

FOREWORD BY BISHOP BILL HAMON

THE
GIFT
OF
Tongues

WHAT IT IS, WHAT IT ISN'T
AND WHY YOU NEED IT

ROBERT
HENDERSON

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If not for Pastor James Walker and his influence in my life, this book would never have materialized. His selfless pursuit of the Lord and the ministry of the Holy Spirit opened the door for me to experience the power of the Holy Spirit and the gift of tongues. Though he came from a traditional religious position, he laid that aside, with all its advantages, to embrace what he understood to be the life of the Spirit and the gifts He endows. For this, I am eternally grateful.

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FOREWORD

Robert Henderson has blessed the Body of Christ with a truth that needs to be emphasized in this day and hour. You will find here a thorough biblical presentation of God’s purpose for giving the saints the gift of the Holy Spirit, which includes the “other tongues” of our spirit language. Most Full Gospel ministers rarely teach their members about this gift of the Holy Spirit.

Both Robert and I, however, fully recognize the vital importance of this gift. In 2008, God revealed that the third and final church reformation had been decreed. I wrote a book concerning this third reformation and all that it will fulfill of God’s end-time purposes in and through His Church. God then spoke to me about writing a book that would enlighten and enable Christ’s Church to do that, and the result was *70 Reasons for Speaking in Tongues*, because it gives 70 beneficial reasons for using this particular gift of the Holy Spirit.

God the Father’s greatest gift for the world was His only begotten Son, who came to purchase His Church with His own blood. Jesus’ greatest gift to His Church was the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit's greatest gift to individual saints is the ability to pray in a spirit language.

During the Pentecostal movement, many books were written on the baptism of the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues. After the charismatic renewal, hardly any books were written on speaking in tongues. We thank you, Robert, for obeying the Holy Spirit's motivation in you to write this book on tongues. We pray that it will go to many in the Body of Christ so that they will be enlightened and motivated to help bring about the great awakening and end-time harvest. Every Christian needs to read and practice these great truths about the value, importance and benefits of using the Holy Spirit's gift of tongues.

Bishop Bill Hamon, bishop, Christian International Apostolic-Global Network; author, *70 Reasons for Speaking in Tongues*, *God's Weapons of War* and *Your Highest Calling*

One

WHY THE DEBATE?

It does not take an in-depth search of the Bible to discover the gift of tongues and see it in operation. Numerous Scriptures back this gift up and affirm it, and together we will look at many of them. Yet even Bible-believing people debate about whether or not this gift is for today. As a result of all the debating and questioning, many believers consider the gift of tongues obsolete and archaic. They feel that theologically, emotionally and intellectually, there is no need for this gift in today's world or Church.

I would assert, however, that nothing could be further from the truth. Both in my experience and from a strongly theological viewpoint, I would assert that operating in the gift of tongues holds great advantage for us, and that it is even necessary to living a full life of satisfaction and effectiveness. This is what I will endeavor to illustrate as we progress through the information I will present here regarding this gift.

First of all, what are *tongues*? This gift of tongues is the supernatural ability to speak a language you have never learned, using

this language for spiritual and heavenly reasons. Chronologically, the first place we see tongues mentioned in Scripture is Mark 16:17: “And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues.” We are told here that new tongues are one of the signs that will follow a believer. Believers who have been born again are supposed to be able to manifest and demonstrate the supernatural power of God. This is quite evidently an uncommon experience for many of us today. So often, we seem powerless and without any real authority. Yet we are told that these signs should follow us.

The Greek word for *sign* in this verse is *semeion*, and it means “an indication.”¹ The root word it comes from is *sema*, which means “a mark.” When we connect these two parts of the definition, it could be said that a *sign* is a mark we carry that indicates we are a believer. We will look into this Scripture from the gospel of Mark in greater depth in a moment, but suffice it to say here that we are supposed to be marked with the supernatural of God. *Tongues* are one of these *markings* or *indications* that we are believers and belong to Him.

As believers, we are supposed to be characterized by the supernatural. Isaiah 8:18 tells us that as God’s children, we were made to function in and live from the supernatural power of God: “Here am I and the children whom the LORD has given me! We are for signs and wonders in Israel from the Lord of hosts, who dwells in Mount Zion.” The writer of Hebrews in the New Testament would later pick this verse up and record it in Hebrews 2:11–13, making the case from this Scripture that the same DNA and nature that was in Jesus is now in us as those joined to Him:

1. Note that the definitions I provide of Greek and Hebrew words throughout are all taken from *Strong’s Concordance*, Orion Systems Version 3.0.3 (2010–2017), <https://itunes.apple.com/dm/app/strong-s-concordance/id405005619?mt=8>.

For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified are all of one, for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying:

“I will declare Your name to My brethren;

In the midst of the assembly I will sing praise to You.”

And again:

“I will put My trust in Him.”

And again:

“Here am I and the children whom God has given Me.”

When we are told that the One who sanctifies (Jesus) and the ones who are being sanctified (us as believers) “are all of one,” it means that we are all the sons and daughters of God. In other words, the same nature that is in Jesus is now in us. As a result of our new birth and salvation experience, we now carry the nature of God Himself. Notice that in Isaiah 8:18, as His children we are “for signs and wonders.” Signs and wonders are part of our portion as the ones who now carry the nature and likeness of God. We are here to demonstrate the Kingdom of God in the earth as believers marked with the supernatural of God.

Manifesting the Kingdom

Mark 16:17, the Scripture we looked at that speaks of these signs following believers, reveals another interesting factor. The word *follow* is the Greek word *parakoloutheo*, which means “to follow near.” The supernatural realm of God is supposed to be very close to those of us who are believers. We are not only supposed to speak of the Lord and His Kingdom; we are also supposed to manifest it.

This is what the apostle Paul said in 1 Corinthians 4:20: “For the kingdom of God is not in word but in power.” If all we have

is a gospel of *word*, or of reasoning and no demonstration, we are falling far short of God's original intent for us as believers. We are to manifest signs of the supernatural. It is these signs that will convince the world of the reality of who Jesus is.

Signs are to follow very near to us. We must position our faith and believe God for the supernatural in which the Bible says we are to operate. We cannot let a powerless Christianity fashion us. Paul warned us of this in 2 Timothy 3:5, saying some people would live their life "having a form of godliness but denying its power." Then he told us, "And from such people turn away!" Paul calls Christianity without power merely a form of godliness, and he makes the extremely strong statement that we should get away from those who claim to be Jesus' people but have no evident power in their life.

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Wow, if we were to take this word at face value, there would be a mass exodus from much of Christianity today. I am not advocating this. I understand that there are other ideas we need to consider. This does tell us how desperate we should be, however, for a Gospel of power and not just word. We are to go after this realm of signs and wonders following us. They are not a luxury; they are an absolute necessity for us as believers. We must not settle. We must set our hearts in agreement with God's Word, until our experience as believers lines up with the Word. This is our portion as the children of God.

One of these signs following us as believers is the gift of tongues. I would be so bold as to say that the gift of tongues is absolutely essential to walking in and demonstrating this

supernatural power I have been speaking about. We will see this more as we progress. The word *tongues* in the Greek is the word *glossa*. By definition, it means “a language, especially one naturally unacquired.” In other words, we did not acquire this language through natural means. The ability to speak and function in the gift of tongues came from a supernatural encounter. Out of this supernatural encounter, the power and ability to speak and pray in tongues became present in us.

My Experience with Tongues

I first experienced this gift myself many years ago. Through a series of events, my family came into what has since been referred to as the “charismatic renewal.” This was a time from the 1960s well into the 1980s when people were encountering the Person of the Holy Spirit in new and powerful ways. The strict religious structures of many denominations were being challenged by the impact of the Holy Spirit and His gifts on people. One of these gifts was the gift of tongues.

Our family ended up leaving the denominational church we had been part of for decades, if not centuries. As a result of my father’s hunger for the supernatural, we found ourselves in one of these new charismatic churches. Its pastor had been removed from the traditional church he had led, all because of his encounter with the Holy Spirit on a new and powerful level. My dad and several other members of my family began to experience the Holy Spirit on these new levels as well, and began to speak in tongues.

As a twelve-year-old boy, I would watch this in hunger myself, even longing to have the same encounter. I remember one time when I was left in the back seat of the car while my mom went in the house. I decided I would try to speak in tongues, as I

had heard others do. I could not do it. I was unable to make the sounds that would have been associated with a tongue or prayer language. I vividly remember this. It affirmed to me that I did not have the gift of tongues and that speaking in tongues was not just something I could do from a desire or natural ability.

I don't really remember how much time passed after that incident, but later on I was in a service where people who wanted the gift of tongues were being prayed for. Because of my previous attempt in the car, I was aware that I could not pray in tongues from my own ability, so I went forward for prayer. As others prayed for me, I began to speak. To my amazement, a supernatural language I had never learned began to flow out of my mouth. It actually caught me by surprise because of my failure to speak in such an unknown language when I had tried it on my own.

From that time until now, the result has been that I have a gift of tongues I operate in, and I speak in tongues regularly. It has been and continues to be a strong and powerful influence in my life. For forty-plus years, I have been learning about the power of this gift. I would say irrevocably that this gift of tongues has been as big a blessing in my life as anything else I have ever encountered. It is a true gifting from the gracious hand of God into the lives of those who hunger and thirst for Him.

Tongues of Men and Angels

When we talk of tongues, we should know that they can be languages of earth or of heaven. The apostle Paul alluded to this in 1 Corinthians 13:1 when he said, "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal." Even though his emphasis is on operating in love, Paul also gives us some

insight into tongues. He shares that tongues for the believer can be from languages known in the earth among men, or from languages unknown that are angelic and heavenly in nature.

This is why we must be careful in judging too harshly what our gift of tongues or someone else's gift sounds like. We might hear someone speak in tongues and think it sounds like nothing from this earth. That could be exactly right, because it could be a tongue of angels. Clearly, from what Paul declared, not only are there earthly languages we might speak supernaturally even though we don't know them; there are also angelic languages we might be speaking.

Acts 2:4 chronicles the initial infilling with the Holy Spirit of 120 believers, which resulted in the gift of tongues: "And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." The result was that other people who were listening, who spoke various languages in the natural, all heard these believers speaking of the glory of God. Verses 6–8 show that as these believers spoke in tongues, they were actually speaking the different languages of their listeners, which they had no way of knowing:

And when this sound occurred, the multitude came together, and were confused, because everyone heard them speak in his own language. Then they were all amazed and marveled, saying to one another, "Look, are not all these who speak Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each in our own language in which we were born?"

People from many other countries and regions heard these Galilean believers speaking in a wide variety of "home dialects." This is because the supernatural gift of tongues that the believers had received in the Upper Room on the Day of Pentecost came forth in earthly languages. These 120 believers,

now filled with the Holy Spirit, were speaking tongues in the languages of men, which enabled their hearers afterward to understand them.

Several years ago, when I was pastoring in a small town in Texas, I brought in a guest speaker who was Haitian. In Haiti, French is a common language because of the French heritage and influence there. Our guest speaker had stayed on after his time of ministry, and he came to our morning prayer time the next day. As we were praying, I would speak in the gift of tongues and intermingle it with my native language of English, which is a common practice for me. When we were through with the hour-long prayer time, this Haitian man approached me and asked if I knew French. I assured him that I did not. He then began to tell me that every time I would speak in tongues and finish a time of praying, I would say the words *je t'aime*, which in French means "I love you."

I was astounded at this. I realized that I had been saying "I love You" to the Lord in a language I did not know. Not only was it a language I did not know; it was also one of the languages considered the most romantic in the earth. I was telling the Lord through tongues "I love You" from the deepest parts of my heart.

Many people who experience the gift of tongues recount that it is as if their natural language is insufficient to express the deepest cry of their heart to the Lord. Through the gift of tongues, they are able to release from their spirit that which is longing for the Lord Himself. The Holy Spirit uses this gift of tongues to help us release the cry of our heart, filled with His passion, to God.

As we have seen, there can be times when such tongues are not of this earth; they are of the heavenly dimension. I believe one of the reasons God allows this is so heaven can come to

earth. When we speak a language of heaven, the atmosphere of heaven can begin to permeate the atmosphere of earth.

One of the greatest mandates Jesus left us was to pray heaven into earth. Matthew 6:9–10 tells us to pray until heaven’s atmosphere begins to dominate the realms of earth: “In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” When we are empowered to pray in an angelic tongue, if it in fact brings the atmosphere of heaven into earth, this mandate is accomplished. A tongue that we share with the angels allows the atmosphere they create to become the atmosphere we encounter. What an awesome thing! This can be just one of the reasons we might be empowered to speak with the tongues of angels, as well as the tongues of men.

The Holy Spirit uses this gift of tongues to help us release the cry of our heart, filled with His passion, to God.

No Need for Tongues?

With all of this said, then why the debate over whether or not tongues are relevant and even theologically applicable for today? Throughout my history of walking with the Lord and functioning in ministry, I have encountered at least three ideas that allow resistance to tongues and their operation. The first idea is that we no longer have the need for tongues today. The second idea is that this gift is actually the work of the devil. The third is that tongues are illogical and unintelligible. Let’s look at each of these objections to tongues in more detail.

First, why would some modern-day believers maintain that we no longer need the gift of tongues today? These people say

that in the beginning of the Church, tongues were necessary to spread the Gospel. As we saw in Acts 2, the disciples were able to speak in the language of other cultures. But now, those who oppose this gift insist that such an ability is no longer necessary since we have the Bible available in almost all languages. We also have the ability to translate from language to language in both speech and the written word. The miracle of tongues such as operated on the Day of Pentecost is therefore now unnecessary, say those who hold to this idea.

I believe people who say this are missing the point. The miracle occurred on that day not just so a group of people could hear the Gospel in their own languages. In fact, the Bible doesn't even say they were hearing the Gospel. Acts 2:11 clarifies that they were hearing the disciples speak about the works of God: "We hear them speaking in our own tongues the wonderful works of God." To me, this means that it was not so much a Gospel message the listeners were hearing, as it was praise, honor and glory being given to God for His favor and grace. In the Greek, the word translated "wonderful works" here is *megaleios*. It means "magnificent, conspicuous favor." In other words, the disciples were praising God for His glorious grace.

Ephesians 1:6 reflects this cry of adoration and glory, "to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved." This could have been what the believers who were speaking in languages they did not know were saying. They were resounding the glory and majesty of the conspicuous grace and favor that had come on their lives through the power of the Holy Spirit. Even though their minds did not know what they were saying, their spirits were rejoicing in the adulation of God and His kindness. Through the gift of tongues, they then were erupting forth with praise to the One who had endowed them with such wonders.

My question to those who say we no longer need this gift of tongues is, Why wouldn't we need it? Who would deny the power of something so glorious touching our lives? That there would be such a praise lifted to God that people all around would stand in wonder! People who would deny us such an experience tell us that we no longer need tongues because that which is perfect has come. First Corinthians 13:10–11 does speak of something perfect coming that will do away with something partial:

But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away.

When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things.

Those who resist the validity of tongues for today say that what is perfect has come, and that this is a reference to the canon of Scripture, or the Bible. Their argument is that because we now have the inerrant Scriptures, we no longer have the need for tongues or even the other gifts.

This argument has many holes. Even though I believe that the Bible is indeed the inerrant Word of God, I do not believe this Scripture is speaking of that idea. Neither do I understand that since we are now mature and need to put away childish things, this would include tongues and other expressions of gifting. Yet some believers would contend that since we have now matured as the Church throughout the millennia, we have no need for these gifts.

Nothing could be further from the truth. I would say that we have as much—or more—need of the Holy Spirit's gifts today as on the Day of Pentecost. We need like never before the power, authority, anointing and gifts of God to empower us in

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the culture we are contending for. In fact, when Paul penned these words about the perfect coming, he was not talking of the Bible being that which was perfect. He was, in fact, speaking of a perfect love that would come. Let’s look at this entire Scripture in context. When perfect love, which is Jesus Himself, comes, then there will be no more need for that which is partial:

Love never fails. But whether there are prophecies, they will fail; whether there are tongues, they will cease; whether there is knowledge, it will vanish away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away.

When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things. For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known.

And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

1 Corinthians 13:8–13

When we stand face-to-face with Jesus in perfect love, only then will tongues cease and there will be no more need for the gifts. Until that time, we desperately need the empowerment that comes with tongues and other expressions of the Holy Spirit. Only when the perfect love of God has fully come will we no longer need tongues. We are not there yet. We will not be there until the Second Coming of the Lord. Then, all that He has graciously deposited in us as His people will be invalidated.

That which is in part will no longer be needed, because His fullness will have come! So biblically and theologically speaking, tongues *have not* passed away. We have not yet left the dispensation of time when they are still needful, because that time will only end when Jesus returns.

A Devilish Language?

A second objection leveled against the gift of tongues is that it is of the devil. I have actually heard this idea more than once through the years. It seems that when people cannot explain something logically, then it must be of Satan. Jesus warned us about attributing the works of God to the devil. He actually classified it as the unpardonable sin.

Matthew 12:24 shows the religious leaders of Jesus' day claiming that His ministry of casting out devils was through the power of the devil. When the Pharisees heard about a deliverance He had done, their response was, "This fellow does not cast out demons except by Beelzebub, the ruler of the demons." When Jesus heard this, He began a discourse explaining why it could not be true. He showed that what He did was through the power of the Holy Spirit, and He addressed how you cannot remove a strong man from his house unless a stronger man comes upon him. Basically, Jesus was declaring that through the power of the Holy Spirit, He was stronger than any demonic force. Then He made this powerful and serious statement:

Therefore I say to you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven men. Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the

Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him, either in this age or in the age to come.

Matthew 12:31–32

Jesus was saying that when you attribute the works of the Holy Spirit to Satan, you are getting dangerously close to blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, for which there is no forgiveness. I do believe that when men with sincere hearts make judgments in ignorance, that is one thing. I understand that God is merciful and kind. If, however, people whose motives are not pure seek to hold on to their place and resist God's work through such statements, that is another thing, and I believe it can be treacherous ground.

We must be very careful in this area. We should be slow to judge something as being of Satan before we know for sure, especially when it is purported to be of God and the power of the Holy Spirit. As I said, I have heard people claim that tongues are of Satan. Some of these people were simply ignorant. With other people, however, I could sense a demonic agenda that was driving them not to enter into the operation of this gift themselves, as well as driving them to seek to keep others from entering into the deeper things of God.

Jesus accused the religious leaders of His day of just that, speaking out strongly to them: “Woe to you lawyers! For you have taken away the key of knowledge. You did not enter in yourselves, and those who were entering in you hindered” (Luke 11:52). *Woe* was an exclamation of grief. In other words, there was no hope for these people. We must be very careful about how we approach supernatural demonstrations. We should move with caution in evaluating them until we know for sure about them. This includes tongues and making any declaration that they are from the devil.

Unintelligible Gibberish?

The third objection or point of debate against the gift of tongues is that it is not logical or intellectual. Some people who have heard others speak in tongues call it unintelligible gibberish. This gift somehow or other offends their minds and/or intelligence. This is not a valid argument, either. As we have seen, sometimes tongues are from the earth's known languages, but other times tongues can be angelic in nature. If we are judging and criticizing tongues because we don't like the way they sound, we might be speaking evil of an angel's language. Just because something does not seem to impress us on earth does not mean it isn't valid and good.

The other thing to remember is that God takes what seems foolish to confound the wise. First Corinthians 1:27–29 tells us that God loves to take what mankind does not esteem and use it to work His purposes:

But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, that no flesh should glory in His presence.

Sometimes God allows tongues to sound foolish, yet they are filled with great power in their operation. Just because this gift does not make sense to our natural man does not mean it isn't of God. One of the main reasons the Lord does this kind of thing is so that He gets the glory for all things. No flesh can take credit. It is to His praise when what humankind seems to despise, He uses in powerful ways.

So it can be with tongues. So much power is locked up within this gift. We will discover this reservoir as we move forward, and we will know God's closeness as we learn to function in the gift of tongues!