

A Study On Tongues

As with any doctrinal issue, any belief system must be filtered thru the Word of God. If an opinion or experience doesn't filter thru, then it is not of God. We cannot rely on emotions, feelings or experience as a true test for foundational Biblical doctrine. So how does the modern charismatic movement fair when tested by Biblical truth?

First, what are Biblical tongues and does the charismatic movement speak in Biblical tongues?

Act 2:1 And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.

Act 2:2 **And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind,** and it filled all the house where they were sitting.

** Note first that for a true "Pentecostal" experience, you will hear a loud sound from heaven as a mighty wind...Does this happen when tongues are spoken?*

Act 2:3 **And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them.**

** Note next that for a true "Pentecostal" experience, you will notice the appearance of an image that resembles fire above each of their heads...Does this happen when tongues are spoken?*

Act 2:4 **And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues,** as the Spirit gave them utterance.

** Note next that they spoke with other tongues...This was a known language...Not an unknown "heavenly" language...This is proven in verses 8-11 as the languages are listed...Notice also that it wasn't in the actual speaking but in the hearing...Each man heard the Gospel in his own language...This was not "jibber jabber"*

Act 2:5 And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven.

Act 2:6 Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language.

Act 2:7 And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galilaeans?

Act 2:8 And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?

Act 2:9 Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judaea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia,

Act 2:10 Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes,

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

What about this "Heavenly" language?...Is it Biblical to speak this language?...Paul said that it was not...

2Co 12:2 I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven.

2Co 12:3 And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;)

2Co 12:4 How that he was caught up into paradise, **and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.**

So if tongues are the "Heavenly" language then the Bible states we are not to be speaking these words on earth...

Paul clearly teaches against this "unknown" tongue...The tongues the Bible teaches is a "known" language...

What does Paul state about the use of tongues?

Paul wrote the passages below to the church of Corinth. This was one of the worldliest churches in the New Testament. Paul was constantly rebuking them for their worldly practices. Many churches today would resemble the church of Corinth in their practice of tongue speaking.

1Co 14:1 Follow after charity, and desire spiritual *gifts*, but rather that ye may prophesy.

1Co 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.

1Co 14:3 But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men *to* edification, and exhortation, and comfort.

1Co 14:4 **He that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifieth himself**; but he that prophesieth edifieth the church.

This is true in most churches today...Someone speaks in an unknown tongue in order to lift themselves up and make themselves seem to be spiritual...Paul warns against this practice in this verse...

1Co 14:5 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.**

In many churches, tongues are magnified above every other gift. But Paul says that prophesying (preaching) is greater for the church to be edified. We have the complete revelation of God in the Bible now and there are no other prophecies after the book of Revelation...Read Rev. Chap. 22...So prophesying today is preaching what is revealed in the Word of God...Paul says that tongues are not the greatest gift...

1Co 14:6 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**?

Paul says, "what good will it do if I speak to you in tongues because you will not learn anything about God's Word?"....

1Co 14:7 And even things without life giving sound, whether pipe or harp, except they give a distinction in the sounds, how shall it be known what is piped or harped?

1Co 14:8 **For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?**

1Co 14:9 **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.**

Paul says that unknown tongue speaking is a waste of breath...If no one understands then what good has it done to further God's Kingdom?...

1Co 14:10 There are, it may be, so many kinds of voices in the world, and none of them is without signification.

1Co 14:11 **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.**

Paul says that an unbeliever that hears the tongue speaking will think you are crazy...They won't have a desire to seek out the things of God...

1Co 14:12 Even so ye, forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual *gifts*, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church.

1Co 14:13 Wherefore let him that speaketh in an *unknown* tongue **pray that he may interpret.**

So Paul lays out the rules for tongue speaking...No charismatic church follows these rules...1st, there must be one to interpret and interpret correctly....

1Co 14:14 For if I pray in an *unknown* tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful.

1Co 14:15 What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also.

1Co 14:16 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?

1Co 14:17 For thou verily givest thanks well, but the other is not edified.

1Co 14:18 I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than ye all:

1Co 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 tongue.**

Paul really shows how important tongues are in the church...He says he would rather speak five words with understanding than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue...Does this sound like Paul believes that the gift of tongues should take priority in the church?...

1Co 14:20 Brethren, be not children in understanding; howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men.

1Co 14:21 In the law it is written, With *men of* other tongues and other lips will I speak unto this people; and yet for all that will they not hear me, saith the Lord.

1Co 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.

Paul states what tongues are for...They are for a sign...For a sign to who?...The unbelieving Jews...Notice that Jews were always present when tongues were spoken in the N.T.....

1Co 1:22 For the Jews require a sign, and the **Greeks seek after wisdom**:

Jews require a sign and Greeks (us as gentiles) seek after wisdom...Gentiles do not require a sign but the Word of God only...

1Co 14:23 **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?**

Again Paul says that if a non believer visits your church he/she will think you are crazy if you speak in this unknown tongue...

1Co 14:24 **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:

Preaching on the other hand will get the job done in the unbelievers heart...

1Co 14:25 And thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so falling down on *his* face he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth.

1Co 14:26 How is it then, brethren? when ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying.

1Co 14:27 If any man speak in an *unknown* tongue, **let it be by two, or at the most by three, and that by course; and let one interpret.**

This is the 2nd rule for tongues...It can only be two or at the most three in a service and it must be done in order (by course) and not at the same time...How many charismatic churches abide by rule # 2?

1Co 14:28 **But if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church; and let him speak to himself, and to God.**

*So this means that an interpreter must be identified before the service ever begins...The Holy Spirit will not contradict the Word of God...If someone speaks in tongues and no interpreter is present then that person is not guided by the Holy Spirit...Notice also it says **let him**...not her...Women are not to speak in tongues...We will see this plainly outlined by Paul shortly...*

1Co 14:29 Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge.

1Co 14:30 If *any thing* be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace.

1Co 14:31 For ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted.

1Co 14:32 And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets.

This means that everything done is subject to the Word of God...If it contradicts the Word of God it is not of God...

1Co 14:33 **For God is not the author of confusion**, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints.

If a church doesn't abide by these rules then confusion ensues...This is of the devil...

1Co 14:34 Let **your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak;** but *they are commanded* to be under obedience, as also saith the law.

The whole context of this whole chapter is speaking in tongues...This does not mean a woman cannot talk at all in the church building...This simply means women are not to speak in tongues and in the next verse we learn that they are not to prophecy either (preach) but learn from their husbands...

1Co 14:35 **And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church.**

1Co 14:36 What? came the word of God out from you? or came it unto you only?

1Co 14:37 **If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord.**

Paul clearly states that speaking in tongues does not make you "spiritual"...

1Co 14:38 But if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant.

1Co 14:39 Wherefore, brethren, covet to prophesy, and **forbid not to speak with tongues.**

Many charismatic people use this one statement by Paul to justify their actions while overlooking everything in this chapter that Paul had already stated...Paul was not against speaking in tongues but remember that tongues were for a sign to the Jews and the tongues Paul was speaking of was a "known" language not "jibber jabber"..

1Co 14:40 **Let all things be done decently and in order.**

The entire tongues movement is not based on Biblical doctrine but on experience...Experience is not a true indicator for the things of God...The Bible is the only true indicator...

Remember that the Bible clearly states that the Holy Spirit will never lift up or edify Himself but will rather always give Christ the Glory...

Joh 16:13 Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: **for he shall not speak of himself;** but whatsoever he shall hear, *that* shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.

Joh 15:26 But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, *even* the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, **he shall testify of me:**

This is not what the charismatic movement teaches...They place all of the emphasis on themselves and on the Holy Spirit...The Holy Spirit is given preeminence above Christ...The Bible plainly teaches that Jesus is to get the preeminence...

Col 1:18 And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; **that in all things he might have the preeminence.**

The Bible says IN ALL THINGS...This even means tongues...

Does the Bible teach that tongues will cease?

1Co 13:8 Charity never faileth: but whether *there be* prophecies, they shall fail; **whether there be tongues, they shall cease**; whether *there be* knowledge, it shall vanish away.

1Co 13:9 For we know in part, and we prophesy in part.

1Co 13:10 But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.

Those that are of the charismatic persuasion will argue that the "perfect" is in reference to Jesus Christ...But this can't be...Jesus had already come...If Paul had made reference to the 2nd advent of Jesus Christ it would be "come again"...This is a plain reference to the complete Word of God that was being compiled during Paul's day..Paul knew that the complete Word of God would come and when the perfect Word of God was come there would be no more prophecies and no more need for tongues as a sign....

1Co 13:11 **When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things.**

1Co 13:12 For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.

Paul told the Corinthians to put away the childish things (tongues) as they matured in the Lord....Paul is very plain as he listed the gifts that tongues were at the bottom as to level of importance...

1Co 12:28 And God hath set some in the church, **first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers**, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.

Notice that Paul states to the Corinthians (remember this was before the Apostolic signs to the Jews ceased) the order of importance of the gifts...Tongues is last...Also, notice that Paul clearly defines these tongues as "diversities"...In other words, different languages...The ability to communicate in a different language to someone...

Paul gives proof that these signs eventually ended because he was unable to heal later in his ministry...

2Ti 4:20 Erastus abode at Corinth: **but Trophimus have I left at Miletum sick.**

He also was unable to heal himself...

2Co 12:7 And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.

2Co 12:8 **For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me.**

2Co 12:9 And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

Also, you will find nowhere in Scripture where the Holy Spirit caused anyone to lose control of their faculties...Many will drop to the floor and flop like a fish and claim to be "slain in the Spirit"What does the Bible state about this?

***Mat 17:15** Lord, have mercy on my son: for he is lunatick, and sore vexed: for oftentimes he falleth into the fire, and oft into the water.*

The only people in the Bible that lost control of their faculties were those that were under the influence of a demonic force....The Holy Spirit gives us a sound mind not a "black out" spell as many experience...

2Ti 1:7 For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, **and of a sound mind.**

Again, please remember that we cannot base our beliefs on experience but on the firm foundation of the Word of God.