

Speaking in Tongues in 1 Corinthians 14

REVIEW of ACTS 1-2

Acts 1:12 ¶ Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet... **13** ... **they went up into an upper room**, where abode both Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew, James *the son* of Alphaeus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas *the brother* of James. **14** **These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication**, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren. (about 120 people)

[[Dictionary: **TONGUE**

5. **A language**; the whole sum of words used by a particular nation.

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Acts 2:1 ¶ And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, **they were all with one accord** in one place. **2** And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a **rushing mighty wind**, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. **3** And there appeared unto them **cloven tongues like as of fire**, and it sat upon each of them. **4** And **they were all filled with the Holy Ghost**, and began to **speak with other tongues**, as the Spirit gave them utterance. ... **6** Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that **every man heard them speak in his own language**. ... **8** And how hear **we every man in our own tongue**, wherein we were born? ... **11** Cretes and Arabians, **we do hear them speak in our tongues** the wonderful works of God. ... **33** Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and **having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear**. ... **38** Then Peter said unto them, **Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins**, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

"The gift of tongues was given to the disciples on the day of Pentecost. But it was given them for use right then, so that those of all the different nationalities might hear the gospel in the language which they could understand. So it did not need any interpretation of tongues there." (W. W. Prescott, GCDB March 3, 1893, page 461.4)

MORE ABOUT TONGUES

Mark 16:15 ¶ And he said unto them, **Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature**. **16** He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. **17** And these signs shall follow them that believe; **In my name** shall they cast out devils; **they shall speak with new tongues**; **18** They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover. -a prophecy of Jesus

Acts 10:44 ¶ While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. **45** And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that **on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost**. **46** For they heard them **speak with tongues**, and magnify God. Then answered Peter, **47**

Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which **have received the Holy Ghost** as well as we? **48** And he commanded them to **be baptized in the name of the Lord**. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days.

Acts 19:1 ¶ And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding **certain disciples**, **2** He said unto them, **Have ye received the Holy Ghost** since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. **3** And he said unto them, **Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism.** **4** Then said Paul, **John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance**, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. **5** When they heard *this*, **they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.** **6** And when Paul had laid *his* hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and **they spake with tongues, and prophesied.** **7** And all the men were about twelve.

1 Corinthians 13:1 ¶ Though I speak with the **tongues** of men and of angels, and have not charity (**Greek: "agape", most-commonly translated "love"**), I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. ... **8** Charity never faileth: but whether *there be* prophecies, they shall fail; whether *there be* **tongues**, they shall cease; whether *there be* knowledge, it shall vanish away... **13** And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but **the greatest of these is charity.**

[[Dictionary: CHARITY

1. In a general sense, **love, benevolence, good will**; that disposition of heart which inclines men to think favorably of their fellow men, and to do them good. In a theological sense, it includes **supreme love to God, and universal good will to men.**
1 Corinthians 8:1; Colossians 3:14; 1 Timothy 1:5.

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Regarding the speaking "**with the tongues of men and of angels**": Could it be that Acts 2 is an example speaking with the tongues of **men** and that 1 Corinthians 14 is an example of speaking with the tongues of **angels**? I don't know... -Sid

1 CORINTHIANS 14, VERSE by VERSE

1 Corinthians 14:

- ¶ Follow after charity, and desire spiritual *gifts*, but rather that ye may prophesy.
 - Pursue charity (agape love). Also, Paul would rather that they prophesy, than speak in tongues.
- For he that speaketh in an *unknown* tongue **speaketh not unto men, but unto God**: for no man understandeth *him*; howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries.
 - In Acts 2, the tongues that were spoken were known languages understood by men.
- But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men *to* edification, and exhortation, and comfort.
 - **Maybe this is why Paul preferred prophesy over tongues (vs 1,5).**
- He that speaketh in an *unknown* tongue **edifieth himself**; but he that prophesieth **edifieth the church.**
- I would that ye all spake with tongues**, but rather that ye prophesied: for greater *is*

he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues, except he interpret, that the church may receive edifying.

- **(NLT) I wish you could all speak in tongues**, but even more I wish you could all prophecy. For prophecy is greater than speaking in tongues, unless someone interprets what you are saying so that the whole church will be strengthened.
 - **There is no edification for the church members, unless the tongues speaking is interpreted.**
 - **1 Corinthians 12:10** To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another **divers kinds of tongues**; to another **the interpretation of tongues**: ... **28** And God hath set some in the church, **first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers**, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, **diversities of tongues**. ... **30** Have all the gifts of healing? **do all speak with tongues? do all interpret?** **31** But **covet earnestly the best gifts**: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way.
 - **Remember that Acts 2 speaking in tongues, did not need "the interpretation of tongues"**.
6. ¶ Now, brethren, if I come unto you speaking with tongues, what shall I profit you, except I shall speak to you either by revelation, or by knowledge, or by prophesying, or by doctrine?
- **Paul didn't seem to have any reason to speak in tongues at Corinth.**
7. And even things without life giving sound, whether pipe or harp, except they give a distinction in the sounds, how shall it be known what is piped or harped?
8. For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?
- **In other words, if a trumpet doesn't sound the call-to-battle tune, then why would you prepare for battle?**
9. So likewise ye, except ye utter by the tongue words easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken? for ye shall speak into the air.
- **In other words, if you speak with an unknown language, how can it be understood and if not understood, what good is it?**
10. There are, it may be, so many kinds of voices in the world, and none of them *is* without signification.
- **"Languages are spoken with the intention of conveying some intelligible(understandable) idea to the hearers."** (SDABC)
11. Therefore if I know not the meaning of the voice, I shall be unto him that speaketh a barbarian, and he that speaketh *shall be* a barbarian unto me.
- **"Barbarian" here denotes one who was not a Greek and didn't understand the Greek language.**
12. ¶ Even so ye, forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual *gifts*, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church.
- **The Greek word translated here as "spiritual gifts" is the same Greek word that is most-commonly translated "Spirit", as in Holy "Spirit". It is good to desire the gifts of the Spirit, but our motive should be to edify the church. This should be our goal of our desire for the gifts, rather than "to exalt self and satisfy personal ambition."** (ibid)
13. Wherefore let him that speaketh in an *unknown* tongue pray that he may interpret.
14. For if I pray in an *unknown* tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful.

- "my spirit prayeth" => It is our mind(spirit) that gives us the words to be able to pray.
 - "unfruitful" => not helpful to those who know not the meaning of the words.
15. What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also.
- In other words, if I pray or sing in a language that no one can understand, then I should also interpret so it can be edifying to those listening. In the days we live in now, have you ever heard those who speak in tongues ever explain, in a known language, what they said in a unknown language?
16. Else when thou shalt bless with the spirit, how shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned say Amen at thy giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest?
17. For thou verily givest thanks well, but the other is not edified.
- "the other is not edified" if they have no understanding of what you said.
18. I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than ye all:
- Did Paul speak with the tongues of angels, as he mentioned in 1Cor 13:1?
19. Yet in the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that *by my voice* I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an *unknown* tongue.
20. (vs.20-25 from NLT) ¶ Dear brothers and sisters, don't be childish in your understanding of these things. Be innocent as babies when it comes to evil, but be mature in understanding matters of this kind.
21. It is written in the Scriptures (Isa.28:11): "I will speak to my own people through strange languages and through the lips of foreigners. But even then, they will not listen to me," says the Lord (Jehovah).
22. So you see that speaking in tongues is a sign, not for believers, but for unbelievers. Prophecy, however, is for the benefit of believers, not unbelievers.
23. Even so, if unbelievers or people who don't understand these things come into your church meeting and hear everyone speaking in an unknown language, they will think you are crazy.
24. But if all of you are prophesying, and unbelievers or people who don't understand these things come into your meeting, they will be convicted of sin and judged by what you say.
25. As they listen, their secret thoughts will be exposed, and they will fall to their knees and worship God, declaring, "God is truly here among you."
26. ¶ How is it then, brethren? when ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. **Let all things be done unto edifying.**
27. If any man speak in an *unknown* tongue, **let it be by two, or at the most by three, and that by course; and let one interpret.**
28. **But if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church; and let him speak to himself, and to God.**
- ... but not to the church...
29. Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other(s) judge.
- **1 Thessalonians 5:21** Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.
 - **1 John 4:1** ¶ Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.
 - **Matthew 24:11** And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. ...

- 24** For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if *it were* possible, they shall deceive the very elect.
30. If any *thing* be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace.
- Only one prophet should speak at once. If God reveals something "to another", the first should stop.
31. For ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and **all may be comforted**.
- Or, "all may be exhorted."
32. And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets.
- When inspired by the Holy Spirit, the prophets choose whether to speak or to be silent.
33. For **God is not *the author of confusion, but of peace***, as in all churches of the saints.
- **1 Corinthians 14:40** Let all things be done **decently and in order**.
 - **Romans 15:33** Now the **God of peace** *be* with you all. Amen.
34. ¶ Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but *they are commanded* to be under obedience, as also saith the law.
- **1 Timothy 2:11** Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. **12 ¶** But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence.
 - As you can see, Paul said this not only to the church at Corinth, but also to Timothy. Apparently, this was the custom of the early Christian churches. Should it apply to the churches today? I don't know -Sid
35. And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church.
- Apparently, " both Greek and Jewish custom dictated that women should be kept in the background in public affairs. Violation of this custom would be looked upon as disgraceful and would bring reproach upon the church."(ibid). This custom is no longer practiced in most societies today. Whether this is of God, or not, I do not know. -Sid
36. What? came the word of God out from you? or came it unto you only?
- The church at Corinth was one of the last that Paul founded. It appears that this church was doing things differently than most of the others. That would explain why Paul gave them such pointed instruction.
37. If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that **the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord**.
- Here, Paul declares his instruction to Corinth to be from the Lord, Jesus Christ.
38. But if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant.
- "In effect, Paul is saying that if anyone should not recognize the fact that the apostle was inspired by God, and therefore did not receive his instructions as being God's commands, he does so at his peril." (ibid)
39. Wherefore, brethren, covet to prophesy, and forbid not to speak with tongues.
- Paul summarizes what he said throughout this discourse, starting in verse one. Prophecy should be the priority, but speaking with tongues, according to the guidelines he gave, should be allowed
40. Let all things be done decently and in order.

- When we gather to worship the Almighty Creator, Jehovah, and His "beloved", "only begotten Son", Jesus Christ, reverence is essential. This would include no confusion, unnecessary noise, or disorder.
- [Habakkuk 2:20](#) ... Jehovah is in his holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before him.
- "The most profitable meetings for spiritual advancement are those which are characterized with solemnity and deep searching of heart; each seeking to know himself, and earnestly, and in deep humility, seeking to learn of Christ." (1T 412.1)

SUMMARY BY SID

From my reading of the Bible and a Bible commentary, I would humbly submit my following opinions:

1. The speaking in tongues in Acts 2 and in 1 Cor. 14 are NOT the same, for the reasons stated above
2. Both are legitimate. For obvious reasons in Acts 2, it was edifying to the church. Paul, in 1 Cor. 14, says that this other type of speaking in tongues is edifying to the speaker. Paul also indicates that it is a good thing – vs. 4, 5, 18, 22, 26.
3. Paul warns against the abuse of the tongues of 1 Cor. 14. It is incomprehensible for me to see how Acts 2 tongues speaking could possibly be abused by humans, since humans have no control over such things.
4. Paul seems to indicate that there was no loss of self-control during 1Cor14 speaking in tongues. This is contrary to current popular belief.
5. Has Acts 2 tongues speaking been witnessed in modern times? Absolutely.
6. Has Acts 2 tongues speaking been counterfeited by satan? I doubt it, but I really don't know.
7. Has 1 Cor. 14 tongues speaking been witnessed in modern times? I don't know.
8. Has 1 Cor. 14 tongues speaking been counterfeited by satan? Absolutely.
9. Can we judge other people's experience and/or witness of tongues, as described in 1 Cor. 14?
 1. If we can see or are told of things that go against scripture, then we can be assured that it is either satan's counterfeit, or just someone faking it.
 2. If we have no Biblical evidence of anything wrong, then we are on dangerous ground if we claim that someone else's witness/experience with 1 Cor. 14 tongues speaking is NOT Biblical, or worse – satanic. A related factor is that "by their fruits ye shall know them". When we hear of Christian people, who are well-known for their good fruits, who also speak in the tongues of 1 Cor. 14, then I think we are amiss if we do not consider the possibility of this being Biblical tongues speaking.

This is my studied opinion. I realize that I could be mistaken. -Sid Nash 2011; updated 8/21/2021; updated 8/6/2022