
SPEAKING IN
TONGUES
DOES THIS STILL HAPPEN?

Speaking in Tongues

Over the past several weeks, we've been examining the work of the Holy Spirit, and one subject has continued to generate questions, discussion, and even disagreement—speaking in tongues.

Many of you have raised important questions concerning baptism, receiving the Holy Spirit, the purpose of miraculous gifts, and whether speaking in tongues continues today. We've also heard questions about personal prayer languages, the tongues of angels, and how to understand those who claim miraculous experiences while living contrary to the commandments of Yehovah.

These are legitimate questions, and they deserve biblical answers.

Now, my purpose in this lesson is not to prove that speaking in tongues has ceased or that it continues today. My purpose is to examine what Scripture actually teaches, why these gifts were given, how they functioned in the early assembly, and whether their original purpose remains applicable today.

And perhaps most importantly, how do we reconcile someone's personal spiritual experience with what Scripture teaches?

Because personal experience does not establish biblical truth. Biblical truth is the standard by which every experience must be examined.

So today, we're going to set aside denominational doctrines, religious traditions, personal assumptions, and even our own experiences, and allow Scripture to interpret Scripture.

And wherever that leads us, we must be willing to follow.

David B: Why does baptism need to happen before receiving the Holy Spirit? What is its purpose?



The first thing we need to understand is that the practice of ritual washing and immersion did not begin with John the Baptist or with the New Testament. Its foundation is already established in the Torah. But there is an important distinction: even though the Torah repeatedly commands washing, bathing, and cleansing with water, it does not explicitly establish every feature of what later became known as the mikveh.

Typology : Purpose in the OC is cleansing of Uncleanness

And the vessel must be clean before it can be a dwelling place for Yah

Ezekiel 36:25–27

Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them.

Do you see the progression:

1. Yehovah cleanses His people with clean water.
2. He gives them a new heart and a new spirit.
3. He puts His own Spirit within them.
4. His Spirit causes them to walk in obedience to His commandments.

1 Peter 3

in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water. There is also an antitype which now saves us—baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Yeshua Messiah



Having said that…

1. Hearing the message

Romans 10:14, 17

How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?…So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of Yah.

2. Believing in Yeshua

John 3:16

For Yah so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

3. Repenting of Sin

Acts 3:19

Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord

4. Confessing Yeshua

Romans 10:9–10

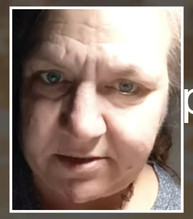
that if you confess with your mouth the Messiah Yeshua and believe in your heart that Yah has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

5. Being baptized

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 forgiveness of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”

What if someone misses one of these, or doesn’t do one of these?



Darja: First, are the miraculous gifts of tongues described in Acts and 1 Corinthians still perating today? Second, if they are not, how do we explain the experiences of sincere believers who genuinely believe they have spoken in tongues?

4. Personal Edification??

1 Corinthians 14:4

He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself, but he who prophesies edifies the church.

How is the person edified if he/she doesn't understand the language he/she is speaking?

1 Corinthians 14:14–15

For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my understanding is unfruitful. What is the conclusion then? I will pray with the spirit (lower case), and I will also pray with the understanding.

So Darja…

I think we need to avoid two possible errors.
One is to say that because someone had a powerful experience, the miraculous gift of tongues must still be operating today.

The other is to say that because we believe tongues have ceased, every modern experience must be fabricated, psychological, or demonic.

Neither conclusion is adequately established in Scripture.



Samuel: Samuel's central argument is that the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth, and because Torah is truth, a person cannot genuinely be walking in the Holy Spirit while rejecting Yehovah's commandments. He says that miraculous experiences, including speaking in tongues, must be evaluated by whether a person is submitted to Yeshua, committed to the covenant, and walking in obedience to Torah.

Samuel's thoughts are largely sound, but I feel it needs some clarification

Acts 10:44-48

While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard the word. 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. For they heard them speak with tongues and magnify Yah. Then Peter answered, "Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?" And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord.

As I pointed out last week, the Holy Spirit came "upon" Cornelius and his Gentile bunch before they received the indwelling. This was obviously before any of them were properly under covenant.

Why?

Acts 15:8–9

"So Yah, who knows the heart, acknowledged them (Gentiles) by giving them the Holy Spirit, just as He did to us, and made no distinction between us and them

Another Stated Purpose



Jim: Does Scripture distinguish between the miraculous gift of tongues and a separate, private prayer language? Is there a biblical distinction between mikveh, which supposedly removes something, and baptism, which supposedly adds something?

Mikveh Vs Baptism

Although I appreciate Jim's illustration of the mikveh as representing the removal of something and baptism as representing the addition of something, I believe Scripture presents a different picture and does not support making such a distinction between the two.

Both the Mikveh & the Baptism are the removal of something

The Mikveh was for ceremonial cleansing, and this was a type that pointed to the cleansing of sin that is given at baptism.

1 Peter 3:21

There is also an antitype which now saves us—baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward Yah), through the resurrection of Yeshua the Messiah

Romans 6:3-4

Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Messiah Yeshua were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

One could argue that our baptism is our death, dying to ourselves so that we can walk anew because of what was Removed and then Added.



Michael: Michael is correct that we cannot dismiss speaking in tongues simply because we believe the miraculous gifts may no longer be operating today. We must establish what Scripture teaches about tongues, why they were given, and whether Scripture actually teaches that they would cease before Yeshua's return

“This is really what provoked me to jealousy”

Romans 11:13–14

"For I speak to you Gentiles; inasmuch as I am an apostle to the Gentiles, I magnify my ministry, if by any means I may provoke to jealousy those who are my flesh and save some of them."

Paul identifies tongues as a sign to unbelievers, quoting a passage originally directed toward Israel. Michael, as a Jewish man, experienced what he understood to be tongues and was moved toward faith.

This makes sense to me!

…because tongues always had a purpose in Scripture. They were never presented as simply a supernatural experience for the sake of having an experience. Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 14:22 that tongues were a sign to unbelievers. And considering that Michael is Jewish, I find his testimony particularly interesting.

Now, does that automatically prove that what Michael witnessed was the miraculous gift of tongues? No. But I certainly wouldn't dismiss the significance of his testimony.

My point is that throughout Scripture, the miraculous manifestations of the Holy Spirit served a purpose beyond the experience itself. They were signs that testified to something Yehovah was doing. So rather than focusing exclusively on how an experience made someone feel, I believe we should be asking what biblical purpose it served and whether it aligns with what Scripture teaches about the gift.

Conclusion

As we bring this discussion to a close, I want to emphasize something important. The question is not whether Yehovah is capable of giving someone the miraculous gift of tongues today. Of course He is! The question is whether what we are witnessing today is the same gift described in Scripture.

Throughout the Bible, the miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit served a purpose. They were never just about creating an emotional experience or demonstrating spiritual superiority. They testified to the work of Yehovah, confirmed His message, and served as signs according to His purposes.

I don't question the sincerity of those who have shared their experiences. But sincerity is not the standard by which we determine truth. Scripture is.

And while Paul tells us that tongues would eventually cease, we must be careful not to claim certainty about the timing when Scripture itself does not explicitly establish it.

So my conclusion is simple: I'm not interested in putting Yehovah in a box by declaring what He can or cannot do. But neither am I willing to redefine a biblical gift to accommodate what people claim to experience.

We must never allow our experiences to interpret Scripture. We must allow Scripture to interpret our experiences.