

APPENDIX 1

TWELVE REASONS WHY BIBLICAL TONGUES WERE REAL LANGUAGES

1. The term “tongue” is often used in the New Testament describing real languages (Revelation 5:9; 7:9; 10:11; 11:9; 13:7; 14:6; 17:15).
2. The adjective “new” is most appropriate for describing real languages (Mark 16:17).

Tongues were the God-given ability to speak in a language that was totally new to the speaker (i.e., a foreign language). How could ecstatic utterances be thought of as being “new”?

3. Speaking in tongues was a supernatural, God-given ability (Mark 16:17-18; Acts 2:4) which is reasonable only if tongues were real languages.

As John Walvoord observes, “Any view which denies that speaking in tongues used actual languages

is difficult to harmonize with the scriptural concept of a spiritual gift. By its nature, a spiritual gift had reality, and being supernatural, needs no naturalistic explanation.”²²

Bellshaw adds this comment: “If these tongues are ecstatic utterances, they could be duplicated fraudulently. Gibberish can be uttered by anyone, and a second person could feign interpretation of that unintelligible vocalization. Therefore, it is reasonable that this gift would consist of the ability to speak in a foreign language without the opportunity to learn that language by ordinary means.”²³

4. The adjective “other” is most appropriate for describing real languages (Acts 2:4; 1 Corinthians 14:21; Isaiah 28:11).

These are languages *other* than and *different* from the person’s native tongue (i.e., foreign languages). In what sense could ecstatic utterances be considered “different”?

5. The tongues of Acts 2:4,11 are clearly identified in Acts 2:6,8 as real languages (dialects).
6. The tongues in the book of Acts were not meaningless utterances, but they were means of conveying a meaningful message (Acts 2:11; 10:46). Likewise the tongues in 1 Corinthians communicated meaningful content.

In Acts:

Acts 2:4—"the great things of God"

Acts 10:46—"magnifying God (proclaiming God's greatness)"

Thus, tongues in Acts involved meaningful doctrinal content, not meaningless and empty gibberish.

In 1 Corinthians:

1 Corinthians 14:14-15—A prayer to God

1 Corinthians 14:15—A song of praise

1 Corinthians 14:16—The giving of thanks

7. The expression "kinds of tongues" is understandable only if tongues were real languages (1 Corinthians 12:10,28; cf. 1 Corinthians 14:10).

Any linguist knows that the three thousand languages of the world are *grouped* into many classes or kinds. But could it be said that there are *kinds of ecstatic utterances*?

8. The fact that tongues could be *interpreted* demands that tongues be real languages (1 Corinthians 12:10,30; 14:5,13,27-28).

Interpretation necessitates meaning! Meaningless utterances cannot be interpreted. How can one give meaning to something that has no meaning? How can one give sense to nonsense?

9. 1 Corinthians 14:10-11 is clearly depicting real languages.
10. Tongues-speaking is said to consist of *words*, which would be possible only if tongues were real languages (1 Corinthians 14:9,19).
11. The tongues mentioned in Isaiah 28:11 (cited by Paul in 1 Corinthians 14:21) were real languages.
12. The article of previous reference in 1 Corinthians 14:22 proves that the Corinthian tongues (verse 22) were the very same thing as the Isaiah tongues (verse 21), namely, real languages (see discussion, page 93).

CONCLUSION

“These twelve arguments, taken together, demonstrate conclusively that all of the New Testament references to the gift of tongues concern the same phenomenon. In every case it was the miraculous ability to speak in an unlearned foreign language.”²⁴