



LEADER TRAINING SERIES

Excerpt from Session 4

“Two Kinds of Tongues”

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TWO KINDS OF TONGUES

1 CORINTHIANS 12:4-11

“There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all: for to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, **to another different kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues.** But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills.”

Personal Tongues and the Usage of Tongues In Public Ministry

The Bible shows that there are two general categories of speaking in tongues. These two categories can be seen in the following scriptures:

- 1) Tongues spoken at the time the person is baptised in the Holy Spirit: Acts 2:4-6; 10:45-47; 19:6. In these scriptures the individuals receive the gift of the Holy Spirit along with speaking in tongues. These scriptures imply the usage of tongues as a personal prayer language for communion, prayer, worship and praise to God on a continuing personal basis. (also 1 Corinthians 14:1-4,14,15; Jude 20; Romans 8:26-27, Ephesians 6:18). This usage of tongues is for the building up of the specific individual who is praying in tongues.

When a person is using their personal prayer language, i.e. praying in tongues they are praying unto God and the words spoken in tongues in this context do not need to be interpreted. In the context of personal praying in tongues, the prayer or praise or giving of glory is directed towards God, 1 Corinthians 14:2 says that “he who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God, for no one understands him...” (NKJV)

- 2) Tongues given in the assembly to communicate to the church and to be a sign to the unbeliever. (1 Corinthians 12:10; 12:29-30; 14:5, 21-22). This

usage of tongues is for the purpose of public ministry. This message would be addressed to other people and therefore will need to be interpreted for the benefit of others listening. This gift of tongues will be used for the sake of building up the whole church as the Spirit gives direction. In most cases it will be necessary to have tongues with interpretation to enable the people to understand what was said (1 Corinthians 14:5–13). An exception to this would be where one gives a message in tongues and it is understood in a language of one of the listeners. Some scriptures give guidelines for usage to both the personal prayer language and tongues when used in public prayer ministry, e.g. 1 Corinthians 14:1–4. See 1 Corinthians chapter 14 note for further explanation.

Therefore if the whole congregation were speaking or singing in tongues or some in tongues and some in English would this would be a personal usage of tongues, (each person is individually responding to God by speaking in tongues). If an individual gave a distinctive message in tongues (one that stood out above the rest of the congregation) then this would need to be interpreted and would be classified as one of the nine gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Note that Paul is greatly concerned about what happens “in the church”, for this reason he gives clear distinction as to what to do within the church as opposed to what is allowable in the congregational prayer time or in one’s personal life. (1 Corinthians 14:4, 5, 12, 19, 23, 28). Some things done in one’s personal life or in the prayer time were interpreted or expressed differently “in the church”.

the Interpretation of Tongues - The God-given spontaneous ability to interpret an utterance given in tongues into the language understood by the people present. It may be a brief summary or a lengthy explanation and yet not be an exact translation. Paul states that the only tongues which need to be interpreted were those that were given in the church for the purpose of ministering to other men. Hence when an individual is responding in praise to God by singing or praying in tongues this would not need to be interpreted, but a specific message which is clearly proclaimed for all to hear, would likely need interpretation.

In all the scriptural instances where the Holy Spirit fell upon the people for the first time the people spoke in new tongues to the Lord.

By looking at the examples within the Scriptures we see:

- a) Acts 2:4 In God's sovereign precedence He pours out His Holy Spirit along with the gift of tongues.

- b) Acts 9:17 Ananias is sent that Paul might receive the Holy Spirit. Paul later states that he is glad that he speaks in tongues profusely (I Corinthians 14:18).
- c) Acts 10:45-46 Cornelius' household receives the Baptism in the Holy Spirit with speaking in tongues.
- d) Acts 19:2,6 The Ephesus church receives the Holy Spirit along with speaking in tongues.
- e) Acts 8:15-19 The believers in Samaria receive the Holy Spirit after Peter lays hands on them. Though the word "tongues" is not mentioned in this passage, Simon saw the manifestation of the Holy Spirit as the apostles laid hands on the believers. Simon had already seen healings and casting out of demons, yet he had not seen anything like that which took place when the Holy Spirit was poured forth. One could conclude that he heard the same manifestation as was present in the other instances above, that of speaking in tongues. Interestingly, Peter says to Simon that he has "no part or share in this ministry", (v. 21). The Greek word for ministry is the same word which is translated as "speech" or "utterance" elsewhere in the scriptures. Some commentators state that Peter's statement should better be translated as "you have no part or share in this speech or utterance." As such it would clearly indicate that the people in Samaria were speaking in tongues.
- f) Mark 16:17 - one of the signs that will accompany those who believe is that "they will speak in new tongues" (Mark 16:17).

NOTE: 1 Corinthians 14:14-15 is a parenthetical statement or an aside which Paul inserts to talk about the personal usage of tongues; as such, verses 13 & 16 would flow together in the context of group or public ministry when using tongues. Some scriptures give guidelines for usage to both the personal prayer language and tongues when used in public prayer ministry (e.g. 1 Corinthians 14:1-4).