



Below are a few answers to questions we've received about speaking in tongues and the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Speaking in tongues is real, and many great men and women throughout history have testified that God so filled or baptized them with the Holy Spirit they had to ask Him to hold back or "stay" His hand.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT SPEAKING IN TONGUES

1. Have you ever spoken in tongues?

Yes, I do daily.

2. Do you think it is something Christians should want to do?

Yes. As believers we should desire all that God has provided for us.

3. Do you think speaking in tongues is something God wants us to do?

Yes. 1 Corinthians 14:5 says, "I wish you all spoke in tongues" signifying it is God's desire.

4. Why do you think some Christians do not speak in tongues?

- **Man-made traditions.** Being told that it is not for today, etc.
- **Pride.** We must humble ourselves and become like little children to speak in tongues. It is an insult to our intellect. For an intelligent person to begin saying things they do not understand is very humiliating and an insult to our ego.
- **Faith.** It takes faith to speak in tongues. We have to (by faith) say words we do not understand.
- **They think it is evil.** People for ages have blamed speaking in tongues on the devil. However, Jesus said, "If a son asked his father for bread he will not give him a stone. If he asks him for fish he will not give him a serpent will he? Or if he asks him for an egg he will not give him a scorpion will he? If you know how to give good gift to your children how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them who ask him" (Luke 11:11-13)? Scorpions and serpents always represent the devil or demons in the Bible. Jesus was saying, if you ask God for something, He will not let the devil give you a counterfeit.
- **Speaking in tongues was only for the apostolic age.** Religiosity has taught people that tongues passed away once the Bible was completed and the apostolic age was over. They use 1 Corinthians 13:8 and 10 ~ "If there are gifts of prophecy, they will be done away; if there are tongues, they will cease; if there is knowledge, it will be done away ... but when the perfect comes, the partial will be done away." These religious zealots pick out "if there are tongues, they will cease" and say, "when the perfect comes, the partial will be done away." They claim "the perfect" is the Bible and once the scriptures were completed there was no longer any need for tongues. However, they do not throw out "prophecy" or preaching as they apply it, nor do they throw out knowledge, we are still learning and growing in knowledge. The argument they use here against tongues is completely absurd and invalid.

5. Is speaking in tongues always an earthly language?

Tongues are merely an unknown dialect to the one speaking. They at times may be in a known dialect as on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2) or a spiritual language known only to God Himself (1 Corinthians 14:2). The point is they are speaking in a language that is unknown to the one speaking, which is what makes it so powerful. "He that speaks in an unknown tongue speaks not unto men, but unto God: for no man understands him; howbeit in the spirit he speaks mysteries" (1 Corinthians 14:2).

When one speaks in tongues, they are edifying themselves. When we are speaking in tongues, we are in essence exercising our spiritual man. As such, we are building up, strengthening, edifying and making our spirit man stronger. The more we exercise this gift in our personal time of prayer and praise, the stronger our spirit becomes. "He who speaks in an unknown tongue edifies himself" (1 Corinthians 14:4). This is one reason we should practice this gift regularly.

6. What about tongues and interpretation of tongues?

There is a difference in application in the use of tongues in prayer, praise and worship and a public display in the congregation. If a group is together in prayer time and some are praying in tongues that typically doesn't need to be interpreted because they are clearly speaking to God. Interpretation is to take place when in a church service and a person speaks out loud, clear and distinctly in tongues. Interpretation is to be given so that the entire church is edified and built up and not just the one speaking. The interpretation is often similar to that of a prophecy (1 Corinthians 14:3-4). It may be often interpreted as praise to God as well (1 Corinthians 14:17). In a time of group prayer and there are those praying in tongues, at times it may need to be interpreted if there is a clear and distinct utterance in tongues. You can usually tell the difference. It will usually come across as being distinctive and different from those praying or worshipping in tongues.

A Few Facts About Speaking in Tongues

- **You receive all of the Holy Spirit the moment you trust Jesus as your Lord and Savior.** “If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His” (Romans 8:9). The baptism of the Holy Spirit is a separate and distinct experience believers can have with the Holy Spirit that already dwells within them as a born again believer (Matthew 3:11, Act 1:5).
- **It is God’s desire for all believers to speak in tongues.** Paul said, “I would that you all spoke with tongues” (1 Corinthians 14:5). It is clearly God’s will to give this gift to His people.
- **Tongues are mainly directed toward communion with God.** “He that speaks in an unknown tongue speaks not unto men, but unto God: for no man understands him; howbeit in the spirit he speaks mysteries” (1 Corinthians 14:2). Tongues can be directed in a message to God’s people, but their primary function is speaking to God. God gives us our own unique language to talk to Him. How cool is that?
- **Tongues are for praise, thanksgiving and worship of God (1 Corinthians 14:14-16).** When you have given thanks to God for all the good things He has done, and for who He is, and you don’t have any more words to express your gratitude, you can continue your worship and praise of Him through your new spiritual language.
- **It’s a wondrous form of prayer (1 Corinthians 14:14-16).** When you have prayed about certain things and don’t know what else to say, or how to pray, you can then use your prayer language - tongues. You are speaking mysteries to God (1 Corinthians 14:2). You are speaking to God directly from your human spirit, bypassing your understanding.
- **Tongues edifies or builds up your spirit.** “He who speaks in an unknown tongue edifies himself; but he that prophesies edifies the church” (1 Corinthians 14:4). You are exercising your spirit. The more you exercise your spirit through speaking in tongues, the stronger your human spirit becomes. This is not a substitute for reading the Word of God, but it definitely helps.
- **It is something you do (Acts 2:4).** On the Day of Pentecost “they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and (they) began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.” The Holy Spirit didn’t speak through them, He merely gave them the utterance or prompted their speech, but they were the ones who spoke. Someone may ask, “what if it’s just me speaking?” It better be. You are the one speaking. It is your human spirit or spirit man speaking directly to God (1 Corinthians 14:2).
- **It is received by faith.** Everything we get from God is received by faith. Faith is expressed in actions (Mark 2:5, James 2:17, Hebrews 4:2). Ask God to baptize you in or with His Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues. Accept by faith that if you ask Him for something He will give it to you (Luke 11:11-13). After asking Him for this experience in the Holy Spirit, act in faith and begin speaking. At first, you may simply hear one or a few syllables in your head that you don’t understand. Just start speaking in faith! Like a child when they first begin talking, they say one or two things and keep saying them until they begin to speak fluently. Some may speak out fluently right away and others may not. Everyone’s experience is different. That’s what makes it personal. We serve a personal God Who deals with us all on an individual basis. Also, each of us come to the Lord with different levels of faith. Our responsibility is simply to act or speak in faith and allow the Spirit of the Lord to work in and through us.

Let’s be careful not to put God or the Holy Spirit in our religious or traditional box. Our God is so much bigger than man made ideologies. Let’s get back to “Thus saith the Lord!”

By Dr. Gary Linton