Then answered Peter,

Cornelius and others spoke in tongues. It was a witness to their believing. While Peter and the others are saved, you can say they were in unbelief concerning Gentiles getting saved (given their understanding of the prophecy program). Afterward, they believed what God was doing. Indirectly, God was telling Peter that something had changed. The mystery program started with Paul in Acts 9, but Peter didn't know that or what it meant. And Cornelius wasn't saved by the gospel of grace. He also wasn't a proselyte to Israel (as suggested by Acts 10:28). Nonetheless, the evidence of his salvation in the kingdom (or, prophecy) program was speaking in tongues.

Here is the other story:

Acts 19:1-7

1 And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples,

2 He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost.
3 And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism.
4 Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.
5 When they heard *this*, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.
6 And when Paul had laid *his* hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.
7 And all the men were about twelve.

Paul encountered some disciples who had heard John the Baptist's message and were baptized. They heard this from Apollos, who only knew John's baptism when he encountered them (see Acts 18:25). So, these kingdom believers received the Holy Ghost after Paul laid hands on them. The evidence of their belief was speaking in tongues. The scripture gives even more evidence that they were kingdom believers by noting that there were 12 (the number denoting Israel). Even though Paul was involved in the incident, the men were not part of the body of Christ. Tongues was not an evidence for those in the body of Christ, even though some had the gift.

3.6 The Gift of Tongues During the Mystery

Before we get into how tongues worked during the mystery program, let's note a couple of things. A variety of spiritual gifts existed and they were given out by the Spirit. Two of these gifts were tongues and interpretation of tongues:

1 Corinthians 12:10-11

10 To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another *divers* kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues:
11 But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.

Not everyone had the gift of tongues:

1 Corinthians 12:30

30 Have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret?

So, tongues cannot be a sign of those that believe during the mystery program since not all believers had it. And that was in the past. No one has the gift now. Also, interpretation appeared to be something important during that the beginning of the mystery program. It was not given during prophecy—more specifically, during Acts 2.

1 Corinthians 14 addresses to a greater extent prophesying and speaking in tongues and to a lesser extent interpreting tongues. We will jump through the chapter leaving out much of the verses concerning prophesying.

1 Corinthians 14:2

2 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.

An unknown tongue is a language that someone in the world knows, but none of those people are present where the speaking in tongues is happening. So, Paul concludes that only God could understand the speaker. He would speak in mysteries since everyone would wonder what he said.

1 Corinthians 14:4-5

4 He that speaketh in an *unknown* tongue edifieth himself; but he that prophesieth edifieth the church.
5 I would that ye all spake with tongues, but rather that ye prophesied: for greater *is* he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues, except he interpret, that the church may receive edifying.

So, verse 4 might lead you to believe that the one speaking in an unknown tongue knows what he said. But verse 5 says that no edification is happening unless he can interpret. We will get more confirmation on this shortly. The edifying for the speaker is probably just the self-assurance that the Holy Ghost was speaking through him. It would be confirmation to himself that he had the gift.

1 Corinthians 14:9

9 So likewise ye, except ye utter by the tongue words easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken? for ye shall speak into the air.

This seems to confirm that the speaker didn't know what he was saying.

1 Corinthians 14:13-14

13 Wherefore let him that speaketh in an *unknown* tongue pray that he may interpret.
14 For if I pray in an *unknown* tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful.

Someone that spoke in a language that he didn't know should have prayed that he might also interpret (i.e., he needed that gift too). We will see that it was more likely that someone else had that gift. If someone prayed in the language that he could not really speak, there was no understanding.

1 Corinthians 14:20-21

20 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.

Verse 20 was telling the Corinthians to understand why they had this gift. Verse 21 referenced this verse:

Deuteronomy 28:49

49 The LORD shall bring a nation against thee from far, from the end of the earth, *as swift* as the eagle flieth; a nation whose tongue thou shalt not understand;

That is furthered by this passage:

Isaiah 28:11-12

11 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.

Paul was saying that the old testament passage was also being fulfilled by the Corinthians. The *people* of the prophecy was Israel. But, in this case, while the Gentiles speaking knew a language that the Jews didn't know, they were going to speak to them in the language that they did know. This makes the gift just like the one in the prophecy program. The gift was a sign to the unbelieving Jew that he might believe the message spoken. That is amplified here:

1 Corinthians 14:22-23

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.
23 If therefore the whole church be come together into one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in *those that are* unlearned, or unbelievers, will they not say that ye are mad?

But Paul said that if everyone spoke in tongues, which were intended to be heard by unbelieving Jews that were present, and if there were also unbelieving Gentiles present, which were not being witnessed to by the miracle, they would think the church was crazy because no one was there to interpret for them. This is another evidence that it is not the gift of hearing.

Side Study 3.6: Why Did the Corinthians Have the Gift of Tongues?

If you read all of Paul's letters, tongues is only a topic in *1 Corinthians*. This reason for this is so that you can make the connection to *Acts* and better understand the gift in general.

Acts 18:1

1 After these things Paul departed from Athens, and came to Corinth;

Acts 18:7-8

7 And he departed thence, and entered into a certain *man's* house, named Justus, *one* that worshipped God, whose house joined hard to the synagogue.
8 And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized.

Justus' house was adjacent to the synagogue. Some of the Corinthians met there and some of those had the gift of tongues for the express purpose of witnessing to the Jews next door. One of the Jewish converts was Crispus. He is also mentioned in 1 Corinthians 1:14. There were also baptisms as further witness to the Jews since such a thing wasn't necessary for the body of Christ.

After a complicated controversy, Sosthenes, the next chief ruler of the synagogue, was beaten:

Acts 18:17

17 Then all the Greeks took Sosthenes, the chief ruler of the synagogue, and beat *him* before the judgment seat. And Gallio cared for none of those things.

But he evidently got saved soon after and was mentioned in 1 Corinthians 1:1 as co-author of the letter.

Tongues was a gift that was present elsewhere in the body of Christ. But it is only mentioned in the Corinthian church to help clarify why it existed. It was also a temporary gift that faded away.

1 Corinthians 14:26-28

26 How is it then, brethren? when ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying.
27 If any man speak in an *unknown* tongue, *let it be* by two, or at the most *by* three, and *that* by course; and let one interpret.
28 But if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church; and let him speak to himself, and to God.

Paul said that speaking in tongues should be done one-at-time and only if an interpreter was present. At Pentecost, many spoke at one and there was some confusion. Paul declared the same thing to the Corinthians.

1 Corinthians 14:34-35

34 Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but *they are commanded* to be under obedience, as also saith the law.
35 And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church.

Finally, Paul said that a woman wasn't to prophesy or speak in tongues in the church (you need to keep what he said in the context of the passage).

Conclusion

As far as I can tell, the gift of tongues during the mystery does not differ much from the gift during prophecy. Here are some similarities:

1. The speaker spoke in a language that he did not understand.
2. The foreign tongue was for an unbelieving Jew that was present.
3. It was very likely that others were present that did not understand what was being said.
4. The sign wasn't for Gentiles (note that a proselyte isn't a Gentile any more)

Here are some differences:

1. During prophecy:
   a) Many spoke in tongues at the same time because many foreign Jews were present from many different places.
   b) There was no one to interpret because someone eventually spoke in the languages of all of the Jews present.
   c) Tongues was an evidence of belief.
2. During the mystery:
   a) A few spoke in tongues but one-at-a-time and an interpreter explained what was said to those that didn't understand the tongue (such as the believing and unbelieving Gentiles that were present).

b) Someone had to interpret otherwise no speaking in tongues was to be done.

c) Tongues was not an evidence of belief (only some believers had the gift).

We should consider how tongues might work during the dispersion at a time other than when Jews were to come to Jerusalem. Most likely a Jew with the gift of tongues would go to a foreign land where all of the people spoke the language of the land. The speaker would speak in the foreign language and all the Jews (and Gentiles) would understand what was said. There wouldn't be a need to speak in many languages at the same time and no interpreter would be necessary. If Jews were present from elsewhere, then perhaps the speaker would speak again in another language.

Reference Materials

Completed and draft e-books are available via `https://thechurchoforlando.org`.

[1] *Biblical Time*, Tom Wilson, e-book; First Edition, 9/7/25

[2] *Respecting Distinctions*, Tom Wilson, e-book; First Edition, Revision A, 6/18/26

[3] *The Biblical Angels*, Tom Wilson, e-book; First Edition, Revision A, 9/11/24

[4] *The English Bible*, Tom Wilson, e-book; First Edition, 6/3/25

[5] *The Language of Prophecy*, Tom Wilson, e-book; partial Draft Edition, 1/8/26

Index of Bible Verses

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