

Hi Mikha,

As stated previously, I don't understand your remark "*and many times afterward*", as I don't know any verses about being born again more than once.

Anyway, coming back to tongues. If you have received the Holy Spirit, then that's great – Praise the Lord! But why don't you speak in tongues then?

Speaking in tongues is a wonderful thing, and usually people don't speak in tongues, either because they don't understand the purpose of it, or because of some prejudice, or some demonic blockage (e.g. due to occult influences).

To grasp the purpose of tongues and the role of the Holy Spirit, we need to realize that, as Adam's descendants, we have not only forfeited eternal life but have also inherited a dead spirit (ROM 5:12).

All of us are born with a dead spirit, separated from God, and unless we are reconciled to Him, eternal separation will be our lot. We are born as *carnal men*, who cannot perceive YHWH and are, in fact, in enmity towards Him and the Torah. Our spirit lies dormant, as the body & the soul (the flesh) rule our unregenerated lives.

The soul is part of the heart (intellect, imagination, memory, emotion, senses) as is the spirit, the latter of which is also called ***the inner man*** (EPH 3:16), or ***the hidden man of the heart*** (1. Peter 3:4).

Since Messiah's whole purpose was to restore mankind's union with God, the human spirit has to undergo rebirth (only the spirit is born-again, not the body nor the soul).

Thus, the expression ***dead in sins*** refers to our dead spirit and ***quicken*** refers to the renewal and redemption of that spirit (EPH 2:5). Our dead spirit is compared to a heart of stone and is also called ***the uncircumcision of [the] flesh*** (COL 2:13). It is this *flesh nature* which is corrupt and which has to go.

The ***circumcision of the heart*** is not some new year's resolution to do better, but a concrete operation which is performed by the Spirit (ROM 2:29), and not by hands (COL 2:10).

The moment you receive God's Spirit, your own spirit receives life and is 'raised from the dead'. The stony heart becomes soft and its 'foreskin', i.e., the *flesh nature* is removed – **you are then a new creature, created from the inside out** (not vice versa). Many verses refer to this as 'putting off the old man and putting on the new man' (e.g. COL 3:9-10; EPH 4:22-24).

YHWH calls the above simply the *Brit Chadashah*, i.e., the Spirit of Torah put into man (PSA 119:142), so that he will obey the Torah because the Spirit causes him to love God and His law. Here are a few verses, all of which refer to God's 'heart operation' [*my italics/emphasis*]:

Behold the days come, says YHWH, that I will make a renewed covenant with the House of Yisra'el, and with the House of Y'hudah. Not according to the

covenant that I made with their fathers, in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt [50 days after the Exodus]: forasmuch as they broke My covenant, although I was a husband over them, says YHWH. But this is the covenant that I will make with the House of Yisra'el after those days, says YHWH [50 days after the resurrection]: I will put My Torah in their inward parts, and in their heart will I write it [by my Spirit] (JER 31:31-33).

I will take away, the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you, a heart of flesh. And I will put My spirit within you, and cause you to walk in My statutes [to keep the Torah] (EZ 36:26-27).

You are a letter of the Messiah that was served by us: written not with ink, but by the Spirit of the Living Eloah; not on tablets of stone [stony heart], but on tablets of the heart of flesh (2 COR 3:3).

And YHWH your Elohim will circumcise your heart ... to love YHWH your Elohim with all your heart, and with all your soul [to keep the Torah] (DEUT 30:6).

And by Him, you were circumcised with the Circumcision which is not by our hands [but by His Spirit], by the putting off of the flesh of sins, by circumcision of the Messiah. And you were buried with Him in immersion [baptized in water], and by Him, you have risen with Him [baptized in the Spirit], because you had trust in the Power of Eloah, who raised Him from the place of the dead [by the power of the Holy Spirit] (COL 2:11-12).

He is not a Jew who is one in appearance [only]: also what is made visible in the flesh [alone] is not circumcision. But that one is a Jew, who [is one] secretly; and circumcision is that of the heart by the Spirit, and not by the letter [only]; whose praise is not from men, but from Eloah (ROM 2:28-29).

It should be clear from these verses that neither ethnic Israel nor fallen mankind as a whole is able to obey God's law, otherwise no renewed covenant would have been necessary nor Yeshua's death. God's law was broken in the very beginning by Adam, making all of us lawbreakers who deserve eternal death. Thus, first of all we need to be redeemed, viz., bought back from the slavery of Satan, sin, and death. It is no use trying to keep the Torah as a sinner. Keeping the law cannot change our state 'from sinner to saint' – it cannot save. No matter what you do, you remain a sinner, a son of fallen Adam, born of the flesh which cannot inherit the Kingdom of God. That's why Yeshua tells us to be born again of the Spirit (JN 3:5)¹, and once this has happened we will keep the law because we love it, have the power to fulfil it, and are reconciled to God. Hence, we keep the Torah not in order to be saved, but because we are saved.

The moment you are born of God and have become His child a renewal process starts. You grow up and mature, often through 'fiery trials' which are allowed by God. You need to learn to renew your mind (soul), viz., you need to bring your thoughts in line

¹ **Born of water** refers to the Spirit. Water baptism signifies burial, not rebirth.

with the Scriptures and away from your former worldly thought patterns (ROM 12:2). Eventually and ideally you will be changed by the Spirit into the likeness of YHWH (2 COR 3:18).

Lastly, before dealing specifically with tongues, receiving the Holy Spirit also means *anointing* of course. A follower of the Nazarene needs to be anointed just like Yeshua was anointed with the *Oil of the Spirit* before commencing His ministry as prophet, priest and king (MT 3:16; LK 4:18; REV 1:6). Without this anointing² no one would be able to do the works of Yeshua and walk in the power of the Holy Spirit. If we want to fully preach the Gospel, then we have to demonstrate Eloah's power and use His name and authority – just as Paul did (ROM 15:9; 1 COR 2:4).

Tongues

Besides oil, also fire, water, and wind symbolize the Spirit.

John the Baptist was the first to tell the crowds that Yeshua would immerse them with the *Fire of the Holy Spirit*.

Behold I am only immersing you in water to repentance. And He that comes after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not fit to carry, and He will immerse you, with the fire of the Ruach HaKodesh (MT 3:11).

Then, before the crucifixion Yeshua told the crowds that those who believe would receive the *Water of the Holy Spirit*.

Whoever believes in Me, as the Scriptures have said, rivers of water of Life will flow from his belly. And He spoke this about the Spirit, that those who believed in Him were about to receive (JN 7:38-39).

Lastly, after Yeshua had been ***sown in weakness and raised in power*** (1 COR 15:43), having become our forerunner and the firstborn of the dead (1 COR 15:20) (*in antitype of the firstfruits of the barley harvest*), He told His disciples that they would receive the *Power of the Holy Spirit* from on high (LK 24:49) and that they would speak in tongues:

And these signs will follow those who believe: in My Name, they will cast out shadim, and they will speak with new tongues (MK 16:17).

Thus, what occurred on that ***day of firstfruits*** (NUM 28:26) proved to be – as one would expect – quite tangible:

There was suddenly a sound from heaven like a powerful wind [ruach]: and that entire house in which they were sitting was filled with it. And tongues that were

² John, who probably wrote to the assemblies of Asia Minor, told the brethren that all of them had been anointed with the Holy Spirit (1 JN 2:20).

divided, appeared to them like fire, and sat upon each one of them. And all of them were filled with Ruach HaKodesh, and they began to speak in different tongues, like which the Spirit gave them to speak (ACTS 2:2-4).

Firstly, we see the Holy Spirit manifesting Himself as *Wind* (JN 3:8) or as the *Breath of Life*, the same *Breath of Life* which Adam received at creation. The wind filled the whole house, just as the glory of YHWH, once resting on Mt. Sinai, had filled the whole House of Elohim (1 KI 8:11).

The next manifestation of the Holy Spirit was fire. Fire transforms, purifies metal and sets dead wood ablaze. It's a familiar emblem of Eloah's power, but its appearance on that day in Jerusalem was absolutely unique: tongues of fire which were lighting for a short while on each of the 120 brethren.

We remember Yeshua's anointing, and the unique manifestation of the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove which came down from heaven and lighted on Him (MT 3:16, JN 1:32). Did not the gentle dove signify His character and fate, that He would be humble, harmless, and eventually sacrificed?

The powerful wind which filled the entire house, followed by tongues, was simply an expression of what was about to occur: human temples would be filled with the *Power of the Spirit* and subsequently manifest tongues.

What happened after the Spirit had filled the house? The Spirit manifested itself in tongues. What would we expect to happen once the Spirit had filled the houses (temples) of the brethren? Tongues. We would expect them to manifest tongues, to utter languages.

The Fire of the Holy Spirit, which John the Baptist had anticipated, manifested itself as tongues, because once they had received the Spirit and once the fiery tongues had vanished from above their heads, the Fire of the Holy Spirit would manifest itself again as tongues. In other words, the evidence of the infilling of the Spirit is '*tongues*' – anyone who is baptized in the Spirit will start to speak in tongues, just as the one hundred and twenty on that day.

Everyone could hear the talmidim. Some of the bypassers understood what was said as they heard them speak in their own languages, while others thought it was gibber.

As we will further see, being immersed in the Holy Spirit without some manifestation as quoted above doesn't agree with scripture. All the people to whom I have talked, felt some hot or tingling sensation, like a current of power going through them. Some were actually 'slain by power', viz., they fell to the floor the moment they received – reminiscent of the cohanim who weren't able to stand in The Temple (2 CHR 5:14). Of course this is subjective, but I may add that in my case it was a very gentle experience.

Nothing dramatic, just warmth and joy coming over me while I was starting to form syllables which I had never spoken before (*only later I realized that I had received a prayer language*).

The outpouring of the Spirit in Jerusalem is a precedent and a plumb-line to which any subsequent bestowal should match up, and I don't think we should wave aside its significance. One hundred and twenty talmidim started speaking in tongues and were followed by another 3,000 the same day (*to question whether those 3,000 also spoke in tongues is like questioning whether they repented, or whether they were immersed in water, etc. all of which I'd personally find fairly absurd to question*).

There is no reason to doubt that all of the disciples manifested the same sign the moment they received. That the languages were audible (and even visible) is confirmed again a few verses later:

And this is He who at the right hand of Eloah is exalted: and received from the Father the promise concerning the Ruach HaKodesh. And He has poured out this gift [like water], which, behold, you see and hear (ACTS 2:33).

3½ years later, a Samaritan named Simeon saw a manifestation of the Holy Spirit:

Then they placed a hand on them, and they received Ruach HaKodesh. And when Shim'on saw that by the placing of a hand of the emissaries, the Ruach HaKodesh was given, he offered them money (ACTS 8:17-18).

Even Simeon, a sorcerer who had deceived the Samaritans for a long time (*because he was that good at faking the power of God*) was quite impressed and wanted 'true power' for a change. How did he know the Samaritans had received the Holy Ghost? Were they all just smiling, telling John & Peter "Good prayer, thanks" before quietly walking away? Maybe they were, but there's even more reason to conclude that they had started to speak in tongues, which is what Simon saw (*one can clearly see when someone prays in tongues*).

The outpouring of the Holy Ghost in Caesarea is mentioned next:

And while Shim'on was speaking these words, the Ruach HaKodesh rested upon all who were hearing the Word. And the circumcised brothers who had come with him, were amazed and astonished that the gift of the Ruach HaKodesh, was also poured out upon the Goyim! For they heard them; while speaking in different tongues and magnifying Eloah. And Shim'on said, Can anyone forbid water, that those should not be immersed who, behold, have received Ruach HaKodesh, just like we have? (ACTS 10:44-47).

The believing Jews were astonished because they realized that also the Gentiles had received the Holy Spirit. How did they know? **Because they heard them speaking in tongues.** Peter confirms that it was the same experience which the Jews had in Jerusalem some 3½ years earlier, and alone the imperative ***behold*** in verse 47 shows that it was a visible manifestation. It was the end of the 70th Week, during which Yeshua would confirm the renewed covenant by signs and wonders to the Jews only (DAN 9:27).

A few days later, Peter relates the above event to the believing Jews in Jerusalem who had received the Holy Ghost on Shavuot shortly after the crucifixion (in the middle of the 70th week). Once again *fire baptism* is connected with *speaking in tongues*:

And when I began to speak there, the Ruach HaKodesh rested upon them like that upon us, from before [3½ years earlier]. And I remembered the Word of our Adon who said, Yochanan immersed in water, but you will be immersed in Ruach HaKodesh (ACTS 11:15-16).

For Yochanan immersed in water, but you will be immersed in Ruach HaKodesh after not many days (ACTS 1:5).

Twenty years later in Ephesus, on his third missionary journey, Paul meets twelve disciples of John the Baptist who had only been immersed in water. Paul quotes John and tells the disciples to also believe in Yeshua (who baptizes with the fire of the Spirit):

And Paul laid a hand upon them and the Ruach HaKodesh came upon them, and they spoke in different tongues and prophesied (ACTS 19:6).

Prophesying in a larger sense can also mean praising God under inspiration, as seen in ACTS 10:46 and ACTS 2:11.

To summarize, in the book of Acts we have found three witnesses which testify that **anyone who was immersed in the Fire of the Spirit started speaking in tongues** (audibly and visibly). Of course many more people were added, all those whom God would call, and all of them were immersed in fire as the promise was (and still is) for all:

For to you was the promise, and to your sons, and to all those who are far away, those whom Eloah will call (ACTS 2:38-39).

Sometimes it only says that they were baptized, or that they turned to YHWH. Again, there is no reason to assume that they weren't baptized in the Spirit³, or that repentance or anything else was missing – they will have manifested the infilling by

³ The incident of John's twelve disciples who hadn't heard about the Spirit seems to be an exception to the rule.

speaking in tongues just like anyone else (*Scripture nowhere records that the Holy Ghost was poured out and only a few or none of the recipients started to speak in tongues*).

Purpose of Tongues

Before looking at what exactly happens when someone speaks in tongues, and what the exact purpose is, let's clarify the meaning of the ambiguous term *gift*, or more precisely, **the gift of the Holy Spirit**.

The following phrases indicate that **the gift of the Ruach HaKodesh** is nothing else but **the Ruach HaKodesh**, and not the manifestation of speaking in tongues:

- Promise: ***receive the gift of Ruach HaKodesh*** (ACTS 2:38)
- Promise: ***receive the Ruach HaKodesh*** (ACTS 8:15, 19:2, JN 20:22)
- Promise: ***receive Ruach HaKodesh*** (ACTS 8:19)
- Fulfilment: ***filled with Ruach HaKodesh*** (ACTS 2:4)
- Fulfilment: ***the Ruach HaKodesh*** (ACTS 10:44)
- Fulfilment: ***the gift of the Ruach HaKodesh*** (ACTS 10:45)
- Fulfilment: ***received Ruach HaKodesh*** (ACTS 10:47)
- Fulfilment: ***immersed in Ruach HaKodesh*** (ACTS 11:16)

The following passages show even more clearly the above to be true:

And this is He who at the right hand of Eloah is exalted: and received from the Father the promise concerning the Ruach HaKodesh. And He has poured out this gift, which, behold, you see and hear (ACTS 2:33).

While saying, Give me also this authority that upon whom I place a hand, he will receive Ruach HaKodesh. Shim'on Kefa said to him, Your money will go with you to destruction because you thought that the gift of Eloah could be obtained by the goods of the world (ACTS 8:19-20).

And I remembered the Word of our Adon who said, Yochanan immersed in water, but you will be immersed in Ruach HaKodesh. If therefore Eloah equally gave the gift to the Goyim who believed on our Adon Yeshua the Messiah like also to us, who was I that I should be able to hinder Eloah? (ACTS 11:16-17).

Again, **the gift of the Holy Spirit** is synonymous with **the Holy Spirit**. *Speaking in tongues* as the evidence of spiritual rebirth is, in fact, never called **the gift of the Holy Spirit** neither **a gift of the Holy Spirit** (at least not in the Scriptures). On the contrary, it seems as if the Holy Spirit wants to prevent us from mistaking the manifestation of our rebirth with a *spiritual gift*.

Spiritual gifts are dealt with towards the end of the first letter to the Corinthians, where Paul addresses specifically three of the nine spiritual gifts, and sets down certain rules of how to operate them in public. The gifts are, simply put **a)** tongues, **b)** interpretation, and **c)** prophecy.

Although the chapter doesn't deal with *speaking in tongues* as described in ACTS, there are two verses where Paul briefly diverts to what happens when we speak in tongues in the sense of worshiping, praising, and praying to God:

- a) In 1 COR 14:13-15 Paul does not only exhort the brethren to pray to be able to interpret, but he also tells them how to do this: ***pray also in [your] understanding*** – and not only in tongues. Why not? ***For if I were [only] to pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my understanding is without fruit*** (v. 14).

In other words, when asking God for something, we should also use our natural language and not just the supernatural. But more importantly, the reason given here sheds some light on what happens when we pray in tongues.

The human spirit or 'hidden man of the heart' has a voice, which can communicate as well. If I pray in tongues, that renewed spirit, that revived inner man prays, i.e., ***my spirit prays***. The understanding or intellect is 'without fruit' because it is not involved in producing the language. The human mind isn't able to influence the prayer's content because God's language bypasses the mind (which has nothing to do with being in trance by the way). That is why Paul told the brethren they should pray with the understanding also when praying for the gift of interpretation.

Every father will teach his new-born child how to communicate with him. At first the father will present simple words, then phrases, and eventually the child will speak his language. YHWH does the same only that He imparts His language within a few seconds into His new-born. Yeshua had promised that He won't leave us orphaned, but that He would adopt us. He would give us the *Spirit of Adoption* (ROM 8:15):

And because ye are sons [children], God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father (GAL 4:6).

Thus, speaking in tongues as a prayer language is a pure form of direct communication to Eloah – spirit to Spirit (ZEPH 3:9).

- b) The second time Paul refers to tongues as a prayer language is in 1 COR 14:18 where he says the following: ***I thank Eloah that I speak in tongues more than all of you***. Firstly, such a statement only makes sense if all the brethren are able to speak in tongues. Secondly, it shows that *speaking in tongues* and *praying in tongues* are overlapping terms – Paul wasn't referring to the gift of

tongues which always needs interpretation, he was talking about prayer. He was basically saying, “*I pray more with my spirit than anyone of you*”.

Lastly, as the gift of tongues and the evidence of rebirth originate from the same Spirit, we should also expect to find some common features. The first basic common principle may be gleaned from 1 COR 14:2 where it says that ***He who speaks in a tongue ... speaks in the Spirit.***

The reason we find both in the scriptures, **to speak in the spirit** and **to speak in the Spirit**, is because the human spirit was merged with God’s Spirit at rebirth (1 COR 6:17; 2 COR 3:17; JN 14:20). God’s Spirit and my spirit are interdependent in the operation of tongues. I cannot pray with my spirit without praying in the Spirit, and vice versa. After He has filled my renewed heart (ROM 5:5), the Spirit releases a language through my spirit and I start to speak in tongues. Thus, with regards to praying in tongues, the terms **in the Spirit** and **in/with the spirit** are interchangeable.

The above verses have shown **a)** that everyone in the Corinthian assembly spoke in tongues (as a means of praying), **b)** that it is the spirit which does the praying (indwelt & enabled by the Holy Spirit), and **c)** that *praying in the Spirit* means *praying in tongues*.

Paul wasn’t praising himself when He wrote that he prays more than anyone else. Instead, he was trying to encourage the Corinthian brethren to spend more time in prayer. Likewise, and as a means of spiritual warfare, Paul admonishes the brethren of the Ephesian assembly to pray intensely in the Spirit:

And with all prayers, and with all petitions, pray at all times in the Spirit (EPH 6:18).

Shall we assume that there were brethren who couldn’t fully partake in the spiritual battle because they weren’t able to pray in the Spirit?

In Jude, a letter which doesn’t address a particular congregation, but which was circulated to all Nazarene assemblies, we find that believers are admonished to build themselves up by praying in the Spirit:

But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost (JUDE 1:20).

Again, why would Jude admonish the ‘beloved’ to pray in the Holy Ghost, if some of them weren’t able to do so?⁴

The fact, that speaking or praying in tongues builds up the inner man, is the second common feature we find (1 COR 14:4; EPH 4:16). Isaiah, whom Paul quotes in his chapter on tongues, calls it the rest and the refreshing (ISA 28:12). Yeshua Himself alludes to the Spirit when He promises water that would quench thirst unlike any other water, and even become a well inside of man:

If you knew the gift of Eloah, and who this is who said to you, Give me to drink, you would ask Him, and He would give you water of Life ... every man who drinks from the water that I give him, will not thirst forever. But that water that I give him, will be in him a spring of water, that will spring up unto eternal life (JN 4:10,14).

The last thing Yeshua said before revealing Himself to the Samaritan women was this:

For Eloah is spirit, and those who worship Him, ought to worship in spirit and in truth (JN 4:24).

We are to worship God by turning on this well, viz., by praying in the Holy Ghost. The rivers of living water which flow from the belly, i.e., from the heart/spirit, are nothing else but tongues (JN 7:37-39). I can personally confirm that it often sounds like water bubbling forth from a fountain when I pray in the Spirit. My inner man is being watered during prayer, my spirit drinks while I worship Eloah in the Spirit of Truth (1 COR 12:13, JN 15:26) – this is the refreshing which Isaiah foresaw.

Praying in tongues also gives ***rest unto our souls*** (MT 11:29), because we don’t need to think what to pray for or which words to use. The Holy Spirit gives the utterance and our minds are completely at rest.

We anyway don’t know what God wants us to pray for, but the Spirit does. When we pray in tongues, the Spirit gives the content and the language, and thus we always pray according to God’s will. **The Spirit prays** and **the spirit prays** are synonymous terms as we have seen – one cannot occur without the other:

Thus also, the Spirit aids our infirmity, for we do not know what is right to pray for. But the Spirit prays on our behalf with groans that are not describable. And He who searches the hearts, knows what is the thinking of the Spirit that prays on behalf of the Set-Apart-Ones, according to the will of Eloah (ROM 8:26-27).

⁴ Epistles such as Romans, Galatians, Philippians, etc., abound in references to the infilling of the Holy Spirit. Shall we really assume that none (or only some) of these references imply that there was a manifestation when someone received the Holy Ghost?

Below some of the other roles which the Holy Spirit fulfils:

- Glorify Yeshua (JN 16:14)
- Convict of sin (JN 16:8-9)
- Mortify the flesh (ROM 8:13)
- Reveal deep things (1 COR 2:10)
- Make known future things (JN 16:13)
- Teach everything (JN 14:26)
- Lead into all truth (JN 16:13)
- Change us into the image of Yeshua (2 COR 3:18)
- Seal and act as a pledge for our final redemption (EPH 1:13-14)

Objections

Amongst the more radical objections (unsurprisingly only raised by non-tongue-speakers) we find statements such as “*Speaking in tongues...*”

- ... *doesn't exist today.*”
- ... *is a mass psychosis.*”
- ... *is faked.*”
- ... *is from the devil.*”
- ... *is an offense to God.*”
- ... *is not in the Bible.*”
- ... *is also operated inwardly and inaudibly.*”
- ... *is only for weirdos.*”
- ... *is only for a few chosen ones.*”

Besides these, the most moderate and self-assuring claim is: “*The Bible clearly shows that not everyone needs to speak in tongues!*”

The claim is based on one verse...

Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Or do all interpret? (1 COR 12:30).

... and is usually supported by two more:

For Eloah placed in His assembly first: emissaries; after them, prophets; after them, teachers; after them, workers of power; after them, gifts of healing and helpers, and leaders, and kinds of tongues (1 COR 12:28).

And for another, power, and for another, prophecy, and for another, discerning of the Spirit, and for another, kinds of tongues, and for another, the interpretation of tongues (1 COR 12:10).

The problem is that none of these verses refer to the manifestation of the Spirit as seen in ACTS. In fact, 1 COR 12, 13, and 14 deal solely with the *spiritual gifts* which the Spirit ***distributes to every man as He wills*** after the initial refilling (1 COR 12:11).

The answer to verse 30 is therefore indeed “No”, either because someone doesn’t have the *gift of tongues* or because he doesn’t operate it. Scripture only allows 2-3 tongues to be given at a gathering, no matter how many people attend. The *gift of tongues* is distinct from tongues which evidence our rebirth:

Evidence of Rebirth

- Used for prayer & worship.
- Used in public gatherings & in private.
- Can be operated as often (or as long) as one wishes.
- Expresses praises & groanings. (mysteries not explicitly mentioned)
- Not explicitly mentioned to be a sign.
- Doesn’t need to be interpreted and is sometimes understood.

Spiritual Gift

- Not used for prayer & worship.
- Only used in public gatherings.
- Can only be operated 2-3 times per gathering.
- Expresses mysteries.
- A sign for unbelievers.⁵
- Needs to be interpreted and is never understood (as a rule).

⁵ The contrast between **1 COR 14:22** and the uncontrolled speaking in tongues in **v. 23** suggests that the *gift of tongues* is the sign for unbelievers, not collective praying in tongues. This is supported by Paul’s reference to Isaiah: ***In the Torah it is written: With a strange speech and with another tongue I will speak with this people; even so, they will not hear Me, says YHWH. Therefore, tongues are placed for a sign: not to believers, but to those who do not believe*** (1 COR 14:21-22). Seeing the Assyrian invaders and hearing their strange tongue was proof of Israel’s disobedience and unbelief. Moses’ warning, that YHWH would bring a nation against them ***whose tongue [they] shall not understand*** had come true (DEUT 28:49). It was a sign. It was a call to repentance – but Israel didn’t take heed. Unintelligible tongues are given as a sign to those who are in unbelief, so they would consider and acknowledge the finger of God in it and repent (but few do).

Ignoring these differences even Spirit-filled people like to mistake the *gift of tongues* with the evidence of spiritual rebirth. Lately, I have often come across the phrase ‘*praying out the mysteries of God*’, which is simply the result of relating **1 COR 14:2** to praying in the Spirit. Let’s briefly look at it:

For he who speaks in a tongue does not speak to sons of men but to Eloah⁶: for no man understands a thing that he speaks; yet in the Spirit, he speaks a mystery (1 COR 12:11).

Despite the immediate context of interpretations & prophecies, no one seems to have the idea that the mystery is simply the divine word for the assembly on that day, which is to be revealed to all through the gift of interpretation a few seconds later.

So why ‘*praying out mysteries*’ which are revealed weekly providing the gifts are operated? The phrase ‘*praying out mysteries*’ doesn’t exist in the Scriptures, which by the way say that we know the mysteries of the Kingdom (LK 8:10) and the mystery of His will (EPH 1:9).

The *gift of tongues* is one spiritual gift out of nine, all of which are enumerated in 1 COR 12:8-10. But because it reads ***kinds of tongues⁷*** or ***diversities of tongues*** (KJV), it has become fashionable to split up one gift into several types of tongues, amongst them also the simple prayer in the Spirit. Thus, suddenly we find ‘*praying in the Holy Ghost*’ as belonging to one of the nine spiritual gifts. Now, our negative reply to the question, “***Do all speak in tongues?***” must include any tongues, whether it’s the manifestation of our spiritual birth or simply the *gift of tongues*.

Needless to say that the doctrine on how to ‘*unlock the divine mysteries for your life*’ is warmly received in charismatic circles (much to the delight of the devil of course). Teachings like these will eventually only increase the mistrust towards tongues and thus lead more people into hell.

Anyway, this is just to give you an idea of the confusion we face regarding tongues.

I hope that these pages will be of help to you. If you think that you’ve been born of the Spirit, then there’s no reason for me to argue with you. If, on the other hand, you think that you could be lacking something, then the promise is still there:

⁶ There is a tradition which says that when the high priest would enter the Holy of Holies on the Day of Atonement, he could communicate to God in a language that only he and God understood. This ability to speak in and understand the language of God only occurred when the high priest was in the Holy of Holies, and after he exited the sacred chamber, he was no longer able to speak that heavenly tongue.

⁷ The term ***kinds of tongues*** (sometimes translated as ***different languages***) should probably highlight the fact that the languages always differ – unlike with interpretations & prophecies.

And if you, who are evil, know to give good gifts to your sons, how much more will your Father from heaven give Ruach HaKodesh to those who ask Him?

LK 11:13

Shalom,
Jake