

THE NEW TESTAMENT GIFT OF TONGUE SPEAKING

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. That “tongue speaking” is a Bible subject is a matter of N.T. record, with the N.T. having much to say about it.
2. That it was practiced in the early days of the N.T. church, the church belonging to Christ, by members of the church, is also a fact, a matter of record.
3. That the power to speak in tongues and the practice of speaking in tongues is claimed today by many professed Bible believers is also a fact.
4. But the actual possession of the power to speak in tongues, or the actual possession of the gift of speaking in tongues today, is not a fact. The simple fact is this: It is a false claim! A bogus practice!
5. Furthermore, the N.T. practice and purpose for speaking in tongues was very different from the present-day claims and practices of those making the claims of doing so.
6. Let us note the Scriptural evidence for the gift of tongue speaking and then compare it with the present-day claims and practices.

II. DISCUSSION

- A. The Gift Of Tongue Speaking In N.T. Times Was Identified As One Of Nine Spiritual Gifts, Or Miraculous Powers, Given By The Holy Spirit, 1Cor.12:1,4-11.**
- B. Tongue Speaking Was Identified As One Of the Miraculous Signs That Were To Follow Baptized Believers, Mk.16:15-18; 1Cor.14:22; Cf. Ac.2:14-18; 19:6.**
- C. Not All Baptized Believers Were Promised Nor Possessed The Spiritual Gift Of Tongue Speaking, 1Cor.12:28-30.**
- D. To Speak In Tongues, Or To Possess The Gift Of Tongue Speaking, Meant Its Possessor Was In Possession Of Miraculous Power To Speak Languages, Known Languages Of Men, Without Having Learned Them By Natural Means, Ac.2:1-11 (emp.vv.4,6,8,11); Cf. Mk.16:17; Ac.10:44-46; 1Cor.14:5,13,27.**

E. For Emphasis, The Tongue Spoken Was Understood By Men Who Knew The Language Or The Tongue Spoken, Ac.2:4-6,8,11

1. The miracle was on the part of the tongue speaker, not on the part of the hearers, as some claim.

F. Further Proof That To Speak In Tongues Was To Speak Languages Known To And Understood By Men Is The Fact That The Tongues Spoken Could Be Interpreted By Other Saints Who Had Another One Of The Nine Spiritual Gifts Known As “The Interpretation Of Tongues,” And That The Gift Of Tongue Speaking Was To Be Divinely Regulated In Its Use, 1Cor.14:5,27,28.

1. Use it where one’s audience understood the language being spoken by the tongue speaker.
2. Even then the number of speakers is limited to three and that by course, i.e., one at a time; and
3. If the tongue or language to be spoken is not understood by the audience addressed, and there is not inspired interpreter present, or one who possess “the gift of the interpretation of tongues” present, the tongue speaker is to “keep silent”.

G. The Tongues Of Ac.2 And The Tongues Of 1Cor.14 Are One And The Same Kind, They Are Languages, Not Two Different Kinds, As Some Claim.

1. The word “unknown” in 1Cor.14 is in italics, being added by the translators for the purpose of clarification, which in this case only results in much confusion.
2. The idea of the tongue being an “unknown tongue” in 1Cor.14 is that the tongue speaker was using his gift to speak a language his audience did not understand; he was not speaking in the language of the audience he addressed.
3. The “tongue” or the language he was speaking in the use of his gift was unknown to his audience because he was not speaking their tongue or their language.
4. They were told to cease the practice; they were not to do so unless there was an inspired interpreter present to translate the language spoken into the language of the people present.

H. Spiritual Gifts, Including Tongue Speaking, Were Given Through A Human Medium Or By Means Of The Laying On Of An Apostle’s Hands

1. Ac.8:14-21a (Cf.vv.5,12,13, Philip); 19:6; 2Tim.1:6; Rom.1:11.
2. Cf. Mk.16:17,18; Ac.2:16-18,38, which tell us **WHAT** with reference to spiritual gifts, but not **HOW**.
 - a. We have to go elsewhere to learn **HOW**.
 - b. The “elsewhere” is Ac.8:14-21; 19:6.
3. Objection: But what about Cornelius? He received “the gift of the Holy Spirit” directly, through no human medium or agency; if he did, why not other?
 - a. Yes, he did receive it directly, Ac.10:44-48.
 - b. Answer: Yes, he did receive it directly and even before he was a Christian. But his reception was a special case and for a special purpose, Ac.11:1-18; 15:1-5,6-12.

I. Spiritual Gifts, Including Tongue Speaking, Were Limited In Duration As Per 1Cor.12:31-13:13.

J. Spiritual Gifts Were Needed At The Beginning And In The Early Days Of The N.T. Church For At Least Two Reasons.

1. They were in needed and used in the period of progressive revelation of God’s will to man, when the whole of God’s plan for man as we have it today was being revealed through the apostles of Chris. Cf. Jno.16:7-13; Eph.3:1-5; 1Cor.2:9-13; 7:1,10,25.
2. The apostles could not be everywhere all at that same time. Therefore, in the absence of an apostle they needed spiritual gifts in order to carry on their work and worship, and in order to expose and defend themselves against false teachers. Cf. 1Jno.4:1; 2:18-20,26,27; 1Cor.12:10c.
3. These spiritual gifts were never meant to be a permanent part of the N.T. church, but temporary in nature, purpose and use, much like the purpose and use of the purpose and use of scaffolding in building a house.
 - a. Very necessary in the process of building. But of no further use after the completed structure.
 - b. Spiritual gifts were very necessary during the period of progressive revelation of God’s plan to man, i.e., during the period of the “part”; but of no use when the revelation of God’s plan to man was completed, or during the period of the “perfect” – the perfect law of liberty now exists in its complete and perfect state.

III. CONCLUSION

1. In 1Cor.12, we have innumeration; 1Cor.14, regulation; 1Cor.13, duration.
2. Therefore, thought they existed at one time; they no longer exist; they have ceased, and that by divine decree.
3. Those people who claim such gifts today:
 - a. Make false claims to the gift in spite of sincerity; they have no power of the Spirit today to possess such gifts.
 - b. In their so-called use, they do not speak languages of men.
 - c. What they do speak cannot be interpreted because they are not languages.
 - d. Do not recognize the regulations of gifts laid down in 1Cor.14.
 - (1) More than 3 speak at the same time.
 - (2) Do not speak by course, or one at a time.
 - (3) Speak without having it interpreted to the audience addressed.
 - e. Claim they can't help themselves in their speaking out in tongues because the Holy Spirit has taken control of their spirit. Cf. 1Cor.14:32,33.
 - f. Their women speak out publicly in violation of 1Cor.14:34. Cf. 1Tim.2:11-14; Tit.2:15.