
Subject: WHY EVERY BELIEVER Should speak with TONGUES

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WHY EVERY BELIEVER Should speak with TONGUES

"What is the value of speaking in tongues; to what extent, if any, will it enhance my spiritual life, empower my testimony and improve my ministry to the Lord's assembly?" These questions and others are not infrequently pondered by observers of what may be properly labelled "the spiritual phenomenon of the Twentieth Century"-- the great Pentecostal outpouring of the Holy Spirit. This spiritual movement, which began in earnest in the late 19TH Century and literally exploded in the early 20TH Century, has made phrases such as "baptism with or in the Holy Spirit" and "speaking with tongues" almost common parlance in the realm of theological discussion and has done much to awaken the sleeping masses to the reality, if not the validity, of that form of inspired utterance commonly called "tongues." (Acts 2:4 "And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.")

Frowned upon by churchmen as emotional gibberish and decried as the spontaneous outburst of individuals emotionally disturbed, it should come as no surprise that the practice of speaking in tongues has enlisted its fair share of enemies. Despite this opposition, however, conservative evangelicals have found it increasingly difficult to deny the reality of a practice that is thoroughly documented in Scripture, and have therefore chosen to reluctantly acknowledge the validity of speaking in tongues while carefully downplaying its value. Especially have they denounced the idea that speaking in tongues is for every Christian. I, for one, take exception to such a sour response and believe that when the pertinent Scriptures are examined with an unbiased heart, this cold toleration will change to a warm hearted approval of tongues as a form of spiritual utterance of immense value for every saint. So this humble tract is sent your way in the interest of the Truth, and with the sincere desire that, upon further examination, you yourself will join the happy throng who have come to realize in a personal way the reasons WHY EVERY BELIEVER SHOULD SPEAK WITH TONGUES.

A Telltale Token

"But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judaea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words: For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day. But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy..." (Acts 2:14-18).

It was Pentecost, 30 A.D., and Jerusalem buzzed with teeming throngs of the pious who

ascended to the "city of the Great King" to observe the pilgrimage Feast of Weeks. But this Pentecost was to be extraordinary; it was destined to be the day when a huddled band of one hundred and twenty Galileans, believers in the crucified but resurrected Jesus of Nazareth, were to become a "habitation of God by the Spirit" (Ephesians 2:22 "In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit."). The stage had been set by long days of prayer and supplication (Acts 1:14 "These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren."), days of expectation and hope, as the tiny band, unnoticed by the world, eagerly awaited the "promise of the Father" (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."). And then it happened. The sound of a forceful gust of wind filled the house where they were sitting, and they saw mysterious tongues as of fire distributed to each of them. In the awe of that moment, they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues.

As the rumor of what had happened spread, a curious but startled crowd gathered and, perplexed by the remarkable scene, enquired as to its significance? In response to their enquiry, the Apostle Peter announced with holy fervor and evident fire: "This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; and it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God. I will pour out of My Spirit upon all flesh..." (Acts 2:16, 17a). The Spirit had descended. The promise of the Father had arrived, heralding the dawn of a new epoch in the Divine economy. The church, predicted by Jesus (Matthew 16:18 "And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."), was birthed in the glory of a moment cloaked in power. And significantly, God had chosen to announce the arrival of His Spirit with the telltale token of tongues.

It was, in fact, this supernatural utterance in languages unlearned by the speakers that prompted Peter as the apostolic spokesman to announce the arrival of the Holy Spirit in partial fulfillment of Joel's prediction (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.>").

"... This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel," replied Peter to the unenlightened charge that these men were "full of new wine." By so doing, this leading apostle underscored the evidential value of tongues as betokening the indisputable arrival of the Holy Spirit in the lives of these New Testament believers. Similarly, at a later period, he, along with some fellow Jewish believers accepted an eruption of tongues at Cornelius' household as conclusive proof that the Holy Spirit had fallen upon that band of Gentile believers:

"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?" (Acts 10:44-47)

The key phrase in the above quotation is "For they heard them speak with tongues." The phenomenon of tongues, which characterized the initial outpouring of the Spirit in the Jerusalem upper room, was what convinced those of the circumcision (Jewish believers who were zealous for the law and therefore leery of Gentile inclusion) that these Gentiles had genuinely received the Holy Spirit. In a later rehearsal of the Cornelius episode to brethren in Jerusalem, Peter seems to establish an experiential link between the tongues of the Jerusalem outpouring and the Holy Spirit's work in Caesarea by recounting: "And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning." (Acts 11:15) (The Greek particle in this context means "just as," "even as"; it augments the force of the simple, thus emphasizing a commonality of experience between the initial Jerusalem outpouring and the work of the Spirit here in Caesarea.) Clearly, speaking in tongues is beginning to emerge, just as Jesus predicted (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;"), as a sign following believers; and, as Peter plainly implies, as a supernatural display evidencing the reception of the Holy Spirit (cf. Acts 2:4 "And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance"; Acts 11:15,16 "And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning. Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost."; 19:1-6 "And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples, He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism. Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied."). This is reason number one why every believer should speak with tongues: it is the initial evidence of one's reception of the Holy Spirit. Nor should we expect to walk in the pathway of apostolic Christianity apart from this apostolic experience!

It is precisely at this point, however, that Satan beguiles the unlearned who are unaccustomed to making those subtle distinctions so essential to proper Biblical interpretation. For how many of these believers have rejected the insistence that all Christians should speak with tongues as the initial evidence of the Holy Spirit's arrival with an appeal to Paul's question in 1 Corinthians 12:30: "...do all speak with tongues?", thereby concluding that universal tongue-speaking for Christians is utterly out of the question? But does such an appeal actually prove their point? On the surface it might seem so, but a careful reading of 1 Corinthians 12-14, and indeed of all New Testament references to speaking in tongues, will point us to a consideration that they have over-looked-- and one that is absolutely vital to the discussion. It is simply this: The New Testament uses the phrase "speaking in or with tongues" in a fluid manner, sometimes denoting the inspired utterance

in a language unknown to the speaker which signals the reception of the Holy Spirit, and at other times the charismatic gift of tongues whereby God seeks, in conjunction with the companion gift of interpretation, to communicate a message to His people. It is the all important context which determines which particular form is under review. In 1 Corinthians 12:28-30 "And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities {kinds} of tongues.

Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles? Have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret?â€•, for example, the context clearly reveals that it is the gift of tongues that is under consideration, not the sign of tongues which every believer can, and indeed should, express as a means of prayer and communion. Failure to make this distinction inevitably results in a confounding of things that differ, the obvious error of those who attempt to make a sweeping application of the form-specific reference in 1 Corinthians 12:30. Such an attempt thus reflects an over simplistic view of the phrase "speaking with tongues," which, as a fluid expression, may refer to more than one form of tongues-speech.

To illustrate this point, let us examine for a moment the experience of the church in Jerusalem. This assembly initially consisted of 120 men and women who received a powerful baptism with the Holy Spirit, and who each spoke with tongues as the sign or evidence that they had received the Spirit's in filling (Acts 2:4 "And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.â€•). And yet, there is no Biblical evidence that this entire company possessed the charismatic gift of tongues which is generally used to communicate a message from God to His people and is to be accompanied by an interpretation in the native language of the Christian assembly. Paul could have addressed these believers in Jerusalem as he did the church at Corinth, "Do all speak with tongues [as the charismatic gift to communicate a message]?" and fully expected his rhetorical question to be answered with an inward "no" by the congregation, although each member prayed in tongues in his or her private devotional life.

To further illustrate this distinction, permit me to appeal to my personal experience as a pastor. The congregation (the adult element) I currently pastor consists of a company of tongue-talking believers (those who are baptized members), and yet perhaps no more than one of them presently has the charismatic gift to deliver divine messages to the congregation in tongues! Do they all speak with tongues? Certainly not in the sense of the gift of tongues; no, no more than the Corinthians did. But if you mean "do they all pray in tongues as a sign of the Spirit's presence in their lives?" The happy answer is a resounding yes! And my dear friend, so should you! So the appeal to 1 Corinthians 12:30 in objection to universal tongues-speaking for believers does not prove what the detractors would hope; it is simply a classic instance of confounding things that differ-all in an attempt to discredit a Pentecostal emphasis.

A Source of Spiritual Edification

A second reason why every believer should speak with tongues involves the immense spiritual up

building that is the direct result of "praying in the Spirit." Jude is no doubt referring to the edificational value of tongues when he writes: " But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith praying in the Holy Ghost" (Jude 20).

Of course, there may be those who respond negatively to an identification of "praying in the Holy Ghost" with prayer in tongues, but those who are privileged to pray in this manner recognize that when they lift their voices in a language supernaturally inspired by the Holy Spirit they are, in the purest sense, "praying in the Holy Ghost." This is readily apparent when one reflects on the fact that the individual who is praying in tongues is giving expression to words that originate independently of his own finite understanding (1 Corinthians 14:14 "For if I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful."), words which articulate, as humanly formulated ones seldom do, the very mind of the Spirit (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."). Such an individual has been admitted into a special prayer channel, through which "mysteries in the Spirit" (1 Corinthians 14:2 William's Translation: "by the Spirit he is speaking secret truths") leave lips of clay and are borne heavenward. Is not such prayer, which expresses the "mind of the Spirit" and conveys "mysteries in the Spirit," the most undeniable and unadulterated form of "praying in the Holy Spirit"?

Jude 20 indicates that such prayer is a spiritual boon to the believer. I can attest from personal experience (over twenty years of praying in tongues) that "praying in the Spirit" is an invaluable means of fortifying one's faith, replenishing spiritual energies, and refreshing the weary soul. It is Divinely directed prayer in a spiritual dimension that makes a decided difference in one's over-all development in discipleship.

A Means of Rest and Spiritual Refreshment

Speaking in tongues as the Spirit gives utterance is also the source of spiritual refreshment to which the prophet Isaiah refers when he writes: "For with stammering lips and another tongue will he speak to this people. To whom he said, This is the rest ["this is the rest, quietness"] wherewith ye may cause the weary to rest; and this is the refreshing: yet they would not hear" (Isaiah 28:11,12). It is to this prophecy that the apostle Paul refers in 1 Corinthians 14:21 as he writes, "In the law it is written, with men of other tongues and other lips will I speak unto this people; and yet for all that will they not hear me, saith the Lord." It is as if the Lord were saying, "As an irrefutable sign, I will speak supernaturally in an unfamiliar language to a disobedient and gainsaying people, in an attempt to rouse them from their unbelief and usher them into My glorious rest." Has not God been doing just that through what is popularly and derisively known as the "Tongues Movement"? Is not the very Lord who invited the heavy laden to find rest beneath His easy yoke (Matt. 11:28-30 "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest

unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.â€•), beckoning to this end-time generation, beset with information overload, dazed by the daily buzz of business, and ruffled with the hustle and bustle of religious activism, to come apart for a while and find invigorating and refreshing rest in the place of Spirit-inspired prayer? Could it be that some, despite the obvious length to which the Lord has gone, will not hear Him--opting instead to run the Christian course without the promised rest and finding themselves, in the end, "wearied and faint in their minds" (Hebrews 12:3 â€œFor consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.â€•)? How shall we escape the besetting burdens of age-end difficulties (2 Timothy 3:1 â€œThis know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come.â€•), the strain of increasing satanic opposition (1 Peter 5:8,9 â€œBe sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.â€•), and the widespread spiritual lethargy (Matthew 24:12 â€œAnd because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.â€•) of the last days if we brush aside this "rest wherewith ye may cause the weary to rest"?

Without it, a believer's experience will lack the apostolic luster, the deep seated tranquility and the calm repose of the one who said, "I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than ye all:" (1 Corinthians 14:18).

Fail-Proof Intercession

"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" (Rom. 8:26, 27).

Ah, and now we come to a vital and very practical reason why every believer should treasure the ability to pray supernaturally in the Spirit. According to Romans 8:26 â€œLikewise 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.â€•, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts (Galatians 4:6,7 â€œAnd because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.â€•) to assist us in the monumental task of prayer. The Greek word used to depict the Spirit's help in this regard which, according to Thayer's Lexicon means "to take hold with another," thus implying that unaided human weakness is woefully inadequate when it comes to the vital issues of for what and how we ought to pray.

Who is the man or woman who cannot relate to the limitations of the finite human intellect when seeking to formulate prayers in accordance with God's will (1 John. 5:4 â€œFor whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our

faith.â€•) and in a manner that is acceptable in His sight? Just consider for a moment the numerous questions associated with the question of effective intercession. For whom shall I pray--especially in a sin-cursed world wherein myriads are in dire need of Divine intervention? For what should I pray, since the basic need(s) of needy men is (are) often shrouded in circumstances that are but symptomatic (Mark 2:5 â€œWhen Jesus saw their faith, he said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee.â€•)? In what manner and to what extent should I pray--should I pray at length against stubborn demonic strongholds (Daniel 9:3 â€œAnd I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes:â€•) or briefly in ejaculatory {brief utterance} faith (Mark 11:24 â€œTherefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.â€•)? Should I fast while I pray? The crucial answers to these questions are provided when we learn to rely upon the Spirit's assistance in the matter of prayer.

With the Spirit's indwelling presence, we will be prompted to pray, given utterance (Acts 2:4 â€œAnd they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.â€•) that adequately expresses the mind of God concerning the matter about which we are praying (Romans 8:27 â€œAnd 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.â€•), and moved to sigh and groan with heart-felt emotion appropriate to the eternal issues that engage us in intercession. Who is sufficient for these things (2 Corinthians 2:16 â€œTo the one we are the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life. And who is sufficient for these things?â€•)? None but the competent Holy Ghost, Who maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God, thus insuring that all things work together for our good and His ultimate glory (Romans 8:27,28 â€œAnd 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. And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.â€•).

Conclusion

In the foregoing paragraphs we have sought to examine the sign significance, edificational value, tranquilizing and helpful nature of speaking with tongues. Now it is time for you to make a decision. As a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, are you convinced that this outflow of tongues, occasioned by the reception of a personal Pentecost (Acts 2:4 â€œAnd they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.â€•), is of sufficient value to be a dynamic part of your Christian experience? Do you believe that your faith would be fortified, your spirituality furthered, and your testimony enhanced by praying in the Holy Spirit (Jude 20 â€œBut ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost,â€•)? If you answer these questions in the affirmative, there would seem to be but one recourse for you--Receive ye the Holy Spirit with the initial evidence of praying in tongues! Then you will be able to pray as Peter, James, John, Paul and a host of other New Testament worthies prayed. And if we will purify ourselves as they purified themselves (2 Corinthians 7:1

Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. (1 Jn. 3:3 And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.), and labor for the souls of men as they did labor (1 Corinthians 15:10 But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.), we will not be far from the heartbeat of apostolic practice (Acts 2:42 And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers).

If your interest is sufficient to join me in prayer, please do so now: "Dear Heavenly Father, as a believer on your Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, I am convinced of the value of praying supernaturally in other tongues. But Father, I recognize that such a blessed capability is the result of receiving, as did the early disciples on the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit. In Jesus Name I ask for the Holy Spirit now. I believe that He is in me now and begins to give me utterance in new tongues. In an act of childlike faith, with perfect confidence in your promise [Luke 11:13 If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?], I begin to lift up the sound of my voice, not in any language you know, but in the new language [Mk. 16:17 And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues;] which you have given me." At this point you should lift up your voice, expecting the Holy Spirit to form the words and syllables as you supply the sound of your voice. The Holy Spirit, unlike unclean spirits, will not forcibly usurp control of your vocal apparatus, moving your tongue, lips and jaw against your will. As you begin to speak by faith, determined not to utter a word in any language you know (since one cannot speak two languages simultaneously), the Holy Spirit will graciously begin to mould and shape the sound of your voice into the syllables and words of His choosing. As you act your faith, the assurance and manifold blessings of prayer in the Spirit will assuredly follow. (Mark 11:24 Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.; John 14:14 If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it.; 1 John 5:14,15 And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him).

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