

Why Should We Speak in Tongues?

Part 1

Introduction

"Why should we speak in tongues? It sounds like a lot of gibberish to me." When Tim Sheets asked God, "Why tongues?" The Lord replied that it is about the dominion mandate in Genesis 1:26. Isaiah 55:11 says, *So shall My Word be that goes forth out of My mouth; it shall not return void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.*

Speaking in tongues is governing intercession. Simply put, it is Spirit government language.

Opponents of speaking in tongues claim it was for another day; that it is sheer emotionalism, or worse, a tool of the devil. Enthusiasts, on the other hand, associate this gift with the baptism in the Holy Spirit, believing it releases the power and cleansing fire of the Holy Spirit and gives us the power to witness, evangelize, heal, perform miracles, and the ability to live a holy, joyful Christian life.

What does the Bible say about this subject? Speaking in tongues or praying in the Spirit, both terms for this gift, is mentioned many times in Scripture. No less an authority than the Apostle Paul, after criticizing the Corinthian Church for its abuses in this area, says "I would like everyone of you to speak in tongues," (1 Cor. 14:5) and "I thank God that I speak in tongues more than all of you" (14:18), and "So what shall I do? I will pray with my spirit, but I will also pray with my mind; I will sing with my spirit, but I will also sing with my mind" (14:15).

Nowhere does the Bible indicate that speaking in tongues is the least of the spiritual gifts, as some claim, or that it was only for a particular time.

Whether you are merely curious about speaking in tongues, whether you are seeking this gift, or whether you are a strong opponent, we invite you to study this important subject with us.

Our Study

How do we know if we've been baptized in the Holy Spirit? What is the initial evidence (first sign) that one has received the fullness of the Spirit?

The Scripture: Acts 1: 4, 5

"On one occasion...He (Jesus) gave them this command: 'Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift My Father promised, which you have heard Me speak about. For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.'"

Following His resurrection Jesus continued to meet with many of His followers, including the disciples and Mary, His mother.

1. What was His command to them? _____

2. What was the gift? _____

The Scripture: Acts 2: 1-2, 4

"When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting... All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them."

Pentecost is the Greek name for the Jewish feast, the Festival of Weeks. It occurred on the fiftieth day after Christ's resurrection.

3. What happened on the day of Pentecost? _____

The Scripture: Acts 2: 5-8

"Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard them speaking in his own language."

4. What amazed the crowd? _____

The Scripture: Acts 2:38, 39

"Peter [said], 'Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off - for all whom the Lord our God will call.'"

5. What would those who received Jesus Christ also receive? _____

6. Who else was the promise for? _____

This was the promise given by the prophet Joel many centuries before.

On the day of Pentecost 3,000 people accepted Peter's message and a few days later, an additional 5,000.

The baptism in the Holy Spirit, along with the speaking in tongues, was not just for those listening that day, but for future generations as well. If you are a Christian today, you fit into that category of those the Lord has called.

We believe the Lord wants His people to speak in tongues because it was the normal experience following (or accompanying) salvation in the Early Church.

While several other examples are given in Scripture, two are given explicitly.

The Scripture: Acts 10:44-48

"While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message. The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles. For they heard them speaking in tongues and praising God."

7. What happened while Peter was preaching? _____

8. What were the Gentile believers doing? _____

The Scripture: Acts 19:4-6

"Paul said, 'John's baptism was a baptism of repentance. He told the people to believe in the one coming after him that is, in Jesus. On hearing this, they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus. When Paul placed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied.'"

9. What did Paul call John's baptism? _____

10. What happened when Paul placed his hands on his listeners? _____

We have already indicated that the Bible shows that speaking in tongues is God's will for us. Why is this so?

It Helps Us to Pray In the Will of God

"Teach us to pray," the disciples asked Jesus. Evidently, not much learning had taken place over the next dozen or so years because Paul in writing to the Romans, confessed, *"We do not know what we ought to pray"* (Rom. 8:26).

Sometimes we can be self-centered, self-serving, and so self-motivated that we struggle to pray a totally selfless prayer. And even our best attempts to pray God's will miss the mark.

The Scripture: Romans 8:26

"We do not know what we ought to pray for."

11. What is Paul's confession? _____

The Scripture: Romans 8:26, 27

"The Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. And He who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will."

12. What is Paul's solution to this problem? _____

13. How is He able to do this? _____

14. How does He intercede for us? _____

By praying according to the will of God, the Holy Spirit brings us into harmony with that will.

It Brings Our Tongue Under Control

The Scripture: James 1:26

"If anyone considers himself religious and yet does not keep a tight rein on his tongue, he deceives himself and his religion is worthless."

15. What does James say about our tongue? _____

James teaches that the tongue is the control center of a person. When we offer our control center to the Holy Spirit, He begins to bring our conversation under Christ's control.

The Scripture: Ephesians 4:29

"Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful to building up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen."

16. What does good conversation do? _____

Speaking in tongues is a means of producing Christ's mind in us, so that we speak only those things that are useful to build up ourselves and our hearers. Speaking in tongues purifies and renews our mind, which is the source of our conversation and way of life.

It Allows Intimate Spiritual Communion with God

The Scripture: 1 Cor. 14:2

"For anyone who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God. Indeed, no one understands him, but he utters mysteries with his spirit."

17. Who does the person speaking in tongues speak to? _____

18. What does he do? _____

The primary purpose of this spiritual exercise is not that we speak to men, but rather that we speak to God. Communing with God in this manner, we are freed from the limitations and restrictions of our finite minds. We are not restricted to speaking only of those things which we have learned in our intellect. We are released to speak also of things which we are taught intuitively by the Spirit of God. We commune with God about deep things, which remain a mystery to our finite mind.

The Scripture: 1 Cor. 14:15

"So what shall I do? I will pray with my spirit, but I will also pray with my mind. I will sing with my spirit, but I will also sing with my mind."

19. What are Paul's instructions to us? _____

*Speaking in tongues allows us to draw from a well of life-giving power,
wisdom and knowledge that's already in our born-again spirit.*

– Andrew Womack

In the second part of this study, we will continue to look at the reasons why God wants us to speak in tongues.

The Answers

1. To wait for the gift His Father had promised
2. They would be baptized in the Holy Spirit.
3. A sound like the blowing of a violent wind filled the house. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.
4. They heard the disciples each speaking in his own language.
5. The gift of the Holy Spirit
6. Their children and for those who were far off, whom the Lord would call
7. The Holy Spirit came on all their listeners.
8. Speaking in tongues and praising God
9. Baptism of repentance
10. The Holy Spirit came on them; they spoke in tongues and prophesied.
11. They didn't know what they should pray for.
12. The Spirit Himself intercedes for the pray-er with groans that words cannot express.
13. He knows the mind of the Spirit.
14. In accordance with God's will
15. If we don't keep a tight rein on it, our religion is worthless.
16. Builds us up and benefits those who listen
17. To God
18. He utters mysteries with his spirit.
19. To pray and sing both in our native language and in our tongue.

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