

The Ignorance on the Subject of Tongues is Mind-Boggling

I've included a few of the many public comments from my last blog, Why Do So many Pentecostals and Charismatics Not Speak in Tongues Anymore, to expose the blatant ignorance there still exists in the church and among professing believers today on the subject of tongues.

1. I began the article by mentioning three pioneers of the faith who said that tongues was the making of their ministries, but that mention was met with great irreverence by one individual.

"John G Lake was a known fake healer who was also a financial huckster. His inability to heal led to [the] death of a girl named Hannah Anderson, and almost crippled another girl who had a fractured thigh.

"Oral Roberts: His shameful attempts to get rich off of his "ministry" are well known. Anyone remember him saying God would kill him if people didn't send him 8 million dollars?

"Kenneth Hagin: Spread the Word of Faith heresy and plagiarized Kenyon.

"If these people are examples of what comes from speaking in tongues, I think I'll stick with regular English, thanks."

What can I say? Such disregard and disdain for some of God's choice servants will utterly corrupt any life. It is difficult for me to understand such professing Christians. This is eerily equivalent to the Pharisees and religious leaders calling Jesus a devil and attributing His works to demons (Matt. 12:24).

2.

“Tongues? You think it is the be all and end all. But really, it’s just laziness. God doesn’t want mindless drones – otherwise he wouldn’t have given us free will. I mean really – do you honestly believe that God (Who knows everything) would require some random person to babble things they don’t understand in order to save someone? Next time you pray – don’t take the easy way out. Actually talk to your Father.”

Wow! Just half a Scripture refutes this person’s statements: “For he who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men, but to God...” (1 Cor. 14:2a).

3.

“Paul said in the Bible that tongues was one of the least of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Yes, I believe some have that gift, but does one have to have it to be more spiritual than those that do have it, or does one have to have that gift to be saved? No, the Bible does not say that.”

This person missed the entire point of the article. He chose to fixate his thoughts and words on traditions instead of rightly dividing the word of God.

This person makes three errors in his brief statements. First of all, the devotional exercise of praying privately in other tongues is never called a gift in Scripture. The gift is the Holy Spirit, also called the promise of the Father, or the baptism in the Holy Spirit, which is available to every person in every generation (Acts 2:39).

The word gift is never associated with tongues until 1 Cor. 12 when it is called divers kinds of tongues. It is the public ministry gift of tongues that needs to be interpreted for the edification of the hearers.

Second, the baptism of the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in other tongues is for personal edification which

should add to our spirituality in the sense that it makes us more effective witnesses. How many Christians can you name who do not speak in tongues but move in the gifts of the Holy Spirit? Not many. Why? Because they've not received the baptism in the Holy Spirit that Jesus sent.

Third, the gift of the Holy Spirit with tongues is separate from salvation. They are two distinct experiences so we should not confuse the two. Jesus spoke of salvation as a "well of water" (John 4:14), and the baptism in the Holy Spirit as "rivers of living water" (John 7:38). Simple. If these individuals would stop trying to interpret Scripture through their traditionally colored glasses and listen, instead of speak, they would learn something. The problem with many of them is they've been religiously brainwashed instead of New Testament taught.

4. This next person makes the same mistake while adding another statement that increases his confusion:

"Speaking in tongues is not the only gift of the Holy Spirit. There are many others that are just as important if not more. I would think there would be a practical application of speaking in another language for guests who may not understand the local language quite as well."

Once again, tongues, as in diverse kinds of tongues, is a gift, which is confused with the simple gift of the baptism in the Spirit with tongues for personal edification. This mix-up is the most common error among those who do not believe this experience is for every Christian.

Second, he confuses the sign at Pentecost, when the tongues they spoke were actual languages the nations at Jerusalem understood, with the private use of tongues for personal edification. There are different purposes and uses of tongues. Actually, there are at least four uses or purposes of tongues.

1. They are for personal edification (1 Cor. 14:4).
2. They are a gift for public use with interpretation (1 Cor. 14:27).
3. They are a means of prayer and intercession (Rom 8:26-28).
4. They are a sign to the unbeliever when understood in their own language (Acts 2:7-12).

5.

“Paul said tongues was the least, not the first, yet some people think tongues is the first and a must-have to be holy. I don’t agree, but it is one of the gifts, not a have-to-have, to be right with God and holy.”

This individual is another who confuses the simple gift of tongues for edification with the public gift that needs an interpretation. But he goes a step further and confuses tongues with holiness. Tongues is not a prerequisite for holiness.

The fruit of holiness is the fruit of the Spirit and every born-again believer has the Spirit within them so that they can produce the fruit of holiness in their lives. The Corinthians were enriched in the gifts (1 Cor. 1:4-7), but Paul said they were yet carnal because there were strife and divisions among them (1 Cor. 3:1-3). This proves that the baptism in the Holy Spirit is not primarily to produce holiness in our lives, but power (Acts 1:8).

6.

“Tongues are not to be turned on and off by people but given utterance by the Holy Spirit.”

This next individual seems to imply that speaking in tongues is controlled by the Holy Spirit. This may be true for the public gift of divers tongues that requires an interpretation, but it is not true for the private use of tongues, which a believer receives when he is baptized in the Holy Spirit.

Paul said he could pray or even sing in tongues at will (1 Cor. 14:15).

7. This next person seems to be quite sure of his position and even acts as the expert teacher who wants to give me a Bible lesson.:

“Bert, your article on tongues is based on cheerleading without a shred of authentication. You rely on stories instead of the Word. I pray in tongues. I have for 40 years. When it wants to come up, I go with (it).”

We’ve already covered this. He believes you need to wait for a spirit of ecstasy before you can speak in tongues.

“But I do not ascribe miracles to tongues that are not found in Scripture. When you make tongues a cure-all, you are way out of bounds, encouraging us to live in la-la land.”

A thorough study of Romans 8:26-28 in the Greek will shed much light on how praying with groanings, which includes tongues, is indeed connected to miracles of healing and salvation and even spiritual growth and gives birth to such.

“Consider this: for all the praying in tongues that Pentecostals and Charismatics (PCs) have done over the eons, it has not stopped America from sliding into the muck of immorality and godlessness. America as a nation has gone to hell in a hand-basket while PCs prayed in tongues, believing it is a cure-all for all of our problems. The Church has seen a great falling away from the Word while we prayed in tongues. You must stick with Scripture, Bert, when you speak

of the benefits of tongues, or you're teaching error."

I concur with the reverse of what this person is stating—that the very reason America is in bad shape is because the church has done too much mental praying in English and not enough spiritual praying in other tongues.

"Please consider this: when you make tongues the answer for everything, you become part of why so many leave tongues alone. Tongues were given to spread the Gospel to those speaking foreign languages. They were meant to awe those who heard it, as they knew those speaking didn't know their language. It was a sign given by God to them to persuade them to believe in Jesus, but PCs have made [tongues into] getting people healed. That's nonsense.

The nonsense here is that this Christian takes the preposterous position that tongues is for preaching in other languages, but we have already seen that this is only one use or purpose of tongues and is subject to the will of the Spirit. The main use of tongues is for personal edification and prayer.

"You have no scripture for that. You're teaching us to live by what we think, not by the Word. The only reason I pray in tongues is because it sometimes wants to come up, if I don't know how to pray, so I let it fly, but since I cannot know what I am saying, I cannot put faith in my tongues to fix the problems at hand. It is the prayer of faith in Jesus that saves the sick, and tongues cannot be prayed in faith, believing for healing, as you know not what you say. Stick with scripture, Bert, so those who read you will not live by illusions and fantasies."

What else can be said? This individual is all muddled up and tangled up in seeing tongues from only one angle. I never said

that tongues will fix all our problems, but it will sure fix many of our problems because you will be dealing with life's issues from a place of personal edification and revelation. Speaking in tongues does not give you faith for everything, but it stimulates the faith you already have from the Word (Jude 19-20). My advice to this commentator is that he needs to learn the Scriptures.

8.

"Tongues were given as a ministry tool but we made it a private prayer language and changed it from a true language to praying in English syllables, calling it a language of the heart. Where do we find scripture for that?"

The same error keeps being repeated. Can you see that? Several of these believers are not distinguishing the difference between the private and public use of tongues. It is a ministry tool and it is also a private prayer language.

"For he who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God. For no one understands him, although in the spirit, he speaks mysteries" (1 Cor. 14:2).

These many comments to my last *Charisma* blog revealed again to me that ministers need to teach more on the topic of tongues so that believers can exercise their faith in their personal use of it. There is too much confusion in this area. We need the light of the Scriptures to bring clarity and understanding.