

“What about Speaking with Other Tongues?”

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Answers to the most common questions about speaking with other tongues

1. What is “speaking in tongues”?

“Speaking in tongues” is the ability to speak in unlearned languages through the divine unction of the Holy Spirit.

2. Did speaking in tongues occur in the Old Testament?

No. Speaking in tongues is unique to the New Testament age.

3. Did Jesus speak in tongues?

There is no biblical record that Jesus spoke with tongues. However, we do know that He foretold the coming of this gift in Mark 16:17 *“And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues...”*

4. When was the first record of speaking with other tongues?

a. On the Day of Pentecost, shortly after Jesus’ ascension.

b. Acts 2:1-4 (NKJV) *“When the Day of Pentecost had fully come...there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.”*

5. What did speaking in tongues signify?

a. The *Promise of the Father*, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon all flesh as prophesied by the prophet Joel.

b. Acts 2:16-17 (NKJV) *“But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, that I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh...”*

6. Some people say that those in the upper room really didn’t speak in other languages, but that the crowd only *heard* them speak in their own languages. Is this a possible interpretation?

a. No. Acts 2:3 states that the divided tongues as of fire rested upon the disciples, not the crowd.

b. No. Acts 2:4 states that *“they began to **speak** in other tongues, as the Spirit gave them **utterance**.”*

c. No. Acts 2:17 associates the outpouring of the Holy Spirit with divine utterance, not divine hearing.

d. No. Why would the crowd assume the disciples were filled with new wine if it were they themselves who were experiencing a strange hearing phenomenon? (Acts 2:13)

7. Wasn’t speaking in tongues given on the Day of Pentecost in order for the people to hear the Gospel in their own language?

- a. No. The crowd that gathered did not hear the Gospel presented in this manifestation of speaking with other tongues. Acts 2:11 states that the people simply heard *“them speaking in our tongues the **wonderful works of God.**”* In other words, the disciples were praising and worshipping God in these new tongues.
- b. No. Speaking in tongues was simply a *sign* that caused the people to ask the question, *“Whatever could this mean?”* (Acts 2:12)
- c. No. The people responded to this phenomenon of speaking in tongues not in faith, but in skepticism: *“They are full of new wine.”* (Acts 2:13)
- d. The crowd did not hear the Gospel until Peter stood up to explain the meaning of this new phenomenon of speaking in tongues (Acts 2:14-41).

8. Isn't speaking in tongues limited to the early church era?

No. Peter told the crowd in Acts 2:38-39 (NKJV), *“Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you (1st generation), and to your children (2nd generation), and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call (until the last generation).”*

9. Were there other times where speaking in tongues took place besides on the Day of Pentecost?

- a. Yes, in Caesarea as Peter preached to Cornelius' household. Acts 10:44-46 (NKJV) states, *“While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard the word. And those of the circumcision who believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also. For they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God.”*
- b. Yes, in Ephesus. Acts 19:6 (NKJV) states, *“And when Paul had laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied.”*
- c. Yes, in Corinth (See 1 Corinthians 12-14)
- d. Yes, in Paul's life (See 1 Corinthians 14:18)

10. Some people teach that tongues ceased after the twelve apostles died or after the Bible was completed. Doesn't the Bible say that tongues will cease?

Yes, but not as some have proposed. 1 Corinthians 13:8-12 tells us that tongues will one day cease, along with prophecy and knowledge. The reason: *“For we know in part and we prophesy in part.”* Spiritual gifts are given to compensate for our imperfect understanding and insight into the things of God. How long will we need tongues, prophecy, and knowledge? We will need them until “that which is perfect” comes: *“But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away.”* The context reveals that this “perfect” refers to the time when we see Jesus face to face: *“For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then (i.e. when that which is perfect is come) face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known.”* Yes, tongues will one day cease—when we see Him with unveiled face. At that time we will no longer see in part and prophesy in part. Our understanding and comprehension will then be open and complete. Paul's point in 1 Corinthians 13 is that spiritual gifts will one day no longer be needed and will therefore cease. The abiding virtues of faith, hope,

and love will endure beyond this age and therefore should guide the exercise of any Christian gifts or service.

- 11. I know many people who are offended by speaking in tongues. Why is this?**
- Usually this is because of all the gifts, tongues is the least *rationally* understood. Tongues by its very nature can offend the minds of intellectual people who see no logical explanation to this unusual display. Rational attempts to explain its occurrence often include descriptions such as “psychotic,” “demonic,” “immature gibberish,” “crazy,” and “false.”
 - Sometimes people are offended due to experiences with people who have blatantly abused or overemphasized the gift.
 - Some people are offended because of the persons used in its manifestation.
 - Some are offended because of doctrinal beliefs or biases that oppose its use.
 - Many people are offended simply because they are ignorant of the Scriptures regarding tongues.

- 12. If speaking in other tongues does offend, why did God choose speaking in other tongues to usher in the outpouring of the Holy Spirit? Couldn't He have chosen a better, less offensive gift?**

We must understand that there are two types of offense. The first type of offense happens when we violate another person's legitimate rights or trust. The second type of offense comes when we fail to live up to another person's “preconceived” ideas or “expectations” of who we are or how we are to behave. Our actions then become offenses, or “stumbling blocks.” The cross of Jesus was God's gift to sinful humanity, but some were offended by the concept of a bloody, crucified Messiah. Thus they were offended by Him and rejected Him. As a result, His cross became a stumbling block (1 Corinthians 1:23). The cross of Jesus therefore serves as a “sifter” between those who would rely upon their own works and wisdom versus those who would receive by faith the “foolish” message of the cross. So it is with tongues. 1 Corinthians 14:21-22 says, *“In the law it is written: ‘With men of other tongues and other lips I will speak to this people; and yet, for all that, they will not hear Me,’ says the Lord. Therefore tongues are for a sign, not to those who believe but to unbelievers; but prophesying is not for unbelievers, but for those who believe.”* By rejecting the *sign* of tongues, we reject through unbelief the Holy Spirit who gives it. Thus the sign of tongues serves as a stumbling block into receiving the Spirit's wisdom and power. Speaking in other tongues often serves as a “sifter” between those who would rely upon their own mind and power and those who would rely upon the mind and power of the Holy Spirit.

- 13. Is speaking in tongues a manifestation of real languages or is it simply unintelligible gibberish?**

- Speaking in other tongues is a supernatural manifestation of real and different languages in the lives of those who have not learned them. Consider Acts 2:7-8 (NKJV) *“They they were all amazed and marveled, saying to one another, ‘Look, are not all these who speak Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each in our own language in which we were born?’”*
- Speaking in tongues can involve the use of real human or angelic languages. 1 Corinthians 13:1 states, *“Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels.”*

- c. There are literally thousands of human languages and dialects in this world. It has been asserted that even the most accomplished linguist can only be familiar in his retention of up to one hundred languages. This leaves thousands that he or she would be unfamiliar with. Languages vary from simple to complex and from guttural to nasal. Some languages seem strange and unintelligible. Simply stated, language is a tool for communication between a speaker and a listener. As long as the speaker and the listener understand one other, communication has taken place and thus language exists.
- d. In addition to human languages, Paul mentions *angelic* languages. Whether or not believers can speak in the languages of angels is not known. Who can possibly know what angelic languages sound like?
- e. 1 Corinthians 14:10 states, *“There are, it may be, so many kinds of languages in the world, and none of them is without significance (i.e. “meaning”).*
- f. Even as a baby begins to exercise human speech in simple and childlike ways in the early stages of learning, so it seems possible that the same could be true as people first begin to exercise speaking in tongues due to different levels of faith. As the believer’s faith develops and skepticism erodes, liberty and fluency often increases proportionately.
- g. Testimonies often come where messages in tongues are given in the language of people from other countries, thus verifying that the tongues given were genuine languages.
- h. Ultimately, speaking in other tongues is a *spiritual* language of communication between the believer and God: *“For he who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God, for no one understands him; however, in the spirit he speaks mysteries.”* (1 Corinthians 14:2) In this regard, it matters not whether any other human understands the language as long as communication between God and man is taking place.

14. I have heard that there are non-Christian religions that practice something similar to tongues. Is it possible for non-Christians and even pagans to speak in tongues?

- a. Yes. Satan is a counterfeiter, a deceiver. There are reports that “speaking in tongues” has occurred among pagan tribal rituals and some cults. However, so do healings and other miracles. This should not surprise us. Scripture is clear that we should be aware of the counterfeit. Consider the following scriptures:
 - 1) Exodus 7-8 Pharaoh’s magicians produced counterfeit miracles in to match those of Moses’ rod turning into a serpent, turning the water into blood, and the plague of frogs. Yet this did not discount the legitimacy of God’s supernatural signs.
 - 2) Matthew 24:24 (NKJV) *“For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect.”*
 - 3) 2 Thessalonians 2:9-10 (NKJV) *“The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan with all power, signs, and lying wonders, and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved.”*
- b. Clearly the Bible teaches us that speaking in tongues is a legitimate manifestation of the Holy Spirit. Therefore we are responsible to test the spirits

and embrace the true while rejecting the false. (1 Thessalonians 5:21; 1 John 4:1)

15. How can I be sure that I receive the true tongues rather than the false?

- a. The Holy Spirit and His gifts belong to those who are saved (Acts 2:38-39). Make sure that you have made Jesus your Lord and Savior prior to asking the Father for spiritual things. In John 14:6 (NKJV) Jesus stated, *“I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.”* Attempting to be involved in spiritual things apart from Jesus Christ will lead to deception and contact with evil spirits.
- b. When you ask for any spiritual promise, believe that you will receive exactly what you ask God for and not a substitute. Luke 11:11-13 states, *“If a son asks for bread from any father among you, will he give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent instead of a fish? Or if he asks for an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!”* In other words, if you sincerely ask God for manifestations of the Holy Spirit, He will not give you a false (stone, serpent, scorpion) manifestation. He is a good heavenly Father who will give His children the good gifts He has promised and they desire!

16. Is tongues the initial evidence of being “Baptized with the Holy Spirit”?

Many Pentecostals believe and teach that speaking in tongues is the only sure evidence of receiving the Baptism with the Holy Spirit. While speaking in tongues is definitely *one* evidence of the Baptism with the Holy Spirit, the Bible is not dogmatic that it is the *only* initial evidence. There is no airtight case on this issue. Therefore it is best not to be dogmatic. What did Jesus say believers should expect upon receiving the Baptism with the Holy Spirit? Jesus never said, “You shall receive tongues after that the Holy Spirit has come upon you.” Rather, He said you shall receive *power* when the Holy Spirit comes upon you (Acts 1:8). The purest evidence of the Baptism with the Holy Spirit is supernatural power and ability to witness for Jesus Christ with confirming signs and wonders following. This includes the operation of what we call “Spiritual Gifts” or “Spiritual Manifestations.” Although there is not an airtight case to say that tongues will *always* accompany the Baptism with the Holy Spirit, there does seem to be a *precedent* in Scripture that leads us to expect that tongues would be the normal experience and should be expected as the initial evidence. Based on Scripture, it seems foolish that we would be opposed to it.

Consider the following references:

- a. Acts 2:4 (NKJV) *“And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.”*
- b. Acts 10:44-46 (NKJV) *“While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon those who heard the word...they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God.”*
- c. Acts 19:6 (NKJV) *“And when Paul had laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied.”*

Two references in Acts do not specifically say that tongues accompanied the Baptism with the Holy Spirit, but they seem to infer the evidence of tongues.

- a. Acts 8:17-18 (NKJV) *“Then they laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit. And when Simon saw that through the laying on of the apostle's hands the Holy Spirit was given...”* (What evidence or sign did Simon see if not tongues?)
- b. Acts 9:17 (NKJV) *“And Ananias went his way and entered the house; and laying his hands on him he said, ‘Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you came, has sent me that you may receive your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.’”*
- c. Later in 1 Corinthians 14:18 (NKJV) Paul declares, *“I thank my God that I speak with tongues more than you all.”* (When did he receive if not when Ananias laid hands on him?)

17. Is it right to ask God for tongues?

- a. Yes. 1 Corinthians 12:31 (NKJV) *“But earnestly desire the best gifts.”*
- b. Yes. 1 Corinthians 14:1 (NKJV) *“Pursue love and desire spiritual gifts...”*

18. Some say that speaking in tongues is the least of the gifts. Is this true?

No. The Bible never says that speaking in tongues is the least of the gifts. Sometimes this argument is used in order to demean the use of tongues for any reason or to make its use seem irrelevant. One argument used is based on the fact that speaking in other tongues is placed close to the end of the listings of spiritual gifts in 1 Corinthians 12:7-10. If this so-called rule is to be followed—that the last one listed is least of all—then this should hold true in 1 Corinthians 13:13 where love is listed last behind faith and hope. On the contrary, the last is the greatest...love! This is not to say that speaking with other tongues is the greatest gift. It does mean that any and every gift from God is precious and should be embraced because it is given from His love.

19. Some say that tongues are from the devil. Is this true?

Although it is okay to question, making these kinds of assertions is a very dangerous. The Scripture itself reveals that speaking with other tongues is a Scriptural manifestation of the Holy Spirit. Jesus said in Matthew 12:32 (NKJV) *“Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him, either in this age or in the age to come.”* To attribute the manifestation of the Holy Spirit in regard to speaking with other tongues to the devil is no different than when the Pharisees attributed Jesus' casting out of demons to the power of the devil. While it is true that some counterfeit tongues can be of the devil, it is not right to say that every instance of speaking in tongues is from the devil. We must test each occurrence of tongues by Scripture (1 Thessalonians 5:21-22; 1 John 4:1). Speaking with other tongues is holy and is to be honored when it is inspired by the Holy Spirit.

20. Doesn't the Bible say that the gift of prophecy is greater than the gift of tongues? If this is so, shouldn't we just seek the “greater” and leave the “lesser” alone?

- a. No. First the Scripture does say that prophecy is greater than tongues *“unless he interprets”* (1 Corinthians 14:5). In other words, when speaking with other tongues is followed by interpretation, it is equal to prophecy. Why? It is because the goal for any manifestation of the Spirit is the edification of the Body. A

message in an unknown tongue without interpretation would not be understood and would bring confusion rather than edification. Therefore prophecy is the more desirable gift when there is no interpreter.

- b. No. Although 1 Corinthians 13:13 states that love is greater than faith and hope, this does not negate the importance of faith and hope. They have their place. So it is with any one of the gifts, including tongues.

21. What is the “Gift of Tongues?”

- a. Actually there is some confusion about this due to a lack of proper understanding from the Greek, the language in which the New Testament was written. In reality the term “gift of tongues” does not appear in the Greek. When “gifts” are mentioned in the New Testament, they usually refer to those listed in Romans 12:3-8. These are sometimes referred to as “motivational gifts” and are graces given to us by God through which He makes His desires “our” desires. However a different word is used to describe the “gifts” in 1 Corinthians 12:7-10. That word is “*phanerosis*” which means “manifestation”. Therefore these “gifts” are not really gifts at all, but rather “manifestations” of the Holy Spirit working among and through the members of the church. No one possesses these manifestations in a way that could be said, “I have the gift of tongues!” No, rather they are spontaneous manifestations of the Spirit for the common good, flowing through whomever HE wills (1 Corinthians 12:11). With this understanding we realize that the Holy Spirit may use *anyone* in the church at *any time* He chooses for *any reason* He chooses with *any manifestation* He chooses.
- b. Speaking with other tongues is a manifestation of Holy Spirit inspired utterance in a tongue normally unknown by the hearers. A public message in tongues in the church setting is to be followed by Holy Spirit inspired interpretation of tongues so that the message can be understood.

22. If God desires to give us a message, who doesn’t He just tell us in our language instead of using tongues?

- a. God is sovereign. He has the right to use whatever manifestation He chooses whether or not we understand His reasons.
- b. Man’s unredeemed rational mind often keeps him from receiving revelation (in the sense of illumination) of God’s truth. Therefore God must overcome the limitations of our natural minds in order to reveal to us spiritual things (1 Corinthians 2:9-12). 1 Corinthians 2:14 (NKJV) states, “*But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.*”
- c. Speaking with other tongues allows us to “tap” into the mind of the Spirit—the spiritual source of supernatural revelation into the mysteries of God. 1 Corinthians 14:2 (NKJV) states, “*For he who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God, for no one understands him; however, in the spirit he speaks mysteries.*”
- d. Tongues are given by God as a sign. Jesus said that the sign of tongues would follow a believer (Mark 16:17). Paul said that tongues is given for a sign to the unbeliever (1 Corinthians 14:22). What is the purpose of this sign? Paul says that it is a sign that God is speaking sovereignly to them (1 Corinthians 14:21). Unfortunately those who are stubborn in heart are unwilling to hear (1

Corinthians 14:21) making tongues a sign of their hardness of heart to receive from the Spirit over their own natural pride and reason (1 Corinthians 2:10-16; 14:21).

- 23. Is there a difference between the gift of tongues and a “devotional tongue”?**
Yes, the Scriptures about speaking in tongues indicate this. In the corporate church setting, the manifestation of tongues is given “as the Spirit wills” (1 Corinthians 12:11) and must be accompanied by an interpretation (1 Corinthians 14:27-28). Devotional tongues, or what some call the “prayer language” or “spiritual language” is different than the public manifestation of tongues because it is used in private and is activated according to the human will rather than the Spirit’s will: *“For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my understanding is unfruitful. What is the conclusion then? I WILL pray with the spirit and I WILL also pray with the understanding. I WILL sing with the spirit, and I WILL also sing with the understanding.”* (1 Corinthians 14:14-15 NKJV) The private use of tongues does not necessarily require interpretation in order to be edifying although Paul says we should pray for interpretation (1 Corinthians 14:13). See Questions 24 and 25.
- 24. If a person does not understand what he is saying in tongues, what good is it to speak in a private “devotional tongue”?**
- Although the term “devotional tongues” does not appear in the Bible, this term does describe its purpose and use. Unlike the “gift” or “manifestation” of tongues which is given for the purpose of speaking to the corporate body as the Spirit wills, devotional tongues has private benefits for the believer.
 - Devotional tongues is direct communication “spirit to Spirit” with God: *“For He who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God, for no one understands him; however, in the spirit he speaks mysteries”* (1 Corinthians 14:2). Praying in tongues is praying with our spirit rather than with our natural mind. 1 Thessalonians 5:23 and Hebrews 4:12 tell us that there is a distinction between soul and spirit. The soul is our personality, made up of our mind, will and emotions. However, God is Spirit (John 4:24) and, because of the new birth of our spirit (John 3:5-8), we now have been given the Spirit of adoption whereby we cry out *“Abba, Father!”* (Galatians 4:6). Our spirit now longs to express itself to God in ways that we can never do with our natural minds. Our communication with God is often hindered by our inability to get beyond the limitations of our natural minds in order to communicate with an infinite God who is far above us (Isaiah 55:8-9). Speaking with other tongues does not disable our reason or negate our intellect. It simply “bypasses” our natural mind’s limitations, giving us a direct communication with God “in the spirit.” Praying in tongues is the liberation of the spirit man to express himself to God: *“For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays”* (1 Corinthians 14:14). What a blessed liberation, what a blessed privilege, what a blessed gift!
 - Devotional tongues allow a person to pray and grasp “mysteries” that his mind does not perceive. Spiritual realities many times go contrary to our natural inclinations, demanding that we live by faith rather than by reason. The spirit man inside of us can detect spiritual realities that are beyond our natural ability to perceive. This does not mean that God will give us “extra-biblical revelation” but illumination into the mysteries of God in Christ contained within the Word of God

- but hidden to the world (1 Corinthians 2:6-8; 2 Corinthians 4:4-6). Praying in other tongues allows the Holy Spirit to reveal to us these spiritual realities.
- d. Speaking in tongues brings personal edification. 1 Corinthians 14:4 says, *“He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself.”* To “edify” means to “build up” or to “charge”, as in the case of a battery. Speaking in tongues allows our spiritual man to become sensitized and built up in order to be more effective in ministering spiritual things. Daily problems and activities can drain us spiritually. Speaking in tongues helps us to draw strength from the Spirit.
 - e. Praying in tongues reminds us of the Spirit’s indwelling Presence (John 14:16-17).
 - f. Praying in tongues helps us to pray in line with God’s perfect will. Romans 8:26-27 (NKJV) states, *“likewise the Spirit also helps our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God.”* The Greek word for “helps” in this passage is *“sunantilambonomai”* which means “to take hold together with against.” By praying in other tongues, the Spirit “takes hold together with us against” the problem in order to obtain God’s will in prayer. The Greek word implies a joint effort between us and the Holy Spirit rather than a work of the Spirit alone. It is praying what the natural mind “knows not what to pray for as it ought.” This can only be accomplished with praying in the spirit, or with other tongues. In this way the Spirit can reveal the mind of God on the matter so that we will pray His perfect will.
 - g. Praying in tongues stimulates faith. Jude 20 (NKJV) says, *“But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit.”*
 - h. Praying in tongues helps us to remain free from worldly contamination. 1 Corinthians 14:28 states, “But if there is no interpreter, let him keep silent in church, and let him speak to himself and to God.” Praying in tongues can be done “under the breath” in the midst of a crowd, allowing one to have continued fellowship with God, thus helping to prevent the mind from becoming overwhelmed in even the most negative environment.
 - i. Praying in tongues brings spiritual refreshing. Isaiah 28:11-12 (NKJV) states, *“For with stammering lips and another tongue He will speak to this people, to whom He said, ‘This is the rest with which you may cause the weary to rest, and ‘This is the refreshing’; yet they would not hear.”* What is the rest? It involves speaking in other tongues! Praying or speaking in tongues allows us to live life above the chaos of the natural realm and enjoy the rivers of the Spirit for spiritual refreshing.
 - j. Praying in tongues allows a person to express his thanks to God well. 1 Corinthians 14:16-17 (NKJV) states, *“If you bless with the spirit, how will he who occupies the place of the uninformed say ‘Amen’ at your giving of thanks, since he does not understand what you are saying? For you indeed give thanks well, but the other is not edified.”*
 - k. Praying in tongues brings the tongue under subjection to God. James 3:8 (NKJV) states, *“But no man can tame the tongue. It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison.”* No man can tame his own tongue. It always finds itself given to uncontrolled speech, gossip, rebellion, and lies. Only God can control the

tongue. Isn't it interesting that the first thing God did in the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost was to get supernatural control of the human tongue? There is no impurity in this spiritual language. It is letting the spirit, rather than the flesh, have control. Galatians 5:16 (NKJV) *"I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh."*

- l. Speaking in tongues allows us to express our purest praise unto the Lord. 1 Corinthians 14:15 (NKJV) states, *"What is the conclusion then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will also pray with the understanding. I will sing with the spirit, and I will also sing with the understanding."* Acts 2:11 (NKJV) states, *"We hear them speaking in our own tongues the wonderful works of God."* Speaking or singing in other tongues will liberate the spirit of man to express his deepest praise and worship in ways that the natural mind could never fully express.
- m. Praying in tongues is a provision for our mental health. 1 Corinthians 2:11 (NKJV) states, *"For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him?"* Circumstances can traumatize our mind, our will, and our emotions leaving us on the brink of mental disorder. Buried emotions and feelings eat away at our mental health. There are things that we do not understand about ourselves, but our spirit perceives them. Praying in tongues allows our spirit to express our deepest needs and feelings to God, thus providing God's therapy or catharsis on our soul.
- n. Praying in tongues allows us to be used of God in praying for the unknown. Many times a person will be impressed on our heart for prayer. We do not know what to pray, for we do not know the circumstances involved. So we ask the Holy Spirit to guide us as we pray in tongues in order to pray the perfect will of God for this person or situation. At times there will be an urgency placed on our spirit while praying in tongues for some situation in which we know nothing about, but the burden remains until the prayer is finished, until the peace of God witnesses that His will has been prayed.

25. How does the Scripture distinguish between the "gift of tongues" and private or "devotional tongues"?

- a. The way we distinguish between the two is by determining 1) who's will is involved in the initiation of the tongue, 2) where it takes place, and 3) whose edification does it serve.
- b. The "gift" or "manifestation" of tongues is given for the edification of others and is manifested as the Spirit wills in the church.
 - 1) 1 Corinthians 12:7 (NKJV) *"But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all."*
 - 2) 1 Corinthians 12:11 (NKJV) *"But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills."*
 - 3) 1 Corinthians 14:5 (NKJV) *"I wish you all spoke with tongues, but even more that you prophesied; for he who prophesies is greater than he who speaks with tongues, unless indeed he interprets, that the church may receive edification."*
 - 4) 1 Corinthians 14:6 (NKJV) *"But now, brethren, if I come to you speaking with tongues, what shall I profit you unless I speak to you either by revelation, by knowledge, by prophesying, or by teaching?"*

- 5) 1 Corinthians 14:12-13 (NKJV) *“Even so you, since you are zealous for spiritual gifts, let it be for the edification of the church that you seek to excel. Therefore let him who speaks in a tongue pray that he may interpret.”*
 - 6) 1 Corinthians 14:26-27 (NKJV) *“How is it then, brethren? Whenever you come together, each of you has a psalm, has a teaching, has a tongue, has a revelation, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification. If anyone speaks in a tongue, let it be two or at the most three, each in turn, and let one interpret.”*
 - 7) 1 Corinthians 14:28 (NKJV) *“But if there is no interpreter, let him keep silent in church, and let him speak to himself and to God.”*
 - 8) 1 Corinthians 14:33 (NKJV) *“For God is not the author of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints.”*
 - 9) 1 Corinthians 14:40 (NKJV) *“Let all things be done decently and in order.”*
- c. “Devotional tongues” is for personal edification and is practiced in private and as the individual wills.
- 1) 1 Corinthians 14:4 (NKJV) *“He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself.”*
 - 2) 1 Corinthians 14:14 (NKJV) *“For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my understanding is unfruitful.”*
 - 3) 1 Corinthians 14:15 (NKJV) *“What is the conclusion then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will also pray with the understanding. I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding.”*
 - 4) 1 Corinthians 14:18-19 (NKJV) *“I thank my God I speak with tongues more than you all; yet in the church...”* (i.e. Paul practiced speaking in tongues outside the church in his own devotions)
 - 5) 1 Corinthians 14:28 (NKJV) *“But if there is no interpreter, let him keep silent in the church, and let him speak to himself and to God.”*

26. Is it possible for every believer to speak in tongues?

It seems possible, especially in the area of devotional tongues. Some believers do not and never will speak in other tongues, especially in the corporate church setting (1 Corinthians 14:30). However, we are exhorted to desire spiritual gifts (1 Corinthians 14:1). Therefore it is not wrong to desire to speak with tongues. Paul said, *“I wish you all spoke with tongues”*. Paul knew the great devotional benefit a person receives with the spiritual language. Not everyone will be used by the Holy Spirit in the “gift” or “manifestation” of tongues in the church, for this comes only “as the Spirit wills.” However, it would be of great value for every believer to be able to release his spirit in prayer (1 Corinthians 14:2). We are spiritual beings. A Christian may, upon receiving the Baptism with the Holy Spirit, release his spiritual language in a faith response to God. On the day of Pentecost, each believer received this manifestation in an individual way (Acts 2:3) in order to express the wonderful praise of God in another language. Jesus stated in Mark 16:17-18 that tongues is one of the signs that will follow those who believe. The first step necessary to receive this spiritual language is to believe-to believe that it is from God and that it is provided for you. People, who believe it may be for others and but not for them seldom, if ever, receive—thus confirming what they believe. Just as salvation must be received personally through faith, so it is that all of the promises of God must be received by grace through faith (Ephesians 2:8-9).

27. Can a person who has received the Baptism in the Holy Spirit and spoken with other tongues choose to speak in tongues at any time?

Yes. Some mistakenly believe that all occurrences of tongues are as the Spirit wills. But this is true only of the “manifestation” or gift of tongues in the church. This is not true of devotional tongues. Speaking with other tongues is not a mystical trance whereby a person loses all control of his will, speaking ecstatically under the control of some alien influence, and afterward regains consciousness or control of his will. Nothing can be further from the truth! However, many misinformed people have not only believed this distortion but have taught it in order, it seems, to instill fear in the hearts of seekers so as to discourage any further investigation. After all, who wants to be “out of control” of his will? This fear would be valid if it was true, but the Scripture teaches something far different. We are not to be out of control as with an unclean spirit. Unclean spirits seek to control and dominate a person. The devil seeks mediums, the Holy Spirit seeks partners. The Holy Spirit is not seeking robots, He is seeking willing participants. The Holy Spirit does not come to possess, He comes to fill. He does not come to dominate, He comes to cooperate. 1 Corinthians 6:17 (NKJV) states, *“He who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him.”* Just as marriage makes two into one, not through annihilation of one but through union of two, so it is with our relationship with the Holy Spirit. Speaking in tongues is a partnership between a person’s liberated spirit and the Holy Spirit. We partner with the Holy Spirit in church meetings and He partners with us in our private devotions. We are a team—one spirit, one mind, and in one accord. Let us see how the scripture bears this out:

- a. Acts 2:4 (NKJV) *“And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and (they) began to speak as the Spirit gave them utterance.”* Notice the partnership: THEY began to speak and the SPIRIT gave them utterance. All human speech consists of two things: the raw material of sounds and utterance. We are to yield our lips to produce the sounds and depend upon the Holy Spirit to bring forth the utterance.
- b. Acts 10:46 (NKJV) *“For they heard them speak with tongues and glorify God.”*
- c. Acts 19:6 (NKJV) *“And when Paul had laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied.”*
- d. 2 Peter 1:21 (NKJV) *“For prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.”* In Acts 2:17 Peter interprets tongues to be a form of prophecy. 2 Peter 1:21 reveals to us clearly that all prophecy of Scripture came in partnership between man and the Holy Spirit. Although devotional tongues is not the object of this passage in II Peter, the same principle of cooperation in spiritual language is understood.
- e. 1 Corinthians 14:14 (NKJV) *“For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays...”* Here we see not the Holy Spirit emphasized in the use of tongues, but the human spirit. Paul says, “my spirit prays.” The emphasis here is not upon the moving of the Holy Spirit upon a person to speak as much as it is upon the desire and control of the human spirit to communicate with his spiritual Father in prayer.
- f. 1 Corinthians 14:15 (NKJV) *“What is the conclusion then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will also pray with the understanding. I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding.”* Notice Paul says “I WILL” speak and sing in the spirit just as he says “I WILL” speak and sing with the understanding. Paul was making it clear that he was not a robot but could willfully control HOW to use his prayer language.

- g. 1 Corinthians 14:18 (NKJV) *“I thank my God I speak with tongues more than you all; yet in the church I would rather speak five words with my understanding.”* Notice “I would rather speak”. Paul not only had control of how he would use his prayer language, but also had control of when and where he would use it.
- h. 1 Corinthians 14:26-28 (NKJV) *“How is it then, brethren? Whenever you come together, each of you has a psalm, has a teaching, has a tongue, has a revelation, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification. If anyone speaks in a tongue, let there be two or at the most three, each in turn, and let one interpret. But if there is no interpreter, let him keep silent in church, and let him speak to himself and to God.”* We have here an interesting passage. We see the issue of personal control of a tongue clearly portrayed. A person who speaks in a tongue has control over:
 - 1) Personal Judgment: “Let all things be done for edification.”
 - 2) Frequency of Use: “Let there be two or at the most three”
 - 3) Timing and Order: “Each in turn”
 - 4) Himself: “But if there is no interpreter, let him keep silent in church”
 - 5) Volume: “And let him speak to himself and to God”
- i. Jude 20 (NKJV) “But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit.” Jude could not give this exhortation if the people were not able to initiate by a choice of their will this praying in the Holy Spirit. “Praying in the Holy Spirit” was their responsibility, not God’s. Personal choice and control to initiate praying in the Holy Spirit is thereby understood.

28. What about those who speak in tongues in a church service or in public and say they have no control declaring that “The Holy Spirit made me do it”?

This is false and must be rejected no matter how sincerely someone may seem. The Holy Spirit will not control anyone against their will. On the other hand, if a person cannot control himself or herself, he may be under the influence of unclean spirits. (See Question 27)

29. Shouldn’t a person be moved “emotionally” or have some type of “goose bumps” or feelings when praying with other tongues?

Not necessarily. There is a difference between feelings and faith. Feelings and emotions will come from time to time, but we should never operate on feelings but on faith. Think about the diversity or reactions people have with salvation. Some are very emotional while others calm and reflective. Learn to launch out and build your faith on the solid rock of God’s Word instead of on the shifting sand of feelings. Obey the Word and depend on the help of the Holy Spirit. Many times, and usually the most critical times, there may be no emotions at all. Just as in any other type of prayer, ask the Holy Spirit for help, and then launch out in faith on God’s provision. Feelings many times follow faith rather than precede it.

30. Sometimes when speaking in other tongues, I feel silly and my mind tells me that speaking with other tongues is just me. Are these feelings normal?

Yes. In Western civilization we have exalted the rational mind or intellect. Unfortunately the result is that it becomes a barred prison for the spiritual dimension of man. Third world countries experience the freedom of the Spirit much more readily because they relate to spiritual things. Anything we do by faith will seem at first to be

silly to the mind. Our reason and intellect are gifts from God, but when they get in the way of receiving the things of the Spirit of God, things are out of order spiritually. Proverbs 20:27 (NKJV) states, *“The spirit of a man is the lamp of the Lord, searching all the inner depths of his heart.”* The spirit of man is where God reveals Himself. Romans 8:14 (NKJV) states, *“For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.”* We must allow our minds to be “transformed” by God’s Word so that we might prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God (Romans 12:2). It is normal to expect our natural minds to oppose the things of faith and spirit (1 Corinthians 2:14). If we are looking to the Holy Spirit as our Senior Partner in prayer, then we must walk by faith rather than by feelings. As we do, our carnal mind will be transformed and will begin to be an aid and not a hindrance in spiritual understanding.

31. What about “interpretations of tongues” that seem much longer than the message in tongues?

It must be pointed out that there is a difference between “interpretation” and “translation”. Translation conveys a word for word, while an interpretation gives the meaning of the message. Sometimes a message in one language must be interpreted with many more words in another language in order for the meaning to be clearly understood. Sometimes a person who gives an interpretation may flow right on into the manifestation of prophecy without being aware when one stopped and the other began. Then there are times where a person may be speaking out a Spirit-inspired prayer to God for the church in other tongues. What follows is not an interpretation but rather an answer to the prayer through prophecy.

32. Does a person who is used in tongues or interpretation in the church know everything they are to say before they give it?

Not necessarily. As with any utterance of the Holy Spirit, it is common to experience an inner “burning” or “bubbling up” sensation that simply needs a response of faith and obedience in order to be released. With tongues a person needs to simply yield to the unction of the Holy Spirit by speaking out in faith. Sometimes with interpretation a word, phrase or sentence will be all a person will know ahead of time. But as that person yields to the unction and speaks what he has been given, the Holy Spirit will release the unction for the rest of the interpretation.

33. Is it possible for a person to give a tongue or an interpretation of tongues “in the flesh”?

Yes. As stated in Question 27, people are responsible for how, when, and where they use tongues and interpretation or, for that matter, any of the gifts. One thing that will cause a fleshly manifestation is for a person to operate outside of love. 1 Corinthians 13:1 states that speaking in tongues apart from love is an irritation and a distraction. Operating without Holy Spirit unction in a service always leaves a “fleshly” taste in the midst of the gathering. Some people begin with an unction of the Spirit but then finish in the flesh. It is important to speak when the Holy Spirit gives the unction and to stop when the unction lifts. If these two principles of love and unction are followed, the flesh will have very little room to operate.

34. Wouldn’t it be better to just forbid the use of tongues in the church because of the potential of fleshly manifestations which could cause confusion?

- a. No. Paul instructed the church in 1 Corinthians 14:39 (NKJV), *“Therefore, brethren, desire earnestly to prophesy, and do not forbid to speak with other tongues.”* The answer to the problem is not to forbid but to instruct. This was Paul’s approach to the problem when in 1 Corinthians 12:1 (NKJV) he states, *“Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I do not want you to be ignorant.”* Most people get into the flesh because they are ignorant of spiritual gifts and how they are to operate. There are right in their heart but wrong in their head—their understanding. It is the responsibility of leadership to instruct the people in the proper use of spiritual gifts and to control the improper use of the gifts in order that the people receive of their blessing.
- b. No. The Scripture tells us neither to grieve the Spirit nor to quench Him. We grieve the Holy Spirit when we step out in the flesh, but we can also quench Him when the flesh forbids Him to operate at all. As with all spiritual truths, there is a balance that brings health and life to the people of God.

35. What is “singing in the spirit”?

In 1 Corinthians 14:15 (NKJV) Paul states, *“I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also.”* Singing with the spirit is singing with other tongues. It is the human spirit’s way of expressing its deepest praise and worship of God. Singing in the spirit can take place in private or in spontaneous worship in the church. Sometimes a manifestation of singing in tongues comes in the church followed by another singing the interpretation. These occurrences seem to carry a stronger anointing because of the element of worship involved.

36. Isn’t it necessary to interpret singing in the spirit if it is done in public worship?

No. In private expressions of tongues one is not talking to man but to God (1 Corinthians 14:2). Although people who stand nearby may overhear, they must understand that the tongue is not directed toward them but toward God. Many who have come into the presence of such worship have said that it seemed as if the angels of heaven sang and its beauty captivating. Love would, however, demand that a person expressing such praise not draw undue attention to himself, thus drawing people’s focus away from God and toward himself. In some situations where people would be caused to stumble, it should be avoided altogether in favor of worship in a known language only (1 Corinthians 14:23). Here we see a few passages of Scripture that show praise in other tongues without interpretation:

- a. Acts 2:11 (NKJV) *“We hear them speaking in our own languages the wonderful works of God.”* On the day of Pentecost the saint spoke in other tongues the praises of God. The tongues were real languages as testified by those who were in Jerusalem. These saints did not interpret. In fact, if a Jew understood one tongue, he might not another. Therefore he would not have had an interpretation of every tongue manifested that day. There was no indication that such an interpretation was necessary. These Jews understood that this was praise directed to God, praise that they were simply overhearing.
- b. Acts 10:44-48 We see that the Holy Spirit it poured out upon Cornelius’ household and they all spoke with tongues and magnified God. Here there was no interpretation. Again it was an overheard worship of men toward their God.
- c. Acts 19:1-6 the disciples at Ephesus were filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke with tongues. No mention is made of interpretation.

- d. Some, being ignorant of spiritual gifts, have put undue restrictions upon the exercise of speaking and singing in tongues. Think about it for a moment: If a foreigner was to come to a church service and praise God during the worship service in his or her own language, we who overheard would not stand up and demand of that person, "You must either interpret to me what you are saying to God so I can understand or else be silent!" We would not dare demand this because we know that it is none of our business what another expresses in worship to God regardless of what language it is in. However, if that person was to begin preaching or teaching to you in a foreign language, we would be in order to require that person to interpret to you or else not bother. The need for interpretation is based on to whom the communication is directed. If I am not involved in the communication process, then I have no need or the right to demand interpretation. God is Spirit and therefore needs no interpretation of spiritual language, or any language for that matter. I believe understanding that principle will help us be both Scriptural and mature in our understanding.

37. Is it possible for one who gives a message in tongues or who prays in tongues privately to interpret the tongue himself?

- a. Yes. In fact, the Scripture actually encourages this practice. 1 Corinthians 14:13 (NKJV) states, "*Therefore let him who speaks in a tongue pray that he may interpret.*" If a person is used frequently by God to give messages in other tongues, it becomes obvious that insuring that there is an interpreter in the meeting can present a huge problem. If there is no interpreter, he is to remain silent for no one will understand him. How convenient it would be if the person giving the tongue could also interpret it. The problem would be solved. As a result, Paul instructs those who would speak in a tongue in the church to pray that he would interpret it also. In fact, in the spirit of his instruction it could be said that if a person who gives a message in tongues in the church is not prayed up and prepared to be used of God to interpret the tongue, he should not give the tongue at all. Otherwise, if there is no interpretation given by someone else, the tongue would be out of order and not edifying to the Body. The Holy Spirit speaking through Paul would not have instructed us to pray for interpretation if it was not in His will to give it to us. Therefore let us not neglect this important instruction.
- b. Yes, even in private devotional tongues. As wonderful as praying in the spirit is to our spirit man, it can have benefits for our understanding also. How? We do this through interpreting back to our soulish man. Paul said in 1 Corinthians 14:2 of one who speaks in tongues, "*in his spirit he speaks mysteries.*" As we speak and pray in tongues in our private devotions, the Holy Spirit, working in partnership with our spirit, can reveal mysteries—things which eye has not seen, nor ear has heard, nor has entered the heart of man, things which God has prepared for those who love Him (1 Corinthians 2:9). But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. By praying that we may interpret back to our understanding, many of these mysteries are revealed. Many complex decisions can be made by "praying it through" in the Spirit and then interpreting back to the understanding. If we need answers that are spiritually and morally correct, then we need to get in touch with the Holy Spirit where He reveals Himself—our human spirit. Praying and speaking in devotional tongues followed by

interpreting back to our understanding is one of the greatest but most unutilized benefits of this spiritual language.

38. 1 Corinthians 12:30 says, “Do all speak with tongues?” The implied answer is “no”. How do you explain the teaching that all Christians should speak in tongues?

1 Corinthians 12:29-30 mentions those with offices of ministry in the church (apostles, prophets, teachers) and those who are used in the gifts or manifestation ministries in the church (workers of miracles, gifts of healings, speaking in tongues, and interpretation). The answer is, “You are right!” Not everyone will be used of God to minister to the church in one of these ways. Not everyone who speaks in a private tongue will be used of the Holy Spirit in the manifestation of tongues in the church. After all, Paul is speaking of those ministries which God has appointed in the Body, the church: “And God has appointed IN THE CHURCH: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, varieties of tongues” (1 Corinthians 12:28). Just as doing the work of an evangelist does not make you an evangelist in the church, so speaking with devotional tongues does not automatically make you one who will be used to give a message in tongues in the church.

39. Some say that tongues is for the immature believer and that once a Christian becomes “mature” then they are to put away “childish things” such as tongues. Isn’t this what is implied in 1 Corinthians 13:11 and 1 Corinthians 14:20?

1 Corinthians 13:11 (NKJV) says, “*When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things.*” 1 Corinthians 14:20 (NKV) tells us, “*Do not be children in understanding: however, in malice be babes, but in understanding be mature.*” The childish things mentioned in 1 Corinthians 13 (malice, pride, ego, suspicion, etc.) are works of the flesh and not spiritual gifts or manifestations. Tongues certainly cannot be the subject of Paul’s statement because in 1 Corinthians 14:5 (NKJV) he says, “*I wish you all spoke with tongues,*” and in 1 Corinthians 14:18 he says emphatically, “*I thank my God I speak with tongues more than you all!*” Certainly no one would consider Paul to be an immature believer! Paul considered tongues neither immature for himself nor for the believers at Corinth.

40. Some churches teach that one must speak in tongues to be saved. Is this true?

No. The Bible is clear in Ephesians 2:8-9 (NKJV): “*For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that (salvation) not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.*” Romans 10:9-10 (NKJV) is clear concerning the requirements for salvation: “*That if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, YOU WILL BE SAVED. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.*” If tongues were that important in the salvation process, surely God would have made it clear here and Jesus would have emphasized it in the preaching of the Good News. On the other hand, if a person is depending on speaking in tongues to save him, he has “fallen from grace” as the principle basis of his salvation (Galatians 5:1-6).

41. Some people teach that you don't have the Holy Spirit until you speak with tongues. Is this true?

No. There is a difference between being "born of the Spirit" and being "baptized with the Holy Spirit. Jesus is a perfect example. Luke 1:35 tells us that Jesus was born of the Holy Spirit in the womb of Mary, and was therefore called the Son of God. Obviously, Jesus had the Holy Spirit inside of Him from birth. However, thirty years later He was baptized by John the Baptist in the Jordan River and the Holy Spirit came UPON Him (Luke 3:21-22). This inaugurated Jesus' ministry. In the same way, when we call upon the name of Jesus, we are born of the Spirit (John 3:1-8). After His resurrection, Jesus came to His disciples, told them to receive the Holy Spirit, and then He breathed upon them (John 20:22). This was the beginning of the new creation as it happened in the creation of man in the Garden of Eden. Jesus breathed into them the breath of life and they were born again, new creatures in Christ Jesus (2 Corinthians 5:17). Like Jesus, we are children of God by virtue of our birth by the Spirit. However, there is another work of the Holy Spirit called the Baptism with the Holy Spirit for the work of the ministry. Jesus commanded His disciples to wait for this promised outpouring. Jesus said in Acts 1:8 (NKJV), *"But you shall receive POWER when the Holy Spirit has come UPON you."* As Elisha had to wait to receive the mantle of Elijah in order to do the works of Elijah, so the disciples had to wait for the mantle of Jesus, the Holy Spirit, before they could walk in the same works as Jesus. Tongues was the evidence of the Baptism with the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost, but the Bible NEVER teaches that a person must speak in tongues in order to have the Holy Spirit within them through the new birth. In fact, Romans 8:9 teaches the opposite: "Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His." The manifestation of tongues can accompany the "baptism with the Holy Spirit" but is not a condition of being "born of the Spirit" and having the Spirit of God inside. As demonstrated in the life of Jesus and His disciples, there is a difference between the Spirit of God WITHIN and the Spirit of God UPON. To insist otherwise is to deny the work of salvation in the saints throughout history who never spoke in tongues and only serves to divide the Body of Christ and lift up its adherents in spiritual pride, elitism, and deception.

42. 1 Corinthians 14:23 seems to say people who do not understand the meaning of tongues might think that the people in the church are mad if they all speak in tongues. How do you justify the use of tongues in a church when unbelievers come in regularly?

1 Corinthians 14:23 (NKJV) states, *"If the whole church comes together in one place, and all speak with tongues, and there comes in those who are uninformed or unbelievers, will they not say you are out of your mind?"* In this verse Paul mentions two categories of people: the "uninformed" (which are believers who are unfamiliar with spiritual manifestations) and "unbelievers" (the lost). Paul gives this scenario in the context of the need to use interpretation when giving a message in tongues. Whereas speaking in tongues in the church gathering would not bother Spirit-filled church members, it might bother unbelievers and the uninformed. They not only might receive no benefit from such messages but, in fact, might question the sanity of a person who spoke in languages no one else understood. Expand the scenario of one person speaking in a tongue without interpretation, to the entire congregation speaking in tongues without interpretation and you have mass confusion in the minds of these poor uninformed brethren and those unfortunate unbelievers. Ultimately what people need is

communication that they can understand, something by which God can speak to their understanding and thereby reach their heart. In such cases where unbelievers and the uninformed are present, Paul encourages the use of prophecy over tongues. However, this does not mean that tongues are not appropriate when accompanied with interpretation, for both Paul and Peter equate tongues with prophecy when the people understand the message (Acts 2:4, 16-17; 1 Corinthians 14:5). This does not mean that there is NEVER a time when tongues cannot be used in a congregational meeting in the context of corporate prayer when no one is seeking to communicate with each other but with God alone. Speaking in tongues with interpretation can actually be a sign from God to the uninformed and unbelievers present (1 Corinthians 14:21-22; See Question 22). Paul is simply saying that when unbelievers and the uninformed are present, special attention should be given to insure that speaking in tongues does not become an undue obstacle for them. (See Question 36 in regard to singing with the spirit.)

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