

KEY QUESTIONS

What does the **BIBLE** say about **TONGUES**?

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The first mention of speaking in “tongues” in the New Testament is recorded in the second chapter of Acts, fifty days after Jesus had returned into heaven. As the disciples and other believers were gathered together in an upper room, the Holy Spirit —whom Jesus had promised He would send—came in a powerful way. There were four signs of the **Spirit’s coming on that day**:

The first sign of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit was the sound “**as of a mighty rushing wind**” (verse 2). *Is this what happens in our churches today?*

The second sign was the appearance of “**cloven tongues like as of fire**” which “sat upon each of them” (v. 3). *Is this what happens in our churches today?*

The third sign was that “they were **all filled** with the Holy Ghost, and began **to speak with other tongues**, as the Spirit gave them utterance” (v. 4). Now, the Greek word here translated “tongues” is *glossa*, which **always** means known languages, **never** just **unintelligible** sounds. *Is this what happens in our churches today?*

The fourth sign of the Holy Spirit’s outpouring was that when “the multitude came together,” **every person** who heard the 120 Spirit-filled believers speaking **heard in his own language**. God wanted the Gospel message to be understood by **all** the people from the many different countries assembled in Jerusalem on that Pentecost. *Is this what happens in our churches today?*

Consider another portion of Scripture which deals with speaking in **tongues** and **other gifts of the Spirit**. Chapter 12 of *I Corinthians* **states**: “Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit” (v. 4). Verses 5-10 go on to say that spiritual gifts given to **various** people are **not always the same**, but include the word of wisdom, the word of knowledge, faith, healing, miracles, prophecy, discernment, tongues, and interpretation of tongues.

Verses 11-27 explain that God gives **different** gifts to **different** persons, as He chooses. “And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments [administration of ministries], diversities of tongues. *Is “tongues” first or last in this list? Do you think that “tongues” is more important than helps or healings or teachers?*

“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?” *What is the implied answer to all of these? It is No!*

Then, chapter 12 concludes with this encouragement from Paul in verse 21: “**But covet earnestly the best gifts....**” *Are “tongues” the best gift? Are they at the first or the last of the list of gifts?*

Paul continues, “And yet I show you a more excellent way.” *What is the more excellent way than speaking in tongues?* That more excellent way is the sacrificial love which is a **much greater gift than tongues**. “Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity [the Greek word is *agape* --“the selfless love which comes from God”] I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.”

This **sacrificial love** is far more enduring than tongues. *Does your church teach this?* “**Charity never faileth**: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall pass away” (v. 8). “Now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the **greatest of these is charity [agape, sacrificial love]**” (v. 13).

Is tongues one of the three greatest gifts? What does your church emphasize? See above.

Consider honestly and prayerfully:

(1) Should we follow after or seek to speak in tongues or should we “follow after Charity... (Love)...” as it says in *I Corinthians 14:1*?

(2) Which is more important, speaking in tongues or in understandable speech? Paul himself said in *I Corinthians 14:19*, “Yet in the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue.”

Another point to consider: What percentage of those who “speak in tongues” during a service are women? Was Paul, in *I Cor. 14:34*, cautioning against the more delightful emotional tendencies God has given women in general when he said “Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted for them to speak...”? Also, Barnabas explains that Paul was specifically warning against a **special group of trouble making women** who were harassing missionaries, and that Paul was definitely **not** condemning women in general.

Something else to think about:

If “tongues” were a gift that all believers *must* have and speaking in tongues, the primary evidence of a full salvation experience, would it not be stressed in *every* epistle? Yet *Romans* stresses salvation; *Galatians*, the fruit of the Spirit; *Ephesians*, grace; *Philippians*, joy; *Colossians*, Christ in us; *Thessalonians*, holy living; *Timothy*, doctrine, etc. **Not one** of these letters even mentions “tongues”!

Because so-called “tongues” can be **easily falsified**, we each need to be careful that it is our *lives* which “speak” and tell others of the life-changing power of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

DO YOU KNOW GOD?

How can you know *God personally*? Every person’s sinful, selfish rebelliousness separates him or her from God. Therefore it is vitally important that each of us must be sorry for our wrongdoing, ask Jesus to forgive us, and to believe that He does!

Consider the following verses that show how each of us comes to know God:

- “All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.” *Romans 3:23* “But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags....” *Isaiah 64:6*

- “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” *I John 1:9* “If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.” *Romans 10:9-10*

- “For God so loved the world, that He gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved.” *John 3:16-17*

Do you know to “believe **on Jesus**” means to **admit that Jesus is God, and to put your trust totally in Him**? *Acts 16:31* assures us: “**Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved....**”

WHAT YOU DO:

- Agree with God about your wrongdoing and that you need to change. *I John 1:9*
- Believe that Jesus Christ is your Lord and risen Saviour. *Romans 10:9*
- Receive Jesus Christ into your life. *John 1:12*

All of this you do on the authority of God’s Word—the Bible. YOU do these things because you take God at His Word.

WHAT GOD DOES:

- Jesus Christ becomes your personal Saviour and Lord. *John 3:16*
- Jesus Christ forgives your sins as He said He would in His Word. *I John 1:9*
- You are now His child. *John 1:12*
- You are now a new person. *II Cor. 5:17*
- You now have the Holy Spirit in-dwelling or living inside you. *John 14:16-17*
- You now have eternal life. *I John 5:12*

All of this God does for you because you take Him at His word! You believe God means what He said!

WHAT YOU DO AS A FOLLOWER OF JESUS:

1. Read the Bible daily. *Acts 20:32, I Tim. 2:15*
2. Talk to God (pray) every day. *Heb. 4:16, John 16:24*
3. Obey the Bible’s teaching. *John 14:23*
4. Tell others about Jesus. *Romans 10:9*