

SPEAKING IN TONGUES

This subject is misunderstood by many Christians — even by those who have been Baptized in the Holy Spirit. Some Church fellowships ignore the subject hoping it will just go away! Others see it as the evidence of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit and go no further. The desire to *‘search out the matter’* (**Prov.25:2**) is a rare approach to what will turn out to be, we trust, a marvellous release of the Spirit from within you.

Let us look again at **Acts 2**. The Spirit is the Breath in our breath, He gives the utterance (words) and all we have to do is to open our mouths and turn on our sound boxes. It is called talking! The only difference here is that our understanding does not grasp what is actually being spoken. Scary? Could be if you don’t know that the Spirit of God is IN YOU.

FOUNDATION FOR OUR STUDY:

OUR GOD IS ONE GOD

God is One and has many expressions and names. In the New Testament He expresses Himself as **The Father** — The original Word-Thought, Creator, Unseen and Holy, The Source.

The Son — Jesus — The Word always expressing the Thought (Who mediates Thought to Hearers), The visible Expression of the invisible God.

The Holy Spirit — Holy because He is God — Spirit also means *‘BREATH’* (Greek says *‘strong breath’* or *‘hard breath’*). Breath/Spirit is absolutely necessary in order to speak. *Breath* turns thought into word. Jesus is *‘The Word made flesh’*.

The Thought and the Word are ONE as Jesus said, *‘I and My Father are one’* (John 17:22)

WORDS ARE SPIRIT

Jesus said (**John 6:63**), *‘My words they are spirit and they are life’*. Not too difficult to grasp considering that John 1:1 tells us that **God is WORD**. The words from Father are His will being expressed. If you desire to walk in God’s will, then you will be desiring to walk in His words which are truth and life.

A RECAP

God **made** a spiritual man in **Genesis 1:26** in His image and likeness. In **Genesis 2:7** God **formed** a body out of the ground and placed His spiritual man in it. Then He breathed into that man THE BREATH OF LIVES. Not ‘life’ singular as in most Bibles but live**S** as the Hebrew word *CHAYIM* is plural. This first man had **ONE** breath that had **TWO** expressions of life in it. One part of his breath was used for living and the other part of his breath was used for speaking life.

This man disobeyed God and A PART OF HIM died immediately as the word said. As this man went on to live for 930 years, we conclude that the part that died in him WAS THE ABILITY TO SPEAK LIFE - GOD’S WILL - he could only bring forth death which was the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

When you are born again, **THE ABILITY TO SPEAK LIFE AGAIN** is given to each one of us. As you know, even though we are born anew, it is still mighty hard to be always speaking life . . . Jesus’ words. The baptism in the Holy Spirit is to give you the release from that inability to speak forth the words of life

from where they are stored in you: namely *the mind of Christ* which, says St. Paul, *we have* (**I Corin. 2:16**).

The word **soul** in the Greek is *PSEUCHE* and means ‘breath’ or ‘soul - spirit (including MIND) and the word **spirit**, as we have seen, in the Greek is *PNEUMA* and means *specific or hard breath, wind or moving breath, spirit*. Both soul **AND** spirit therefore are concerned with speaking. . . which is the expressing of thoughts. My spirit has the Holy Spirit dwelling in it (**Romans 8:16**). The Holy Spirit moves to glorify the WORD — JESUS (**John 16:13+14**).

DEATH OR LIFE?

Proverbs 18:21 declares that ‘*death and life are in the power of the tongue. . .*’ and that means in our speaking. Words are the expression of thoughts. If the thoughts come from **my** own soul/mind, then they will be quite natural and will be concerned most times with conclusions from **my** intellect, **my** own judgments and **my** observations and I choose ‘good’ over ‘evil’ which does not produce spiritual life but rather spiritual death (=the absence of life). Such can only produce natural life and these declarations are sometimes called ‘*carnal*’ or ‘*fleshly*’. By contrast, when I speak the thoughts that come from *the mind of Christ* within me, then they will be words of life, encouragement and blessing etc. . . which will be **SPIRITUAL LIFE** to the receiver.

OUR MIND IS TO BE RENEWED

It is obvious that *our minds need to be renewed*. **Romans 12:1+2** emphasises just that, and when it starts to happen, *we shall be changed from glory to glory* towards being in His Image (**II Corin. 3:18**).

Again **Romans 12:21** instructs us, *to overcome evil* (my own mind) *with good* (the mind of Christ). My mind is evil because of the ‘fall’ but we still need **James 3:10** to give us a reminder of the fact that out of our mouths come BLESSING as well as CURSING. Just in case we think that it does not concern us, check up on to whom James was writing? Answer = my brethren! He is writing to CHRISTIANS . . . you and I.

WE ARE EXHORTED ONLY TO SPEAK TRUTH (**Ephesians 4:11-16**). If we are enabled to do just that, it will cause us *to grow up into Him in all things*. If we can really believe that, our language will become pure and, Jesus being the Truth, we shall be manifesting Him each time we open our mouths.

THE BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT IS ACCOMPANIED WITH FIRE. Fire that will burn up the wood, hay and stubble of our own non-life producing thinking and reactions. **Isaiah 6:5-8** — Isaiah had **HIS LIPS TOUCHED BY FIRE** which made him ready to be used by God. Back in Acts chapter 2: 1-4, where did you think the tongues of fire landed? I believe that ‘on their heads’ would be the correct answer; on their heads = on their thinking and control.

NEW LANGUAGES

In the Old Testament, **Genesis 11:7**, God met with His people and gave them new languages which achieved His purpose of SCATTERING them and giving them a new vision.

In the New Testament, Acts 2, God gave new languages which achieved His purpose of GATHERING His people together . . . which He did and 3,000+ found the Lord.

ARE OUR WORDS REALLY THAT IMPORTANT?

We had better read **Matthew 12: 34-36**,

O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. (35) A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things. (36) But I say unto you, That EVERY IDLE WORD that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day

of judgment.

Every word counts!!! Oh help! The need for a renewed mind gets more obvious as we proceed. We surely desire to express the Lord Jesus Christ continually and effectively. Every time Jesus spoke, He spoke what the Father gave Him to speak. Every time He spoke, something supernatural happened. Lives were touched. Everyone He spoke to received what they needed . . . whether it was deliverance, healing or comfort. *We are seated with Him in heavenly places at the same time* He lives within us. Therefore the heavenly places are in us. He purposes to carry out His desires through us without interference from our own thinking.

As our minds are renewed, we shall more and more be released to operate/speak in English which is a progressive step towards having continuous dialogue with Christ Jesus. We are commanded to walk in the spirit which means that we are to walk being aware of His will, out of which His words come to us. When Jesus, by His Spirit, has full control over our tongue, **James 3:1-5** tells us that He will then have full control over our bodies. Likewise Jesus (our Head) will have full (100%) control of His Body.

WHY DOES GOD WANT YOU TO SPEAK IN TONGUES?

Let us examine some of the many reasons why God has planned things this way.

TO MAGNIFY HIM

• **Acts 10:46** *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.*

THEY SPOKE IN TONGUES AND MAGNIFIED GOD. e.g. take a magnifying glass and hold it over your thumb. Does it make your thumb bigger ? No! Your thumb does not change but YOUR VIEW of your thumb INCREASES. When you magnify God, God does not change but YOUR VIEW OF HIM GETS LARGER and you can see much more detail than you could before . Speaking in tongues is like your magnifying glass.

TO PRAISE HIM

• **Acts 2:11** *Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God.*

The preceding verses list the rest of the (16) nationalities that were present when they came forth from the upper room into the streets. The (120) disciples were speaking in UNKNOWN languages (to them) but were very well understood by the devout Jews who had come from those countries. They were the ones that testified that the speaking in tongues was declaring **THE WONDERFUL WORKS OF GOD**. That, without any stretch of the imagination, is **PRAISE** ! Speaking in tongues is mighty in public praise.

BUILD UP YOUR FAITH

• **Jude 20** *But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost.* Do you ever feel that your faith is almost nonexistent ? God has given us a means whereby we can help ourselves **TO BUILD UP OUR FAITH**. How? By praying in tongues which is *praying in the spirit*. St. Paul in **I Corin.14:18** said that he **PRAYED IN TONGUES** more than all his audience put together. He was able to testify that, having prayed 10,000 words in tongues, he only needed, by contrast, to speak five words in the assembly in the understanding for the power of God to be revealed (**I Corin.14:19**). His faith was most certainly built up! Paul most likely prayed in tongues before the meeting . . . at home or on the journey to the fellowship.

HELP YOU PRAY

• **I Corinthians 14:14** *For if I pray in an unknown tongue, MY SPIRIT PRAYETH, but my*

understanding is unfruitful. There is a powerful expression of **PRAYER** and that is in tongues. The Holy Spirit knows how we are to pray and He also knows the object for such a prayer. As one prays in the spirit, God accomplishes just what He desires, because we are thus praying according to His will. We so often pray incorrectly as we pray our ideas about a matter.

GIVES YOU REST & A REFRESHING -A RELEASE OF THE SPIRIT-

• **Isaiah 28:11** *For with stammering lips and another tongue will he speak to this people. (12) To whom he said, This is the rest wherewith ye may cause the weary to rest; and this is the refreshing: yet they would not hear.* Isaiah prophesied about **THE RELEASE OF THE SPIRIT** in future believers. He declared that when they spoke in tongues, such activity would bring to the speaker a **refreshing** and cause them to **enter into rest**. When one is resting, the chair or bed is doing all the work: you and your thinking can rest!

BLESSING ANOTHER & GIVING THANKS

• **I Corinthians 14:16-17** *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? (17) For thou verily givest thanks well, but the other is not edified.* Speaking in tongues — speaking in the spirit — enables you to **BLESS ANOTHER** person. It also is a great way to **GIVE THANKS**. It is best to use such a method of blessing and giving thanks when those hearing you understand what the word says about such! Pick the right time and substitute this for the more formal ‘grace’ before meals!

THE ‘HOT-LINE’ TO GOD

• **I Corinthians 14:2** *For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no man understandeth him; howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries.* Speaking in tongues is like **‘THE HOT LINE’ DIRECT TO GOD**. Your cry gets on the priority line to God’s ear. It says that when one thus speaks, he speaks unto God. The cry deep within your heart is released to God and no one else can get on that line!

SPECIFIC PRAYER

• **I Corinthians 14:14+15a** *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:* Praying in an unknown tongue releases His Spirit in your spirit from within you. . . this allows HIM to pray His will when you don’t know what that is exactly in your mind. You do not understand with your mind what is being communicated. That is good . . . because if you did, you just might change something because of your very limited understanding of the subject about which you are praying.

Notice carefully here the order that the two types of prayer are mentioned. Pray in the spirit **FIRST**, then pray with your understanding. Why? The first expression will also build up your faith, release the Holy Spirit so that what you **THEN PRAY** will be with His understanding and you will know what it is all about.

A testimony from Australia: On a certain evening the Holy Spirit caused a room-full of saints to go to a certain house. They arrived about the same time. They knew that the Lord had drawn them together but did not know why. They started to pray in the spirit . . . all together out aloud. They moved into singing in the spirit and worshipping the Lord. Prayed more in the spirit . . . sang some . . . prayed some and this went on all through the night until about 6.00am. Then one felt to turn on the radio news. They heard the announcement that a communist taker-over of a certain country had been broken up during the night. They all knew that the Lord had them praying for even though they themselves only found out afterwards.

PERSONAL & CORPORATE WORSHIP

- **I Corinthians 14:15b** . . . *I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also.*

In the similar way, one can sing in the spirit . . . sing in tongues. As one progresses thus, a song of the Lord or a hymn or a chorus or a spiritual song in English (or known tongue) will come forth. This is one of the richest ways of worshipping the Lord. It holds the same for individuals or for the assembly of saints. In the Church service, we so often go about worship 'back to front' and miss out much of the Lord's blessing.

PART OF THE ARMOUR OF GOD

- **Acts 1:14** *These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.*

• **Ephesians 6:18** *Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;* The first reference here happened BEFORE Pentecost and the second reference happened quite a while afterwards. Notice the phrase 'in the spirit' occurs in the latter. Ephesians 6 describes the armour that the saints are to put on. One part of that armour is PRAYING IN THE SPIRIT requesting God's help. Ahab of the Old Testament was killed by an arrow that went through a chink in his armour. Let us be sure we have no gap in our armour!

SIGN TO THE UNBELIEVER

- **I Corinthians 14:22** *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.* There have been many testimonies about believers speaking in (unknown to them) tongues with the listeners understanding all that was spoken. Upon hearing precise and personal words from God, accepted the Lord.

GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT OPENED UP

- **Acts 19:6** *And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.* These believers in Ephesus spoke in tongues which led them straight into prophesying . . . and that's done in English!

Also mentioned in the New Testament is some special releases by the Spirit of God. **Ephesians 1:17** speaks of **THE SPIRIT OF WISDOM** and **THE SPIRIT OF REVELATION**. Essential for every Christian worker whereby the word of God comes alive and is thus more beneficial to our walk.

POWER TO MOVE IN THE SPIRIT

- **I Corinthians 12:7-11** *(7) 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: (11) But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to EVERY man severally as he will.* Notice certain words in these scriptures. The Spirit is given to EVERY MAN to profit and that includes every Christian. Then follows the **GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT** which are released after one has received the baptism in the Holy Spirit. (There have been a few instances where the gifts of the Spirit were manifest through those who know nothing of *the Promise of the Father*.)

THE END PURPOSE

There is also an indication from **Zephaniah 3:8+9** that when all is said and done, God will have again just one language in the earth like he had before Genesis 11. Just one difference . . . this language that will be given to all will be **A PURE LANGUAGE**: the only language that could be pure is that which comes

forth from the Holy Spirit. THE **GREATEST GIFT** is the initial release because it is WORD and therefore closest to Jesus Who is the Word. Tongues is the means to build up ones faith so that one can move in the other gifts. LOVE, says **I Cor. 12:31** + ‘the love chapter’, is the **MORE EXCELLENT WAY**.

**THERE IS A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ‘PRIVATE TONGUES’
AND ‘TONGUES IN A MEETING’**

When one reads **I Corinthians 14**, it is important to note what takes place **IN THE CHURCH** and what doesn’t. One may speak in tongues in the Church as prayer and as worship. Should the Spirit anoint one to speak out loud with power = a GIFT of speaking in tongues, then there will operate the GIFT of interpretation so that the assembly can follow what is happening. Similarly there can come the GIFT of prophecy which will be understood by all. So that we might move as St. Paul did, be challenged by the Lord to use your gift to the full both at home in private and also in the gatherings of the saints. This study does not attempt to cover ALL the scriptures or ALL the operations of the Holy Spirit that are released when we are liberated in spirit.

The Lord is that Spirit and where the Spirit is Lord, there is liberty (II Cor. 3:17). §