

Holy Spirit baptism

By Dr. Jay Zinn

Essential to the walk of the disciple is laying a good foundation at the beginning of your Christian walk. A closer look at the book of Acts reveals the pattern of another experience the early saints enjoyed. Peter cites three foundational steps in *Acts 2:38* in response to his audience's question: *What should they do to right their wrong in crucifying Jesus?* His answer:

- Repent—*turn* from your sins to Jesus (for Salvation),
- Be baptized in water for the forgiveness of sins (Water Baptism),
- Receive the gift and promise of the Holy Spirit (Spirit Baptism).

All Christians receive the Holy Spirit when they turn to Jesus and are “born again” (John 3:5-7). Salvation is a *spiritual* birth. But the book of Acts reveals an additional experience to the salvation of the early Christians. They were *baptized in the Holy Spirit!*

In *Acts 8:12-17*, the Samaritans believed the gospel Philip was preaching and were baptized in water (water baptism *follows* salvation in the pattern of Acts). When the apostles back in Jerusalem heard about it, they came to Samaria to pray for these new converts because the Holy Spirit had not yet come *upon* any of them (Acts 8:16). They had received the Holy Spirit *within*, but had not received the Holy Spirit *upon* them like the apostles had experienced in *Acts 2:2-4*.

The baptism of the Spirit is a baptism of the believer into the “anointing” of the Holy Spirit. Jesus set the pattern for this when the Spirit descended *upon* him at the river Jordan in the form of a dove (Matthew 3:16). He was water baptized by John and “anointed” by the Holy Spirit. The believer follows Christ's example when we follow him in water baptism and in Spirit baptism.

The baptism of the Holy Spirit is an essential part of our Christian foundation because it affects the believer's life in a number of ways. It brings an increased dimension of:

- **Authority** to witness and minister to others (Acts 1:8).
- **Inspiration** in worship (John 4:24; Philippians 3:3).
- **Power** in prayer (Romans 8:26; 1 Corinthians 14:15; Ephesians 6:18; Jude 20).
- **Understanding** in the scripture (1 John 2:20, 27; 1 Corinthians 12:12).
- **Guidance** from God's voice (Acts 13:2; Mark 13:11; John 16:13-15).
- **Manifestations** of the gifts of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 12 and 14).

The baptism of the Holy Spirit is a gift. Once a person has decided to receive Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord, they are qualified to receive this “gift” from God. Remember, a gift isn't something you earn. Many have erred in thinking they've got to *clean up their act* before they can have this experience. The blood of Jesus has already cleansed you from your sins. Therefore, you simply need to *desire* this gift and *ask* for it (*see Acts 2:38; Luke 11:33*).

Some of you may wonder how you can know if you've received this gift? This is a legitimate question because it is more than just "taking it by faith." There is a tangible experience that accompanies the baptism of the Holy Spirit. It is called—*speaking in tongues*. Look closely at the experience of the early church converts in four classic illustrations:

1) The 120 Jewish converts in *Acts 2* spoke in tongues (a new language) when the Holy Spirit came **upon** them in an upper room in Jerusalem. Visiting Jews from other countries were drawn to this phenomena when they heard the 120 speak about God's glorious works in their own native tongue (*Acts 2:11-12*). Amazed at this, the crowd asked what this meant, to which Peter replied (verse 16): "This is what was spoken [foretold] by the prophet Joel." Joel had prophesied the coming of this experience (*Joel 2:28-29*), and so did Jesus (see *Acts 1:4-5, 8*). Peter also tells the crowd: "Exalted to the right hand of God, he [Jesus] has received from the Father the **promised** Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now **see** and **hear** (*Acts 2:33*)." So what did the crowd see and hear? One hundred-and-twenty disciples speaking in a new language—the tangible evidence of the baptism (anointing) of the Holy Spirit. The tangible evidence of Christ's anointing was the *dove*. The tangible evidence of the Christian's anointing is *tongues*.

2) The Samaritan converts in *Acts 8* spoke in tongues by implication. When the apostles came down from Jerusalem to Samaria and laid hands on the new converts, Simon the sorcerer SAW something he wanted to purchase—the ability to lay hands on people and impart the gift of the Holy Spirit. Peter rebuked him for this and said, "May your money perish with you, because you thought you could buy the **gift** of God with money! You have no part or share in this **ministry** (the Greek word for "ministry" here is **logos**: *something said, or utterance*)." Simon saw something **uttered**. So in light of the pattern of Spirit Baptism seen in *Acts*, it is safe to conclude that Simon saw the Samaritans speaking in *tongues* (new language).

3) The Roman converts in *Acts 10* spoke in tongues. The saved Jews who came with Peter to the household of Cornelius were surprised when they witnessed the Gentiles receive the *gift* of the Holy Spirit. How did they know? Because they heard them *speaking in tongues!* Peter acknowledged immediately that this household had received the Holy Spirit just as he and the others had on the day of Pentecost. So he ordered them to also to be water baptized to complete the foundation of their conversion. When the apostles back in Jerusalem confronted Peter for going into the home of Gentiles (see *Acts 11*), he explained how God led him there and how Cornelius and his house had received the same *gift* the apostles did on the day of Pentecost. Case closed. No one could refute the *evidence*. The Gentiles had *spoken in tongues* like the Jews did when they were anointed by God.

4) The Greek converts in *Acts 19* spoke in tongues. In his journey through the interior of Asia Minor, Paul came across twelve disciples who were not baptized correctly, nor had they been baptized in the Holy Spirit. When Paul settled the issue about water baptism, he laid his hands on them and the Holy Spirit came **upon** them and they *spoke in tongues* (*Acts 19:6*).

In all of the incidents in Acts, the pattern is clear. Something tangible was *seen* and *heard* when the early saints received the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Tongues was the immediate evidence. Jesus himself predicted this would happen when he said, “*And these signs will accompany those who believe...they will speak in new tongues*” (Mark 16:17).

Speaking in tongues is also mentioned in *1 Corinthians 12, 13, and 14* explaining the gift’s purpose, practice, and dynamics. The book of Acts provides the *historical* record of the experience—*1 Corinthians* provides the *insight*. There will be more on *1 Corinthians* in next week’s assignment.

What is so amazing about this experience is that every believer in Christ can have it. YOU can have it. It’s not earned; it is a gift. Peter told the crowds, “*The promise [gift of the Holy Spirit] is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call*” (Acts 2:39). To say this was only an experience for the early church Christians does not line up with Peter’s promise that this gift is for **all**. The baptism of the Holy Spirit is just as much for us today as it was for 120 on the day of Pentecost and the other new converts in the book of Acts.

You’re probably wondering by now why God would choose the manifestation of an *unknown* tongue to be the evidence of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit? The answer may be found in the fact that the most unruly part of our body is the *tongue*—a part that no one can tame according to *James 3*. Speaking in tongues, however, is the Holy Spirit enabling the utterance to come forth (Acts 2:4). Since the Holy Spirit is providing the utterance, then it is truly a time when the tongue is tamed and speaking only that which edifies (1 Corinthians 14:4).

When I first spoke in tongues I couldn’t understand the language. The apostle Paul clarifies this when he said that our “spirit” is speaking *mysteries* to God and, therefore, will not be understood by our minds (1 Corinthians 14:2). This is why it is called an *unknown* tongue. Paul further explains that, when we speak in tongues, our mind is not producing the language because it is coming from our “spirit” (1 Corinthians 14:14).

So what is our spirit? **Proverbs 20:27** says:

“The human spirit is the lamp of the LORD that sheds light on one’s inmost being.”

Apparently the physical location of our *spirit* is in the middle section of the body. When our conscience is pricked, a physical reaction occurs in our gut (like butterflies). Proverbs also indicates our *spirit* is the *Lord’s lamp* (i.e., the conscious awareness of the existence of God).

When Adam and Eve were created, God designed them in His image as three-part beings. Therefore, we have a **body**, a **soul**, and a **spirit** (see 1 Thessalonians 5:23).

The **body** (our *world-conscious* part) is the visible, physical home of our invisible soul and spirit.

The **soul** (our *self-conscious* part) is our mind and comes from the Greek word, **psuche**, which is where the word psychology (study of the mind) comes from.

The **spirit** of man is our *God-conscious* part.

This is how our *soul* (the mind) can have its own language while our *spirit* receives and speaks another language when we are baptized in the Holy Spirit.

Here is a list of things that are happening when a Christian speaks in tongues:

- The Holy Spirit (in us) enables our “spirit” to speak in tongues (Acts 2:4).
- We’re uttering “mysteries” to God with our spirit (1 Corinthians 14:2).
- We’re praying in a tongue we don’t understand (1 Corinthians 13:1; 14:2, 15-16).
- We’re praying “in the Spirit” with our spirit, which builds faith (Jude 20).
- We’re praying a prayer God understands, which edifies us (1 Corinthians 14:4a).
- It’s a perfect prayer because its source is in the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:4).
- It is a way the Holy Spirit intercedes for us in our weakness (Romans 8:26-27).
- It burns up the *chaff* (of sin) in our lives (Isaiah 4:4; Matthew 3:11-12).
- It imparts a greater boldness to witness (Acts 1:8; 4:13, 31).

As I have led hundreds of people into this experience, I often come across someone who asks me, “What if God doesn’t want to give this to me, or what if I get a demon instead?” These are legitimate questions and here’s what I tell them. Look closely at what Jesus says in **Luke 11:9-13**:

*“So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you ... for everyone who asks **receives** Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will he give him a snake instead? Or if he asks for an egg, will he give him a scorpion? If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, **how much more** will your Father in heaven **give the Holy Spirit** to those who ask him!”*

The principle here is obvious. If we ask God for the “gift” of the Holy Spirit, which *he* initiated, and it says in his Word that it is ours for the asking, why would he not give it to us?

And why would he give us a scorpion or snake (symbolic for devils) instead of the Holy Spirit? What parent would do that to their child? Parents give good gifts—not harmful gifts—to their children. *How much more* will our heavenly Father give us the Holy Spirit when we ask him? God not only wants to give the baptism of the Holy Spirit to us; it will be exactly what we asked for and not a demonic spirit.

If your interest has increased through this study to desire this for yourself, then how can you receive this “gift” of the Holy Spirit and speak in tongues? Trust me when I say, it is not difficult at all to get it. Many are amazed at how simple it is once they’ve stepped out in faith to receive it.

First, you must repent (be willing to turn from everything the Bible calls sin) and accept Jesus Christ as your Lord (Master) and Savior (Acts 2:38-39; Romans 10:8-13). If you’ve already done this then understand, believe and act upon the following steps:

- It is Biblical (be thoroughly convinced through examining the scriptures).
- It is God’s will for you (Ephesians 5:17-18).
- It is applicable for today’s Christian (Mark 16:17; Acts 2:39).

- It is not your salvation experience, but distinct from it (Acts 8:14-17).
- It is evidenced by speaking in a language (tongue) you won't understand (Mark 16:17; 1 Corinthians 14:2 and 15).
- It is for your spiritual growth and edification (1 Corinthians 14:4a; Jude 20).
- You must really want this gift, and believe God will give you what you have asked for (Luke 11:9-13; Hebrews 11:6; James 1:6-7).
- Jesus is the baptizer in the Holy Spirit (Matthew 3:11; Luke 24:49). Ask him to baptize you with the evidence of an *unknown* tongue.
- After you ask, say nothing more in the language or languages you understand because your mind won't be producing the new language (1 Corinthians 14:14). It will come from your spirit (i.e., out of your belly—see John 7:38). To speak from your mind is to shut off the valve from which the river flows.
- Understand that God uses your lips and your voice when you speak. You can't speak with your mouth closed tight. Neither can you speak in tongues unless you begin to give voice, and step out to speak in a new language as the Holy Spirit gives the utterance. Speak it out loud.
- Once you begin to speak in tongues, relax and let it go. Keep speaking for as long as you wish. Your language will grow, and your faith will increase. Your spirit is now speaking *mysteries* to God so don't give any thought to the fact that you don't understand what you're saying (1 Corinthians 14:2, 14).
- As you're speaking there's something else you can do with your new language. Paul says, “*So what shall I do? I will **pray** with my spirit ... I will **sing** with my spirit*” (1 Corinthians 14:15). You can also *sing* in tongues! Put a tune to it, any tune. Sing in your new language! It's fun!
- Pay no attention to the lies the devil will fire into your thoughts, such as: “You're not really speaking in tongues, you're just making it up!” If this happens to you, it isn't uncommon. The majority of those who received their new language had the same thoughts. Why? Because it's new and doesn't seem possible. Or maybe our intellect is trying to reject it because it seems foolish. Whatever the doubts, understand it is Satan who wants to keep you from having this gift. Ignore him and keep speaking in tongues. In time, the doubts will cease as your faith increases.
- Finally, pray in tongues often. Paul did (1 Corinthians 14:18). Also understand you can start and stop at any time. You are in control of the praying. Tongues will not come without you initiating it (1 Corinthians 14:15).
- It brings the supernatural power (anointing) of God to operate in the gifts of the Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:1-11). This is what happened to Jesus after he was anointed by the Holy Spirit at the Jordan River:

Luke 4:1 — “Jesus, **full** of the Holy Spirit, left the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness.”

Luke 4:14 — “Jesus returned to Galilee in the **power** [Greek: *dunamis*] of the Spirit.”

- This same Holy Spirit power to operate in the gifts, Jesus promised to us, his disciples:

Luke 24:49 — “I [Jesus] am going to send you what my Father promised; but stay in the city until you have been **clothed with power** from on high.”

Acts 1:8 — “You will receive **power** when the Holy Spirit comes **on** you.”

Acts 19:6 — “The Holy Spirit came **on** them, ... they spoke in tongues and **prophesied** [the gift of prophecy].”

At the turn of the 20th century, a Methodist evangelist by the name of Charles F. Parham opened a Bible School in Topeka, Kansas. He gave his forty students an assignment to diligently study what the book of Acts showed to be the evidence of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit and report back in three days. Each student’s findings were the same: every recipient baptized in the Holy Spirit spoke in “other” tongues. The result of this study sent them to their knees in prayer for God to bless them with this gift.

As it was for the 120 disciples on the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit came upon these students and they began to speak in tongues. This event sparked a renewal and revival that spread across the Midwest and Southern California to a humble Los Angeles mission on Azusa Street.

By 1906, people came from all over the world to Azusa to see this experience and hear more about it from the leader of the mission, a black pastor named William J. Seymour. Many who heard the message believed and received the baptism with the evidence of speaking in tongues, and took their experience back to their own countries. As in the case for all restored truth, this doctrine was not embraced by all and is still resisted to this day. It is my hope to shed some light on the controversies and misunderstandings that surround this subject of speaking in tongues.

I will begin with this important point: The doctrine of speaking in tongues is “nonessential.” This means it is a matter of individual conviction and has no bearing on determining one’s salvation. It is not a heaven or hell problem. What matters most is to respect the convictions on either side of this teaching and agree to disagree in a loving and humble attitude toward each other. It should never be an “us vs. them” in matters of “nonessential” doctrines. Whatever our personal convictions are on this subject, let us follow the admonition of Paul in his letter to the Romans (12:10, 16):

“Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves. ... Live in harmony with one another.”

Why is there such controversy surrounding this experience?

- **Controversy** surrounds this because of the erroneous teaching of some claiming that a person is not saved until they speak in tongues. The Bible does not teach this.
- **Controversy** surrounds this because restored foundational truths of the early church—lost during the “dark ages”—have always been met with resistance. This is how denominations came about. God would restore a truth to people seeking to embrace that truth, and then the subsequent controversy would cause church leaders to force a separation of those who embrace the restored truth from the rest of the fellowship. The “new” doctrine then becomes the cornerstone of a newly formed denomination of like-minded believers on that teaching.

In time the newly formed denomination settles in, becomes entrenched in what was once fresh and new, and goes from being “rejected,” to unwittingly becoming a “rejecter” of the next truth God restores to the church. Church history affirms this. The same has held true for the doctrine of speaking in tongues—thus, the rise of Pentecostal denominations after the turn of the 20th century.

- **Controversy** surrounds this experience because of fear.

Fear of the lack of faith. Though one may see it in scripture, it’s hard to cross the line of faith required to believe this could actually happen today.

Fear of rejection. What if God doesn’t give it to me when I ask for it? What does that mean? Am I not worthy of it? If I do get it, how will that affect my current relationships with those who think this isn’t from God or isn’t for today?

Fear of deception. Either in missing out on real truth or embracing false teaching.

These are only a few types of the *fears* that shake up people’s comfort zones, and feed the sense of controversy.

- **Controversy** surrounds this experience because of pride. Proverbs 13:10 says, “*Where there is strife, there is pride.*” Pride is on both sides of the fence. Pride from those who have much at stake to change their views, and pride by those who assume a superior posture over those who have not experienced this yet.
- **Controversy** surrounds this because of the misunderstanding of scripture references used for or against this experience.

What are the misunderstandings surrounding this experience?

The First Misunderstanding:

The belief that the “gift” of salvation and the “gift” of the Holy Spirit are the same gift and experience.

The Bible demonstrates there are two separate and distinct “gifts” from God in the life of the believer—the *gift* of eternal life and the *gift* of the Holy Spirit. Note the contrasts of the two experiences below:

The “Gift” of Eternal Life:

- Greek here for “gift” is: **charisma**
- **Charisma:** Romans 5:15, 16; 6:23
- Born of the Spirit
- Born Again of the Spirit
- Receive the Holy Spirit within
- Twelve Disciples (John 20:22)
- Samaritans (Acts 8:12)
- House of Cornelius (Acts 10:43)
- Ephesian disciples (Acts 19:1-2)

The “Gift” of the Holy Spirit:

- Greek here for “gift” is: **dorea**
- **Dorea:** Acts 2:38; 8:29; 10:45; 11:17
- Baptized (Filled) with the Spirit
- Anointed with the Spirit
- Receive the Holy Spirit upon
- Disciples 47 days later (Acts 2:1-4)
- Samaritans days later (Acts 8:14-17)
- House of Cornelius (Acts 10:44-46)
- Ephesian disciples later (Acts 19:1-6)

Until one recognizes that the scriptural pattern reveals two experiences, the confusion will remain. The misunderstanding is in the belief that one receives **all** that the Holy Spirit has for us when we’re born again and no “other” experience follows. This belief is difficult to sustain in light of the above scriptures.

The Second Misunderstanding:

**The belief that the evidence of tongues
for Spirit Baptism does not apply to everyone
and could be one of many of the spiritual “gifts” in 1 Corinthians 12.**

This belief exists because of a mistaken interpretation of 1 Corinthians 12:29-30, which reads: “*Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all have gifts of healing? **Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret?***” The obvious answer is “no.” But is this speaking in tongues referring to the speaking in tongues recurring in Acts? The answer is, no. So let’s take a look at the difference. In the book of Acts, the consistent pattern of the **evidence** accompanying the Baptism (Gift) of the Holy Spirit was clearly—*speaking in tongues*:

Acts 2:4

*“All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and **began to speak in other tongues.**”*

Acts 10:44-46

*“While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message. The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles. **For they heard them speaking in tongues** and praising God.”*

Acts 19:1-2, 6

*“Paul took the road through the interior and arrived at Ephesus. There he found some **disciples** and asked them, ‘Did you receive the [gift of] Holy Spirit when you believed?’ They answered, ‘No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit.’ ... When Paul placed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they **spoke in tongues** and prophesied.”*

NOTE: This evidence is confirmed by Jesus when he said: “These **signs** will accompany those who believe: ... they will **speak in new tongues**.”

An important point is to be made here. Tongues are NOT the gift being referred to when receiving the “gift” of the Holy Spirit. The **anointing power** itself is the gift, and tongues is simply the evidence of that—“You will receive **power** when the Holy Spirit comes on you.”

When prophets, priests, and kings were anointed in the Old Testament, oil was poured **on** them. When Jesus was anointed in the Jordan, the Holy Spirit—in the form of a dove—landed **on** Him. And when the believers were anointed in the New Testament, the Holy Spirit came **on** them and they spoke in new tongues.

All **anointings** were accompanied with something tangible as the evidence or “sign” of their anointing. So the sign of the gift (tongues) isn’t the gift, it is the *tangible* evidence that you’ve just been anointed and clothed with **power** from on high (Luke 24:49).

The “power” of the Holy Spirit is now available to us in the nine gifts of the Spirit. This is why it shows some recipients prophesying **after** they spoke in tongues, not before (Acts 19:6).

IN THE OLD TESTAMENT, the power to do what **kings** were anointed to do came **after** the oil (the tangible evidence) was poured on them:

1 Samuel 10:1, 6

“Then Samuel took a flask of olive oil and poured it on Saul's head and kissed him, saying, ‘Has not the LORD anointed you ruler over his inheritance? ... The Spirit of the LORD will come powerfully upon you [Saul], and you will prophesy with them.”

1 Samuel 16:13

“So Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him [David] in the presence of his brothers, and from that day on the Spirit of the LORD came powerfully upon David.”

IN THE NEW TESTAMENT, Jesus was anointed to operate in power **after** the dove (the tangible evidence) landed on Him.

Luke 3:21-22; 4:1, 14, 18

*“And as he [Jesus] was praying, heaven was opened and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form like a dove. ... Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, left the Jordan Jesus returned to Galilee in the **power** of the Spirit “The Spirit of the Lord is on me [Jesus], because he has anointed me.”*

John 2:11

“What Jesus did here in Cana of Galilee [water to wine] was the first of the signs [after his anointing] through which he revealed his glory; and the disciples believed in him.”

Acts 10:38

*“God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and **power**, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil.”*

IN THE NEW TESTAMENT, the believers were anointed to operate in power in the gifts of the Spirit **after** the Holy Spirit came on them with speaking in tongues (the tangible evidence).

Acts 1:8

*“You will receive power **when** the Holy Spirit comes on you.”*

Acts 19:6

*“When Paul placed his hands on them [Ephesian disciples], the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in tongues and **prophesied** [the gift of prophecy].”*

Thus the pattern:

Anointing + Tangible Sign = **power** to operate in the gifts of the Spirit.

A diligent study of the book of Acts will reveal that any and all believers who operated in any of the spiritual gifts listed in 1 Corinthians 12, did so **after** they were anointed with the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues. This is where the confusion lies and needs to be clarified. The “gift of tongues” in 1 Corinthians 12 is not referring to the tongues found as a “sign” in the book of Acts. There is a difference. Please note below:

The “tongues” received as a **sign** of the Baptism (Gift) of the Holy Spirit is a private language used to “edify” the **believer** at any time he or she chooses:

1 Corinthians 14:2-4

*“For anyone who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God. Indeed, no one understands them; they utter mysteries by the Spirit. ... Anyone who speaks in a tongue **edifies** themselves.”*

1 Corinthians 14:14-16

“For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays [mysteries to God], but my mind is unfruitful. So what shall I do? I will pray with my spirit [mysteries to God], but I will also pray with my understanding; I will sing with my spirit [mysteries to God], but I will also sing with my understanding.”

1 Corinthians 14:18

“I [Paul] thank God that I **speak in tongues** more than all of you.”

Romans 8:26

“In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans.”

Jude 20

“But you, dear friends, by **building** [edifying] **yourselves up** in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit ...”

The “tongues” spoken in a church service setting is one of the nine spiritual gifts used to “edify” the **church** as the Holy Spirit determines.

1 Corinthians 12:1-2

“Now about the gifts of the spirit, brothers and sisters, I do not want you to be uniformed.”

1 Corinthians 12:7-11

“Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given **for the common good**. To one there is given through the Spirit [i.e., a spiritual gift] the message of wisdom, to another the message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another **speaking in different kinds of tongues**, and to still another the **interpretation of tongues**. All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he distributes them to each one, just as he [the Holy Spirit] determines.”

1 Corinthians 12:30

“Do all have gifts of healing? Do all **speak in tongues**? Do all **interpret**?”

1 Corinthians 14:5

“I would like every one of you to speak in tongues, but I would rather have you prophesy. The one who prophesies is greater than one who **speaks in tongues**, unless someone interprets, so that the church may be **edified**.”

1 Corinthians 14:12

“Since you are eager for gifts of the spirit, try to excel in those that **build up** [edify] the church.”

1 Corinthians 14:26-28

“What then shall we say, brothers and sisters? When you come together, each of you has a hymn, or a word of instruction, a revelation, **a tongue** or **an interpretation**. Everything must be done so that the church may be **built up**. If anyone **speaks in a tongue**, two—or at the most three—should speak, one at a time, and **someone must interpret**. If there is no interpreter, the speaker should keep quiet in the church and speak [in tongues] to himself and God.”

1 Corinthians 14:39-40

“Therefore, my brothers and sisters, be eager to prophesy [a spiritual gift], and do not forbid **speaking in tongues** [a spiritual gift, to be followed by an interpretation]. But everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way.”

Please note that when a person is baptized (anointed) with the gift (power) of the Holy Spirit, they do not receive the gift of tongues in 1 Corinthians 12 spoken in a church service, they receive a personal language of tongues as a *sign*.

Note the distinction between the personal experience and a church service—**tongues as:**

A SIGN – Mark 16:17; Acts 2:4; 19:6

- **All** may speak at one time
- **All** may speak in this setting
- **No** interpretation is required

A GIFT – 1 Corinthians 12 and 14

- Only **one** may speak at a time
- Two, **at the most**, three may speak
- Each tongue **must be** interpreted

Thus 1 Corinthians 12:30 is **not** referring to the “tongues” spoken when baptized in the Holy Spirit; it is referring to the spiritual gift of tongues brought forth in the church setting to be followed by the gift of interpretation. So it is out of context to use this text to teach that not everyone will speak in tongues when they’re baptized in the Holy Spirit. What is more legitimate to teach is that not everyone who speaks in tongues (their prayer language) will be led by the Holy Spirit in a church to bring a “tongue,” followed by an interpretation.

Is every spirit-filled believer who speaks in English going to bring forth a prophecy? No. Is every spirit-filled believer who speaks in a “prayer language” going to bring forth a tongue in the service? No. Two—or at the most—three. This is what 1 Corinthians 12:30 is speaking about.

The Third Misunderstanding:

**The belief that speaking in tongues
has ceased and is no longer for today.**

Let's look at the text and context from which this teaching evolved:

1 Corinthians 13:8-10

*“Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; **where there are tongues, they will be stilled**; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when completion comes, what is in part disappears.”*

The context of this chapter is centered on “love,” which is **eternal**, versus “gifts,” which are **temporal**. We are to follow the way of love AND eagerly desire spiritual gifts (1 Corinthians 14:1). We need the gifts motivated by love, today, yet when Jesus returns, the need for the gifts will become obsolete. Love will prevail, yes, but the gift of prophecy, the gift of tongues, and the gift of the word of knowledge will all cease to exist. They're needed only for this temporal, incomplete life, until our complete eternal life has come.

So to use this as a premise to disavow tongues for today is inconsistent with the context. If this context means tongues has already ceased, the question is, **when** did it cease? There is no historical account of this ceasing in the book of Acts. That's because Peter said that this gift which Jesus promised (Acts 1:4-5) was for *everyone the Lord calls* (Acts 2:39). To say tongues had ceased before those yet were called, is to contradict the apostle Peter.

Have you been called? Absolutely! So enjoy what God promised is yours.