

The Pentecostal phenomenon of "speaking in tongues" has created widespread controversy in the minds of many today. Seeing that millions of Christians claim to have had this experience, we must of necessity ask ourselves what is this? Can all these people be raving lunatics? Are they all simply making up a bunch of gibberish to satisfy their poor mentally defected minds? I personally like the example that Christ gave us when the disciples of John the Baptist came to ask Him if He was indeed the Christ or not, and Jesus simply replied by telling them to look around you at what I am doing and make your own judgment call. The deaf hear, the blind see, the lame walk, in essence we should understand the truth, that a good tree brings forth good fruit, and we should be very cautious of dismissing believers and churches that claim to have these same works manifesting in their midst, since they are only the works that Jesus said we would do. As with any issue, some are for it and some against it. The scripture tells us to study to show ourselves approved unto God and I applaud you for looking beyond tradition and into the Word of God for your answers.

You are not alone for many ask the question: What Is Speaking in Tongues?

And before we delve into this let me first emphasize that when you are seeking God you are not seeking tongues. Speaking in tongues is the biblically natural result of a person being born again of the spirit. You are not seeking tongues, you are however seeking to receive the promise of the father, the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and speaking in tongues confirms to you and all around you that you have received the baptism of the Spirit. There is another study in this series called Signs that God Didn't Choose and I encourage you to take the time and view this important study which deals with other signs that people consider to be the evidence of receiving the Spirit.

Some feel that speaking in tongues falls among the paranormal and is among the area of ghosts, goblins, reincarnation and the such. Experiences and beings that are impossible to document and out of the realm of the experiences of normal people.

In our studies of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit we will find the Bible teaches three principal ways in which tongues are manifested:

- 1) As the initial evidence of the Holy Spirit baptism
- 2) As one of the nine gifts of the Spirit in the church

3) And in a believer's personal devotion to God.

But because of time constraints and attention spans I don't want to deal with speaking in tongues as the evidence of receiving the Baptism of the Holy Spirit in this particular study just the question of what speaking in tongues is.

The tongue is many things:

In Psalms 45:1 - Its likened to the pen of a skillfull poet

In Proverbs 18:21 we are told the tongue can kill or nourish life

In Psalms 52:2 - Its likened to a sharp razor

Proverbs 15:4 We are told the tongue can crush the spirit

There are twisted tongues, gossiping tongues, lying tongues, deceiving tongues

And it is the tongue which God has chosen to show that a person is in voluntary submission to the spirit.

In Acts 2:4 we are told that they began to speak with other tongues as the spirit gave the utterance in the KJV.

And let me say this - some people have the impression that God moves upon them by the Spirit in such a way that they are taken over or even possessed and begin to speak in tongues in such a way that they have no control over what is happening.

Let me explain the best I can what really happens:

The Holy Spirit comes upon a person and gives them the utterance, or the ability to speak with tongues. It can be a very powerful and emotional experience, or it can be subdued, but the believer has to respond to what the Holy Spirit is doing within, and they respond by opening their mouths and speaking the unknown words that the Spirit gives them to speak.

By beginning to speak in tongues it becomes an acknowledgement between the flesh and the spirit, between the person and the spirit of God that they are ready to be filled with the Spirit and God then fills that person with the power of his spirit.

Let me use this poor illustration for those of you that are computer literate. When you go to view this video file on the internet, your computer sends an acknowledgment through the TCP/IP protocol that a port is open and ready to

receive data and the server which holds this video file then begins to download the video to that open port and streams the data into the real player program for you to watch.

In a sense the infilling of the spirit is similar, God begins to move upon an individual, they begin to respond by feeling that utterance that God is giving them and they begin to speak and yield their tongue to the spirit and as they do something miraculous happens where the spirit of God begins to stream into a person and fills them with his spirit while they are speaking in tongues.

Tongues are also manifested in a believer's private life of prayer and worship. Tongues also serves as a means of communication between a person's spirit and God's Spirit. These tongues are not meant to be understood by men; therefore, they need no interpretation.

*In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express.*

ROMANS 8:26 (NIV)

In Jude 1:20 we are admonished to pray in the Holy Spirit

*But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit*

Jude 1:20 (NKJV)

How does one pray in the spirit? They open up that spiritual port and begin to let God pray through them in tongues and the spirit begins to intercede in groanings that cannot be uttered. The word groanings [Greek, *stenagmos*] means *too deep for words*, when you begin to pray in the Holy Spirit, a deepness can come upon you and it's too deep for your words to express and once again you begin to speak in tongues, not unto men, not as a sign, but unto God, as spirit communing with spirit, praying about things that your natural man is not aware of but as your spirit is made aware of by the Holy Spirit.

The Apostle Paul said it like this in the NLT

*<sup>14</sup>For if I pray in tongues, my spirit is praying, but I don't understand what I am saying. <sup>15</sup>Well then, what shall I do? I will do both. I will pray in the spirit, and I will pray in words I understand. I will sing in the spirit, and I will sing in words I understand.*

1 Cor 14:14-14 (NLT)

Paul talked about praying in tongues and not only did he pray in tongues but he sang in tongues! In the eyes of some Paul was a raving lunatic!

He related praying in tongues to praying in the spirit so you can make the connection there, if he was singing in the spirit he must have also been singing in tongues.

The Apostle Paul was what some call today a tongue talking Holy Roller, as a matter of fact he wrote in 1 Cor 14:18 *I thank God that I speak in tongues more than all of you.*

Some consider speaking in tongues not to be for us today yet the Apostle Paul wrote that we were to FORBID NOT TO SPEAK WITH TONGUES in the KJV. I would like to look at that text in the light of the translation of two more modern versions of the Bible, the Amplified Bible and the New Living Translation.

*So [to conclude], my brethren, earnestly desire and set your hearts on prophesying (on being inspired to preach and teach and to interpret God's will and purpose), and do not forbid or hinder speaking in [unknown] tongues.*

1 Cor 14:39 (AMP)

*Three things, then, to sum this up: When you speak forth God's truth, speak your heart out. Don't tell people how they should or shouldn't pray when they're praying in tongues that you don't understand.*

1 Cor 14:39 (NLT)

The Apostle Paul said don't hinder speaking in tongues and Don't tell people How they should or shouldn't pray when they're praying in tongues that you don't understand.

He did however give directions for loud public displays of speaking in tongues, but not for private or quiet devotions.

Its not bad for unbelievers to hear tongues.

We are told that Tongues are a sign not for believers but for unbelievers in 1 Cor 14:22

If you have never received the Baptism of the Holy Spirit evidenced by speaking in tongues as the spirit gives the utterance, God wants to give it to you.

A repentant heart and simple faith is all you need and the promise of the father can be yours.

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