

Captive's Corner



"Bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ"

2 Corinthians 10:5

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Tongues

First of all, you do not have to speak tongues to be saved. Some in the past have spoken tongues when they were saved, but certainly not all - 1 Corinthians 12:28-31. If you read carefully the book of 1 John, you will notice that the purpose for writing that book was to give assurance to those who believe in Jesus that they do have eternal life - 1 John 5:13. Also, as you

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read the Gospel of John you will see it was written so we would believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God and that by believing we would have life in His name - John 20:30-31. You will notice that tongues are never mentioned in John's gospel or epistle. If they were so necessary for salvation, then certainly John would have said so. You can read through the book of Acts and 1 Corinthians 12-14 in

order to understand the purpose and proper use of this gift according to God.

In today's world I personally believe tongues are not often if ever an expression of God's Spirit. They can be from God as evidenced in the Scriptures. (Here, you need to study carefully the purpose in His use of tongues as revealed in Acts and 1 Corinthians 12-14.) They can also be from Satan, the great counterfeiter, as revealed by the abuse of tongues in 1 Corinthians 12-14. A third source of tongues is simply ourselves as evidenced by the fact that we learn primarily by imitation as to our speaking skills. Who taught you to speak originally?

As you can see, I believe that tongues can be explained in a number of ways, all of which are not evil. However, I

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also believe that you must be very careful in regard to them since the enemy has this experience universalized among adherents of all the major religions of the world. Tongues in themselves are not necessarily a

manifestation of God's Spirit or, for that matter, a visit from the true God Who made the heavens and the earth and Who has redeemed us with His blood.

The Greek word translated 'tongues' in regard to this subject can just as well be translated 'other languages.' 'Other' meaning languages other than those the person has learned. Considering the context of Scripture in which this word is used, 'other languages' much better conveys the meaning of the Greek word. Romans 8:26-27 may seem to imply to some that the passage may be a reference to tongues (other languages). It is not. One can prove it is not by realizing that the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with GROANINGS WHICH CANNOT BE UTTERED. How clear can it be. He cannot put them into words, nor can we. If He could, then He could just as easily speak English as any other language.

It is interesting to consider the motivation to speak in a tongue. In correcting the abuse of this gift, Paul points out in 1 Corinthians that we should always have as our goal the building up of others - 1 Corinthians 14:12. You will notice, too, that the gift of tongues was given for a sign not to the believers but to those who do not believe! - 1 Corinthians 12:22. Thus, they are not "proof" to anyone who knows Christ of his salvation or of the

Spirit's presence as some claim. They were given according to the promise of Isaiah as a proof of the present judgment of God upon Israel. See Isaiah 28:11, 12 with 1 Corinthians 14:21-22. You will notice that consistent to this fact is the history of the use of this gift in the book of Acts. In every case, Jewish men were present to be witnesses to this gift, and tongues were instrumental in proving that the blessings of the new covenant were to extend also to the Gentiles.

On the personal side, those who speak tongues in private (a practice that has no support or example in Scripture) testify of good feelings, etc. I believe that if the tongue is self-produced, it is the equivalent to a good cry emotionally, ie. a release of tension. If the tongue is other produced (demonic) it will eventually prove a detriment to the spiritual growth of the believer although at first appearance it may seem to do otherwise.

In testing the spirits within tongue speakers, I have yet to find one to be the Holy Spirit of God. Nevertheless, such a fact does not prove that He is not speaking still through men with this gift. However, it does prove that the persons involved need

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to be very careful to test the spirits to see if they are of God. You can do this in a number of ways, but the best that I have found is to apply 1 John 4:1-6 to the situation. Addressing the spirit that is speaking, ask it if it believes that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh (the point here is that He continues on as a man in glory). An evil spirit hates this truth and will not testify to it because it carries the sentence of judgment to the spirit as it reminds it of its lost position with God.

You can command that the spirit speak in English, a skill which the Holy Spirit can easily do as well as many evil spirits.

Now, in a practical vein, the sum of what I am saying to you is that you should not seek this gift of tongues. There is no Scriptural warrant for such a pursuit since God bestows gifts on man according to His will and the need of others. You are told to seek to build up others in love. Love apart from gift will prove effective in the purpose of God - 1 Corinthians 13. So rest assured that God will equip you as He sees fit and that in Christ you are complete - Colossians 2:9-10. Those who are born again of God's Spirit and God's Word will find in God's Word the truth regarding the use of tongues. Do not allow anyone to spoil you with vain philosophy or deceitful teachings. If you walk humbly

with God in righteousness, He will not withhold any good thing from you - Psalm 84:11; 2 Peter 1:2-4. Be satisfied with the Lord Jesus Christ as His Spirit reveals Him to you. He is the center of the Father's delight (as we are in Him). The enemy is attempting in our world to propagate another terrible lie that God in His

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goodness would withhold something good from those who love Him. Thus, he is tempting men and women to feed on that which is forbidden. In this case, we are told to avoid having anything to do with demons and their activities. Yet, many "believers" are turning to the dark powers of this world because they do not believe what God has said in regard to His Son Jesus. Apart from Christ there is no true life. You can read the book of Ephesians to see what I am saying here. We must be careful to walk in the light He has given and

not seek to make "light" where there is none.

I hope these few thoughts will help to clarify this subject for you. To me the question of "tongues" is not primary to the true gospel, although at times some groups do use it to pervert the gospel (like those who say you must speak in tongues to be saved). The important thing for you to do is to seek the Lord Jesus Christ with your whole heart. He alone saves. The Holy Spirit's primary ministry is to make Him known to you. Keep your eyes on Jesus - Hebrews 12:1-2.

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