

THE BIBLICAL DOCTRINE OF SPEAKING IN TONGUES EXPLAINED



ANESIA O. BAPTISTE

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INTRODUCTION

In Christianity today, some have misrepresented the biblical doctrine of the gift of the Holy Spirit known as speaking in tongues.

Many, primarily in the Pentecostal and Evangelical movements present an idea of tongues that consists of utterings which cannot be understood by the people within their audience. However, careful study of the scriptures such as Acts chapter 2 and 1 Corinthians chapter 14 reveal the truth that tongues are recognizable and coherent languages common to nations of people of the world.

This booklet explains in a simple way the truth that to speak in tongues is to speak in foreign languages by the miraculous ability imparted by the Holy Spirit, in order to advance the preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to all the nations of the world. It is very important that the readers thereof follow prayerfully in their bibles to get the true understanding of this bible doctrine. May God bless you. Amen.

THE BIBLICAL DOCTRINE OF SPEAKING IN TONGUES EXPLAINED

1. The Bible admonishes us to rightly divide the word of truth when we study the scriptures. 2 Timothy 2:15.
2. Acts chapter 2 has been cited as the biblical authority for speaking in tongues by the gift of the Holy Spirit. What exactly are tongues as used in this chapter? Let us identify some facts about this gift.
3. The gift of speaking in tongues was given to the disciples of Christ who were united in prayer and Christian unity, with no division, confusion and unsanctification. Acts 2:1-3 (Acts 1:14)
4. It was a miraculous ability given to the disciples by the Holy Spirit which caused them to speak with "other tongues". Acts 1:4
5. Tongues mean languages as seen in the way both words are used interchangeably in Acts 2:4, 6, 8, 11.
6. In verse 4 it says: "And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and **began to speak**

with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance”.

7. In verse 6 it says: “Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that **every man heard them speak in his own language**.”
8. In verse 8 it says: “**And how hear we every man in our own tongue**, wherein we were born?”
9. And in verse 11 it says: “Cretes and Arabians, **we do hear them speak in our tongues** the wonderful works of God.”
10. In the Greek the word Tongue means language. The word study below explains this.
11. The Greek word for Tongue is **glōssa**- “Metaphorically, speech or language. Of a particular language or dialect as spoken by a particular people- Acts 2:11.” Spiros Zodhiates Th.D, **The Complete Word Study Dictionary New Testament**, p. 375
12. Now Acts 2:11 reads “Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our **tongues** the wonderful works of God”

13. Therefore, the people were saying that they do hear the disciples speaking the wonderful works of God in their “languages”
14. Consider also the phrase “other tongues” in Acts 2:4. The Greek is **glōssais heterais**. It means “Tongues others or different, meaning different than their own native tongues” **Ibid**, p. 375
15. Thus, the disciples spoke in tongues or languages which were “other” or different than their own native languages.
16. Now, the Greek word for Language is the word **dialektō** which means “Language spoken by a people or province, ethnic language, dialect, or a particular idiom– Acts 2:6,8. It is apparent that the word in Acts 2:6,8 is synonymous with **glōssais** , tongues or languages in Acts 2:11...” **Ibid**, p. 433
17. Notice how Dr. Spiros shows the similarity of the two Greek words translated Tongue and Language. They mean the same thing.
18. We conclude therefore from a look at the original Greek language translated into English in Acts 2, that the disciples spoke in languages that were different than their

own language and they spoke in languages that were common to other nations of people who were present in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost. Consider the reaction of the people as they list the languages they heard the disciples speak:

19. Acts 2:7-11: "And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galilaeans? And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born? **Parthians**, and **Medes**, and **Elamites**, and the **dwellers in Mesopotamia**, and in **Judaea**, and **Cappadocia**, in **Pontus**, and **Asia**, **Phrygia**, and **Pamphylia**, in **Egypt**, and in the parts of **Libya about Cyrene**, and **strangers of Rome**, **Jews** and **proselytes**, **Cretes** and **Arabians**, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God."

20. Note also that the people understood what the disciples spoke because they identified it as "the wonderful works of God"- Acts 2:11. This shows the tongues or languages which the disciples spoke were coherent, recognizable languages that are identifiable by human ethnic groups.

21. This is not the tongues of the Pentecostal and evangelical movement, whose utterings are incoherent, unrecognizable and unidentifiable by any human language speaking people. These are false tongues and have no biblical root.

UNKNOWN TONGUE EXPLAINED

Many argue that tongues do not have to be coherent languages understood by humanity because of a reference in 1 Corinthians chapter 14 to "*Unknown tongue*".

What does 1 Corinthians chapter 14's use of "*Unknown tongue*" mean?

1. Firstly we must understand that the word tongue used in 1 Corinthians 14 is the same Greek word **glōssa** or an expression containing it, which means language. (See earlier word study/explanations)
2. Secondly, notice that the word *unknown* is in italics. I have deliberately put it in italics here because proper study bibles reflect this, due to the fact that the word *unknown* is a supplied word. It does not appear in the original Greek text. There is absolutely no Greek word translated *unknown* in any of the verses in 1 Corinthians 14 where it appears in the English translation.
3. 1 Corinthians 14:2, 4, 13, 14, 19, 27 the expression *unknown tongue* appears in the English translation but where it does appear, the word *unknown* is in italics.

Check your study bible now and see this.

4. What does the Greek transliteration show?
It simply says "a" rather than "*an unknown*"
5. Consider the renderings in **The Ready Research Bible EXEGESES– a literal translation and transliteration of scripture** by an Exegete called Herb Jahn. He puts the real translation from the Greek "a" in bold and the supplied words "*an unknown*" in italics.
6. Therefore the English from the Greek should read "a tongue" and not "*an unknown tongue*" .
7. For emphasis I have underlined the correct translation from the Greek "a tongue"
8. 1 Corinthians 14:2 "For he that speaketh in *an unknown tongue* a tongue..." **Ibid**, p. 844
9. 1 Corinthians 14:4 "He that speaketh in *an unknown* a tongue edifieth himself; but he that prophesieth edifieth the church..." **Ibid**, p. 844
10. 1 Corinthians 14:13 "Wherefore let him that speaketh in *an unknown* a tongue pray that he may interpret..." **Ibid**, p. 844

11. 1 Corinthians 14:14 "For if I pray in an *unknown a tongue*..." **Ibid**, p. 844
12. 1 Corinthians 14:19 "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 a tongue*." **Ibid**, p. 844
13. 1 Corinthians 14:27 "If any man speak in an *unknown a tongue*..." **Ibid**, p. 845
14. Furthermore, in the **Interlinear Greek-English New Testament** by George Ricker Berry, pages 459-462, the phrase used throughout the verses in 1 Corinthians 14: 2, 4, 13, 14, 19 and 27 translated "in an *unknown tongue*", omits the word "unknown" altogether.
15. The Greek phrase is **γλώσση** and Berry shows in his dictionary that its literal translation from the Greek is "with a **tongue**" or sometimes "in a **tongue**". There is simply no Greek word translated *unknown* in these verses. It does not exist in the original text. We therefore conclude that the real translation from the Greek to English is "**a tongue**" and not "*unknown tongue*".

CONCLUSION

Thus we conclude that in 1 Corinthians chapter 14 the Apostle Paul is addressing the church about speaking in tongues which are languages, that the congregation does not understand and from which they cannot get edification, if there is no interpreter or translator.

- It is for this reason Paul emphasizes the need for an interpreter (or translator) if the use of tongues or languages is to edify the church. 1 Corinthians 14:5- "I would that ye all speak 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" (emphasis supplied)
- Notice that the tongues are languages which can be interpreted. And the purpose of interpretation is for edification. To edify is to build up the church in the truth or to present the truth to persons who need to hear it. (Remember the nations of peoples at Pentecost said they did hear "the wonderful words of God" in their own

language or tongue Acts 2:11)

- If tongues or languages are to be used, which are different from the spoken language in the congregation, it is necessary to have an interpreter at all times or else the speaker of a tongue or language different than the language of the congregation must stay silent.
- 1 Corinthians 14:27-28 "If any man speak in a **tongue**, let it be by two, or at the most three and that by course (Greek-in succession), **and let one interpret. But if there be no interpreter, let him be silence in the church;** and let him speak to himself, and to God."
- The true bible doctrine on the Spiritual Gift of speaking in tongues presents the miraculous gift of speaking in a coherent, recognizable language of humanity.
- It has been used by God to cause his disciples to create great preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to many foreign speakers of foreign languages, resulting in a rapid growth of the early church as seen in the book of the Acts of the Apostles.

- It is also used as a sign for unbelievers who speak different languages. 1Corinthians 14:21-22
- The biblical gift of speaking in tongues is NOT mutterings and babblings which cannot be understood because they do not match any recognizable and identifiable human language of any ethnic group or nations of people. Please reject these false tongues. Amen.

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