

Why Does God Want Us to Speak with Tongues?

Why speak with tongues? There are many reasons for speaking in a spiritual language.

Primarily, though, the Scriptures require it. The apostle Paul commanded us, saying, “Pray in the Spirit always” (Eph. 6:18). Jude commanded it in verse 20, saying, “Pray in the Holy Spirit.”

Jesus said it was one of the signs which were to follow the ministry of Christians: “And these signs will accompany those who believe . . . they will speak with new tongues...” (Mark 16:17). If Scripture commanded it only once, then it is a command, to be obeyed.

Paul commanded: “Earnestly desire spiritual gifts ... I want you all to speak in tongues ... I thank God that I speak in tongues ... (I Cor. 14:1, 5, 18). Speaking in tongues is one of God’s gifts, and Christians need all the gifts God offers.

Speaking in tongues is the primary confirmation that one has received the baptism with the Holy Spirit. In the Bible it is always accompanied by speaking in tongues. Tongues was the evidence, but it was the side benefit—the side effect of knowing Christ—not the main reason for the experience. Tongues was considered the “tell-tale sign” of the experience, not the experience itself. How one lived after receiving the baptism with the Spirit was the proof of the reality of the experience.

The supernatural language is a miraculous manifestation of God’s power, but it combines both human and divine elements and requires both human and divine initiative. Don Basham, in *A Handbook on Holy Spirit Baptism*, claims that tongue-speaking is “truly a co-operation between the Christian and the Holy

Spirit" (page 86). Also, to pray in tongues is a matter of one's will according to 1 Corinthians 14:14-15. Here Paul says that when he prays in a tongue, his spirit prays, not simply his mind. He indicates that he wills to pray and sing with his spirit—it is a decision he makes, not something forced on him. Speaking in tongues is a matter of the will as is any other action.

Misunderstanding what role the speaker has in tongue-speaking has hindered some people from ever confirming the reception of the Holy Spirit through tongues. Many assume that the person receiving is completely passive and that the Holy Spirit takes an inert or completely still tongue and makes it or forces it to utter speech. In other words, the Holy Spirit does it all and the human being is simply His robot. Actually, though, the person manifesting the baptism with the Holy Spirit is very actively participating in the experience of speaking in tongues. Simply, man does the speaking while the Holy Spirit furnishes the words.

Acts 2:4 states, "And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues, as the Spirit enabled them to speak" (MEV), or "...as the Spirit gave them utterance." As they spoke, the Spirit filled their mouths. The Holy Spirit did not tell them what to say, nor did He speak through them. He simply gave them the ability to speak. Albert Hoy says that the disciples "used no conceptual forethought of their own in the vocalization" ("Public and Private Uses of the Gift of Tongues," Paraclete 2, Volume #4, page 11).

In the same manner, the Christian who speaks with tongues will realize that he does not know beforehand what syllables he will utter, but he will speak "not as he receives a mental impression, but as the Spirit gives him the utterance" (Hoy, page 12). Tongues is "the sign of the baptism of the Spirit ... All gifts which the Spirit brings and gives had already been given individually before Pentecost, except for speaking in other tongues with interpretation! Thus, this was the new sign

by which the baptism of the Spirit was known" (says F. Kramaric, cited in *The Pentecostals* by Walter J. Hollenweger, page 342).

Harold Horton says in *Baptism in the Holy Spirit: A Challenge to the Whole-hearted Seekers After God*, page 13, that "The evidence of water baptism at Jerusalem, Caesarea and Ephesus, was not faith nor love, but wetness! It is the same today. The evidence of the baptism in the Holy Spirit at Jerusalem, Caesarea and Ephesus was neither faith nor love, but tongues. So, it is today. To be baptized merely 'by faith' or tradition without evidence, is not to be baptized at all—either in water or the Holy Ghost."

To be baptized with the Holy Spirit is to be immersed in the Holy Spirit or to be completely given over to Him. Two faculties hardest for humans to surrender are the mind and the tongue. Paul says in I Corinthians 14:14, "If I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my mind is unfruitful." Jesus compares baptism with the Holy Spirit to baptism in water. In water baptism the candidate yields to the baptizer until the candidate is completely immersed in water. In the baptism with the Holy Spirit, one is given over entirely to the Holy Spirit. The seeker yields to Christ until completely immersed in the Holy Spirit.

Read more here.

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