

Pentecost, Part IV
Tongues as a Sign in The Acts of the Apostles
Acts 10:24-11:1

The use of tongues in churches and as a “private prayer language” over the past century has become an explosive, and sometimes divisive issue, even schisming churches and causing entirely new denominations to form. But what are “tongues”, from a strictly Biblical perspective? Are they a kind of babel, or a private prayer utterance? What is their purpose, Biblically?

Acts 10:24-29 The gentile proselyte, Cornelius (Roman Centurion) has invited Peter to come and share a message from the Lord. This is a huge step for Peter and the other Jewish believers in Messiah! (You can read Acts 11:1-12 for more).

V30-33, Cornelius relates how the Spirit has supernaturally prepared him to receive the message of Peter.

V34-43- Peter's sermon to Cornelius and household.

V44- The key to it all: As Peter was obeying the Lord in preaching grace to these gentiles, the Holy Spirit was poured out on them!

- V45 Don't miss this: *in the presence of Jewish believers*.
- V46, Just like in *Acts 2:11, as a sign to the Jews*.
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V14, Peter, *taking his stand... with the eleven* (so Peter is the representatives for the truth of all the disciples as one body energized by the One Holy Spirit of truth.)

Acts 19:1-6 Christianity continued to expand to new gentile geographic regions and include more peoples and nations. The third and final example of tongues from the book of Acts occurred in the greco-roman city of Ephesus. Paul found some disciples who followed the teachings of John the Baptist. They didn't know about the Holy Spirit, so Paul informed them more fully, and taught them that John told people to believe in Jesus.

V6, Tongues and glorifying God *in the presence of Jewish believers*.

This is merely the third, and last time that tongues is mentioned in the book of The Acts of the Apostles! Thirty years of foundational church history recorded, and just three recordings of tongues.

There is no mention of tongues when the Holy Spirit came on converts in Samaria ([Acts 8:14-17](#)), when the Ethiopian eunuch was converted ([Acts 8:38](#)), when Saul, who became Paul, was converted ([Acts 9:17-18](#)), when he confronted a sorcerer ([Acts 13:8-11](#)) or when Paul first preached in Asia (verses 44-52).

See 1 Cor 14:22