

# Speaking In Tongues

**Speaking in tongues.** Where does one begin? There's a manageable amount of passages in the New Testament. However, the approach has been a bit challenging. I'm going to address them in order with brief commentary because most of our time will be spent in 1 Corinthians 14 (which is the most helpful passage of all, in my opinion.)

**Mark 16:15–17** "And He said to them, "Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned. And these signs will accompany those who believe: in My name they will cast out demons; they will speak in new tongues;"

- Jesus' disciples were already casting out demons and healing the sick, but we don't read about them speaking in tongues. We'll see that in the following passage.

**Acts 2:1-7, 11-18** "When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place. And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance. Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven. And at this sound the multitude came together, and they were bewildered, because each one was hearing them speak in his own language. And they were amazed and astonished, saying, "Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? . . . we hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God." And all were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "What does this mean?" But others mocking said, "They are filled with new wine." But Peter, standing with the eleven, lifted up his voice and addressed them: "Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and give ear to my words. For these people are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day. But this is what was uttered through the prophet Joel: " 'And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams; even on My male servants and female servants in those days I will pour out My Spirit, and they shall prophesy."

- What fell on the disciples?
- What drew the crowd?
- What did they hear?
- What was being said?

**Acts 10:44–48** "While Peter was still saying these things, the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the word. And the believers from among the circumcised who had come with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out even on the Gentiles. For they were hearing them speaking in tongues and extolling God. Then Peter declared, "Can anyone withhold water for baptizing these people, who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?" And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ."

- Who did the Holy Spirit fall on?

- Why were the believers amazed, and what did they hear?
- What was the result of the gift?

**Acts 19:1–6** “And it happened that while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul passed through the inland country and came to Ephesus. There he found some disciples. And he said to them, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?” And they said, “No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit.” And he said, “Into what then were you baptized?” They said, “Into John’s baptism.” And Paul said, “John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in the one who was to come after him, that is, Jesus.” On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they began speaking in tongues and prophesying.”

- Which came first: baptism or speaking in tongues?
- What did Paul do after the baptism?
- Then what happened?

**1 Corinthians 12:1, 8-10, 28-30** “Now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be uninformed . . . For to one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues . . . And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, helping, administrating, and various kinds of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret?”

- Did everyone have a gift?
- Did everyone have the same gift?
- Did the one who spoke in a tongue know what they were saying?

**1 Corinthians 13:1** If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.

- What are "the tongues of angels"?
- What's the point of the passage?

**1 Corinthians 14: Prophecy & Tongues**

- Vs. 1-4
  - Who does the tongue-speaker speak to?
  - If the miracle is in the ear of the hearer, why do they not understand?
  - Why doesn't the tongue-speaker interpret?
  - Would the congregation speak the same language? Do we?
  - Compare this with Acts 2.
  - Who does the prophet speak to?
  - For what purpose?
  - Who does the tongue-speaker build up? How so?

- Why is a prophecy the greater gift within the assembly
- What did the tongue-speaker need to edify the church?
- Vs. 5
  - Why does Paul prefer speaking in tongues?
  - Why did they need an interpreter?
- Vs. 6-12
  - How does the illustration relate?
  - Would it matter if the miracle was in the hearing and not speaking?
  - Do you notice how he uses the term "languages"?
  - What is the common purpose/theme so far?
- Vs. 13-14
  - Why would the one speaking in tongues need an interpreter?
- Vs. 15-19
  - NASB: "What is the outcome then?" NKJV: "What is the conclusion then?"
  - Either speak in a language everyone understands, have an interpreter, or, as we'll see, don't say anything.
  - It looks as though one could pray or sing in a tongue. The common denominator is praising God.
  - What would he prefer in church? Why?
- Vs. 20-25
  - He references Isaiah 28:11. Israel wasn't listening to a prophet who spoke their language. So, "God would speak to them in the language of the Assyrians or Babylonians. They would go into captivity. Foreigners would remind them of their unbelief by the daily babbling going on all around them."
  - Tongue-speaking was a sign for who?
  - Prophecy was a sign for who?
  - What if an outsider or unbeliever walked into their circus?
  - What if they entered and heard prophecies?
- Vs. 26-29
  - Does everyone do the same thing?
  - What's the goal?
  - How many tongue-speakers were allowed?
  - What if they didn't have an interpreter?
  - Consider this text as a whole and harmonize it with the previous passages.

**Final thoughts:** Having gifts doesn't translate to having faith. Exercising talents doesn't mean we're exercising brotherly love. We don't struggle with this today because we're not speaking in tongues anymore. See the website for lessons delivered on the cessation of miracles. 1 Corinthians 13 is at the heart of the issue. God gives any ability we have to help point others back to God. We've got to get out of the way of the cross. Our lives should be one of humility. Let's not taint the gifts we do have today.