

Explaining Speaking In Tongues

'John the Baptist said, "I baptise you with water but Jesus Who is mightier than I am will come ... He will baptise you in the Holy Spirit and fire"' (Luke 3:16). 'When Jesus had been baptised in water, the sky or heavens was opened and the Holy Spirit descended onto Him in bodily form as a dove then a voice came out of heaven saying, "You are My beloved Son. In You I am well pleased"' (Luke 3:21 & 22). 'Jesus said, "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you"' (Acts 1:8).

The fire represents zeal for God (Psalm 39:3). Power is the power of God. 'When the day of Pentecost (in Hebrew, Shavuot) had come, they were all with one accord in one place. Suddenly there came from the sky a sound like the rushing of a mighty wind and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. Tongues like fire appeared and were distributed to them and one tongue sat on each of them. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues as the Holy Spirit gave them the ability to speak. There were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men from every nation under the sky. When this sound (of speaking in tongues) was heard, the multitude came together and were bewildered because everyone heard them speaking in his own language. They were all amazed and marvelled saying to one another, "Behold, are all these who speak Galileans? How do we hear everyone speaking in our own native language? ... Both Jews and Gentiles, we hear them speaking in our languages the mighty works of God!" They were all amazed and were perplexed saying one to another, "What does this mean?" Others mocked saying, "They are drunk." Peter standing up with the eleven (apostles) lifted up his voice and spoke out (loudly) to them, "You men of Judea and all you who dwell at Jerusalem, let this be known to you and listen to my words. These are not drunk as you suppose ... This is what has been spoken through the prophet Joel. 'It will be in the last days, says God, I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh. Your sons and your daughters will prophesy. Your young men will see visions. Your old men will dream dreams. Yes, and on My servants and on My young women in those days, I will pour out My Spirit and they will prophesy"' (Acts 2:1 to 18).

The time of Grace came with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and is known as the 'last days'. Judaism is the foundation of Christianity. Jesus started the new church as an extension of Judaism. Christianity is not a religion of itself and would not exist without the Hebraic roots, which all Christians should embrace. Pentecost (Greek for '50th day') is Shavuot (Hebrew for 'weeks'), the Jewish feast of harvest held fifty days after the second day of Passover. The Feast of Firstfruits, Shavuot, is also known as the Feast of Weeks or the Feast of the Harvest. 'Children of Israel, when you have entered the land I will give you and reap its harvest, you will bring the sheaf of the Firstfruits of your harvest to the priest and he will wave the sheaf before the Lord on the next day after the Sabbath so you may be accepted. You will offer on that day a male lamb a year old, without blemish for a burnt offering to the Lord ... It is a statute forever throughout your generations in all your homes. You will count from the day after the Sabbath ... seven Sabbaths ... seven full weeks; fifty days to the day after the seventh Sabbath' (Leviticus 23:10 to 16). We can see by these verses, this was a holy feast time for Jewish people. It is no coincidence this special day was called the Feast of Firstfruits because the people in the upper room were truly the Firstfruits of the ministry of Jesus.

The verses in Acts 2:1 to 18 are the very first mention of Christians speaking in an unlearned language or tongue. Speaking in tongues is proof of being filled with the Holy Spirit. People who are not Spirit-filled cannot speak in tongues. The Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues blessed many new Christians. 'Peter said, "All the prophets testify about Jesus, through His name everyone who believes in Him will receive remission of sins." While Peter was still speaking these words the Holy Spirit fell on all those who heard the Word. Jews who believed were amazed and many joined with Peter because the gift of the Holy Spirit was also poured out on the Gentiles. They heard them speaking in other tongues and magnifying God. Then Peter said, "These who have received the Holy Spirit as well as we have should be baptised." He commanded them to be baptised in water in the name of Jesus the Messiah' (Acts 10:43 to 48). 'They were baptised in the name of the Lord Jesus. When Paul laid his hands on them the Holy Spirit came on them and they spoke with other tongues and prophesied' (Acts 19:5 & 6). Some people were baptised in the Holy Spirit then in water. Others were baptised in water then in the Holy Spirit. As Jesus said, the baptism of the Holy Spirit gives Christians the ability to use the power of God.

The ability to speak with other tongues is a unique spiritual gift and it gives us the power to pray, praise, give thanks and intercede for others in a heavenly prayer language. A prayer tongue or language is a manifestation of the Holy Spirit. It can sometimes be the language of holy angels (1 Corinthians 13:1) and is not related to our knowledge, intellect or understanding (1 Corinthians 14:14). Sometimes a tongue can be made known to people in church but that usually comes through an interpretation. It can also be miraculous as it was in the Book of Acts when the Spirit-filled people spoke in the languages of their audience (Acts 2:6 to 11). Tongues is a spiritual experience, well beyond human understanding and reveals a close intimacy with God and a determination to pray with power. It is God's will for all Christians to be able to pray in tongues but it is our choice whether we do or not. Some Christians either do not have enough faith or they

choose to never speak in tongues but they are doing themselves a disservice (1 Corinthians 12:30). Speaking in tongues edifies the speaker who is in absolute control of their speech. Speaking in tongues does not cause people to lose control and it does not bring ecstasy. People who have had the gift of tongues for a few years can sometimes speak in many different tongues and can change their tongue language at will. Speaking in tongues privately is understood only by the Lord. It is a personal prayer or a personal song of worship. 'Those who speak in another tongue speak not to people but to God, for no one understands but in the Spirit the prayer speaks mysteries ... If I pray in another tongue, my Spirit prays but my understanding is unfruitful. I can pray in the Spirit and I can pray with the understanding. I can sing in the Spirit and I can sing with my understanding' (1 Corinthians 14:2; 14 & 15). 'Beloved, keep building yourselves up in your most holy faith by praying in the Holy Spirit' (Jude 1:20).

Speaking in tongues in church can be interpreted either by the person who gave the tongue or by another Christian who has the gift of interpretation, the purpose of which is to edify the church or assembly (1 Corinthians 14:4 & 5). 'There are various kinds of gifts but the same Holy Spirit ... To each person is given the manifestation of the Holy Spirit for the profit of all (in church) ... The Holy Spirit gives one person the gift prophecy ... to another different or various tongues/languages and to another, the interpretation of tongues' (1 Corinthians 12:7 & 10). The gift of tongues is a very holy gift given to us so we may be edified (1 Corinthians 14:4). To be edified means to be emotionally built up, encouraged, filled with joy and also to be filled with awe because the gift of tongues comes down from the Lord God Creator Himself. Tongues is a direct manifestation of the Holy Spirit and is not to be abused. We are told not to ever quench the Holy Spirit (1 Thessalonians 5:19), which is allowing religiosity or our own will to supersede the righteous Will of God. We must not grieve the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 4:30), which is sinning to the point where He can grieve and at that point, God Himself may become the enemy. 'They rebelled and grieved His Holy Spirit, therefore He turned to be their enemy and Himself fought against them' (Isaiah 63:10). We must not attempt to lie to the Holy Spirit (Acts 5:1 to 4). The Holy Spirit is not an 'it'. He is the Lord God manifest. Jesus rejoiced in the Holy Spirit (Luke 10:21) and always referred to Him as He, (John 15:26) Him (John 16:7) or by one of His holy names like Counsellor, Intercessor (John 14:26; 15:26), Comforter (John 14:16), the Spirit of Truth (John 14:17). We must be very careful not to ever blaspheme or mock the Holy Spirit. 'Whoever may blaspheme against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness but is guilty of an eternal sin' (Mark 3:29). 'Everyone who confesses Jesus before mankind will the Son of Man confess before the holy angels of God but those who deny Jesus in the presence of people will be denied in the presence of the holy angels of God. Everyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven but those who blaspheme against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven' (Luke 12:8 to 10).

The explanation how to use the spiritual gifts of tongues, interpretation and prophecy is given in the New Testament. 'Earnestly desire spiritual gifts but especially prophecy. Those who speak in tongues speak not to people but to God for no one understands (what is being said) but in the Spirit they speak mysteries. Those who prophesy speak to people for their edification, exhortation and consolation. Those who speak in another tongue edifies themselves but those who prophesy edifies the whole assembly. It is good to speak with other tongues but better to prophesy. Those who prophesy are greater than those who speak with other tongues unless they interpret so the assembly may be edified. If I come to you speaking with other tongues, how would that profit you unless I speak to you either by way of revelation, a word of knowledge, prophecy or teaching? ... Unless you spoke words easy to understand how would it be known what is spoken? You would be speaking into the air (you would not make any sense). Since you are zealous for spiritual gifts, seek one you may abound to the edification of the assembly. Let those who speak in another tongue pray they may interpret. If I pray in another tongue my Spirit prays, but my understanding is unfruitful. What then? I will pray with the Spirit and I will pray with the understanding also. I will sing with the Spirit and I will sing with the understanding also. If you bless with the (language of the Holy) Spirit, how will those who are unlearned say the "Amen" at your giving of thanks, since they do not know what you said? You most certainly give thanks well but the other person is not edified. I thank my God I speak with other tongues more than you all. In the assembly I would rather speak five words with my understanding, so I might instruct others than ten thousand words in tongues. In the Law it is written, "By men of strange languages and by the lips of strangers I will speak to this people. Not even then will they listen to Me, says the Lord" (Isaiah 28:11 & 12). Therefore tongues are for a sign, not to those who believe but to the unbelieving. Prophesying is for a sign, not to the unbelieving but to those who believe. If the whole assembly is assembled together and all speak with other tongues and unlearned or unbelieving people come in they will say you are insane. If all people prophesy and someone unbelieving or unlearned comes in, he is reprov'd and convicted, thus the secrets of his heart are revealed so he will fall down on his face and worship God, declaring God is among you indeed. ... When you come together, each one of you has a psalm, a teaching, a revelation, another tongue and an interpretation. Let all things be done to edify each other. If any one speaks in another tongue, let it be two or at the most three and in turn and let another interpret. If there is no interpreter let them keep silent in the assembly and let them speak to themselves and to God. Let the prophets speak, two or three and let the others discern (the prophecy not the prophet). If a revelation is made to another sitting by, let the

first person keep silent. You can all prophesy one by one so all may learn and all may be exhorted. The gift of the Holy Spirit of the prophets are subject to the prophets, for God is not a God of confusion but of peace ... If any one thinks themselves to be a prophet or spiritual, let them recognise ... they are the commandment of the Lord ... Desire to prophesy and do not forbid speaking with other tongues. Let all things be done decently and in order' (1 Corinthians 14:1 to 40).

There are some Christians who believe the gift of tongues have ceased and was only for the early church but they are quite wrong. Millions of Christians around the world today speak in tongues and the above verses make it clear, nobody is to forbid others from speaking in tongues, not in the early church and not our church. Children as young as four years old can be baptised with the Holy Spirit and may receive the gift of tongues more easily than adults. John the Baptist was filled with the Holy Spirit before he was born (Luke 1:15). The gift of tongues is God's way to work alongside Christians in prayer. 'The Holy Spirit helps our weaknesses for we do not know how to pray as we ought, the Holy Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with deep groanings or yearnings which cannot be uttered. God Who searches the hearts knows what is on the Holy Spirit's mind because He makes intercession for believers according to God's will' (Romans 8:26 & 27). The 'groaning' and 'yearning' too deep to be spoken are the deep hurt many people have within their soul. Hurt so deep they often cannot talk about it or they might be unaware of it and only the Holy Spirit knows so He makes intercession and heals the emotional wounds. These deep emotional wounds are usually a result of a traumatic incident or unhappy childhood. Deep hurt can be caused by various events, like the rejection of a parent for any reason; children who witness violence; the death of a parent; children with an alcoholic or drug addicted parent; the divorce of parents; sexual abuse; young children left in childcare; bullying; a child growing up with a miserable, depressed parent; feeling unwanted or any childhood trauma can cause such deep wounds. The child suffers and needs emotional healing that can only come from the Lord. Speaking in tongues regularly can slowly heal those wounds or bad memories to make the individual emotionally whole. Emotional healing can take time but after a while, the child or young adult can remember their sad incident and it no longer affects them. They no longer weep at the sad memory but can rejoice. This is the Holy Spirit at work, healing our groaning, yearning, hurt and suffering too deep and hurtful to talk about. We might not be able to tell any person about our emotional pain but we can always tell the Lord. He listens and He heals.

Some people say Jesus never spoke with tongues so question why we do. Jesus was the Word of God and had no need for tongues. 'He is clothed in a garment sprinkled with (His own) blood. His name is called "The Word of God" ... He has on His garment and on His thigh a name written, "KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS" (Revelation 19:13 & 16). The gift of tongues was given to the first Christians as a loving deposit like a down payment to eternal life. 'He Who establishes us with you in Jesus and anointed us is God Who sealed us and gave us the deposit of the Holy Spirit in our hearts' (2 Corinthians 1:21 & 22). 'God Who made us for this very thing (salvation) is God Who gave to us the deposit of the Holy Spirit' (2 Corinthians 5:5). This wonderful free gift is not to be taken lightly. It is the power of God manifest in the hearts of genuine believers. If anyone turns away from God and backslides into sin, the gift of tongues is not usually revoked. 'The gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable' (Romans 11:29). Backsliders must never mock the gift they once joyfully received because that is an unpardonable offence and they will not be forgiven (Luke 12:8 to 10). For those people who embrace the gift of tongues, it is a blessing to savour, enjoy, love, respect and use as a divine tool of power, holy worship, prayer and fellowship (John 4:24; 2 Corinthians 13:14). The Holy Spirit is the One Who gives us His companionship when times are tough (Hebrews 4:16). When we pray, He is the One Who draws near to us (James 4:8). We need to respect the Holy Spirit and use the gift of tongues wisely and reverently. The Holy Spirit cleanses us, He is the Presence within us and He belongs to God. 'Create in me a clean heart, O God. Renew a right spirit (attitude) within me. Do not remove me from Your presence and do not take Your Holy Spirit from me' (Psalm 51:10 & 11).

Amen and God bless you.

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