

BIBLE SPOTLIGHT - on the GIFT OF TONGUES quotes

1 The only way to avoid being deceived is to understand truth, which means that we need to obtain knowledge and wisdom. But from where? Can we depend alone upon the knowledge and wisdom from earthly sources? No, because if we do we would become the enemies of God (see James 4:4). Can we then depend alone upon the knowledge and wisdom from men? No, because if we do we will be cursed (see Jeremiah 17:5). Can we then depend alone on our own wisdom? No, because that is foolishness (see 1 Corinthians 1:19-20, 3:19).

The only One to go to in order to obtain the knowledge and wisdom with which to understand the truth and avoid being deceived with error and falsehood is God!

“And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and **abundant in goodness and truth**”. Exodus 34:6.

“He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: **a God of truth** and without iniquity, just and right is he.” Deuteronomy 32:4.

“...God, that **cannot lie**”. Titus 1:2.

“...it was **impossible for God to lie**”. Hebrews 6:18.

God has given His words of truth written down so that we can read them for ourselves!

“I will cry unto God most high; unto God that performeth all things for me. **He shall send from heaven, and save me...God shall send forth his mercy and his truth.**” Psalms 57:2-3.

“Knowing this first, that **no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation.** For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but **holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.**” 2 Peter 1:20-21.

“Sanctify them through thy truth: **thy word is truth.**” John 17:17.

God’s also mercifully promises to help us understand His truth (see James 1:5; John 7:17, 14:26).

2 Any teaching, doctrine, belief, interpretation or personal opinion that does not agree with what is found written in God's inspired word cannot be the truth.

"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is **profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect**, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." 2 Timothy 3:16-17.

"To the law and to the testimony, **if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.**" Isaiah 8:20.

This shows us that God's inspired word of truth is like a spotlight which we can turn upon any teaching, doctrine, belief, interpretation or opinion to see if it is really the truth or not.

3 The first Biblical occurrence of speaking in tongues was at the tower of Babel (see Genesis 11:1-9). Instead of all human beings speaking just one common language, God miraculously intervened and now there were thousands of different language groups. After this occurred, the people could now only understand what certain among them were saying, which forced them to unite together according to their language group and then scatter throughout all the world into their own different nationality!

Out of all these different nationalities, God chose the Hebrews to be His peculiar people (see Psalms 135:4). Since they were God's chosen, He desired them to follow and keep all His commandments and to spread His truths to all other nations (see Deuteronomy 26:16-19). But their history reveals that they chose instead to disobey God, rejected His truth, embraced custom and tradition, defrauded the world with a counterfeit gospel, and they would not repent. They even went so far as to crucify God's Son Jesus Christ! God then set them aside and chose the Gentiles to be His people (see Matthew 23:37-39; Acts 18:6; Romans 10:16-21, 11:1-28). But God still mercifully gave the Jews one last chance of gaining salvation, and this last hope was to be seen through a special miracle.

"For **with stammering lips and another tongue will he speak to this people.**" Isaiah 28:11.

Jesus instructed His disciples to only reach out to the Jews living in Israel and Samaria. But after His death, resurrection and just before He ascended into heaven, Jesus instructed His disciples to now spread the gospel truth to every nation.

"**Go ye therefore, and teach all nations**, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost". Matthew 28:19.

"And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; **they shall speak with new tongues.**" Mark 16:15-17.

This shows us that in addition to commanding His disciples to spread the gospel to every nation, Jesus also foretold that they would speak with "new tongues".

4 Tongues in Jerusalem (Acts 2:1-13).

50 days after Christ's resurrection, His followers first spoke in tongues. A group of about 120 believers were gathered together in obedience to Jesus who had "commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father" (Acts 1:4). It was the feast of weeks, and the city of Jerusalem was crowded with pilgrims "out of every nation under heaven" (Acts 2:5). The day of Pentecost had arrived, when the Holy Spirit came upon every individual, and they "began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance" (Acts 2:4).

Curious people then came flocking together to see what had happened and soon thousands of people were gathered around, and the disciples then began to speak with the gift of tongues. The crowd was greatly amazed as they heard these Jews speaking some 15 different languages.

The disciples were not babbling, or speaking gibberish, or speaking in languages that no one could understand. But they were given the ability to speak the language of those to whom they were trying to witness to, and yet they still retained their ability to speak their own native language.

"Jews, devout men...**heard them speak in his own language**...And they were all amazed and marvelled..." (Acts 2:5-7).

In the prophecy of Isaiah 28:11, the Hebrew word for "stammering" is "la'eg", and it translates and means "foreigner" (Strong's Exhaustive Hebrew Concordance, word #3934). The Hebrew word for "tongue" is "leshonah" and it translates and means "the tongue of man, speech, language" (Strong's, word 3956). So "with stammering (or foreigner's) lips and another tongue (or language of man) will he speak to this people." Isaiah 28:11. The disciples speaking with the promised sign of these tongues was a direct fulfillment of this prophecy!

The result of Christ's followers receiving the gift to speak in different foreign languages was the conversion to Jesus Christ of "about three thousand souls" in just one day (see Acts 2:41).

5 Tongues in Caesarea (Acts 10:44-48, 11:15-18).

In 38AD, Peter was led by the Holy Spirit to visit the home of a Gentile named Cornelius, who was a Roman Centurion in Caesarea. As Peter was preaching the gospel truth unto Cornelius and his family and friends, they all believed and accepted Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour. Then the Holy Spirit fell upon all of these Gentile believers and they began to speak in tongues. The hearers of these Gentiles were Jewish Christians who had accompanied Peter, and they heard these “speak with tongues and magnify God” (Acts 10:46), just like “the Holy Ghost fell...on us at the beginning” (Acts 11:15).

By speaking in languages that they had never learned, but which the Jews understood, these Gentile believers showed their Jewish Christian audience that the Spirit of God was including them in “the family of God” as His “chosen people” (see Galatians 3:26-29; Romans 10:12). It also showed that the gospel was to be preached “to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people” (Revelation 14:6), and not just to the Jews alone.

6 Tongues in Ephesus (Acts 19:1-7).

In 51AD, Paul was preaching to 12 people, and after they had accepted the truth and were re-baptized, Paul laid his hands on them, and instantly “the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues and prophesied” (Acts 19:6).

The Greek word for “tongues” used here is “glossa”, which translates and means “a language naturally unacquired” (Strong’s, word #1100). This reveals that these 12 people spoke in other languages not naturally acquired or learned by them before, but which were understood by the people who heard them speaking. This passage illustrates the importance of being rebaptized if you have learned significantly greater truths from God’s word.

7 As God has a true gift of tongues, then the devil will counterfeit this in order to deceive. Since the devil can indeed speak through people (see Mark 1:23-26, 5:7-12), then this clearly reveals that there can be a false gift of tongues as well.

8 Tongues in Corinth (1 Corinthians, chapters 12-14).

In 53AD, Paul heard that the church in Corinth was having a variety of problems. In corresponding with them Paul stated that the Corinthian church members were:

- Carnal and full of strife, envy and division (see 1 Corinthians 3:1-3).
- Shocking fornication was also among them (see 1 Corinthians 5:3).
- Brothers were suing one another (see 1 Corinthians 6:5-7).
- Others were defrauding their brethren (see 1 Corinthians 6:8).
- Sisters were dressing like harlots (see 1 Corinthians 11:1-16).
- Heresies were also being spread among them (see 1 Corinthians 11:19).
- They were defiling the Lord's supper, and for this cause some of them had died (see 1 Corinthians 11:20-22, 29, 30).
- Confusion and disorder was in the church (see 1 Corinthians 14:33-40).
- False apostles and unrighteous ministers were among them (see 2 Corinthians 11:13-15).
- They were in danger of receiving a different gospel and following a different Jesus, and even receiving another spirit (see 2 Corinthians 11:3-4).
- Their church services were being disrupted by people making sounds that neither they, nor anyone present, could understand or interpret.

The tongues depicted in Acts was very different from the tongues depicted in 1 Corinthians.

- In Acts there were only three occurrences of tongues-speaking over a some 20 years. But in Corinth, tongue-speaking was a regular practice.
- At Pentecost the whole group of disciples spoke in tongues; in the home of Cornelius all the new converts spoke in tongues; at Ephesus all 12 spoke. But in the church of Corinth just certain believers were speaking in tongues (see 1 Corinthians 12:10).

9 There are 11 Biblical guidelines for speaking in tongues:

#1 – Tongues-speaking was not the universal evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit, because while every true believer is baptized by the Spirit, not all believers would speak in tongues (1 Corinthians 12:8-11,13,30).

#2 – Tongues-speaking was of lesser importance than prophecy, and of far less importance than love (1 Corinthians 12:31; 13). In fact, sometimes tongues was not even listed as one of the spiritual gifts to be received (see Ephesians 4:1-16).

#3 – The gift of prophecy was better than tongues because it edified the church (1 Corinthians 14:1-4).

#4 – Unregulated speaking in tongues led to confusion (1 Corinthians 14:7-12).

#5 – Public speaking in uninterpreted tongues had no value (1 Corinthians 14:13-19).

#6 – Preoccupation with tongues was a sign of immaturity (1 Corinthians 14:20).

#7 – Unregulated tongues was a hindrance to the salvation of others (1 Corinthians 14:23).

#8 – Since tongues could be counterfeited, public tongues-speaking had to be strictly regulated (1 Corinthians 14:26-40).

#9 – Only two or three were allowed to speak in tongues in a service, and they were to speak in turn (1 Corinthians 14:27, 30).

#10 – Those speaking uninterpreted or unknown tongues were to stop speaking and keep quiet (1 Corinthians 14:28).

#11 – A proper and orderly atmosphere in church services was to be maintained (1 Corinthians 14:40).

10 “Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not...(to) those that are unlearned, or unbelievers”. 1 Corinthians 14:22-23.