

Tongue Speaking #1

The gift of tongue speaking has been a popular issue among religious groups over the past several decades, and it has now begun a new wave in the movement. Really, the original tongue speaking was done by Peter and the other 11 apostles on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-6). There are others we read about in the New Testament that also spoke in tongues such as Cornelius (Acts 10:44), and the 12 disciples of John the Baptist (Acts 19:1-7). So we know and understand from God's word that the gift of tongue speaking was prevalent in the first century. But what about in our modern-day world; is God still using tongue speaking as a means of communication to us? What was the point of using this gift in the first century? How was the gift used? In answering these questions, through a thorough study of God's word, perhaps some light will be shed on this subject of "tongue speaking."

The first tongue ever spoke was done by the apostles on the day of Pentecost. Acts 2:2-3 states *"and suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them."* We know from the context that the "they" are the apostles. Jesus promised the apostles this baptism of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8). He also said those same men were to be witnesses of Him, and finally all these who spoke in tongues were Galileans, the region where Jesus chose His apostles (2:7). All of these clues tell us it was the apostles who were speaking in tongues here.

The text goes on to say that there sat on them *"divided tongues."* "Divided" simply means that they were separate, not every tongue was the same. The definition of the word *"tongues"* just means language. These men that spoke in *"divided tongues,"* would be the same as saying "divided languages." The text is obviously not referring to a literal tongue as we know the body part. Vine's defines the tongues on Pentecost as "the supernatural gift of speaking in another language without its having been learnt." The original Greek word for *"tongues"* is *glossa* which is found under Strong's number 1100.

When the Jews heard this sound and saw this before them, they became confused. Why? Because each one heard the apostles speak in their own language! The Jews knew that the apostles hadn't learned themselves all the world languages at this time, so this was indeed something supernatural. Some want to make the claim that the miracle was on the hearer and not on the speaker -- that the apostles weren't speaking in different languages, just that the Jews were hearing them in their own language. Not only is this a

weak assumption, there is just no possible way that this could be correct. That would mean the Holy Spirit rested upon the Jews and not the apostles! It also would make the promise Jesus made in John 14-16, and Acts 1 false, thus making Jesus a false prophet! Such is obviously not the implication of the scripture. For we also know that the apostles "*spoke with other tongues*" and each man heard them "*speak in his own language.*"

These tongues also were uttered that they could be understood. The Jews who heard them understood and comprehended the words the apostles were speaking, for they testified themselves, "*for we hear them speaking in our own tongues the wonderful works of God.*" These Jews were able to comprehend the words spoken as the wonderful works of God. If someone were to say to me "Good Morning" in English, I would be able to understand what was said. However, if that someone said to me "Buenos Dias" in Spanish (a foreign language), I would not be able to understand that because it's not my language. The message is the same in both expressions, but they are of two languages. So it was also on Pentecost for the Jews. The point of all these illustrations is to show that tongues were uttered to be understood by those who heard them. There are some who profess that they can speak in tongues in our modern world, but when asked what they said, the reply is, "I don't know what I am saying," nor does the hearer understand because the sound is like baby gibberish. Those who hold this assertion go to 1 Corinthians 14 for proof that this is how it was also done in the first century, namely at Corinth. Were there two different kinds of tongues? The tongues of Acts 2 differ greatly from the ones spoken of in 1 Corinthians 14. Human wisdom explains that there is an "*earthly tongue*" and a "*heavenly tongue.*" This will be the topic of the next article as we finish this study of "tongue speaking."

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