

must first bind the strongman. The strongman of our house is the tongue. We can tame every member of the body, but our tongue. When God tames a person's tongue, that person comes under God's full control. He is in the hands of the Almighty. He has been conquered by Christ, endued with a spiritual force from on high and empowered for God's service.

HUMANITY'S GREATEST EXPRESSION

The tongue provides the greatest expressions of the human spirit. We humans are spiritual and emotional beings, and as such we must give expression to our emotions. The ability and power to coordinate thought and tongue into intelligent speech is one of our highest prerogatives, elevating us above the beasts of the field. This ability makes us superior to the rest of creation on Earth, and it is the most distinguishing feature of our being.

The tongue becomes the vehicle of expression for the spirit. All of the emotions—such as love, hate, anger sorrow, joy, happiness, relief, serenity—are communicated through the tongue. The tongue is the gateway to the heart, feelings, attitudes and spirit.

CONCLUSION

In light of these truths, it is not difficult to see why God has chosen speaking in tongues to express the greatest, most wonderful experience that we mortal humans can receive. In the baptism of the Holy Ghost, His Spirit and our spirit become one. He uses our tongue and voice to express this union. It is a wonder of wonders, chosen not by humans, but by God, the sovereign ruler of the universe.

Why fight against Him? Believe His Word, accept what He says and you too can be baptized with the Holy Ghost, for it is God's will to give the Holy Ghost to all who repent and ask in faith (Luke 11:13; Acts 2:38-39).



THE CENTER OF PENTECOST

SERVICES

Sunday 10AM & 6PM
Monday Prayer 7PM
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Pastor Keith and
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WHY DID
GOD CHOOSE
TONGUES?



INTRODUCTION

He was a deacon in a fashionable church, but he did not believe in the Pentecostal doctrine relative to the baptism of the Holy Ghost. Yet, he had been exposed to that belief through members of his immediate family. One night, at the close of an evangelistic service in an Apostolic church, he went forward to pray and was overwhelmingly filled with the Spirit of God. He spoke in other tongues fluently and was so inundated in the Spirit that even hours later he could not speak English. This was definitely a Biblical experience accompanied not only by speaking in another tongue, but also by the joy and peace of the Holy Ghost.

Millions have experienced this same baptism in the Spirit. Wherever this message is proclaimed, the question is asked, "Why did God choose speaking in tongues as the initial physical evidence of the baptism of the Holy Ghost?" There may be many answers to this question and perhaps we do not know them all, but would like to point out several key points that are apparent.

THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD

First, we must recognize that God is not accountable to us for what He chooses to do. Isaiah asked, "Who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord, or being his counsellor hath taught Him? With whom took he counsel, and who instructed Him, and taught Him in the path of judgement, and taught Him knowledge, and showed to him the way of understanding?" (Isaiah 40:13-14). We have no license to question God's ways or to dispute His actions. His purposes are supreme, His promises sure, His performances sane and sensible. The following passages of Scripture, when studied prayerfully with a hungry heart and open mind, show that there is a definite connection between speaking in tongues and the baptism of the Holy Ghost (Isaiah 28:1-12; Mark 16:17; Acts 2:4; 10:44-46; 19:6; Romans 8:15-16; Galatians 4:6).

Why did God choose blood as the basis for atonement? Why did God choose water as the element in baptism? Why did God choose gold as the overlaying metal for the ark of the covenant? Why did God choose stone as the material upon

which to record the Ten Commandments? Why did God choose Jerusalem as the site for the Temple? Why did God choose dust out of which to form mankind? There is divine purpose behind these choices, although we may not understand all the reasons. We certainly cannot deny or disavow God's sovereign right to do as He pleases and to choose what He wishes.

AN IMMEDIATE EXTERNAL EVIDENCE

One vital reason why God chose other tongues as the initial sign of receiving the Holy Ghost is that speaking in tongues is an immediate external evidence. There are many other evidences of the operation of the Spirit of God in a person's life, but it is a matter of time before they are manifest. For example, the fruit of the Spirit mentioned in Galatians 5:22-23 follows in the wake of the spiritual infilling.

Peter and the six Jewish Christians who went with Him to Caesarea knew that the Gentiles had received the Holy Ghost, not because of long suffering, gentleness, meekness, or temperance, but because they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God (Acts 10:46). Peter specifically pointed to speaking in tongues as the irrefutable evidence (Acts 10:46-47).

Speaking in tongues is an outward external evidence, instantly observable and heard. By contrast, peace, joy righteousness and spiritual fruit are inward, internal results of the infilling that became evident with the passing of time.

A UNIFORM EVIDENCE

Another reason why God chose other tongues as the initial sign of receiving the Spirit is that speaking in tongues is a uniform evidence. It applies to everyone, regardless of race, culture, or language.

Some people quote 1 Corinthians 12:30 in an attempt to prove that not all speak in tongues when they are filled with the Spirit: "Do all speak with tongues?" However, this verse refers to the **gift of tongues**, that is speaking a public message in tongues to be interpreted for the congregation, which is a spiritual gift that a person may exercise subsequent to the infilling of the Spirit. Though both tongues as the initial evidence of the baptism of the Holy Ghost and tongues as a later spiritual gift are the same in essence, they are different

in administration and operation. For example, the regulations regarding the gift of tongues in 1 Corinthians 14:27-28 did not apply to the conversion accounts in Acts, where many people spoke in tongues simultaneously, without interpretation, as the sign of being filled with the Spirit.

Some people may question this distinction between the initial use of tongues at the baptism of the Holy Ghost and the later use of tongues as a spiritual gift in a Christian's life. But the same distinction is apparent with regard to faith. To be saved, everyone must have faith (John 3:16; Romans 10:9; Ephesians 2:8). Yet, 1 Corinthians 12:9 reveals that there is a special, supernatural gift of faith that can operate in a spirit-filled person's life over and beyond the faith necessary for salvation. Saving faith and the spiritual gift of faith are the same in essence, but different in admonition and operation.

A SYMBOL OF COMPLETE CONTROL

Speaking in tongues symbolizes God's complete control of the believer. Perhaps this is one of the strongest reasons why God chose speaking in tongues as the initial evidence of the baptism of the Holy Ghost. This symbolism becomes apparent when we study James 3, which provides more information on the tongue than any other chapter in the New Testament.

First, the tongue is capable of defiling the whole body. If so, is it incredible to claim that the tongue is also capable of symbolizing the sanctification of the whole body?

Second, though the tongue is a smaller member, it has never been tamed by humanity. It is the most unruly member of the body. If so, is it not necessary for the tongue to be tamed before the whole body can be consecrated to God? James illustrates the importance of the tongue by comparing it to the bit in a horse's mouth, which gives the rider complete control over the horse, and to the helm of the large ship, which gives the pilot full command of the vessel. In other words, whoever controls the tongue of a person controls him. And a person cannot tame his tongue by himself; only God can tame it for him.

According to Matthew 12:29, before someone can enter a strongman's house and plunder his goods, he