



## WHAT TONGUES DO YOU KNOW?

Today's topic comes from one of you who asked a question related to Acts Chapter two.

*And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit was giving them utterance.*

Acts 2:4 NASB

*And when this sound occurred, the multitude came together, and were bewildered, because they were each one hearing them speak in his own language.*

Acts 2:6 NASB

The question, one I have never had asked me before, was "could it have been that all these people were touched by the Holy Spirit so that they heard in their own language?" Good question!

The answer is quite simple, but I shall go a little further with it. It is simple if you take the Bible literally. I have used the NASB translation above as it brings out an important point. *The Spirit was giving them utterance.* The text is pretty clear that it was the speakers who were unfamiliar with the language. The Greek is very clear that these speakers didn't suddenly learn a new language. The verb is in the past (imperfect) tense rather than the normal Aorist (past) tense. As such, it indicates a dynamic process. They were only able to utter these words in a language unknown to them during the time span that the Spirit was enabling them. There is no indication that they continued to speak thus at later times.

Having answered this specific question, let's take a look at the subject of tongues in general. The translators of the KJV did Christianity a great disservice when they added the word "unknown" to the text of I Corinthians. This was done in I Corinthians 14:2, 4, 13-14, 19, and 27. Nowhere does the Bible say anything about an "unknown tongue."

There are other occasions where the Holy Spirit gave persons the ability to speak in a language they did not know (Acts 10:44-47, Acts 11:15-17, Acts 19:6).

Then there were occasions when people claimed to be doing so but, apparently were not. These were members of the church in Corinth. Paul spends one rather long chapter on the subject of tongues (γλῶσσαι). "Tongues" and "languages" are synonyms in the Greek as they are in English. After much instruction on the "proper usage" of tongues and of how little value it is to speak in a language unknown to the speaker, he makes this profound statement.

*If anyone speaks in a tongue, let there be two or at the most three, each in turn, and let one interpret. But if there is no interpreter, let him keep silent in church, and let him speak to himself and to God.*

I Corinthians 14:27-28

Part of his concluding remarks must be clearly understood. The only time it is proper to speak in an unknown language in church is if you have first determined that there is someone in the congregation who will then be able to stand and interpret what you say. Makes sense doesn't it?

Now think about it for a moment! Just how are you going to do this. Can you go up to someone and say, "I am going to speak in a foreign language this evening, can you interpret it?" "Well, what language are you going to be speaking in?" "I don't know!"

Unless you somehow know what language you will be speaking in, it is impossible to follow Paul's instructions. Then, why give such instructions? Because Paul was a great diplomat. He never said you can not do it. . . *do not forbid to speak with tongues.*

I Corinthians 14:39b

he just made it impossible for you to do it!

## CAN YOU LOOSE YOUR SALVATION?

Next week we will take up another question posed by the same person who submitted this week's question. Specifically, we will be looking at Hebrews 6:4-6, Hebrews 10:26 and II Peter 2:21 & 22. You may wish to look at these yourself this week and, if you can find it, look up Article VII of the Berean Bible Church Statement of Faith.

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