

## **SPEAKING IN TONGUES** **(Acts 2:1-4)**

### **I. The meaning of speaking in tongues.**

- A. The term “glossolalia” is used in reference to this movement.
  - 1. This is the joining of two Greek words.
  - 2. “Glossa” means “language, tongue” and “lalia” means “speech.”
  - 3. It means speaking in languages or tongues.
- B. Another term that is used is ecstatic utterances.
- C. The only reference to speaking in tongues in the Gospel accounts is found in Mark 16:17.
  - 1. Jesus said that those that followed Him would be able to speak in “new tongues.”
  - 2. New refers to new to the one speaking and tongues refers to a language one had been unable to speak but now can - which would be miraculous in nature.
  - 3. Some of those that hold to speaking in tongues today say the word “new” refers to a whole new language.
- D. A similar phrase is found in Acts 2:4 where the apostles are said to have been spoken in “other tongues.”
  - 1. Other is a different word than new.
  - 2. This word means “foreign or strange.”
  - 3. It simply means they spoke in languages that were strange to the apostles, ones they had never spoken.
  - 4. The context bears this out because we are told that people from all over the known world heard their languages being spoken.
  - 5. If one were to believe that this is some type of ecstatic utterance, he would have to believe there was a miracle performed upon the hearers there, which is exactly what they do believe.
  - 6. What is interesting is that “tongues” in vs. 4 is different from “tongue” in vs. 8.
  - 7. The word in vs. 8 is the Greek word from which we get our English word “dialect.”
  - 8. These two words are used interchangeably showing the apostles were not speaking new languages but ones which had not been previously known to them.
  - 9. In fact vs. 9-11 identify the languages that were spoken.
- E. The words “tongue” or “tongues” are found numerous times in the book of Revelation and the context shows that each instance is a reference to known languages (7:9;10:11; 17:15).
- F. The problem often arises when discussing 1 Corinthians 12-14.
  - 1. The problem is because of the word “unknown” found several times before “tongue” (14:2, 14, 27).
  - 2. If you notice the word “unknown” is in italics, which means it was added by the translators and that it does not appear in any Greek manuscripts.

- G. There is no place found in the New Testament where references to speaking in tongues is any type of new language that is incomprehensible to anyone on earth.

## **II. The purpose of speaking in tongues.**

- A. It is very important to understand why speaking in tongues was a gift given by the Holy Spirit during the miraculous age.
- B. The first reason for this gift was to allow the gospel to be spoken to non-believers (1 Corinthians 14:22).
  - 1. This was prophesied in the Old Testament (Isaiah 28:12).
  - 2. This is seen to be the case in Acts (2:5; Acts 10:44-46; 19:6).
  - 3. Besides what is mentioned in 1 Corinthians 12-14, we don't read of speaking in tongues anywhere else.
- C. The second purpose of speaking in tongues was to confirm the gospel message (2 Corinthians 12:12).
  - 1. There was no New Testament to which people could turn and look up something.
  - 2. Thus, speaking in tongues was used to show that what was being said was from God.

## **III. The problems with speaking in tongues today.**

- A. Paul had to address problems about the use of spiritual gifts with brethren that had spiritual gifts (1 Corinthians 12:1).
- B. The sad fact is there are still people that have problems understanding them and that they no longer exist.
- C. They do not understand there is no such thing as Holy Spirit baptism today so there is no tie to speaking in tongues.
  - 1. Paul said there is one baptism (Ephesians 4:5).
  - 2. That baptism is immersion for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38).
- D. They make the mistake of affiliating speaking in tongues with being filled with the Holy Spirit.
  - 1. All Christians are to be filled with the Spirit (Ephesians 5:18).
  - 2. Nowhere in scripture are we commanded to speak in tongues.
- E. They believe that speaking in tongues is a fruit of the Spirit.
  - 1. Galatians 5:22-23 - none of these are miraculous.
  - 2. Being spiritual is not tied to speaking in tongues.
- F. It is mistaken to think that speaking in tongues is evidence of faith.
  - 1. Seeking a sign is a lack of faith.
  - 2. 1 Corinthians 14:22.
- G. It is wrong to seek the gift of speaking in tongues.
  - 1. Notice how the Spirit gave the gifts (1 Corinthians 12:18).
  - 2. These gifts were divinely bestowed.
  - 3. This gift was listed nearly last when it was possible to have it.
  - 4. Some say it is self-edifying but Paul said to seek to edify the church (1 Corinthians 14:12).
- H. They have to deal with the problem of gifts not being for today.
  - 1. This is not a subjective idea but must be dealt with objectively from God's word.

2. Paul stated tongues would cease (1 Corinthians 13:8).
3. Why would other miraculous gifts cease while the 8<sup>th</sup> listed gift remained?
4. There is no need for miraculous confirmation any longer.
5. When the New Testament was completed the gifts were done away with (1 Corinthians 13:10).