

The Holy Spirit

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It was a heavenly experience beyond human ability to describe, which brought me into such a close relation with God that I could think of nothing else at the moment, then to devote my whole life to His service. Several other times the Spirit would come upon me, and each time this occurred, I was more convinced that God had something special in store for my life.

I received a wonderful anointing of the Spirit, and it was glorious. Nevertheless, I had not spoken in other tongues as I had seen others doing, who had received the Holy Ghost. This was a disappointment to me. And although I continued to seek God earnestly from night to night, and received many wonderful and repeated anointings of the Spirit, did not speak in tongues.

Then one Saturday afternoon while I was waiting before the Lord, a lady came and knelt nearby. While I was praying, my tongue seemed to get a little thick. I began to speak a few words (that were not clear English). I quickly recovered myself, however, and began again to pray in English, thinking I had gotten my tongue twisted. Is it not strange that many of us are so obsessed with the idea that God uses brute force to make us speak in tongues; but we fail to see that He is trying all the time to use our tongue? Fortunately the lady kneeling nearby, recognized what I did not, that the Spirit was attempting to speak through me. She told me to let the words come out any way that they would, for it was the Spirit of God. *May that lady's memory be blessed!*

Rather timidly I did as she said—the words, however, sounding very strange to me. But lo! in a very few minutes I was speaking clearly, and powerfully in the unknown tongue! I did not stop but continued for some two hours.

And what a blessing the speaking in tongues has been in the many years that have elapsed since. My own experience makes it clear to me that many people who have received the anointing of the Spirit, need only a little instruction to cause them to yield their tongue to God.

And thus, we see that the baptism of the Holy Ghost has two distinct phases. First, the anointing and presence of the Spirit that comes upon us, to dwell with us forever. Hallelujah! How could death, or the grave, cause us to fear, when the Spirit of Life dwells within us! The other part of the baptism is the speaking in other tongues by the Spirit. This is important too, for we must have this to receive the full baptism. But why is it so important? We shall answer this question in the next chapter.

WHY IT IS IMPORTANT for BELIEVERS TO SPEAK IN OTHER TONGUES?

It is often said that while the speaking in other tongues is Scriptural, it is not really important. We say that if the speaking in other tongues is all that the person has received, the experience would be valueless. As Paul says, "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal." (I Cor. 13: 1)

Nevertheless, if the speaking in other tongues is preceded or accompanied by the anointing of the Spirit, then it is of tremendous importance; For it is the infilling of the Spirit, *plus the speaking in other tongues* that comprises the baptism of the Holy Spirit. The speaking in tongues, far from being an insignificant matter, is a glorious and satisfying experience that can edify and enrich the believer all through his life.

In this chapter, we shall take note of some of the purposes of the believer's speaking in other tongues. We can only touch on these briefly. (For a more complete study secure the author's book, "Twenty-One Reasons Why Christians Should Speak In Other Tongues.")

1. *The speaking in other tongues is the "rest" and the "refreshing" promised from the Lord.* "For with stammering lips and another tongue will he speak to this people. 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." (Isa. 28: 11-12)

The Spirit of the Lord must have been speaking of something of great importance when He said, "This is the rest wherewith ye may cause the weary to rest; and this is the refreshing." It is evident that this is a reference to the verse before. Is therefore not that "**rest**" and "**refreshing**" the "**speaking in other tongues**"?

Let us explain. Speaking in other tongues alone could not be that "rest" and "refreshing." It is rather the fact that the Holy Ghost Who comes and gives the utterance is the "**rest**" and the "**refreshing**." The Holy Ghost is a person. When He comes He speaks. This manifestation and presence of the Holy Ghost thus becomes the great blessing, the great "rest," the great "refreshing." And this is another proof that the infilling of the Holy Spirit is accompanied with the speaking in other tongues; For the latter could not be the "refreshing" unless it were accompanied by the presence of the Spirit.

Thus it was that Peter, immediately after the Day of Pentecost when the Early Church was in the flush of its great Pentecostal experience, called the Jews to repent and receive the blessing in "the times of refreshing ... from the presence of the Lord."

"Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord." (Acts 3: 19)

Let no one sell short the experience of speaking in other tongues; for it indicates the presence of the Holy Ghost, Who has come to make His abode in the believer's life.

2. Christ said, in the Great Commission, that believers should speak in other tongues.

"And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues." (Mk. 16: 15-17)

One of the most important passages in the whole Bible are the words of Jesus in Mark 16, where He gave the Great Commission to the Church. These were the last words of our Lord before He went back to heaven. Their tremendous importance has been universally recognized by the Church down through the centuries.

Let us briefly note the various particulars of the Great Commission. First, the Church was to go into all the world and to preach the gospel to every creature. Though the Church has lagged behind, sadly in carrying out this command, it nevertheless does generally recognize the importance and urgency of fulfilling it as soon as possible.

Next, Jesus in His Great Commission commanded the Church to make disciples of all nations. That those who believed the gospel would be saved and those who rejected it would be lost.

So far, the evangelical church is in agreement; but observe, that is not all of the Great Commission. Christ, at the same time, spoke of certain signs that would identify true believers. Among these signs are those mentioned in the 17th verse, "***In my name shall they cast out devils, they shall speak with new tongues.***"

The healing of the sick and the casting out of devils are signs that were to follow believers. But included also is the one, "They shall speak with new tongues." That Christ should have included the speaking of other tongues" In His Great Commission, emphatically calls attention to the great importance of the sign.

3. He that speaketh in other tongues "speaketh unto God."

"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." (I Cor. 14: 2) **Here, Paul declares that a man who speaks in the unknown tongue speaketh unto God!**

Many persons wonder about God's purpose in the speaking in other tongues. Here is one reason, sufficient, if it were the only one. He who speaks in the unknown tongue speaketh unto God! At the time of conversion, God speaks to us in our language and says, "Son, you are now a member of My family." But when we are baptized in the Holy Spirit, we are able to speak as it were, to God in His language—a language that no man understands except God.

Incidentally, it would not be amiss to say that if God chooses, He can give us a language that not even the devil can understand. Here is a means of communion with God that neither man nor devils can intercept. In time of war, nations have codes for secret communication. Sometimes the enemy is able to break that code, but we may be sure that not even the devil can break God's code!

4. *The believer who speaks in tongues edifies himself.*

"He that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifieth himself; but he that prophesieth edifieth the church." (1 Cor. 14:4)

Here is something that the man on the outside usually does not understand. He hears someone speak in tongues and he cannot see any blessing in it. This is not surprising, for the Apostle Paul declares that the speaking in other tongues is not for the purpose of edifying the listener. For this reason Paul taught that speaking in tongues in the assembly unless accompanied by interpretation, was to be discouraged. (1 Cor. 14: 6)

The fact is that speaking in other tongues, except in special instances, is not designed to edify the listener. *The speaking in other tongues is a spiritual exercise designed to edify the speaker.* Paul said, "He that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifieth him-self." (Verse 4) That the apostle was sincere in this statement is reflected in the fact that he said, "***I thank my God I speak with tongues more than ye all.***"

Naturally, until a person speaks in tongues he cannot understand how it can be a blessing to him, nor how he is edified by it. But once he receives the Holy Spirit, he finds that the experience carries with it a rich spiritual blessing. It is a supernatural experience that he never forgets.

5. *One may pray in the Spirit through the Unknown Tongue.*

"Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God." (Rom. 8:26-27)

In the above Scripture, the apostle tells us that none of us know how to pray as we ought. But we have a powerful ally in the Spirit of God, Who will, if permitted, make intercession "***for us with groanings that cannot be uttered.***" Moreover since the Spirit of God always knows the mind of God, He will always pray according to the will of God.

But how does the Spirit pray through us? We may be sure that the Spirit seeks to help us, whatever is the manner in which we pray. This, however, is not what the apostle here is speaking about. It is evident that he is referring to prayer in the Spirit, through the unknown tongue. In such case, the Holy Ghost prays through the believer. Now, Paul says he will pray with the Spirit and with the understanding-both ways. It is good to pray with the understanding. But it also is good to pray with the spirit. When we are at loss for words to express ourselves in prayer, the Spirit will, in the unknown tongue, take the need and lift it up to God.

It is not an accident that the great promise of Romans 8:28 follows that of Romans 8:26, which speaks of the Holy Spirit as the intercessor within us. With the Holy Ghost praying through us, "all things are bound to work for our good".

"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." (Rom. 8: 28)

6. *Speaking in tongues is a gift to the Church.*

Apart from the private use of the gift, is the fact that it has a purpose in the assembly, although not all believers will manifest the gift in public; but before it can be used in public, it must first be used in private. The gifts of the Spirit are sorely needed, and we must not allow this gift to cease in the Church, although of course, it must operate in accordance with the instructions laid down in 1 Cor. 14. The speaking in other tongues affords a ministry of usefulness for certain members of the Church, who might not have any other public ministry. The person's usefulness increases, if he receives the complementary or corresponding gift of interpretation of tongues. The manifestation of these gifts helps confirm the people of God and assists in preparing them for the Coming of Christ.

7. The contrast between the Tower of Babel and Pentecost.

At the Tower of Babel, God sent judgment on the builders by confusing their tongues (Gen. 11:5-9); and for their impiety they were scattered over the face of the earth.

On the Day of Pentecost, God set in the Church the speaking in other tongues, so that the peoples from the nations that had been scattered, might hear and understand the wonderful works of God. Among these people were "dwellers in Mesopotamia" the very land where the Tower of Babel was built! (Acts 2: 9)

At Babel the builders were confounded and forced to leave off building their pagan temple.

At Pentecost, God began building a new structure, the Church of the living God, Christ Jesus being the chief cornerstone.

The temple of Babel was left unfinished. Stones prepared for it were never set in place, and today that once vaunted tower lies in total ruin on the desert of Babylon, a monument to the folly and presumption of man.

The edifice which was built upon what happened at Pentecost is still building today. And the stone (Christ) that would have been set aside "is become the head of the corner." (Acts 4:11)

On the wall of the palace of Babylon, the handwriting written in another tongue, spelled Babylon's doom, "Thou are weighed in the balances, and art found wanting." (Dan. 5:27) The handwriting on the wall today is the speaking in other tongues, again pronouncing the doom of religious Babylon.

Thank God for this gift. It has become one of the great channels by which man is united to his God. "He that speaketh in the unknown tongue speaketh not unto men but unto God."

In closing this chapter, we may add that we have mentioned only some of the great blessings that come with the speaking in other tongues. There are others also, which the recipient will enjoy as he manifests this gift in his private devotions. Once one speaks and prays in the unknown tongue, he realizes the great benefit and value of the experience, and the reason for which God made it a part of this glorious baptism.