



Four Purposes of Tongues

The Clearest Explanation
of Speaking in Tongues

Charles A. Rhodus

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Edited by Daniel Koren

Dedication:

I want to give a special thanks to my precious wife Tammy who supports me in all that I do!

What is this all about?

“To clear up the confusion and misunderstandings on this all important Bible subject!”

There are too many wrong answers and wrong explanations about speaking in tongues. The goal of the author is to bring about clarity and understanding on what the Bible says. He uses the Bible as his sole authority on this subject.

It is strange how teachers want to tell you about a subject they themselves have not experienced!

May you be blessed with knowledge from on high as you read!

Hos 4:6

6 My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children.

KJV

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Who is This For?

Is speaking in tongues for today's believer? Is it Satanic? Is it Biblical? Is it necessary for salvation? If we are New Testament believers should we practice speaking in tongues? If so why? Do you speak with tongues? If so why?

Many are teaching that "tongues" stopped when the Apostles died. Is this true? Well, how can it be true when we read about many more than just the Apostles that spoke in tongues! The New Testament is full of people that spoke in tongues, men, women, Jews, Gentiles and even the mother of Jesus!

Each category of tongues must be understood within its context of use. Each tongue has its own purpose, benefit and end result. Does everyone that has faith have the gift of faith? No. Neither does everyone that speaks in tongues have the gift of tongues. As there are different kinds of faith there are also different kinds of tongues. We will learn here of the different kinds of tongues.

From *Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words* TONGUE (-S) glossa

"a language," coupled with phule, "a tribe," laos, "a people," ethnos, "a nation."

As we can see in the definition, tongues are the language of a tribe, a people or a nation. Many are saying that tongues are not real language, but we can see the original Greek translation proves that they are.

People are often afraid of the unknown. To most, tongues are in the realm of "unknown." The lack of understanding and knowledge of the subject alone can make someone leery and skeptical.

I hope the following information will answer questions and relieve any doubts you may have on this New Testament experience.

Below we will examine four different uses for speaking in tongues.

1. The Sign and Evidence of Receiving the Holy Ghost
2. Prayer – Intercession
3. Worship
4. Gift of Tongues, Divers Kinds of Tongues. One of Nine Gifts of the Spirit

Let us begin...

Tongues is the Sign

Speaking in other tongues is the initial sign or evidence that one has received the Holy Ghost. God gave this miraculous sign because there is no man that can reproduce it. For no man can speak a language he has not learned.

Another reason God gave this miraculous sign is that the tongue, James said, is an unruly member and impossible to tame. No man can tame the tongue (James 3:7-8).

When a person receives the Holy Spirit evidenced by speaking in tongues, his tongue was tamed, not by man but by God. This is a miraculous sign manifested to show the infilling of the Spirit of God. Now for the first time in his life he can allow God to help him keep his tongue tamed. This is not to say that everything he says will be perfect from that point but through the Spirit of God he/she can speak the Word with boldness and be a powerful witness for the name of Jesus!

This miracle of receiving the Holy Ghost is preeminent to the other uses of tongues. Before one can be used in any of the other tongues as mentioned in this essay he/she must first receive the Holy Spirit evidenced by speaking in tongues. This sign of tongues shows that one has been born of the “Spirit” as Jesus said in John 3:5.

Holy Ghost and Tongues Prophesied of in the Old Testament

The next two verses are Old Testament prophecies of the last day outpouring. This Holy Spirit outpouring began in Acts Chapter 2. The prophecy is still being fulfilled and will continue until the rapture of the church! Millions of believers worldwide profess to speak in tongues!

Here are a couple passages from the Old Testament:

Isaiah 28:11-12

For with stammering lips and another tongue will he speak to this people. 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.

Joel 2:28-29

And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit.

Jesus Promised the Holy Ghost with Tongues

John 7:38-39

He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)

In the previous verse Jesus is talking about the Holy Ghost to come. The Holy Ghost could not come until Jesus was ascended to Heaven. In verse 38 he spoke of rivers that would flow from the belly (inner most being). He said “they that believe on him should receive.” Every believer should receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. Are you a believer? Have you received this experience?

You might say, “What about the thief on the cross? He didn’t receive it; he didn’t talk in tongues.” That is correct. How could he receive the Holy Ghost when Jesus was not yet glorified? Jesus said the Holy Ghost would come after his ascension, after they had gathered in the upper room. See Luke 24:49.

This phrase Jesus used “out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water” was referring to speaking with tongues. Jesus said a true believer will receive the Holy Ghost with tongues! A river is something powerful and the people of the day understood the importance of living by a river or body of water. A river gives and sustains life. Jesus likened the Holy Ghost to a river. Did he say you would speak in tongues if you were a believer? Read on.

After rising from the dead, at his ascension into Heaven he promised the outpouring of the Holy Ghost!

Luke 24:49

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.

Mark 16:17

And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues;

The Apostle Mark records the words of Jesus saying that believers shall speak with new tongues. He didn’t say they “might” follow the believer did he? He didn’t say they “should” follow the believer. It sounds positive, it sounds sure.

Though I am convinced that the Holy Ghost is for every believer and it is the Spirit birth Jesus spoke of in John 3:5, I am not attempting to prove its

necessity to you. My desire here is to show the Biblical purposes and benefits of tongues.

John 3:5-8

Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

The fulfillment of these and other prophecies happened beginning in Jerusalem.

The First Time Anyone Spoke in Tongues

Acts 2:1-8

And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven. Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language. And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galilaeans? And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?

In verse 4 we see the first time anyone spoke in tongues. There were about 120 that received the Holy Ghost and all spoke in tongues. Outsiders (people of other nationalities with other dialects) witnessed this miracle and thought they were drunk. Their question was “how can people speak in our languages when they are locals. They do not know our languages, so how is this happening?”

Of course we know that the Holy Spirit outpouring was prophecy coming to pass and this was a miracle of God!

Peter, the Man with the Keys to Heaven

In the next verse Peter explains that the Holy Ghost promise is to every believer, to them that are far off and whomever God calls to salvation!

Acts 2:38-39

Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.

Here are more scriptures in Acts where this was being fulfilled. You will notice that there is no interpretation of the tongues. When one receives the Holy Ghost, an interpretation is not needed because it is the sign and evidence that he/she has received the Holy Ghost.

Many are teaching that speaking in tongues only occurred in Acts 2 but as you will see, this is not so. God made sure that these stories were included in the scripture for our example and understanding. You will not find one time where there was an interpretation of tongues! When we understand the different purposes of tongues, then we can rightly divide the Word.

Cornelius and His Family

Notice in the next passage how they knew they received the Holy Ghost. Verse 46 “For they heard them speak with tongues.” Tongues was and is the initial sign and evidence of the infilling of the Spirit.

Here in Chapter 10 we find the first Gentiles that received the Holy Ghost evidenced by tongues. Understand that this was about nine or ten years after the initial outpouring in Acts 2. These people were believers. They were not sinners just out of jail. They were believers in the true God that had not yet received the Holy Ghost. When you read here in Acts about Cornelius you will find he was a devout man. He prayed, fasted, gave to the poor, and had even seen an angel! Even as good and dedicated as he was God still had more for him.

Even today there are believers worldwide receiving this awesome experience with the sign of speaking in tongues. The gift of the Holy Ghost is for every believer today just as it was for Cornelius and his family!

Acts 10:44-47

While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. 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. For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter, Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?

The Twelve Believers

In this next verse we see twelve Christian men, “believers” that received the Holy Ghost, and tongues accompanied it! Yes, they spoke in tongues. This was twenty years after the day of Pentecost and people were still receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost with tongues.

Today, some people teach that you receive the Holy Spirit when you accept Christ. This passage is a clear example that this teaching is not true.

These disciples and believers had not yet received the Holy Ghost! Speaking in tongues was the sign these believers received when the Spirit came into them. Have you received the Holy Ghost since you believed? These twelve men did not even know of the existence of the Holy Ghost. Speaking in tongues was a new teaching to them. The good thing about these believers is that when they learned there was something new for them they did not resist. In that meeting with Paul, twelve men that had been living for God for 15-20 years received the Holy Ghost evidenced by speaking in tongues!

Acts 19:6

And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.

In the following passage we find where some had received the Holy Ghost but it does not say they spoke with tongues. Neither does it say they did not speak in tongues. I believe we can prove by the story they definitely spoke in tongues.

Eight Years after Pentecost Jews are Still Receiving the Holy Ghost with Tongues

Acts 8:15-20

Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost: (For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.) Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost. And when Simon saw that through laying

on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money, Saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost. But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money.

Understanding the fact that Simon was a sorcerer, he was used to earning money by exciting the people through witchcraft. He did not understand the seriousness of the matter. He also did not understand that the ministry is not a money making scheme. The gifts of the Spirit are not to be used for profit!

He evidently “saw” something supernatural happen here. What he “saw” is not told in this passage. We know that he “saw” them speak in tongues when the Apostles laid hands on them because this would agree with the other examples of people receiving the Holy Ghost. Each and every time without exception they spoke in tongues when the Holy Ghost came upon them. This supernatural event was so moving and powerful in the eyes of Simon that he was tempted to do what he had always done in the past. That was to bewitch the people through sorceries.

Simon felt that if he could make people speak in a language they did not know and cause them to feel this awesome experience he could make money.

As we can see, Peter rebuked him sharply and warned him to stay out of the matter.

Prayer – Intercession

In 1 Timothy 2:1 Paul mentions “intercession” as one of the four types of prayer. Intercession is a prayer that is perfectly pinpointed and perfectly in the will of God! Intercession is a technical term for approaching a king. This is the most powerful of all prayers. When a person is in intercession he can be assured that his/her prayer will see results, immediately in most cases!

Romans 8:26-27

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. And he that searcheth the hearts

knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.

In the previous verse we see the word “infirmities.” An infirmity is not referring to an illness in this passage. It is a temptation, trial or problem. The “Spirit” or Holy Spirit prays for us according to the will of God. How does the Spirit pray for us? With words that can not be spoken in the known tongue, but with “groanings.”

The prayer of intercession is when one goes into a dimension of the Spirit that is deeper than tongues itself. Speaking in tongues is the “road” to intercession. Praying in tongues is a dimension of intercession but not the groanings that Paul referred to in Romans Chapter 8.

The intercession here is not done by the person but by the Spirit. The person is the “vessel” the Spirit is using to give the prayer. The Holy Ghost literally takes over and draws the willing person into a realm of the Spirit that is deeper than any other prayer. His/her speaking in tongues was the avenue used to get into intercession. Another term for intercession is “travail.” When a woman is giving birth she is said to be in “travail.” Travail produces results, usually immediate results.

When praying this prayer the Holy Spirit “helps” our trial and temptations. The prayer of travail is not always for oneself but in many cases for others. The intercessor has a worldwide ministry of prayer. God will use this person for himself, family, the church and needs across the world; needs that he or she will probably never know about in his or her lifetime but God is using that person to reach and help people in desperate situations!

The Apostle Jude mentions it:

Jude 20

But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost

This “praying in the Holy Ghost” is referring to intercession, the powerful prayer of travail. When you are in intercession you build up your faith and great answers to prayer come!

This prayer produces “groanings.” These groanings are literal. Moving beyond tongues into this realm your utterance is turned into groanings. This hard

prayer is like a woman's "travail" that usually draws one down onto the floor. As the Holy Ghost takes over, the person yielding himself is praying the most powerful prayer known to humanity!

1 Corinthians 14:4

He that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifieth himself; but he that prophesieth edifieth the church.

Edifieth, *oikodomeo*; to be a house-builder, i.e. construct or (figuratively) confirm

Is it good to be edified? If there is no one there to build you or lift you up, you can pray in tongues and God will do it.

Galatians 4:19

My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you,

We see in the previous verse how Paul used the word "travail." He was referring to his travail in prayer, interceding for them in tongues.

In the next passage we will see how Paul states that when he prays in an unknown tongue he does not understand what the prayer is. When he prays this way his spirit (human spirit) is praying. Praying in tongues and praying with groanings is more than praying with the lips; the whole person, or as he said his "spirit prays."

Paul made a distinction between praying in the "understanding" and praying in the "spirit." Praying in the understanding is simply praying in your known language. Praying in the spirit is praying in tongues and or with groanings.

1 Corinthians 14:2

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.

Is it good to speak to God? Yes, of course. God gave us tongues as a more effective prayer language.

1 Corinthians 14:14-15

For if I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful. What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with

the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also.

When one speaks in tongues it is a real language. It is not just “jibberish” or even as some say a language of angels or of Heaven. It is my belief that when I or anyone is praying in tongues God blocks Satan from understanding. When someone is speaking in tongues he or she is in direct communication with God. The gift of the Holy Ghost and tongues is a miraculous event that “the angels desire to look into.” See 1 Peter 1:12.

This channel of prayer did not exist until after the Holy Ghost was poured out in Acts Chapter 2. Throughout the Bible we see the word “intercession” used in regards to prayer. The word intercession can be used in any type of prayer or conversation but in the New Testament it takes on a whole new meaning with greater depth!

Worship

Why would tongues be useful in worship? Speaking in tongues has the same positive effect in worship as it does in prayer. It is a direct communication to God. Not only are we communicating with God in worship but we are at the same time building our spirit man. We are being strengthened by the Spirit of God as we worship in tongues.

1 Cor 14:15

What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also.

In verse 15 we see Paul mentioning two ways to sing in worship. One is in the “understanding;” the other is in the “spirit.” Have you ever seen or heard someone sing in tongues? This is what Paul was talking about. I am not saying a person should get up in their church assembly and sing a “special” in tongues. That would not edify the church. So singing in tongues as praying in tongues edifies him or her. Again, edify means to build or strengthen.

Acts 10:45-46

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. For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God.

...

As you would agree worship is magnifying God. In the previous verse we see that when the Gentiles received the Holy Ghost evidenced by tongues that their speaking in tongues was magnifying God.

Someone might disagree saying the word “and” would mean “in addition to.” Or that “magnifying God” was separate and apart from the speaking with tongues. If this would be your approach then you would say that speaking in tongues in this passage is not magnifying God and is not worship.

Let us look at a definition of the word “and.”

kai (kahee); apparently, a primary particle, having a copulative and sometimes also a cumulative force; and, also, even, so then, too, etc.; often used in connection (or composition) with other particles or small words^[1]

As you can see the word “and” can be replaced by the word “even. Let me replace the word “and” in verse 46 to see what it looks like. For they heard them speak with tongues, *even* magnify God.

To me it seems fair to be able to say that by this passage tongues is magnifying God. If you have this experience it will probably be easy for you to see my point, but if you don’t have the Holy Ghost with tongues you may still argue that it does not magnify (worship) God.

1 Corinthians 14:2

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.

Here is a question for you. Is it good to speak to God? Of course it is. Well, as you just read in the previous verse, when a person speaks in tongues he is speaking to God. Logically speaking there must be reasons for this. God has given us a way of communication to him that is beyond our understanding and that is more effective in some cases!

If it is true as it is in prayer that “the Spirit prays for us” (Romans 6:26) then we can see the power of worshipping in tongues! The Spirit would be

worshipping in a dimension beyond our reach! If the Holy Ghost was giving you the words by which to worship, wouldn't that be more effective than your own words? Doesn't God know best?

As in prayer so speaking in tongues in worship is a powerful force that God uses to build up, strengthen and bless the one being used and in some cases others not directly participating.

Gift of Tongues

Divers Kinds of Tongues. One of Nine Gifts of the Spirit

1 Corinthians 12:10

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:

The use of this gift is for a divine utterance accompanied by an interpretation. In other words, God speaks to the church body first in an unknown language, followed by a message in their known language.

These tongues would have no real purpose or edification without an interpretation. The interpretation in the known language will be uplifting and encouragement to the hearers. Of course Paul understood the different kinds of tongues and here was teaching the people what this gift was for. He was not against them speaking in tongues but was simply correcting them. As a matter of fact, Paul spoke in tongues himself and made that clear to them so that there would be no misunderstanding.

The Corinthian church members would give a message in tongues but would not wait on the interpretation. Then someone else would speak in tongues again without waiting for the interpretation. Like any "gift," the gift of diverse kinds of tongues must be regulated and submitted to authority. The gifts are not

to be misused. Paul was setting things in order so that the church could receive the edifying.

Preaching is a “gift” and even preaching can be abused or misused. Understanding this fact we need to realize that the gifts of the Spirit including tongues can be out of place or even misused!

It is very common for people of today to take these verses to try to prove that tongues are not for today or that they need an interpretation if ever spoken. These people in most cases don’t have the experience and need scripture to justify why they themselves do not speak in tongues. By taking this passage out of context and applying it to other uses for tongues and not understanding the different purposes we can make it confusing.

When looking at all the passages on the subject we can better understand the how’s and why’s, the do’s and don’ts of it all.

1 Corinthians 14:6-8

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? And even things without life giving sound, whether pipe or harp, except they give a distinction in the sounds, how shall it be known what is piped or harped? For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?

This gift is accompanied by a distinctive sound. The trained heart can tell that it is given for an interpretation. Someone in the known language having the “gift of interpretation” should give forth the interpretation. The trained ear can tell whether the tongues spoken were for worship, prayer, receiving the Holy Ghost or the diverse kinds of tongues, as Paul called it.

The main purpose of this gift is to make way for an interpretation. The interpretation (divine utterance) in the known tongue is for the hearers to be edified. To be edified is to be encouraged and built up.

1 Corinthians 14:4-5

He that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifieth himself; but he that prophesieth edifieth the church. 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.

The purpose and goal with all of the gifts of the Spirit is that the church receives edification. When Paul said ‘I would that ye all spake with tongues’. Do you think he was saying that everyone should speak in tongues and receive an interpretation? No he wasn’t. He was making it clear that everyone should speak in tongues because they have the Holy Ghost. Does everyone that speaks in tongues have the gift of tongues? No, for the “gift of tongues” is only one of the nine gifts of the Spirit.

1 Corinthians 12:30

Have all the gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret?

Does everyone that speaks with tongues have the “gift of tongues?” No! Many are using this question of Paul “do all speak with tongues” as a means to prove tongues is not for everyone. The Apostle was not talking about all of the tongues. He was referring only to the “gift of tongues.” As you can see in this book there is more than one purpose of tongues. In the next verse we see Paul’s statement “I would that ye all spake with tongues.” Wouldn’t this be a direct contradiction to “not all speak in tongues” as we saw in verse 30?

Diverse kinds of tongues” accompanied by the interpretation of tongues is equal to the gift of prophecy because they both accomplish the same purpose. If the gift of tongues comes forth in a service without an interpretation it serves no real purpose.

1 Corinthians 14:6

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?

The church is not edified without an interpretation.

Verses 6, 19 & 23 are used by people trying to explain away the need of tongues. Yes, if you take these verses out of context, you can “justify” not believing in tongues. Within its context Paul makes it very clear why the “gift of tongues” must be regulated. If Paul was speaking against tongues why did he himself speak in tongues so much?

Look below at the I Corinthians 14 passage which says “two or at the most three” in the same context.” If that applied to speaking in tongues as evidence of the infilling of the Holy Ghost, then why did 120 speak in tongues at the same time in Acts chapter two? Or a whole household in Acts chapter ten? Or twelve

in Ephesus in Acts 19? Obviously, this is a different kind of tongues. Even Paul said, “I speak in tongues more than you all” which indicates that it was not just a church-only deal, nor an interpreter-only deal.

1 Cor 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.

1 Corinthians 14:18

I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than ye all:

Paul makes it clear by this statement that he is not speaking against tongues because he speaks with tongues more than anyone in the church. Do you think Paul had an interpretation every time he spoke in tongues? I say not. The fact is Paul himself understood the different uses for tongues.

1 Corinthians 14:19

Yet in the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue.

He again is reiterating the fact that this public gift should accompany an interpretation.

1 Corinthians 14:22-23

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. 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?

Understanding the fact that this gift will or should have an interpretation tells us we don't need everyone present giving forth the tongues. Everyone else should listen and wait for the interpretation. The gift of tongues is more or less the “forerunner” of the interpretation of tongues.

1 Corinthians 14:39

Wherefore, brethren, covet to prophesy, and forbid not to speak with tongues.

When understanding the fact that there is more than one purpose of tongues we can better grasp the truth in Paul's teaching to the Corinthian church.

Each category of tongues has its own set of rules. The rules are set forth in scripture so that all involved will be edified. You cannot take the rules from one category and apply them to another. Doing this causes misunderstanding and confusion. If tongues are not for today then much of the New Testament is not relevant for today. The good news is, God's Word is relevant and will be relevant until Jesus Christ returns for His church!

Many have asked why God would use something as weird as tongues. It came as God's judgment on Israel who would not listen to His prophets. So He spoke to them in another tongue--in a language they did not know (Isaiah 28:11-12). In 1 Corinthians 14, Paul explains this. That's why tongues are a sign to those who do not believe. The interpretation of tongues is for believers--those who receive the message.