



Speaking in Tongues?

Introduction:

The BIG Question we ask with every question we bring up, “What does the Bible say?”

- God’s Word brings clarity, not confusion!

1 Corinthians 14:33 **For God is not the author of confusion**, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints.

The goal is to bring clarity and unity:

1 Corinthians 1:11 For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them *which are of the house of Chloe*, that there are contentions among you. ¹² Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ.

1 Corinthians 1:17 **For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel**: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect. ¹⁸ For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.

- **Baptism was not the priority!**
- **What was Paul’s Priority?**

What does the Bible say about Tongues?

Does the Bible support speaking in “tongues?” YES

What is Biblical tongues?

- 1) A gift from God to speak in other languages to further the Gospel?
- 2) An unknown language spoken between you and God in prayer?
- 3) Both?
- 4) Neither?

A Bible Study of Tongues:

Old Testament:

Genesis 10:20 These *are* the sons of Ham, after their families, after their tongues, in their countries, *and* in their nations.

Psalms 55:9 Destroy, O Lord, *and* divide their tongues: for I have seen violence and strife in the city.

Jeremiah 23:31 Behold, I *am* against the prophets, saith the LORD, that use their tongues, and say, He saith.

Other Old Testament verses that mention tongues: Psalm 31:20, 55:9, 78:36, 140:3, Isaiah 66:18, Jeremiah 9:3

Old Testament Hebrew word - Tongues = The muscle in your mouth, speaking, or the language in which you speak

New Testament:

Start with the Great Commission:

Mark 16:15 And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.

How can they preach to "all the world?"

- God had prophesied that He would provide a way

Isaiah 28:11 For with stammering lips and another tongue will he speak to this people.

The beginning of the gift of tongues:

Acts 2:4-8 And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and **began to speak with other tongues**, as the Spirit gave them utterance. ⁵ And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, **out of every nation** under heaven. ⁶ Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because **that every man heard them speak in his own language**. ⁷ And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galilaeans?

Acts 2:8 And **how hear we every man in our own tongue**, wherein we were born? ⁹ Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judaea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia, ¹⁰ Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes, ¹¹ Cretes and Arabians, **we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God**.

What do we learn from this?

What was the purpose?

What was happening?

Tongues was given as a spiritual gift to preach the Gospel in other languages and fulfill the great commission

Acts 10:42 And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God *to be* the Judge of quick and dead. ⁴³ To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.

God always equips:

Acts 10:44 While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. ⁴⁵ And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. ⁴⁶ For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God.

Was this an unknown prayer to God? NO

- They heard them speak with tongues and WHAT? Magnify God

NOTE: They understood!

- The message was received

Acts 19:4-6 Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. ⁵ When they heard *this*, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. ⁶ And when Paul had laid *his* hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.

Was this an “unknown language in prayer?”

- Was this a secret prayer or a secret language between man and God?

Paul teaches on tongues:

1 Corinthians 12:7-10 But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. ⁸ For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; ⁹ To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; ¹⁰ To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another *divers* kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues:

Again...speaking of language

- Speaking of communication and understanding

“The Unknown Tongue” and Praying in tongues

The book of Corinthians was a letter to the church of Corinth

- They would write him a letter, he would respond with a letter

The opening of the letter:

1 Corinthians 1:2 **Unto the church of God which is at Corinth**, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours:

He is addressing issues in the church....

1 Corinthians 1:10 Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. 11 **For it hath been declared unto me of you**, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you.

He addressing spiritual gifts...

1 Corinthians 12:1 Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant.

1 Corinthians 12:10 To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues:

“Tongues” (GREEK) - the tongue; by implication, a language (specially, one naturally unacquired):--tongue.

He addresses the “unknown tongue”

1 Corinthians 14:1 Follow after charity, and desire spiritual *gifts*, **but rather that ye may prophesy**.

- No longer “tongues,” but “unknown” tongue

Paul responds to the two sides of this issue:

- Speaking in an unknown language to God vs. prophesying

1 Corinthians 14:2 For he that speaketh in an **unknown tongue** speaketh not to men, but to God: for no man understandeth *him*; howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries. 3 But he that prophesieth speaketh to men *to* edification, and exhortation, and comfort.

Paul goes into GREAT detail to explain why this issue:

I Corinthians 14:4 He that speaketh in an *unknown* tongue edifieth himself; but he that prophesieth edifieth the church.

- The unknown tongue is what Paul is confronting
 1. It edifies (draws attention) to man rather than God
 2. It does not accomplish what God intended it to be
 - a. “To preach the gospel to every creature”
 - b. “BUT he that prophesieth edifieth the church”

I Corinthians 14:5 I would that ye all spoke with tongues, but rather that ye prophesied: for greater *is* he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues, except he interpret, that the church may receive edifying.

- Their focus was on the speaking of tongues rather than the purpose of speaking in tongues
- EXCEPT he interprets

I Corinthians 14:6 Now, brethren, if I come to you speaking with tongues, what shall I profit you, except I shall speak to you either by revelation, or by knowledge, or by prophesying, or by doctrine?

- If I don’t speak with the purpose of proclaiming God or teaching the saints – Then what is the point?

Paul’s Illustration of his point:

I Corinthians 14:7 And even things without life giving sound, whether pipe or harp, except they give a distinction in the sounds, how shall it be known what is piped or harped? 8 For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle? 9 So likewise ye, except ye utter by the tongue words **easy to be understood**, how shall it be known what is spoken? for ye shall speak into the air.

Comparison to an instrument:

- If you can’t understand it, then what is the point?
- “Except ye utter by the tongue words easy to be understood”

I Corinthians 14:10 There are, it may be, so many kinds of voices in the world, and none of them is without signification. 11 Therefore if I know not the meaning of the voice, I shall be to him that speaketh a barbarian, and he that speaketh *shall be* a barbarian to me.

- There is no communication between two that cannot understand each other
 - Example: Traveling through a foreign country

I Corinthians 14:12 Even so ye, forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church.

If you speak in “tongues” – then there should be an interpretation of it

I Corinthians 14:13 Wherefore let him that speaketh in an *unknown* tongue pray that he may interpret.

Praying in tongues? What would that accomplish?

I Corinthians 14:14 For if I pray in an *unknown* tongue, my spirit prayeth, **but my understanding is unfruitful**. 15 What is it 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.

- KEY: Understanding
- Singing, Prayer, preaching – done with the purpose of understanding and edifying

Example: Jesus teaching about prayer:

Matthew 7:7 Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: 8 **For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.** 9 Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? 10 Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? 11 If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?

What about public praying in the unknown tongue?

I Corinthians 14:16 Else when thou shalt bless with the spirit, how shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned say Amen at thy giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest?

- How can you be a blessing to those around you if no one can understand you – including yourself.

I Corinthians 14:17 For thou verily givest thanks well, but the other is not edified.

Paul explains the importance of preaching with understanding

I Corinthians 14:18 I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than ye all: 19 Yet in the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that *by my voice* I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an *unknown* tongue.

Does it sound like Paul is in favor of this new unknown tongue?

I Corinthians 14:20 Brethren, be not children in understanding: howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men.

I Corinthians 14:21 In the law it is written, *With men of other tongues and other lips will I speak to this people; and yet for all that will they not hear me, saith the Lord.* 22 Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not: but prophesying *serveth* not for them that believe not, but for them which believe.

- Tongues are a sign
- NEVER intended to be used as an unknown prayer
- NEVER intended to be used for the church in worship

Paul explains how crazy this would be if they continue in this:

I Corinthians 14:23 If therefore the whole church be come together into one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in *those that are* unlearned, or unbelievers, will they not say that ye are mad?

- Yet there are churches today that do this
- They would think you were mad or crazy

This what is supposed to happen:

I Corinthians 14:24 But if all prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not, or *one* unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all: 25 And thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so falling down on *his* face he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth.

YES!!! This is the goal

Biblical Principle: We do EVERYTHING to EDIFY!

I Corinthians 14:26 How is it then, brethren? when ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done to edifying.

Principle: Whatever you do, it is should bring understanding

- It should edify, buildup. Communicate truth

Paul sets ground rules, a test to separate the gift of tongues from the unknown tongue:

- If it is the gift of tongues, there will be those who can understand it
- If no one can understand it, then sit down and be quiet

I Corinthians 14:27 If any man speak in an *unknown* tongue, *let it be* by two, or at the most *by* three, and *that* by course; and let one interpret. 28 But if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church; and let him speak to himself, and to God. 29 Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge. 30 If *any thing* be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace.

- If God speaks to your heart, wait and make sure it is God and not just emotion
- Then, at the right time, tell others what God is doing in your heart.

I Corinthians 14:31 For ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted.

God is NOT the author of confusion!

I Corinthians 14:32 And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets. 33 For God is not *the author* of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints.

What about tongues today?

1 Corinthians 14:22a Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not:

- Tongues & healing were sign gifts
- They were not intended to last
- Speaking in tongues (other languages) was to cease

1 Corinthians 13:8b ...whether *there be* tongues, they shall cease...

What about Romans 8:26?

Romans 8:26 Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

Tongues has two Greak words in the New Testament:

Glossa: refers to the physical organ, the tongue, or speech or language

Dialektos: refers exclusively to a known dialect or language like French, English, Spanish, etc.

“Groanings” is NOT TONGUES!

“With groanings” = Stenagmos: - With sighs, or that deep feeling and intense anxiety which exists in the oppressed and burdened heart of the Christian.

This verse does not say anything about speaking in an unknown language

- It is actually about not having the words to say to God

Groanings or hurts THAT CANNOT BE put into words (cannot be uttered)

Questions to think about:

1. If tongues is a way to pray to God on a deeper level, then why didn't Jesus teach it or explain it when they ask Him to teach them to pray?
2. Paul confronts this issue, but where is the original teaching on praying in tongues?
3. The Bible is filled with stories and examples for us to follow of great men and woman of God – Where do we read a story of one of them praying this way?