

Greater Works Christin Church

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Tongues – The Power of Unity

Introduction: Tongues has been the object of great debate and even ridicule in the body of Christ for years. As we study the subject of tongues we soon realize that much of the problem in understanding Tongues is that many do not understand the context of the passages that speak of Tongues.

Tongues are not a mysterious hidden gift that should cause people to be fearful. Instead the Bible deals with Tongues and their use more than people care to think.

God gave us the gift and speech of Tongues for a reason and a purpose. This purpose is not so hidden that a simple study could not reveal. Today we hope to uncover at least one of the reasons and purposes of this unique gift.

Genesis 11:1-9

1 Now the whole earth had one language and one speech.

2 And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar, and they dwelt there.

3 Then they said to one another, "Come, let us make bricks and bake *them* thoroughly." They had brick for stone, and they had asphalt for mortar.

4 And they said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower whose top *is* in the heavens; let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth."

5 But the LORD came down to see the city and the tower which the sons of men had built.

6 And the LORD said, "Indeed the people *are* one and they all have one language, and this is what they begin to do; now nothing that they propose to do will be withheld from them.

7 Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, that they may not understand one another's speech."

8 So the LORD scattered them abroad from there over the face of all the earth, and they ceased building the city.

9 Therefore its name is called Babel, because there the LORD confused the language of all the earth; and from there the LORD scattered them abroad over the face of all the earth.

Note: Most will never realize the power of unity. When people are unified power is increased. When people can work together as one there is little they cannot accomplish.

Most never realize the power of unity, even more will never realize the power of a common language and speech. Having a common language will bring a level of unity, but having a common speech as well will bring an even deeper unity.

Not only did the people have a single language, but it seems that the expression of that language was the same. It seems as if they did not have the issue of sorting through various cultural and even personal variations and personalities in regard to the language of the day.

English is the world's common language. Anyone wanting to be involved in international affairs or business will have to learn to speak English. Although English as a language can tear down walls of separation, these walls will not come completely down on account of the cultural and regional uses of the language. For example: people who live in the Bronx, New York will speak differently than those who live in New Orleans, Louisiana. Also, you will find that those who live in the Pacific North West will speak differently than those in the Mid-West. It isn't that the language is different, but there are enough cultural differences that erect walls of separation keeping people from effectively being able to work together in a cohesive manner.

Since this is true in the U.S.A., can you imagine what it is like on a global scale? Even though you can find people in China, Africa and Asia that speak English, there will be problems, not because of the language itself, but because of the speech.

The people in this story did not have any cultural differences that would cause a breakdown in their language and the understanding of that language. Instead, they were able to understand one another in a manner that brought and secured a level of unity that gained the attention of heaven.

It wasn't the unified language or speech that God was upset with. Instead we see that the people were all about themselves and attempted to build a city and tower saying: "let us make a name for ourselves". It wasn't that the people had a single language and speech that angered God, but that they were steeped in pride and arrogance, not acknowledging God.

The people built this city and tower to reach into heaven, by themselves and for themselves:

- "let **us** make a name for **ourselves**" (v.4)
- "the LORD came down to see the city and the tower which the **sons of men** had built" (v.5)
- "the LORD said, "Indeed **the people** are one and **they** all have one language, and this is what **they** begin to do; now nothing that **they** propose to do will be withheld from **them**" (v.6)

In order to break the will of man and to deal with the city, its tower and the arrogance of the people, all God had to do was confuse their language. The separation on account of the various languages was all it took to put a stop to the building of this city and its tower. Their pride filled strength was brought low simply by confusing the language.

Another aspect of this story is God said: "Indeed the people are one and they all have one language, and this is what they begin to do; now nothing that they propose to do will be withheld from them.(v.6)" Nothing would be withheld from these one's united in a common language and speech. What we must remember is that these are people that are not saved, and thus without the filling of the Holy Spirit. They are lost and set apart from the salvation of God.

This is important to understand because they would not use the power of their unity to bring about the things of God, and the things of the Kingdom of God. Instead they would ultimately build something that would be dishonoring to God, and that would only serve fleshly and demonic purposes. This is the only end of things built of the will of man apart from the will of God.

Say the Same Things

1 Corinthians 1:10-12

10 Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and *that* there be no divisions among you, but *that* you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.

11 For it has been declared to me concerning you, my brethren, by those of Chloe's *household*, that there are contentions among you.

12 Now I say this, that each of you says, "I am of Paul," or "I am of Apollos," or "I am of Cephas," or "I am of Christ."

Paul writes saying, "that you all speak the same thing, and *that* there be no divisions among you..." It's as if Paul is looking back at the Tower of Babel and seeing a truth that would apply for the believers in his day.

The people of Genesis 11 were able to build a city and tower that extended into the heavens because they all spoke the same language and dialect. Paul seems to pick up on that theme by telling us to do the same thing. We are to "speak the same thing". This helps in removing the divisions among us.

Unity in Language and Speech brings about Unity that releases Great Power.

The Spirit brings Unity

Ephesians 4:1-6

1 I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called,

2 with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love,

3 endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

4 *There is* one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling;

5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism;

6 one God and Father of all, who *is* above all, and through all, and in you all.

This passage shows several important things. We are told to “walk worthy of the calling with which you (we) were called”.

“walk worthy of the calling with which you were called”

We are instructed to do this with:

- all lowliness and gentleness
- longsuffering
- bearing with one another in love
- endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace

One of the ways we walk worthy of our calling is to keep the Unity of the Spirit. As we have seen so far, Language and Speech is a powerful unifying agent. When we are saying the same things we are being unified in the Spirit.

Tongues – *the Holy Spirit gives the Utterance*

Acts 2:4

And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

On the Day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit came and Filled the disciples of Christ. When the Holy Spirit came upon those in the Upper room, they all began Speaking in Tongues. As we can see from this verse, Tongues is a Spiritual Language given by the Holy Spirit. Tongues is a Language that originates with the Holy Spirit of God.

Baptism in the Holy Spirit – Tongues - Unity

Acts 2:44

Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common,

From the Outpouring of the Holy Spirit and Tongues of Fire to Unity in the Church. This is the righteous picture of what took place in Genesis 11 (Tower of Babel).

The people wanted to build a city and tower to the heavens. This is a picture of what happens when humanity becomes its own god.

When the Holy Spirit comes he gives a common language that empowers God’s people. We are now empowered to be the Temple of God. The Carnal mind says I can reach to the heavens and become like god. The spirit filled believer becomes the house of God on the earth. Tongues becomes the common language that binds us together, empowering us to become the House of God on the earth.