

On Tongues And Salvation



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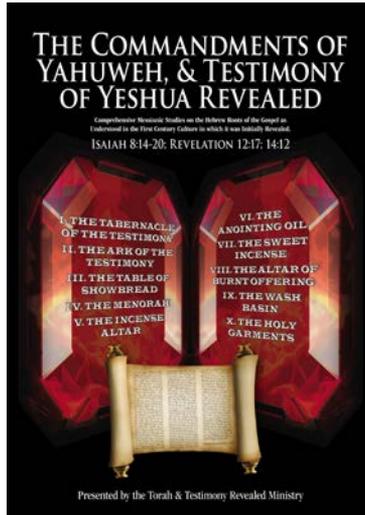
**Must I speak in Tongues
to be Saved?**

**Presented by the Torah & Testimony Revealed
A Jews For Yeshua Apologetics Ministry
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ON TONGUES AND SALVATION

In this presentation we are going to do a brief study on the question of tongues and salvation.

To begin our study, first let us define biblically what a tongue is, or more specifically, what an “unknown tongue” is.

By definition, a tongue is a language, and an “unknown tongue” is a foreign language; so that to speak in an “unknown tongue” means literally, to speak a foreign language.

Is this definition supported by the plain text of Scripture? Absolutely, in **Ma’aseh (Acts) 2:1-11** where the first occurrence of tongues is mentioned, it is written,

2:1 Now when the day of Shavuot (Pentecost) had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.

2:2 And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting.

2:3 Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them.

2:4 And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages as the Spirit gave them utterance.

2:5 Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem, Jews, devout men, from every nation under the sky.

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



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

2:8 “How is it then that we hear each in our own dialect in which he was born?”

2:9 “Parthians, and Medes and Elamites, those dwelling in Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia,

2:10 Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt, and the parts of Libya adjoining Cyrene, visitors from Rome, both Jew and proselytes,

2:11 Cretans and Arabs, we hear them speaking in our own languages the wonderful works of יהוה.”

This passage states clearly that the “tongues” being spoken were indeed a foreign language of another people.

It is also clear that this occurrence and introduction of “tongues” was not a language “unknown” to man; but rather, an ability to speak a “foreign” language previously unknown to the person speaking it, and supernaturally acquired by the speaker.

Is what is not clear is whether this was a continuing ability that they took home with them.

The concept of “tongues” is only mentioned a few times in the NT Scriptures, among the 7 chapters in Scripture where the concept of gifts of the Holy Spirit are mentioned; **Ma’aseh (Acts) 2:1-13; 19:1-7; Romans 12:6; Ivrim (Hebrews) 2:4** and in **I Corinthians 12-14**, the gift of speaking in tongues is mentioned in 5.

The initial 2 presentations of “tongues” are positive in nature. In **Ma’aseh (Acts) 2** it is presented as a notable sign given by God to man as a way to verify to the listeners that Yeshua was the long awaited Messiah they had been looking for. In the second instance in **Ma’aseh (Acts) 19:1-7**, twelve former disciples of Yehochanan (John) the Baptizer



began speaking in foreign tongues, as well as prophesying, after they were baptized in the name of Yeshua and then had the hands of the Emissary Shaul (Apostle Paul) placed on them.

So in these two passages we see,

- 1) What the gift of tongues looks like. (Like a foreign language spoken fluently by somebody who never formerly learned the language).
- 2) Why it is likely to take place. (When the person hearing or speaking the tongue needs confirmation that Yeshua is indeed the true, resurrected Messiah they had been looking for. Not to show that a person is “saved”).
- 3) When it is likely to take place. (When gathered at a public assembly during observation of a Holy Day of Scripture, or after being baptized and having an Apostle lay hands on a person).
- 4) And what is likely to happen. (People will believe in Yeshua as the Messiah after seeing the miraculous event and may express multiple gifts of the spirit as a result of their experience).
- 5) What activity is likely to accompany it. (In the first instance there were tongues of fire on each head, no hands were laid on them by any Apostle, and they were baptized in the water shortly thereafter. In the second instance, they were baptized, had hands laid on them, and then also prophesied).

Later however, when Shaul (Paul) discusses the matter of tongues in the 3 chapters of **I Corinthians 12, 13, and 14** he places the matter of tongues within a general stature of hierarchy concerning the gifts of the Spirit; and places a distinct nuance of de-emphasis on it. But before discussing I Corinthians, let’s begin with the matter of gifts of the Holy Spirit in general.

Beginning with **Romans 12:3-8** we see the first mention of gifts given by God to man. They are written as follows, and do not mention the gift of tongues:

12:3 For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think,



but to think soberly, as **הַיְיָ** has dealt to each one a measure of faith.

12:4 For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function,

12:5 So we being many are one body in Messiah, and individually members of one another.

12:6 Having then different gifts, let us use them in proportion to the favor that is given to us. If we have the gift of prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith;

12:7 Or the gift of service, then let us use it to minister; and those with a gift of teaching, to teach.

12:8 Those who can encourage and warn, let them exhort; and those with the gift of generosity, let them give freely. They who can lead, let them lead with diligence, and those who are gifted with mercy, let them do it with gladness.

In this first example of gifts we see no mention of tongues; but we do see a list of 7 gifts, all of which are encouraged for the purpose of edifying (of building up) the body of Messiah.

They are as follow,

The gift,

- 1) Of Prophecy
- 2) Of Servitude
- 3) Of Encouragement
- 4) Of Exhortation (to warn, correct and call to repentance)
- 5) Of Generosity
- 6) Of Leadership
- 7) Of Mercy

Now continuing on to **I Corinthians 12:4-11 & 12:27-29** we are given



two more lists of many more gifts. Many of these gifts listed in the two Corinthians passages overlap with the Romans list, and with each other. The Emissary Shaul (the Apostle Paul) likewise presents this as gifts given for the purpose of edifying (building up) the body also.

I Corinthians 12:4-11 reads as follows:

12:4 Now there are different types of gifts, but the same Spirit.

12:5 There are different types of ministries, but the same Master

12:6 And there are different types of activities, but it is the same God who works in all and through all.

12:7 But the revealing of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all.

12:8 For to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, and to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit,

12:9 To another trust and belief by the same Spirit, to another, gifts of healings by the same Spirit.

12:10 To another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the discernment of spirits, to another different types of languages, and to another the ability to interpret different languages.

12:11 But the one and same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each person individually according to the will of God.

Notice here that the gift of tongues is a gift given to some but not to others.

The gifts are summarized as follow:

The gift,

1) Of wisdom



- 2) Of knowledge
- 3) Of faith
- 4) Of healings
- 5) Of working of miracles
- 6) Of prophecy
- 7) Of the discernment of spirits
- 8) Of the speaking of languages
- 9) Of the interpretation of languages

And **I Corinthians 12:27-31** states:

12:27 Now you are the body of Messiah, and members individually.

12:28 And הָרָרִי' has appointed these in the assembly, first Emissaries (Apostles), second prophets, third teachers, after these miracles, then gifts of healings, helpers, administrators, and different types of tongues.

12:29 Are all Emissaries (Apostles)? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Are all workers of miracles?

12:30 Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret?

12:31 But earnestly desire the greater gifts, and yet I will show you a better way.

And he asks, "do all speak with tongues? Because not everybody has the same gift or gifts.

The gifts are summarized as follow:

The gift of,

- 1) An Emissary (an Apostle), [a chief overseer and teacher
- 2) Of a prophet (someone who exhorts, warns, and/or prophesies)
- 3) Of a teacher,
- 4) Of the ability to perform miracles,



- 5) Of healing,
- 6) Of serving others, (a type of generosity)
- 7) Of administrating,
- 8) Of speaking in a foreign language(s),
- 9) Of interpreting a foreign language(s).

Between these 3 passages of Scripture a total of 25 gifts are presented.

However, because many of them overlap, the total number of different gifts of the Holy Spirit presented between these 3 passages are 18.

The list of 18 gifts are as follow:

The gift,

- 1) Of prophesy (one type of role of prophet)
- 2) Of serving others
- 3) Of encouraging others
- 4) Of exhorting others
- 5) Of generosity
- 6) Of leadership
- 7) Of mercy
- 8) Of wisdom
- 9) Of knowledge
- 10) Of faith (the ability to trust and believe the word of Adonai)
- 11) Of healing
- 12) Of working miracles
- 13) Of discerning spirits
- 14) Of being an Emissary (an Apostle)
- 15) Of teaching
- 16) Of administration
- 17) To speak a foreign language through the Holy Spirit
- 18) To interpret a foreign language

I doubt very much that these are the only gifts, for Joseph had the gift of dreams, and of dream interpretation. Others the gift of music like King



David, and the gift of artistic ability and craftsmanship like those assigned to design the artifacts of the Temple; **Shemot (Exodus) 31:1-6**.

And Shaul (Paul) clearly states in two of these passages that not everyone has all the same gifts. That no one gift is unique to all believers.

This is not coincidence, as the Emissary Shaul (the Apostle Paul) in these Corinthians passages is specifically addressing the issue of the gift of speaking an “unknown tongue”. And he is specifying with deliberate intent, a de-emphasis of the gift of speaking a previously unknown and unlearned foreign language, presenting it as less effective and influential at building up the body than the other gifts.

In fact, Shaul compares the gift of foreign languages with the gift of prophecy to make his main points so that between these 3 passages, the gift of prophecy is listed first in one of them, second in another, and midway down in the third; while the gift of speaking a foreign language is not mentioned at all in Romans, and listed last in the two Corinthians passages.

On the same note, concerning the issue of whether the ability to speak a foreign language is necessary as evidence of the Holy Spirit in one's life, or as evidence of being “born again” or “saved”, then one would expect the Scriptures to state so plainly. If anything, these passages indicate that all believers will have “a” gift of the Holy Spirit, not that all believers will have the “same” gift.

And most certainly receiving the Holy Spirit is necessary for spiritual rebirth, and spiritual rebirth necessary for entering into the Kingdom of God; **Yehochanan (John) 3:3-7**. But despite this important point, no passage in Scripture designates any particular gift as the sole evidence of being saved or “born again”.

Likewise, neither are there any passages in Scripture indicating that the gift of an “unknown tongue” is anything other than the ability to speak a



foreign language not naturally acquired or formally learned.

In churches today we hear often of a gift of the “tongues of angels” to be used as a prayer language. But the Scriptures do not say anything about any language of angels to be used by believers as a prayer language. Shaul (Paul) only says concerning this type of tongue that even if he were to speak with such a tongue it would mean nothing apart from love.

Interestingly enough, it is this type of tongue that you almost always exclusively hear in churches. That is because as a “tongue of angels” it is “perceived” as a mysterious language nobody would naturally know how to speak; and so it is naturally the one language that Pentecostals and others came to believe the gift of “unknown” tongues is.

However, the Scriptures provide no example of any mysterious “tongue of angels” demonstrated. If anything, all of the “Angels” in Scripture appear to plainly speak Hebrew; and there is nothing mysterious or “unknown” about that among first century Hebrew speaking Jews.

Certainly, if this mysterious tongue of angels were a necessary sign for being born again or saved, then not only would the Scriptures plainly say so, but one should be able to find any number of examples in the Scriptures demonstrating this “gift” in action. And clarify for us why only this gift qualifies as “absolute evidence” of being “born of the Spirit” but not any other gift or foreign language.

Also, if someone had this angelic tongue that no human could be taught to speak due to its angelic origin, then how would you be able to know that it was an actual language being spoken and not just babbling?

And if somebody claimed to be able to interpret it, how would you know the interpretation was correct and that the interpreter was not just making things up? How would you know it was not a *demonic* angel speaking through the person?

Likewise, an angelic type tongue spoken that Shavuot (Pentecost) rather



than the foreign languages experienced in **Ma'aseh (Acts) 2**, would have raised many eyebrows and resulted in many discussions to determine if it was from God or not.

But in **Ma'aseh (Acts) 2** it was clearly known languages of the earth that were being spoken, and it was done in such a way to where those listening knew the person fluently speaking the foreign language had no ability to speak that language fluently seconds prior. As such, it was very clear that it came from God.

It was likewise very clear to those native speakers what was being said; **Ma'aseh (Acts) 2:11**. So there was no room for doubt or confusion in how God used this gift to speak to the people gathered together for Shavuot (Pentecost) that day.

With this, I believe that when you read through the Romans passage, and through **I Corinthians chapters 12, 13, and 14** with these things in mind, that you will gain a new understanding of what the gift of "tongues" is, and is not, and what the gifts of the spirit are.

Clearly, speaking in tongues is not what proves whether a person has been born again or "saved". For Yeshua said a tree is known by its fruit, and the "fruits" of the Spirit, as opposed to the "gifts" of the Spirit, are that of a changed life; **I Yehochanan (I John) 3:9**. And when that changed life grows into full maturity, it will bear and display before all the fruit of love, joy, shalom (peace), patient endurance, gentleness, goodness, trust, meekness, and self-control; **Galatians 5:22,23**.

Gifts can be counterfeited, but a changed life and fruit of the Spirit cannot. So if a person speaks in tongues, but their life has not changed and no fruit of the Spirit has grown over time, then they have not been born again. On the other hand, if they have these attributes over time, then regardless of what gifts of the Spirit they may or may not have, there is every reason to believe they have been saved and born again; for their fruit, not their gift – their character, not their talent, will show it.

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