

The Gospel Truth

BIBLICAL INSTRUCTION AND ENCOURAGEMENT FOR THE
MISSION FIELD WORLDWIDE.

FROM BABEL TO PENTECOST or “OTHER TONGUES”

“And the LORD said....let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another’s speech....Therefore is the name of it called Babel” (Genesis 11:6-9, KJV).

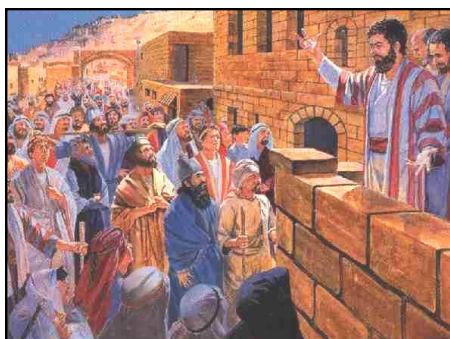
After the great flood in the time of Noah, people once again became wicked in the sight of God. Out of the pride of their hearts, they began to build a tower to heaven which became known as “Babel.” To prevent their prideful idolatry, God caused them to speak in different languages. Previously, “The whole earth was of one language, and of one speech” (Genesis 11:1).

Without a common language, unity was disrupted and people were scattered upon the face of the earth. This was the origin of the different languages in the world.

Over 2000 years later, on the day of Pentecost, 120 followers of Jesus Christ were at Jerusalem in an upper room seeking the Father in unity. “Suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind....And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to

speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance” (Acts 2:2-4).

A great crowd, including Jews from every nation under heaven, congregated to observe this miraculous sight.



At Babel, languages divided people.

At Pentecost, people were unified by the miraculous gift of languages so the gospel could be understood.

Not understanding what was occurring, some accused the disciples of being drunk. God had poured out His Spirit on the believers in Jesus Christ and witnessed of the gospel through

signs and wonders as the disciples spoke in “other tongues.”

Much is said in the religious world about “speaking in tongues” as on the day of Pentecost. What really happened? What were the disciples speaking? Were these “other tongues” a spiritual, heavenly, angelic language? It need not be left to theologians nor to emotional or personal experiences to define the truth of the gift of tongues. The Word of God reveals the reality and truth of this gift.

“Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language” (Acts 2:6). This account is simple and clear. The disciples were not speaking unintelligibly in some ecstatic, angelic language. These men of Galilee (many of whom were uneducated fishermen) were speaking in over a dozen tongues, or languages, of the people who were gathered. “And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were

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WHAT THE BIBLE Teaches About...

Word of God

2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21; Matt. 24:35

Relationship of Love

Matt. 22:37-40; John 14:21-23; 1 John 4:7-11

Repentance

Acts 3:19; Acts 17:30; 2 Cor. 7:10

New Birth

John 3:3-7; 2 Cor. 5:17; Rom. 6:1-4;

Eph. 2:1, 5-6

Freedom From Sin

1 John 5:18; Matt. 1:21; John 8:11

Infilling of the Holy Spirit

Acts 19:2; Acts 15:8-9; Acts 1:8

Holiness

Luke 1:73-75; Heb. 12:14; 1 Peter 1:15-16;

Titus 2:11-12; Rom. 6:22

Kingdom of God

Luke 17:20-21; Romans 14:17; John 18:36

The Church

Acts 2:47; Eph. 4:4-6; 1 Cor. 12:12-13; Col 1:18

Unity

John 17:20-23; Gal 3:28; Rev. 18:2-4

Ordinances

Matt. 28:19-20; Matt. 26:26-30;

1 Cor. 11:23-27; John 13:14-17

Divine Healing

Luke 4:18; Isaiah 53:4-5; James 5:13-16

Sanctity of Marriage

Matt. 19:5-6; Luke 16:18; Rom. 7:2-3;

1 Cor. 7:10-11

Outward Appearance

1 Tim. 2:9-10; 1 Cor. 11:14-15; Deut. 22:5

End of Time

2 Peter 3:7-12; John 5:28-29; 2 Cor. 5:10;

Matt 25:31-46

Pacifism

Luke 6:27-29; Luke 18:20

Worship

John 4:23-24; Eph. 5:19; 2 Cor. 3:17

Great Commission

Mark 16:15

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born?" (Acts 2:8). People from Asia to Africa to Rome (Acts 2:9-11) were amazed and marveled as they listened.

The disciples had not learned these languages; but as the Holy Spirit gave them utterance, they were able to communicate in a foreign language so people of other lands could understand. They were prophesying, or preaching, of Jesus Christ the Son of the living God. "We do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God" (Acts 2:11b). The gift was to the speakers not to the hearers. For example, Peter may have been preaching to a group in one of the languages of Asia. Across the road, John might have been preaching to the people in the language of the Arabians, etc.

The people at Babel were divided by the confusion of everyone speaking different languages. On Pentecost, they were all able to hear the unifying message of Jesus Christ through the divine gift of tongues. If the disciples were jabbering, muttering, and groaning as many professing "tongues speakers" do today, people would have been left in confusion. Rather, men of all nations heard the message of salvation in their native language.

Praise be to the Lord who enabled the disciples, through the Holy Spirit, to witness to foreigners in their own language: from Babel to Pentecost, from division to unity, from confusion to clarity, from sin to salvation.

-mws

THE GOSPEL TRUTH

The Gospel Truth periodical is published in the name of the Lord for all people of all lands in the interest of establishing and encouraging them in the truth of God's Word. This publication teaches and promotes the truths of the Bible that have been established since the time of Christ and the apostles.

The Word of God is the singular, acceptable rule of faith. It teaches salvation and deliverance from sin through the atonement of Jesus Christ; a subsequent infilling of the Holy Spirit to lead, direct and empower; practical holiness in every area of life; and the unity and oneness of God's people. Acceptable service to God is through a personal relationship of love founded in truth.

Editors: Michael & René Smith

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Editorial



“Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said unto them....” —Acts 4:8

When filled with the Holy Ghost, Peter didn't fall over, shake, babble, or foam at the mouth; but he spoke in boldness, clarity, and power of faith in a resurrected Lord. What a wonderful blessing it is to experience the reality of Holy Spirit baptism which empowers and enables us to live a holy life.

In this issue of *The Gospel Truth*, I address the subject of speaking in tongues. It is a large subject and is so important that I increased the size of the paper. Even at that, there is much more that could be written. The Bible is very clear about what occurred on the day of Pentecost when the disciples spoke with tongues. They were able to preach in intelligible languages they had not previously known by a divine gift of the Spirit. The devil has perverted the simplicity of this experience and deceived millions of people into thinking that there is a heavenly language and that speaking/praying ecstatically with unintelligible speech is of the Holy Spirit.

Speaking unintelligibly is not just a practice among the Pentecostal movement, but it exists among almost every religion and Christian denomination. Without fear or reservation, I declare in the Lord that this spirit of gibberish is not of the Holy Spirit; it is contrary to the practice, teaching, and spirit found in Christ and His Word. By this statement, some will accuse me of having blasphemed against the Holy Spirit. Indeed, I have already been so accused but I stand in the light of God's Word and personal divine revelation of this truth.

I have encountered the spirit and practice of speaking in unintelligible tongues not only in the United States but in many other countries. When teaching ministers from various denominations, I know of no other subject that gets the devil more agitated. I can not stress enough the necessity of following the example of Jesus in prayer and in conduct.

Many denominations have taken a “middle-of-the-road” approach to this heathen practice of praying/speaking incoherently. When one sympathizes with it, the door is opened to more false doctrine and to spirits that are not of God. Whether it be from emotion, environment, or actual false spirits, the root of spiritual babbling is from the devil with the purpose to deceive.

It is revealing when there are pagans and atheists having the same ecstatic experiences that the Pentecostals and other tongues groups call a manifestation of the Holy Spirit. Many of these people live in sin but are enamored with their spirituality because of these experiences.

I believe this is one of the greatest deceptive powers of the enemy in the Christian world today. Let us pray and ever be on guard against the enemy. May God enlighten darkened eyes that they might see.

Michael W. Smith

July 2014

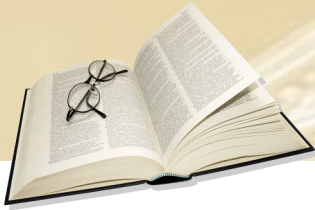


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FROM THE GREEK

Dialektos (Dee-AHL-ek-toss)

Strong's Greek Dictionary: (mode of) discourse, i.e. "dialect": language, tongue.

Glossa (GLOSS-uh) A Greek word meaning "tongue" or "language."

Thayer's Greek Lexicon: Glossa: 1. The tongue, a member of the body, the organ of speech.
2. A tongue, i. e. the language used by a particular people in distinction from that of other nations.

For the purpose of this paper, *glossolalia* refers to the practice of humans uttering sounds without understanding their meaning in a non-existent language (unintelligible speech).

Glossolalia (GLOSS-uh-LAY-lee-uh)

Derived from two Greek words: *glossa* (meaning language or tongue) and *lalia* (meaning talk or speech). In the purest sense, it would refer to speaking in a foreign language. Today, the term is used by theologians to refer to the practice of speaking or praying in what is professed to be a heavenly or spiritual language (ecstatic utterances as in the modern tongues movement).

Merriam-Webster Dictionary: "Profuse and often emotionally-charged speech that mimics coherent speech but is usually unintelligible to the listener and is uttered in some states of religious ecstasy."

Xenoglossia (Zee-nuh-GLOSS-ee-uh)

Derived from two Greek words: *xenos* (meaning foreigner) and *glossa*. Refers to the phenomenon in which someone can speak an actual foreign language that he never learned. It can be understood by another person who knows that language. It is intelligible speech.

It is important to understand the definition of the word "tongues" as translated from the original Greek manuscripts. Much false doctrine has been derived from faulty understanding of the language of the Bible in translation and also from taking scripture out of context. In every case in the book of Acts and 1 Corinthians when the word *glossa* is used, as it refers to speaking in tongues, it means an understandable language. It never refers to unintelligible speech or the modern use of *glossolalia*.

On the day of Pentecost, men of God spoke earthly languages to foreigners in the foreigner's earthly language. This was an example of what is referred to as *xenoglossia*. It is important to note that the translation

of "tongue" comes from both *dialektos* and *glossa* in the Greek and was used interchangeably, making it obvious that the disciples were speaking in known languages other than the language native to them.

Acts 2:4 *And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues [glossa].*

Acts 2:6 *...every man heard them speak in his own language [dialektos].*

Acts 2:8 *And how hear we every man in our own tongue [dialektos], wherein we were born?*

Acts 2:11 *...we do hear them speak in our tongues [glossa] the wonderful works of God.*

The gift of tongues, as experienced on Pentecost, brings clarity as the scripture is studied. It defines the gift, the meaning, and application of "tongues." Never once in the scripture does it refer to the ecstatic babbling which is practiced around the world. In this passage in Acts, "tongues speaking" is observed in its pure, unperverted form as God gave it.

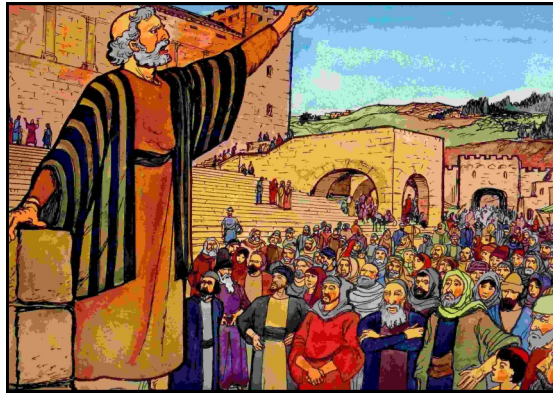
SPEAKING IN TONGUES

THE BIBLE IS OUR GUIDE

The phenomenon of ecstatic “tongues speaking,” praying in tongues, etc. is prevalent among Christians and non-Christians around the world. It is spreading rapidly in Christian movements in the name of the Holy Spirit. It is important that the Word of God be the guide and that all practices and doctrines be in conformity to the Bible—regardless of opinions, experiences and physical manifestations. "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness" (2 Timothy 3:16).

BEWARE OF FALSE TEACHINGS

Jesus gave the church the following warning: "For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect" (Matthew 24:24). The devil comes not only with the appearance of evil but also as an angel of light working miracles. It is vital that truth be embraced and all error rejected. Many are being deceived by the false doctrine of *glossolalia* that is sweeping across the land. It brings a false sense of spiritual security to those who practice it and undermines the reality of a true experience of the Holy Spirit and holy living. Modern tongues speaking is not a result of the Holy Spirit but is of a counterfeit spirit. It is vital that every child of God understand the truth of "tongues" and beware of the fallacy in much of the current teaching and observance on the subject.



THE PENTECOST EXPERIENCE

*The disciples spoke
with clarity and distinction
in a foreign language.*

SPEAKING WITH NEW TONGUES

Jesus commissioned His disciples to go into all the world and preach the gospel. "And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues [*glossa*]" (Mark 16:17). This is the only place in the Gospels that references speaking with tongues as a gift or a sign. This was beautifully fulfilled on the day of Pentecost when the disciples "...were filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues" (Acts 2:4) and

"...every man heard them speak in his own language [*dialektos*]" (Acts 2:6). The disciples were speaking in "new" or "other" languages. They had not learned the languages they were speaking but were able to speak them through the power and gifting of the Holy Spirit.

The disciples were not babbling or speaking unintelligibly. They were speaking with clarity and distinction in a foreign language. By the Spirit, they were beginning their ministry to people from outside of Israel who spoke different languages.

Many people today testify to having been baptized with the Holy Spirit and having a Pentecost

experience of speaking in tongues. If this were accurate, these people would be speaking human languages to witness of the power of God instead of the incoherent babbling that is filling many churches today.

THE GIFT OF TONGUES

The Apostle Paul expounded upon the diversities of gifts that are given by the Spirit. "There are diversities of gifts

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but the same spirit" (1 Corinthians 12:4). The Holy Spirit does not give all people the same gift. "For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge...to another faith...gifts of healing...working of miracles...prophecy...discerning of spirits...divers kinds of tongues [*glossa*]...interpretation of tongues: But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will" (1 Corinthians 12:8-11).

God gives gifts of the Spirit as He sees they will be profitable to the body of Christ and to the work of the Kingdom of God. The gift of tongues, as evidenced by Pentecost, is the ability to speak in a foreign language that is not learned but is given through the power of the Spirit to share the gospel with people in their native tongue or language. The word *glossa* (or language) used in 1 Corinthians is the same word used in Acts 2. It is not a gift of babbling or speaking in an unknown language to man. The gift of tongues was not the gift of *glossolalia* but of *xenoglossia*.

GIFT OF INTERPRETATION

The gift of interpretation is the special gifting of the Spirit to translate for someone who is speaking in his own language that is different than that of the hearers. If the disciples on the day

of Pentecost would not have been blessed with the gift of tongues, they would have needed someone with the gift of interpretation to translate their message into the languages of the listeners. Often, as people babble ecstatically, they claim they need a translator. This is far from the reality of the true gift of tongues or the gift of interpretation. Where there is the gift of tongues, there is no need for an interpreter as everyone will understand in their native language.

Many seek the gift of tongues and esteem it greatly, even if their understanding is faulty. Paul said in 1 Corinthians 12:31, "But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way." He then expounds on the value of charity in the fourteenth chapter. If people would get as excited about and value love as much as they do tongues, the world would be a different place. While not everyone receives the same gift from the Holy Spirit, all can receive the gift of the Holy Spirit Himself.

SCRIPTURAL EXAMPLES OF THE GIFT OF TONGUES

In addition to the day of Pentecost, there are two other times recorded in the scripture where people received the Holy Spirit and spoke in tongues. A few years after Pentecost, Peter ministered to the household of Cornelius and the Holy Ghost fell on them. "And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished...because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God" (Acts 10:45-46). Peter later testified that "...the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning" (Acts 11:15). Similarly, the Holy Ghost fell on disciples of John the Baptist at Ephesus who received Christ. They also "...spake with tongues [*glossa*], and prophesied" (Acts 19:6).

The Holy Spirit was not only given to people on the day of Pentecost but to all believers who opened their hearts and sought for the infilling. God also gave the gift of tongues in these two recorded examples just as He gave at Pentecost. Again, they were not speaking incoherently but in the languages of the hearers. Any other accounting is a

perversion of what the scripture clearly states. With the gift of different foreign languages, they prophesied, or taught, in those languages the doctrines of Christ.

EVERYONE DOES NOT SPEAK WITH TONGUES

Many churches that practice *glossolalia*, speaking unintelligible speech, teach this is the evidence of the Holy Spirit. Not only is their understanding of tongues wrong, it is also incorrect to believe everyone will have the true, Bible experience of tongues. God sets the members in the body and distributes the gifts of the Spirit as

it is pleasing to Him. Paul asked questions to make a definite point in 1 Corinthians 12:28-30. "Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles?"

The answer to those questions is clearly "No." Paul continues to ask: "Have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues [in foreign languages]? do all interpret?" The answer remains the same: "No."

TONGUES (FOREIGN LANGUAGE) IS JUST ONE GIFT

While some of the 120 believers in Acts 2 spoke in foreign languages, many others who received the Holy Spirit at that time did not speak in tongues (other languages). When people of Samaria heard the word of God and were saved, Peter and John prayed for them and they received the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:14-17). They did not speak in tongues, nor did Paul when he received the Holy Spirit. Most importantly, Jesus did not speak in tongues when the Holy Spirit descended upon Him.

Speaking in tongues, or foreign languages, was never commanded, never practiced by all Holy Spirit-filled people and was not exemplified by Christ Himself. It is just one gift of the Spirit that was given at needful times to witness to the unbeliever (1 Corinthians 14:22) that the gospel would be spread and believed.

EVIDENCE OF THE SPIRIT IS POWER TO LIVE HOLY

The true evidence of the Holy Spirit is found in the power to live a holy life and to bear the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23). It is by this fruit that the spiritual life of a person is truly known. There are many people who babble and speak incoherently. They profess to possess the Holy Spirit and yet they are living in sin and in disobedience to God's Word. They are not filled with the Spirit, for the Spirit will only dwell in a clean, holy temple.



Speaking in tongues, or foreign languages, was never commanded, never practiced by all Holy Spirit-filled people and was not exemplified by Christ Himself.

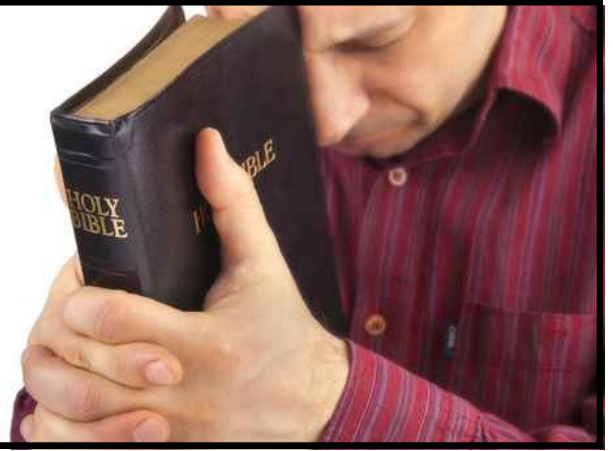
CONCLUSION

The scripture lays down a clear pattern at Pentecost for understanding the gift of tongues as a human, foreign language. The "tongues" movement has gained millions of people who are drawn to an experience that would appear to be supernatural. If someone can have this experience and still live in sin, why seek the real Bible experience of the Holy Spirit? Charismatic babbling is not of the Holy Spirit but of a deceptive spirit contrary to that of God. God does not want to be worshiped in illegitimate ways. The fullness of the Holy Spirit is not found in external exhibition but in righteousness, peace, and joy.

-mws

Prayer Language

“Language of Angels”



There is another false doctrine closely tied to the practice of unintelligible speaking. It is the practice of praying in tongues in what is called a "prayer language" or an "angelic language." Some people practice this publicly and some teach it is a "private prayer language." When people pray in this way, they are speaking words and making sounds which mean nothing to themselves or to the hearers.

Again, truth is not measured by someone's experience but by the Word of God. When this practice is examined by scripture, it reveals that it is a concocted doctrine of man, not of God—for it is not scriptural.

WE ARE INSTRUCTED HOW TO PRAY

We are taught to pray "...in the Holy Ghost" (Jude 1:20) and to pray always "...with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit" (Ephesians 6:18). It takes the Holy Spirit to lead and guide and to help us know how to pray in accordance with the will of God. We are to pray with sincerity and openness to God, living in holiness and praying under the influences of the Holy Spirit.

THE SPIRIT MAKETH INTERCESSION

Some quote Romans 8:26b which states "...the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered." This scripture undermines the doctrine of a prayer language from the very people who quote it in

support of a prayer language. The Spirit will pray "for" us not "through" us. It further states that the groaning of the Spirit "cannot be uttered" or spoken. The reality of the passage is that the Spirit of God assists us and helps minister to the burdens that touch the deepest emotions of our lives.

THE TONGUES OF MEN & ANGELS

Paul's writing of 1 Corinthians 13:1 is used by many to support speaking/praying in the language of angels. "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels." The word "though" is translated from the Greek word *ean* which denotes indefiniteness or uncertainty. It is better



Angels...did not speak
unintelligibly, but they spoke
in the native tongue of the hearer.

translated to the word "if." "If I could speak with the languages of humans and of angels..." Paul could not speak all the languages of men nor did he speak the language of angels. He didn't move mountains and he did not give his body to be burned. He was making a conditional point to demonstrate how charity was the most important of all virtues.

The "tongues of angels" is better understood as being able to speak with eloquence and perfection. *If* people were able to pray or speak in the language of angels, it would be wise to examine how angels spoke here on earth. There are many scriptural examples to guide us. An angel spoke to Zacharias (Luke 1:13), to Mary (Luke 1:30), to the shepherds (Luke 2:10), to Peter (Acts 12:8) and the list goes on. These angels, divine messengers of the Lord, did not speak gibberish or unintelligibly, but they spoke in the native tongue of the hearer.

1 Corinthians 13:8 continues:

"Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues [*glossa*], they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away." If tongues were angelic,

how would they cease? Will the angels be incapable of speaking? Paul never inferred that he spoke an angelic language and the scripture never supports the existence of such.

"UNKNOWN" IS ADDED TO SOME TRANSLATIONS

Pentecostals and others that teach a "private prayer" language quote 1 Corinthians 14:14. "For if I pray in an 'unknown' [added by translators] tongue [*glossa*], my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful." *Glossa* is used, which again means a foreign language—not unintelligible speaking. It would be an arbitrary interpretation of Scripture to change the meaning of *glossa* to suddenly mean incoherent babbling or praying.

If someone is praying in a foreign language, to whom is it unfruitful? The hearer, because the hearer would not understand the language if it wasn't in his native tongue. When a person prays in a foreign language, how "...shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned say Amen at thy giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest?" (1 Corinthians 14:16). Paul said the "unlearned" or uneducated would not understand the prayer; not because it was gibberish, but because he had not been schooled or taught that foreign language.



The educated, learned person would understand the prayer. The prayer would be unfruitful and not edify anyone who did not speak that specific language.

CHRIST'S INSTRUCTION PROHIBITS REPETITION

Regardless of the doctrines of men, turn to the example of Jesus Himself as He taught us to pray in Matthew 6:7-13. "But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do..." (7). The Greek word for "repetition" means to stutter or stammer. It is clear that we are to



But when ye pray, use not
vain repetitions, as the heathen do.

Matthew 6:7-13

pray with clarity and simplicity. The heathen and idolaters would babble in their prayers and repeat the same thing over and over. Jesus said not to do that. This is the very thing many "tongues praying" people practice. They teach people how to pray by saying the same things over and over, which is in direct contradiction to God's Word.

In verse 9, Jesus said, "After this manner therefore pray ye...." Jesus did not make strange noises or speak a strange tongue or language. He prayed distinctly and with understanding. If God wanted His people to pray differently in an unknown tongue, it seems Christ would have taught us differently; and we know that Christ and the Father are not in conflict but are one.

BE NOT DECEIVED BY MEN'S FALSE DOCTRINES

There is no evidence or example in the Bible of a prayer (angelic) language. It is a further perversion of truth and it is not of God. Be not swept away with the doctrines and teachings of man, but follow the example of Christ that you might be found ready to meet Him in peace at His return.

-mws

I Corinthians 14

It was not until modern times that Christians began looking to the scripture to justify ecstatic, unintelligible speaking. It was never introduced by Christ but was already in practice among the heathen. This pagan practice in churches today is emotion at best and a false spirit at worst. Ecstatic utterances are mistakenly seen as something godly and spiritual.

Incoherent speaking and praying did not take place in the early morning church and it is not in God's church today.

Much confusion and false teaching comes from misapplying 1 Corinthians 14 where Paul addressed almost exclusively the practice of speaking in tongues. The main confusion comes not from the Word but from man. On the day of Pentecost, God established what the gift of tongues is and should be. The word *glossa* (foreign language), which was used in Acts 2, is once again the word that is used in 1 Corinthians 14. With Pentecost as the pattern, it is not difficult to understand Paul's teaching to the church at Corinth.

Corinth was a large, seaport city with people from many cultures and backgrounds. There were many problems in the congregation and Paul told them directly in I Corinthians 3:3, "For ye are yet carnal...." 1 Corinthians is largely a book of reproof and correction to a congregation who was carnal and not observing the tenants of Christian living.

A careful examination of chapter fourteen reveals that Paul was not teaching a new practice of tongues but was reproofing them for their wrong exaltation and misuse of foreign

languages. The congregation was in chaos and disorder. While it is possible that someone had the true gift of tongues in the congregation and was speaking a foreign language he had never learned, it is not likely this was the case, as God is not the author of confusion. Most likely, people who already knew foreign languages were speaking them to no edification of the hearers who couldn't understand that particular foreign language. These people would not have had the true gift of tongues as it was not divinely given. Paul instructed them to seek God for the gift of prophecy (preaching) that the church would be edified. A message from God in the language of the hearer would be much more beneficial than a prideful display of speaking in a foreign language.

Consider a few verses from 1 Corinthians 14 and their meanings—with the clear understanding of the definition of tongues being a foreign language. (Note: In the English KJV Bible, the word "unknown" was added by the translators. It was not in the original manuscripts and has been left out of many subsequent translations.)



"Paul was not teaching a new practice of tongues but was reproofing them for their wrong exaltation and misuse of foreign languages."

(Verse 2) For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue [glossa] speaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no man understandeth him; howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries.

He that speaks of the mysteries of God in a foreign language speaks not unto men but unto God if nobody present understands that foreign speech. In verses 2-3, Paul emphasizes the importance of prophesying for the use of edification to the church. The person speaking a foreign language is only edifying himself since he is the only one who understands what he is speaking.

(5) I would that ye all spake 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. (6) Now, brethren, if I come unto 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? (see also verses 12-13)

Paul would be pleased if all the people could speak in different languages but he told them to seek gifts

that would edify the church (not foreign languages that bring confusion). Prophesying is greater unless there is someone who can translate the foreign language so the whole church can be edified. What profit is there for Paul to speak many different languages if no one is there who can understand them?

(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. (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 unto him that speaketh a barbarian, and he that speaketh shall be a barbarian unto me.

Words, no matter how sincere, will be lost to the air if they are not spoken in a language the listeners understand. There are many foreign languages in the world and they all have meaning. But, if you do not understand the language, it sounds barbaric or foreign. Clearly, Paul does not speak of some unintelligible language.

(For verses 14-17, see "Prayer Language" on page 9).

(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. (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? (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:

The very purpose of the gift of speaking a foreign language was to be a sign to the unbeliever that they might hear the gospel and be saved as on the day of Pentecost. If everyone is speaking in different languages, whether gifted or learned, and the ignorant (those that don't understand the language) or unbelievers come in, they will think you are mad for all the chaos. Better to preach in the native language of the unbeliever so that they might understand and be saved.

In verses 26-28, Paul further addressed the chaos that was not edifying and gave instruction. If you speak a foreign language, be sure that there are those that understand the language. If there is no interpreter, be silent in the church and just commune with God.

Understanding that the true use of "tongues" was to speak to the unbeliever in his own language for his edification brings

clarity to the confusion that people have brought to 1 Corinthians 14. *Glossa* was and remains a foreign language and not unintelligible speech. Paul concluded by stating to the congregation that speaking in a foreign language was not to be forbidden, but that there should be someone to interpret. "Let all things be done decently and in order" (1 Corinthians 14:40).

-mws



**If I have spoken in tongues
with unintelligible speech,
does this mean I am not saved?
What should I do?**

It is not a curse to have the light of truth shine on our lives. Rather, as we accept truth, we find greater freedom and victory in the Holy Spirit. As with any false doctrine, there can be innocent people who get entangled because they lack understanding of God's Word. The enemy is crafty and has ensnared many with this deceptive practice.

Examine your life before the Lord. Are you living without sin or are you still committing the works of the flesh? If there is sin in your life, you need to repent. If you are practicing *glossolalia* or have a private prayer language, you need to immediately seek God for deliverance. It does not mean it has been imputed as sin unto you if you have been ignorant of this truth; but knowledge of truth brings accountability. Woe unto them who leave light in pursuit of these ungodly practices.

Ask for God's forgiveness and for complete freedom from the emotion or spirit that has caused you to exercise such behavior. God will forgive and deliver you from any foreign spirit. There is strength in unified prayer and it would be beneficial to have someone else pray with you for a complete deliverance from the false spirit of tongues.

It would be wise to immediately stop worshipping with others who teach and practice this and remove yourself from its influence. Seek for new fellowship with other godly people who are living righteously in truth.

May God grant you wisdom, divine deliverance through the blood of Jesus and power in the Holy Spirit. Amen.

-mws



DID YOU KNOW?

The practice of speaking in ecstatic tongues and their interpretation predates Pentecost and was of non-Christian origin. Babbling ecstatically is common in pagan religions both ancient and modern and is similar to the unintelligible speech of many charismatic churches today.

It is practiced in religions and countries around the world. It can be found among Catholics, Buddhist monks, Shaman in Ethiopia and Haitians practicing Voodoo. It is practiced at Japanese séances and in many African tribal religions amongst many others.



A Word
In Season

Launch Out

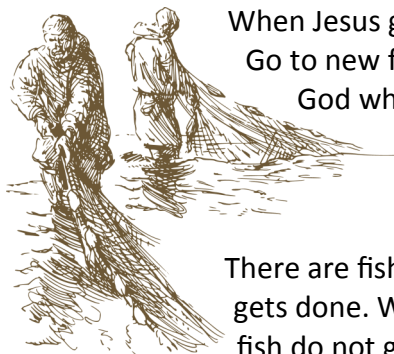
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"Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught." Luke 5:4
The disciples of Christ had been toiling all night trying to catch fish. These skilled fishermen had been unsuccessful and had nothing to show for all their effort. Jesus told them "LAUNCH OUT...and [then] let down your nets for a draught."

Many times we fish, or work for the Lord, within the same, small sphere as others. It might be a comfortable place but the blessings may be minimal and the catch little to nothing. It is possible to stagnate and yet be toiling as the disciples.



When Jesus gives the word, fear not to launch out in faith. Go to new fields where people need the gospel. Praise God where you have been silent. Serve others where you have been self-absorbed. The change may be small or it may be radical, but obey the Lord.

There are fish that never get caught and work that never gets done. We can talk about it and pray about it but the fish do not get caught until we launch out and let down our nets. Let us not limit God but move in accordance with His will. The results, while left to God, are often greater blessings, power, anointing, glory, and new souls.

Launch out my fellow laborer and let down your nets for a draught.

-mws

HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD