

# PRA YING

*In The*

# SPIRIT

*A study of the varieties of tongues as evidenced  
by the baptism of the Holy Spirit*



BY STEVE DOERTER

**PRAYING IN THE SPIRIT:  
A STUDY OF THE VARIETIES OF TONGUES AS EVIDENCED  
BY THE BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

This booklet is a detailed look at the scriptural content of the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the varieties of the manifestation of tongues. New Birth and all that it entails is our initial introduction to the spiritual realm. The baptism of the Holy Spirit and the gifts of the Spirit, with tongues being the emphasis of this study, is our introduction into an actual manifestation of the spiritual, or supernatural. The normal Christian life is meant to be a supernatural experience. God has made incredible provision by the Spirit for this to happen.

For this study to be useful to you, it is necessary to believe that the Bible is the Word of God and it is timeless: it is true yesterday, today and tomorrow. The promises of God are available to those who will believe and appropriate them and to those who allow the Word of God to *shape and direct their doctrine or opinion*, rather than their doctrine or opinion shape and direct the Word of God. The Bible exhorts us not to add to or diminish from the Word, which God gives us. (Deut 4:1-2, Rev 22:18-19)

As a teacher and student of the Word, I have been amazed at the disinformation and the lack of a systematic approach from the Word of God in the teaching on this subject. Selective scripture manipulation and agenda driven theology (having a belief or agenda, and proving it with limited and selected scripture verses) has been a common teaching method for those *opposed* to tongues and also in the case *for* tongues! It is my goal to present a full range of scriptures to consider.

As the scriptures point out and as we will see in this study, there are many *varieties* or uses for the gift of tongues mentioned in the Bible. I will refer to these 'uses' as the '*manifestations/applications*' of the gift of tongues. The scriptures teach certain *rules and restrictions* given for *specific* manifestations/applications of the gift of tongues, but those rules and restrictions do not apply to other manifestations/applications of the gift. It is important to see these *distinctions* in the scriptures to keep from having a distorted view of the whole subject. Since our faith is affected by our knowledge, we need to know what the whole counsel of God is through a systematic study of the scripture on this subject. Then we will know what we can believe God for, through exercising our faith in what we understand the Word of God declares.

### **The First Scriptural References in the New Testament**

We will begin in **Matthew 3:11** (also see Mark 1:8, Luke 3:16)

**Matt. 3:11** I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.

This is the first reference to the 'baptism of the Holy Spirit' in the New Testament. John the Baptist was comparing his ministry to the ministry of Jesus. Notice *three baptisms*! John said his baptism was the *baptism of water* unto repentance. This is water baptism, which is familiar to all Christians. He went on to say however, that Jesus would baptize in the *Holy Spirit* and in *fire*.

**Hebrews 6:2** speaks of the "...doctrine of baptisms." Notice the plural ending on the word.

Now look at **Ephesians 4:5**. It speaks of "One Lord, one faith, one baptism."

Without contradiction we see that in the scriptures, *three is the number of completeness*. With God, we have the Trinity: one God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit; with man we have body, soul and spirit; Jesus is the Way, the Truth and the Life; etc. The completeness of baptism is made up of the three spoken of by John the Baptist: *water, spirit, and fire*, multiple baptisms.

### **The Promise of the Father = the Baptism of the Holy Spirit**

Now look at **Acts 1:4-5**:

**Acts 1:4** And being assembled together with *them*, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, “which,” He said, “you have heard from Me; **5** for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”

Jesus instructed his disciples to wait for the ‘*promise of the Father*’, which was *the baptism of the Holy Spirit*. This then, will be our biblical definition of the "promise": the baptism of the Holy Spirit. This same command was given in Luke:

**Luke 24:49** Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high.”

### **Power**

This ‘promise of the Father’, which is the ‘baptism in the Holy Spirit’, was also to endue them with *power* from God. This is emphasized again in **Acts 1:8**

**Acts 1:8** But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

The Holy Spirit 'coming upon' us is to provide us with the *power* to be the *witnesses* of the Lord Jesus Christ, and to continue His work upon the earth and fulfill the Great Commission! Power is needed in every area of our life to lead a victorious life in Christ and to accomplish the task set before us.

**Mark 16:15** And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. **16** He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned. **17** And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues...

*The Great Commission is still valid today.* Notice that speaking in tongues goes hand in hand with 'preach the gospel' and 'those who believe' and 'casting out demons'. Jesus Himself even declares it would be a 'sign' of those who believe. Since the Great Commission is still valid today, then so are the signs Jesus said would accompany it. Jesus was specific in this post-resurrection command. The commission is to 'Go', and Jesus said that there would be signs following those who believe. *The words of Jesus are still valid today!*

### **How it All Started**

Now read all of **Acts 2**, even if you are familiar with the text.

In **Acts 2:1** When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.

It is interesting to note that those who have been baptized in the Spirit are often referred to as "Pentecostals", and churches with this experience are called "Pentecostal Churches." *Pentecost is the second of three major feasts* that Israel was to observe: *Passover* being the first and *Tabernacles* being the third. It is even more interesting to note that "born-again" Christians relate their salvation experience to the *first feast*, the feast of Passover -- and for very good reason. This feast in the Old Testament, instituted in Exodus, first required the people to slay a

lamb without fault or blemish and use its blood to protect them from the plague of death. The slaying of the lamb and use of its blood thereafter becomes Israel's means of receiving pardon for their transgressions.

We see the parallel in Jesus as the Lamb of God being offered for our sins to save us from the wages of sin, which is death. Not only this, but Jesus was offered up as the sacrifice and spilt his blood on the *very day of Passover*.

**Acts 2:4** tells us something significant also happened on the *very day* of Pentecost.

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

Here, the disciples are “filled with the Holy Spirit” as evidenced by their *speaking in tongues*. Being filled with the Holy Spirit is the fulfillment of what Jesus called the ‘*Baptism in the Holy Spirit*’. Verse 5 explains that because of the feast of Pentecost, there were many Jews in Jerusalem from all over the world there to worship. These men spoke many different languages.

**Acts 2:6** And when this sound occurred, the multitude came together, and were confused, because everyone heard them speak in his own language.

The reason they were confused?

**Acts 2:7** Then they were all amazed and marveled, saying to one another, “Look, are not all these who speak Galileans? (uneducated)

**Acts 2:13** Others mocking said, “They are full of new wine.”

Peter stands up in defense and in **Acts 2:16**

**Acts 2:16** But this is that was spoken by the prophet Joel.

Part of Peter's defense was the use of **Joel 2:28-32**. That Scripture says:

- Joel 2:28** “And it shall come to pass afterward  
That I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh;  
Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,  
Your old men shall dream dreams,  
Your young men shall see visions.
- 29** And also on *My* menservants and on *My* maidservants  
I will pour out My Spirit in those days.
- 30** “And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth:  
Blood and fire and pillars of smoke.
- 31** The sun shall be turned into darkness,  
And the moon into blood,  
Before the coming of the great and awesome day of the LORD.
- 32** And it shall come to pass  
*That* whoever calls on the name of the LORD  
Shall be saved.  
For in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be deliverance,  
As the LORD has said,  
Among the remnant whom the LORD calls.

Many argue that this verse cannot be used when referencing tongues, because it never mentions tongues. That, however, is *incorrect*. Peter, empowered by God, uses this specific God-breathed Scripture in his *defense of tongues*. The point is that the Holy Spirit will be poured out in the last days. We are truly in the last days and we know this based on prophecies that are being fulfilled signaling the coming of Christ. As predicted by Joel, the Holy Spirit is being poured out and it is being denied, rejected or questioned by many Christians.

The *‘this’* in **Acts 2:16** is the disciples speaking in tongues, which was confounding everyone, and thus the issue in question. The *‘that’* is the prophecy that God would pour out his Spirit. Peter continued preaching:

**Acts 2:37** Now when they heard *this*, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Men *and* brethren, what shall we do?”

**Acts 2:38** Then Peter said to them, “repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”

Notice he tells them to ‘repent’ and ‘receive’ the first baptism, which is of water, and they would receive the *gift* (or the promise) of the Holy Spirit. Once again, Jesus called that promise the ‘baptism of the Holy Spirit’. He was making the same offer of the ‘gift’ to them that Jesus had made to the disciples. This was the fulfillment of the command in **Acts 1:4-5**: to wait until they had received the promise (or gift) of the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the accompanying power.

The gift was what the apostles had just received in **Acts 2:4**. Peter, by inspiration, knew the gift was for *all* who would receive it, for in verse **17** he refers to this gift or promise as the fulfillment of prophecy.

**Acts 2:39** For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call.”

This verse explains that this *gift* or *promise* of the Holy Spirit which was *manifested by speaking in tongues* was for them; their ‘children’; for them ‘afar off’; and ‘*as many as the Lord our God shall call*’. This verse clearly declares that absolutely *no time dispensation* was put on any believer receiving ‘the gift’, or ‘promise’, or ‘baptism of the Holy Spirit’ as it was received, manifested, and directly addressed at the Feast of Pentecost in **Acts 2**. Anyone who would postulate that speaking in tongues is not for today is not recognizing the **purpose of** or the **reasoning in** Peter’s argument. It was to emphasize the *universality* of the promise to all believers of all time.

There is and has been a movement away from the supernatural in the church. This has created a church that is big on *rhetoric* but weak in *faith and power*. There is a tendency to judge scripture by our experience. The early church experienced the gifts of the Spirit until Constantine made Christianity the state religion, and filled the leadership of the church with pagan leaders to appease their anger. Since

that time, the gifts of the Spirit have not been the norm, but the exception. Just as the reformation began to change what years of darkness had done to the church in terms of salvation by grace, so the Pentecostal movement began to do in at the turn of the century in 1900 with the Holy Spirit manifesting through the gifts of the Spirit again.

Though the experience was real and scriptural, the reformed church did not embrace this breakthrough, just as the Catholic Church did not embrace the reformation. Since the baptism of the Holy Spirit deals with spiritual things, and spiritual things go beyond human reasoning, it was rejected, and men built doctrine against it that would justify their *lack of experience* with it. Through man's reasoning, attempts to justify the lack of the supernatural (such as speaking in tongues) has led to agenda driven theology, which begins with an agenda (such as tongues and the gifts of the Spirit are not for today) and then attempt to bend scriptures to confirm and validate the agenda. Most of this kind of teaching falls under the category of 'Cessation Doctrine' (the gifts ceased to operate with the Apostles) or 'Dispensational Doctrine' (the gifts were only for that time dispensation).

### **An Example of an Attempt to Invalidate**

One such argument against tongues being a manifestation/application that is relevant and applicable for today is found in **1 Corinthians 13**:

**1Cor. 13:8** Love never fails. But whether *there are prophecies*, they will fail; whether *there are tongues*, they will cease; whether *there is knowledge*, it will vanish away. **9** For we know in part and we prophesy in part. **10** But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away.

It is taught that 'when that which is perfect has come' is referring to the 'coming' of the book of the *New Testament*, and when the New Testament was 'come', tongues (and prophecy, knowledge and other

gifts) were no longer relevant and applicable and they have now ‘vanished away’.

This is *not* at all what is being *said* or *implied* from this commentary on love written by the Apostle Paul. Paul continues to say:

**1Cor. 13:11** When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things. **12** For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall *know just as I also am known*. (emphasis mine) **13** And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these *is* love.

It is obvious that the ‘perfect’ that is to come is something far more *ultimate* and *final* than the canonization of scripture. There is a ‘now’ and ‘then’ comparison that speaks to the consummation of love being the greatest thing, and a union with God in which we shall ‘know just as we are also known’.

If the scripture were to speak about something as important as the biblical gifts of the Holy Spirit *no longer being relevant or applicable* for believers, then it would do so in a clear and precise manner as found in **Hebrews** concerning the Old Covenant:

**Heb. 8:13** In that He says, “A new covenant,” He has made the first obsolete. Now what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away.

There is no ‘stretch’ here in discerning about *what is vanishing away*. The comparison of covenants was and is a very important point to distinguish. The ‘Old Covenant’ was only old because of a New Covenant, so it is clear from the scripture that we can now understand the ‘Old’ is ready to *vanish* away.

To teach that gifts of the Holy Spirit to the church (that the scripture declares to be for ‘as many as the Lord our God shall call’) are now

‘vanished away’ because the book of the New Testament is come, is at best a distortion of **1 Corinthians 13**.

### More History of the Subject

Now look at **Acts 8:14-20**

**Acts 8:14** Now when the apostles who were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them, **15** who, when they had come down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit. **16** For as yet He had fallen upon none of them. They had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. (In water per Acts 10:47-48) **17** Then they laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.

**Acts 8:18** And when Simon saw that through the laying on of the apostles’ hands the Holy Spirit was given, he offered them money, **19** saying, “Give me this power also, that anyone on whom I lay hands may receive the Holy Spirit.”

**Acts 8:20** But Peter said to him, “Your money perish with you, because you thought that the gift of God could be purchased with money!

These verses reveal that there were believers who had been baptized in the name of Jesus, but had not *received the Holy Ghost*. Verse **16** indicates the *falling* of the Holy Spirit as was evidenced by other believers when receiving the "gift." Remember their reference to receiving the Holy Spirit was the ‘baptism of the Holy Spirit’, being ‘filled with the Spirit’, the ‘promise’ (or ‘gift’) which was received with the *manifestation of speaking in tongues*, as experienced on the day of Pentecost.

Simon *saw* the *evidence* that the Holy Spirit had been received and even wanted to buy the *power* to do likewise.

To further emphasize these points, turn to **Acts 10:44-48**:

**Acts 10:44** While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard the word.

Notice the Holy Spirit *fell*.

**45** And those of the circumcision who believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also.

Notice the gift was *poured out*. What was the manifestation?

**46** For they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God. Then Peter answered, **47** “Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptized (in water) who have received the Holy Spirit just as we *have*?”

**48** And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then they asked him to stay a few days.

*Tongues* accompanied the ‘pouring out of the Holy Spirit’ and God used this as a distinct *sign* to the Jewish Apostles, showing the *gift/promise* and *salvation* was available to the Gentiles. (**Acts 11:4-18**) Again and again throughout these accounts, **all** those who were filled with the spirit spoke in tongues. *Not some did and some didn’t*, but the manifestation of evidence that individuals were receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit was their speaking in tongues.

Also, over and over again, the scriptures refer to people ‘*receiving*’ the gift or promise of the Holy Spirit. To remain Biblical, we understand that it was not an issue of whether the gift *was for them or not*, but an issue of whether they ‘*received*’ it or not. Many times, people will not readily or easily receive the gift of tongues, and conclude from their experience that it must not be for them. This is, in fact, the reason that doctrines have been developed that say the gift is not for **all**. It is my opinion, developed from overwhelming evidence of scripture, that the gift is for **all**.

My experience was that it was difficult for me to receive the gift because my ‘understanding’ kept getting in the way, and I wanted the Holy Spirit to ‘make’ me speak in tongues. I didn’t want to have to ‘speak’ by faith and allow the Holy Spirit to give me the utterance. Therefore I struggled for many months before finally being able to step out in faith and ‘receive’ the gift.

Look at **Acts 19:1-6**:

Paul came to the upper courts of Ephesus and found disciples of Jesus.

**Acts 19:1** And it happened, while Apollos was at Corinth, that Paul, having passed through the upper regions, came to Ephesus. And finding some disciples **2** he said to them, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?” So they said to him, “We have not so much as heard whether there is a Holy Spirit.”

Here, Paul found believers in Christ, who had not yet received the Holy Spirit, as the gift.

**Acts 19:3** And he said to them, “Into what then were you baptized?”  
So they said, “Into John’s baptism.”

**Acts 19:4** Then Paul said, “John indeed baptized with a baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe on Him who would come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.”

**Acts 19:5** When they heard *this*, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. **6** And when Paul had laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied.

Paul laid his hands on them and they were filled with the Holy Spirit as *evidenced by* speaking in *tongues* and prophesying.

It is obvious from the preceding scriptures that the Apostles knew the importance of being filled with the Holy Spirit, for they inquired of believers if they had received it or not. When you receive Christ you receive the Holy Spirit into your spirit. Being filled with the Holy Spirit and having the Holy Spirit ‘come upon you’ (as evidenced by speaking

in tongues) is something else. If they had not received the Holy Spirit in these terms, the Apostles took *definite measures* to assure that they did receive it where it was evidenced by speaking in tongues!

It is necessary for us to understand also that it is equally important for us to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, as evidenced in the New Testament Church both then and now. We must understand, as did the Apostles, that if the gift was not important, then God would not have given it. God does not give gifts for entertainment or pleasure, but for the necessary *equipping* of the saints of God.

### **The Corinthian Church and the Gift of Tongues and its Varieties of Manifestations**

The Corinthian Church was not moving in a proper order and balance with the spiritual gifts, and had other problems as well. Paul's first letter to them addresses these problems and thus reveals some further insight into the gifts and manifestations of the Spirit. Let us point out here that problems with an area spiritually do not *negate* the area spiritually! Some have taught that since there were such problems with the gifts, therefore the gifts were nothing but trouble and should not be pursued. Later we will read Paul's response to that line of thought.

Turn to and read **1 Corinthians 14**. The two major points of the chapter are:

All things should be done unto edifying of the church (**v12, 26**)

Things should be done in an orderly fashion (**v33, 40**)

*Prophecy* is shown to be an *edifier of the church* (**v3-4**) and is more desirable than speaking in tongues during the church meeting. This does not negate the gift of tongues, but only clarifies its purpose and use to the believer and to the church. We will now take a closer look at the gift of tongues and its various manifestations/applications.

**1Cor. 14:2** For he who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God, for no one understands *him*; however, in the spirit he speaks mysteries.

You will remember on the day of Pentecost, the believers who were filled with the Spirit and spoke in tongues, *spoke to men in tongues* who understood them. This is the first manifestation/application found in the New Testament. The tongues were in fact *languages* being spoken that the speakers did not know. **Acts 2:4** says they spoke in "other" tongues. This is a *different manifestation/application of the same gift*.

To the Corinthians Paul teaches that one 'who speaks in a tongue' is speaking unto *God* and not unto *men*. This manifestation/application is not meant for man to understand, and it is in fact speaking 'mysteries in the spirit.' This is our first realization of there being varieties of applications for the gift of tongues.

**1Cor. 14:3** But he who prophesies speaks edification and exhortation and comfort to men. **4** He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself, but he who prophesies edifies the church.

*Notice that two different things are to be edified two different ways:*

The *church* by *prophecy* through the *believer*  
The *believer* by *tongues* through the *Spirit*

So then, *another* manifestation/application for tongues is a means for an individual believer to *edify himself*, or in other words, to be built up. This is obviously a need that every Christian has, and since God is not a respecter of persons, God has made this provision for every Christian, not for just a select group that happen to have the gift.

**Jude 20** But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit...

This verse commands the believer to make use of a particular purpose for praying in the Spirit (praying in tongues: 1 Cor 14:14), and that purpose is to ***be built up*** (edified) ***in the faith***. What an amazing provision that God has made for us to build up, strengthen and increase our ***faith!*** Have you ever wanted to increase and strengthen your faith? Well here is a way to do it!

After identifying one of the manifestation/applications of tongues as being for ***self edification***, Paul gives yet ***another*** manifestation/application for tongues in this next verse: tongues with (and for) interpretation.

**1Cor. 14:5** I wish you all spoke with tongues but even more that you prophesied; for he who prophesies *is* greater than he who speaks with tongues, unless indeed he interprets, that the church may receive edification.

Paul declares his wish that ***all believers*** speak in tongues. He is not suggesting that it is only for his ‘dispensation’ or that the gift is not for everyone! In fact just the opposite! If you wonder if it is God’s will for you to speak in tongues, then remember that Paul is writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and he is expressing the will of God when he says ‘I wish you ***all*** spoke with tongues.’ We should believe that when Paul says ***all***, he (and the Holy Spirit) means ***all!***

Though not negating tongues, he also states his desire for all to prophesy or for there to be interpretation of tongues for the ***edifying of the church***. Again, he re-enforces the need for the edifying of the church, which an unknown tongue does not do, unless it is interpreted. Thus ***tongues with interpretation*** (which would be similar to a prophecy) is yet another manifestation/application that is distinctly different than other uses of the same gift. This particular manifestation/application would fall into the category of a gift ***that not all receive***, but is given as the Holy Spirit wills. (more on this under the section “Who Gets What Gift?)

## Praying in the Spirit

Now look at verses **14** and **15**:

**1Cor. 14:14** For if I pray in a tongue my spirit prays, but my understanding is unfruitful.

We see here *another* manifestation/application of the gift of tongues. When we speak in tongues, the scriptures say that we are *praying*. Also, when we pray in tongues, it is our *spirit* that is praying, not our mind with understanding. This is what is meant by ‘my understanding being unfruitful.’ This verse and the next is the scriptural basis for the terminology ‘*praying in the spirit.*’

Praying without understanding what we are saying is often a major stumbling block to those who desire to speak in tongues. Praying without understanding what you are saying takes you outside the ‘comfort zone of *control*’. This is contrary to the way most of us have lived our lives, but it is really what the nature of *faith* is all about. Faith deals with what we don’t understand, what is unseen and what is unknown. Since we don’t understand what we are saying or praying, then it requires a step of faith for it to happen.

The fact that the scripture teaches that my spirit is praying should cause one to understand that it is therefore a *supernatural* occurrence. It is not something that takes control of you, rather it is something that you willingly receive and yield to. There can be several reasons for one not being able to speak in tongues when they have tried to receive the gift of tongues. Sometime there are even things in one’s life that can *block* it from happening. (see section ‘Observations’)

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

God has given us the ability to *pray* both in the Spirit (without understanding) and with our mind (with understanding). We also are

able to *sing* with both the Spirit and with our mind. *Singing in the spirit* is yet *another* manifestation/application of the gift of tongues.

If we only pray with understanding or only pray in the spirit, then we ourselves are out of balance just as the Corinthian church was. Remember, the emphasis of this chapter in Corinthians is edification and order *in the church*. Through Paul's teaching, we learn the places and purposes of the gift of tongues.

Notice Paul's next statement:

**1Cor. 14:18** I thank my God I speak with tongues more than you all...

The Greek rendering of this verse is that he spoke in tongues more than *all of them combined*. Paul certainly saw his need for *personal edification* and *spiritual direction* in prayer and practiced it! Again, God is no respecter of persons! God would not make such a phenomenal gift available to only a select few.

Paul also recognized the *heavenly connection* with speaking in tongues:

**1Cor. 13:1** Though I speak with the tongues of *men* and of *angels*, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal.

Notice his reference to tongues when he says I speak with the tongues of men (with understanding) and of *angels* (without understanding or 'in the spirit'). This is why tongues are often referred to as a 'heavenly prayer language'.

### **More on Praying in the Spirit**

**1John 5:14** Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will He hears us.

This verse of scripture speaks of the confidence that the believer has in the Lord, that if we ask (in prayer) anything *according to the will of*

**God**, He hears us. How we struggle to find His will and pray His will. We need to realize that God knows this struggle and in fact the scripture calls it a *weakness* we have. God does not leave this need unattended!

**2Pet. 1:3** ....as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue...

Peter tells us that God, through His *divine power*, has given to us *all things* that pertain to life and godliness! Included in ‘all things’ is the ability to pray according to the will of God. With the ability to pray according to the will of God, then we can have the confidence that God will hear us when we pray!

**Rom. 8:26** Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

It is interesting to note here that Paul declares us to have a *weakness* that the Spirit needs to help us with. The weakness is this: we do not know what to pray for as we ought to! When we pray in the Spirit (referencing **1Cor 14:14-15**), praying in tongues, the Spirit Himself makes *intercession for us*, with ‘groanings’ which cannot be ‘uttered’ which means without words that can be understood.

**Rom. 8:27** Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit *is*, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God.

This is how we can pray *according to the will of God* every time, by praying in the Spirit, in tongues, speaking mysteries to God from the Spirit, letting the Spirit make intercession for us and other saints. Remember, a *weakness* we have is that we do not know how to pray as we should! But God has made a supernatural provision for this weakness. Since we *all* have this ‘weakness’ it would only make sense that this provision would be for *all*, not just for a few.

(A brief example of this would be what ‘our understanding’ would pray if we were a disciple of Jesus watching Jesus be crucified. In our own wisdom, we would be praying for a miraculous release, or something other than *humiliation and death*. The Spirit within us however, would be praying for strength to endure, knowing that the seed was falling in the earth to die, only to come forth in resurrection authority and power! The Spirit within us would know that salvation was being obtained there on the cross, and how necessary it was for Jesus to go through his present test. Yet in our own wisdom and understanding, we would have been praying against the will of God in seeking his release! Lord, help us turn to the Spirit for direction, even in prayer!)

Turn to **Ephesians 6:18**

**Eph. 6:18** praying always with all prayer and supplication in the spirit being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints...

This again is a reference to ‘praying in the Spirit’, using the *heavenly language* that God gives us upon receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit. Praying in the Spirit is essential for effective *prayer, supplication and power* for the believer.

### **Observations**

Once I was praying for a woman to receive the gift of tongues. She had been baptized in the Spirit for 15 years, but had not had a breakthrough in tongues. The Holy Spirit prompted me to ask her if she believed she was forgiven of all her sins. She replied that she believed all her sins had been forgiven but one! After spending a few minutes in the scriptures with her teaching her anew on forgiveness, she believed God for her forgiveness of her sin that she felt had been too awful for God to forgive. While she was thanking God for forgiving her (for the first time in 15 years) she began speaking in tongues.

I am not sharing this to suggest that there is unforgiven sin in one's life if they had not received tongues yet, but only to point out that for this particular woman, there was a **blockage** in her life from *receiving*, and Godly counsel revealed what that blockage was and how to be free from it.

If you or someone you know has prayed for the gift of tongues and has not received it, it is important to remember that we are all on a journey of learning to appropriate the gifts and promises of God! I am not condemned that I have not appropriated everything that I see available in the scripture to me through covenant and promises. Neither should anyone that has not received the gift of tongues feel condemned or that they are any *less a Christian* than someone who has. It is important though, to distinguish what is true so we know what to reach for! Otherwise we can fall back on a belief that says, "Oh well, it must not be for me", or something similar.

### Seeking

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

This verse tells us to *desire* (seek) spiritual gifts. As mentioned above, I find that often people who have not received the gift of tongues after praying for it will determine that it must not be for them. I would encourage such a one to not give up! In the last 35 years I have know many who have received their heavenly language when they had not initially received it. I am such a person! *Ask, seek, knock*. Let your desire for spiritual gifts be greater than your desire for television, entertainment and distractions. Continue to seek God and believe Him for the fulfilling of His promise and the ability to receive His precious gift.

## Rightly Dividing the Word

Now we want to take a close look at the following verses in **1 Corinthians 14**. They are often quoted and misapplied to the use of tongues in the church, and there has been much confusion and fear created from these misapplications.

**1Cor. 14:21** In the law it is written:

*“With men of other tongues and other lips*

*I will speak to this people;*

*And yet, for all that, they will not hear Me,”* says the Lord.

**1Cor. 14:22** Therefore tongues are for a sign not to those who believe but to unbelievers but prophesying is not for unbelievers but for those who believe.

Notice the *specific* manifestation/application of tongues being referred to from this quote from the Old Testament. It is referring to our first exposure in the Book of Acts when the disciples were speaking in *languages that they did not know*.

(**Acts 2:6** And when this sound occurred, the multitude came together, and were confused, because everyone heard them speak in his own language.)

**V22** of **1Cor. 14** states two things:

1. The tongues that speak an unknown language was a sign for *unbelievers*, because this is what happened in Jerusalem at Pentecost.
2. Prophesying is not for unbelievers but for *believers*!

Yet in **V23-25** we read this:

**23** Therefore if the whole church comes together in one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in *those who are* uninformed or unbelievers, will they not say that you are out of your mind? **24** But if all prophesy, and an unbeliever or an uninformed person comes in, he is convinced by all, he is convicted by all. **25** And thus the secrets of his

heart are revealed; and so, falling down on *his* face, he will worship God and report that God is truly among you.

Here, contrary to **V22**, prophecy is for *unbelievers*!

This is a direct instruction for when ‘the whole church comes together in one place’, obviously, a meeting. The instruction is for them not to all pray in tongues at once, for that is not would not be edifying for the visitor (unbeliever or uninformed). Notice Paul is telling them *not to do* what they did at Pentecost. At Pentecost, they were *all speaking in tongues (all altogether, at one time) to unbelievers*. The unbelievers were hearing the Gospel spoken in their native language and they were turning to Christ as a result.

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

There is an obvious *change in reference* to the *particular manifestation* or application of the tongues that Paul is giving instruction to. We need to read further to flesh this instruction out:

**1Cor. 14:26** How is it then, brethren? Whenever you come together, each of you has a psalm, has a teaching, has a tongue, has a revelation, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification.

Notice the instruction for a church gathering: each one should have a psalm, a teaching, a tongue, a revelation or an interpretation. The use or manifestation/application of tongues in this context is *tongues with interpretation*, which again, is similar to a prophecy, which is an edifier. ‘Let all things be done for edification’.

**27** If anyone speaks in a tongue, let there be two or at the most three, each in turn, and let one interpret. **28** But if there is no interpreter, let him keep silent in church, and let him speak to himself and to God.

Here, further instruction is given for speaking in tongues that *require interpretation*. For that *type* of tongue, you must remain silent if there is no interpretation, etc. This instruction would *not apply* to other uses or manifestations/applications of tongues. *Praying in the spirit* would be

an example of this. It would not be inappropriate to pray in the spirit together in a church setting. This prayer is toward God and according to the spirit. It requires no interpretation.

It is not unusual in multi-national gatherings for everyone to pray out loud simultaneously in one's own language. This is praying with understanding all together at one time in one place. God is not confused. It can be the same for praying in the spirit in a group. The same is true of 'singing in the spirit'. A church gathering would be an appropriate time and place to 'sing in the spirit' in unison with other believers, just as singing 'with understanding' in unison with other believers is appropriate. Tongues for personal edification and 'speaking mysteries' would not lend itself for a meeting with other believers. Tongues with interpretation or prophecy would be more appropriate.

To take a specific instruction for a specific use and manifestation/application of tongues and try to *apply it across the board* for all uses (varieties) and manifestations/applications of tongues is impractical and extra-biblical. This is, however, the standard response that is given concerning believers praying in the Spirit together, and it comes from not rightly dividing the Word of God on this particular topic.

### **Who Gets What Gift?**

A point I want to address now is a statement that is made for a specific application/manifestation of tongues. It is found in the following text:

**1Cor. 12:4** There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. **5** There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. **6** And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all. **7** But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all: **8** for to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit, **9** to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit, **10** 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. **11** But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills.

Notice that the ‘manifestations’ of the Spirit are given and **v11** says that the gifts or manifestations are ‘distributed to each one individually as He wills.’ This verse is often quoted to propose that the ‘gift of tongues’ is *not for everyone*, but only for those God wills to distribute it to. Please notice the specific manifestation/application of tongues that is being referenced: ‘different kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues.’ It is clear from the context that the specific use of the tongues that is given only as the Spirit chooses is *tongues that require interpretation!* This would not necessarily apply to the other manifestations/applications of tongues.

Also note from this passage of scripture that it is referring to ‘diversities of gifts’; ‘differences of ministries’; ‘diversities of activities’; and ‘manifestation of the spirit’. Many have assumed that the ‘manifestation of the Spirit’ that is ‘given to each one’ is a *permanent gift*, and the Holy Spirit predetermines the allotment, or distribution, of these ‘permanent’ gifts to individuals. *There is nothing in scripture to indicate this to be true*. Obviously if one has the *ministry* of prophet, then prophecy would be a permanent gift to accompany the ministry, and likewise for other ministry/gift complements. The distribution of gifts otherwise, is not necessarily permanent or exclusively assigned. This is an important point to consider.

In the verse that follows (**1Cor 14.39**) and in **1Cor 14.1**, we are told to *desire to prophesy*. We are also instructed to desire or *seek spiritual gifts*. Why would Paul (and the Holy Spirit) *instruct us to desire* to do something or have something if it was not readily available to us to appropriate and manifest? We are told to desire to prophesy, yet prophecy is one of the nine gifts of the spirit mentioned that we are told He ‘distributes as He wills’! Too often, people restrict their faith by not viewing the *whole plan* as revealed in the scripture. That is why we are admonished to ‘rightly divided the Word of Truth’.

(2Tim. 2:15 Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of truth.)

Notice from the text the different manifestations of the Spirit: ‘word of wisdom’, ‘word of knowledge’, ‘faith’, ‘gifts of healings’, ‘working of miracles’, ‘prophecy’, ‘discerning of spirits’, ‘tongues’, and ‘interpretation of tongues’. There are nine gifts mentioned in this text. Consider that these gifts are ‘distributed to each one individually as He wills’ ***as they are needed, when they are needed, and where they are needed***: depending on the situation, the people present, what the need is, and who the Holy Spirit may be moving through at the time.

I have seen this to be true in my own life and 35 years of ministry. I have had several, if not all, of these gifts/manifestations distributed to me and through me for specific times, places, needs and circumstances. They are not, however, permanent gifts that I can claim operate in my life all the time. When you consider the sweeping claims that Jesus made about us, and what signs would follow His disciples, then it would **make sense** and remain scripturally accurate, that what I am sharing would be true.

This is an important point to consider, because ***our knowledge limits or releases our faith***. If we believe that we do not have ‘gifts of healings’ as a permanent gift yet we think that is the only way we can have it, then we would feel awkward about praying for a healing. God would not want us to feel awkward about claiming a promise and provision of His Word, because since ‘by His stripes we were healed’ then we can pray for and claim healing whether we have ‘gifts of healings’ as a permanent gift or not!

The baptism of the Holy Spirit is to be a means of ***supernatural power*** working in our lives that enables us to appropriate by faith the manifestations of the Spirit that are to ‘profit all’. Is it not an indictment against the church that the church is the last place most people go to for help for their spirit, soul and body? God gave gifts and manifestations of the Spirit to enable the ***church*** to be a ***dispenser*** of the power that the Holy Spirit has inherent Himself. We should be earnestly seeking God

for insight into the truth of the Scriptures that would properly relate us to the power of the Holy Spirit in our lives and in the church.

### **Do Not Forbid to Speak in Tongues**

**1Cor. 14:39** Therefore, brethren, desire earnestly to prophesy, and do not forbid to speak with tongues. **40** Let all things be done decently and in order.

I believe that Paul through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit was qualified to write scripture that declares and instructs: ***do not forbid to speak with tongues.*** There is no clear, indisputable scriptural evidence that clearly overturns this divinely inspired command/instruction. If an attempt to invalidate this clear admonition of scripture (by declaring that his statement is no longer valid) is justified in terms of there being a ‘time element’ on its validity, then ***where does one stop*** in being able to determine what is for ‘now’ and what was for ‘then’? That same reasoning could declare that John 3:16 was only directed to Nicodemus, etc. Is that not trying to add to or take away from a clearly expressed command of scripture?

The Apostle Paul was writing to a church that was ***misusing*** the gift of tongues. That is clear. People today argue that they have seen misuse of tongues (which is certainly true!) and therefore it is cleaner (less messy) and easier (by forbidding rather than correcting) to drop it altogether. That is exactly why Paul concluded his subject on tongues with this command! Just because there are problems, ‘don’t forbid to speak with tongues’ because it is a gift of God given to the church that the church needs and must continue to use!

If you are under teaching or instruction that forbids you to speak in tongues, you must question the scriptural authority that contradicts this scriptural instruction of Paul. If you forbid *yourself* to speak in tongues, you must question your disregard of this scriptural instruction. Forbidding yourself could sound like ‘it’s for others but not for me’, or ‘if God wants me to have it, He will have to give it to me.’ Remember: God is not a respecter of persons. Everyone needs personal edification, everyone has the weakness of not knowing how to pray as we ought, and everyone has the need to be able to pray in the spirit. That is why Paul said, ‘I wish you all spoke in tongues.’

### **Shocking Conclusions**

I was once listening to a president of a well known seminary speaking in a conference meeting of a well known evangelical ministry. In his sermon he said that anything that had to do with speaking in tongues was of the devil. When I questioned him later in the foyer of the hotel, I asked him about this statement. He was not only saying it was not of God, but taking it to a logical conclusion that if it was not of God, then it was of Satan.

I told him that those who prayed for me to receive Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior, led me in the sinner’s prayer and also prayed over me in tongues. I asked him, according to his statement, was my salvation a work of the devil? The question caused a stir and he dismissed me readily.

A scripture came to mind that deals with a similar subject:

**Matt. 12:22** Then one was brought to Him who was demon-possessed, blind and mute; and He healed him, so that the blind and mute man both spoke and saw. **23** And all the multitudes were amazed and said, “Could this be the Son of David?” **24** Now when the Pharisees heard *it* they said, “This *fellow* does not cast out demons except by Beelzebub, the ruler of the demons.” **25** But Jesus knew their thoughts, and said to them: “Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and every city or house divided against itself will not stand.

Jesus was accused by the Pharisees of operating under the power of the devil by performing miracles. Jesus' response to that accusation was that if the devil were operating to defeat the works of Satan, then it was like a kingdom divided against itself. In other words, that *doesn't make sense*.

When you look at the number of prominent Christian leaders that are impacting the world with their ministries and faith, who claim to be baptized in the Spirit and speak in tongues, then the question begs to be asked: If the gifts of the spirit are not for today, and at worse are simply works of the devil, are all of these leaders deceived? Is the fruit of God that is being produced in their ministries *in spite of* their practice of speaking in tongues or *because of it*?

Beyond the leaders there are the hundred of thousands of believers that have had similar experiences in countries around the world since the turn of the century! For the most part, this 'Pentecostal' experience has produced authentic fruit of the Spirit of God in countless lives. Are all of these believers who have a sincere walk with God *deceived*? Are they under demonic influence? We would have to answer in kind with Jesus: a kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation.

If one chooses to believe that the gifts of the spirit are not for today, they are obviously free to believe what they are convicted of and there should be no negative judgment toward them for their belief. The indictment produced by that belief towards those that do believe it, however, is obvious in its conclusion: their experience is not real, for how can it be if it is 'not for today'. That is why it is a question that needs to be thoroughly explored and carefully considered.

It is my wish that this study has been thought provoking and enlightening as to the content and insight of the scriptures, the Final Authority. Our experience should not dictate our theology. It is only too easy to justify my experience by explaining away scriptures that contradict my experience. If our experience does not line up with the Word, then we should repent and seek God to help us close that gap!

## Summary & Conclusion

The baptism of the Holy Spirit is available to *all believers* who desire to receive it. Speaking in tongues is not a restricted gift, meant only for a few. When you consider the multiple applications of the gift of tongues, you understand that some of the uses would require a *particular gifting*, such as tongues with interpretation. However tongues for *self edification*, or the ability to *pray according to the will of God* would obviously be available to everyone, because everyone has need of it.

You receive it, not by ‘getting more of the Holy Spirit’, but by *yielding* more of yourself to Him. Baptism means "to be immersed in." Immersion means everything ‘goes under.’ Nothing is left unyielded: not our mind (understanding) or our tongue!

When we receive Christ, we receive the Holy Spirit that brings the Spirit of God *into* our lives. When we receive the Baptism in the Spirit, we allow the Spirit to come *upon* us to equip us for works of service by bringing the power of God into our lives.

**1Cor. 12:28** And God has appointed these in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, varieties of tongues.

In reviewing what this verse confirms, we see that there are *varieties of tongues*. Varieties or diversities of tongues indicate that there is more than one use of the gift of tongues. The various uses or manifestations/applications are numerous and include:

1. Praying in a *language* you do not know, as manifest at Pentecost.
2. Praying in a tongue that has an *interpretation* that produces edification of the church like a prophecy.
3. Praying a prayer for *personal edification*, which is being built up in your faith.

4. Praying in the Spirit, which is *praying*: without understanding, praying mysteries in angelic language and praying and interceding according to the will of God.

5. *Singing* in the Spirit which is an integral part of *praise and worship*.

### Seeking the Baptism of the Holy Spirit and Speaking in Tongues

Look now at **Luke 11:9-12**

**Luke 11:9** “So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. **10** For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. **11** If a son asks for bread from any father among you, will he give him a stone? Or if *he asks* for a fish, will he give him a serpent instead of a fish? **12** Or if he asks for an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? **13** If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will *your* heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!”

**1Cor. 14:1** Pursue love, and desire spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy.

We see here that the scripture assures our heart that our motivation is pure in asking, seeking and knocking for the *things of the Spirit God*. If we ask for bread, he will not give us a stone. If we ask for a fish, he will not give us a serpent, or if we ask for an egg, he will not give us a scorpion. All this is to say that if we ask the Father for the gift of the Holy Spirit, how much more does he desire us to have it? You must trust the Lord that as you ask, seek, and knock -- God will open unto you and give you the gift of the Holy Spirit, *with the manifestation of the gift of tongues*.

As we learn to yield to the Spirit of God in our seeking, we understand that it is us who does the speaking, but it is the Spirit that gives the syllables. The Spirit does not force our tongue and voice box to make noise. It is an act of faith, similar to a prayer of faith for healing. We bring the petition, but it is God who heals. It is we who speak as an act of our will and volition, but it is God who gives us the syllables, and the more we speak the more we realize that God is at work through our own voice box. It is also similar to priming a pump with water. To get the flow going the first time, it is often necessary to ‘prime the pump’, that is, begin the speaking of syllables by faith and then being blessed by the flow that comes. This helps overcome the issues of control and the blocks that come from speaking ‘without understanding’. The Western culture can easily be a hindrance to us receiving and moving in the things of the Spirit of God, so for some, it takes effort to learn how to yield to the Spirit.

Release yourself to following scripture when it says to ‘desire spiritual gifts’. Seeking more of the manifestation of the Holy Spirit is a good thing. Seeking a prayer language that brings to you the benefits that God has made available to us in the Spirit is important in so many areas of our life, from worship to spiritual warfare! Remember, ‘...how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him.’

May the Lord bless you as you ponder this teaching.

For further inquiries, please contact:

Steve Doerter  
Grace Community Church  
PO Box 1574  
Cashiers NC 28717  
[gracesteve@nctv.com](mailto:gracesteve@nctv.com)  
[www.gracecashiers.com](http://www.gracecashiers.com)