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**Psalms 19:14:** (NASB) *Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, O LORD, my Rock and my Redeemer.*

It can mean a **literal tongue**: Luke 1:64: This is the account of Zacharias being able to speak.  
It can mean a **language**: Acts 2:4: This was during Pentecost.

Revelation 7:9: The word for *language* here is the exact same word for *tongue*. So it is simple - to speak in a tongue is to speak in a distinct language, be it your own or another.

The purpose of a tongue or language is to communicate: Genesis 11:1-8

Miraculously speaking in tongues, or different languages, was first introduced on the Day of Pentecost after Jesus was raised. Just as Israel had been delivered from slavery as a result of the Passover lamb and 50 days later was given the 10 Commandments as its guide for life, so Christianity 50 days after its “Passover Lamb” had been slain was given the Holy Spirit (God’s power and influence) as a light and guide. Tongues were a gift that came as a result of that spirit.

1. Pentecost: Acts 2:1-8

- Each individual listening clearly heard their native language spoken (over 14 languages).
- There was a mixed audience - those who mocked and those who would believe.
- The Apostle Peter immediately related this experience to Old Testament prophecy.

2. **The conversion of Cornelius:** Acts 10:34-47: Cornelius had been following the Jewish Law. After Peter witnesses to him and his household, they receive the Holy Spirit and this gift to show they are now followers of Christ. As the first non-Jewish converts to Christianity, the purpose was to provide a significant sign verifying this arrangement was acceptable to God. Both the Jews and Gentiles could understand this dramatic sign.

3. In Ephesus: Acts 19:1-7: Newly converted Christians were given the gift of speaking in other languages. (More detail on this later.)

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1. Newly spirit-begotten individuals - those being drawn into Christianity.
2. The preaching of an Apostle - not just any Christian. All three events had an Apostle present.
3. The audience: A Jew or Gentile, some believers and others nonbelievers or not yet converted.

**WHO?** Only Apostles and converts by way of an Apostle's teaching or laying on of hands of an Apostle; only Apostles could transfer the gift to other individuals.

**WHY** was the miraculous ability to speak in an unstudied language granted?

First, it was a sign of God's favor. **The Jewish nation was accustomed to such signs:** Isaiah 7:13-14 **Another proof:** John 4:46-48

Christianity today: Speaking a "spiritual language" no one understands.  
New Testament: In an understandable language.

Second, it was a miraculous method of communication that would fill a dramatic need to spread the Gospel to all - Jews first and then Gentiles. At Pentecost, there were over a dozen languages spoken. There was a need to get the Gospel out wide, far and fast. **This would require effective communication via the understandable spoken word:** Romans 10:10-15: This was about coming to Christ without discrepancy between Jew and Gentile.

Third, tongues were prophesied as a way **not to impress the hearer, but to impress upon the hearer the beauty of the Gospel message:** 1 Corinthians 14:20-23: (The Apostle explains speaking in tongues is meant for the ears of those who do not believe. If it is done only in the presence of believers, it is contradicting the purpose expressed by the Apostle Paul. It was all about spreading the understanding of truth and not about putting on a show!

Isaiah 28:9-12: The scriptural principle explained here is to build truth upon logic and understanding, Scripture upon Scripture, reasoning upon reasoning - not through saying something no one can understand or interpret or something that just makes you "feel good."

Scripturally speaking, speaking in tongues was to communicate the Gospel to those who did not have the ability to understand it any other way. It was not about serving ourselves; it was about spreading the word to others.

**Our theme Scripture:** Psalms 19:14: (NASB) *Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, O LORD, my Rock and my Redeemer.* This is such a powerful message relating to our subject. We want the words of our mouth and meditation of our hearts to be acceptable to God. Therefore, they have to be in accordance with God. Samuel said to Saul in 1 Samuel 15:22: *It is better to obey than to sacrifice*, meaning it is better to do the Lord's will in the Lord's way.

**WHERE** was the gift of tongues supposed to be used?

First, a text to give us perspective: 1 Corinthians 12:27-28, 31: In order of importance, the gift of tongues is at the bottom of the list. What is *the more excellent way* he describes...? More on this later!



**The science of tongues, *Speaking in Tongues*, Nightline Online ABC**

- (Reporter) At the University of Pennsylvania, Dr. Andrew Newberg is looking for an explanation for what most regard as unexplainable.
- It's not language. It's not regular language, at least, that would normally activate the frontal lobe.
- (Reporter) Newberg is exploring the relationship between faith and science, studying what happens in the brain during deepest moments of faith.
- If we're really going to look at this very, very powerful force in human history of religion and spirituality, I think we really have to take a look at how that affects our brain; what's changing, or turning on or turning off in our brain.

CT scan studies of people speaking in tongues show it is not an actual language - just sounds. The brain's frontal lobe that normally lights up when communicating does not light up when someone speaks in tongues.

The Scriptures define speaking in tongues as speaking in languages; contrary to what is done in



modern day.

1 Corinthians 14:6-9: The Apostle Paul is against speaking in tongues if others cannot understand what is being said. He gives an example of the uselessness of tongues used out of context. *You are speaking to the air!* In other words, you are wasting your breath - no one, not even yourself, understands what you are saying - you may be speaking but you are not communicating the Good News!

The whole point of scriptural speaking in tongues was to communicate the Gospel. Now it has become an emotional event rather than one of communication. The Gospel should be transformative, not just emotional.

**Its purpose is communicating meaning and contributing to others:** 1 Corinthians 14:10-12  
**Was it ever instructed to use the gift for personal gain? No...** 1 Corinthians 14:13-14  
**Pray profitably:** Matthew 6:7-8

**Was it ever instructed to use the gift IN the church, or BY the church for the benefit of others?** 1 Corinthians 14:20-25: The Apostle is telling us to be mature! Tongues were a sign for unbelievers so the gift was to be used the right way.

**HOW** was this gift of tongues to be a profitable gift? We know it was NOT profitable as a way to pray. **Praying in tongues produces an unfruitful result:** 1 Corinthians 14:15-17: Pray and sing praise in a manner that is clear and understandable to yourself and to those around you - anything else is a waste of time according to the Apostle Paul. This gift was supposed to build those around you up by spreading the Gospel, not to make you emotionally feel good. **We know it was NOT profitable as oratory within the church - especially with no interpretation:** 1 Corinthians 14:18-20: The Apostle Paul instructed the church to speak to build up the brotherhood; use your sanctified mind - it is FAR MORE VALUABLE than this gift of tongues that was only temporary and for a special purpose - to communicate the Gospel to those who otherwise would not be able to understand. Be grown up! That church was incorrectly using the gift and the Apostle had to refocus them.



**Brain scan results, *Speaking in Tongues*, Nightline Online ABC**

- (Dr. Newberg) *This is the first scan when he was in prayer speaking in English. This is the second scan when he is praying in tongues.*
- (Reporter) *Pastor Stoltzfoos' scan showed that his frontal lobe, the part of the brain that controls language, was active when he prayed in English but for the most part it fell quiet when he prayed in tongues.*
- (Dr. Newberg) *When they're actually engaged in this whole, very intense, spiritual practice, religious practice for them, their frontal lobes tend to go down in activity, but I think it's very consistent with the kind of experience that they have because they say that they're not in charge. It's the voice of God; it's the spirit of God that's moving through them.*

**Tongues were profitable as a way to inspire the hearers with understanding and truth:**

Acts 2:4-8: (NASB) <sup>4</sup>And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit was giving them utterance. <sup>5</sup>Now there were Jews living in Jerusalem, devout men from every nation under heaven. <sup>6</sup>And when this sound occurred, the crowd came together, and were bewildered because each one of them was hearing them speak in his own language. <sup>7</sup>They were amazed and astonished, saying, why, are not all these who are speaking Galileans? <sup>8</sup>And how is it that we each hear them in our own language to which we were born?

**Tongues were profitable as a way to praise God across cultural or language barriers:**

Acts 10:45-47: The people that came with Peter to see Cornelius were Jewish converts to Christianity. They were embarking on something brand new and needed to see that God would accept these non-Jewish converts. They needed a big sign. It makes sense that the tongue Cornelius would be speaking was Aramaic, the Apostle's home language. Peter could hear/understand what was being said - God was being exalted.

**Tongues were profitable as a cross-cultural sign and as a cross-cultural way to prophesy:**

Acts 19:1-7: These are probably other Gentile converts who were given the gift to speak in tongues and prophesy - to be an orator - looking into the Scriptures in a deep way and bringing things to the attention of others. (Used here, it does not mean being able to see the future.)





They were given the gift to communicate with others and the knowledge of what needed to be communicated. They were given a depth of understanding and knowledge without having previously studied - it was a miracle! But the Apostle Paul himself could hear and understand it. Every time tongues are used in a legitimate, biblical way, there is an interpretation. That is the "how" of speaking in tongues. It is supposed to be interpreted and therefore understood.

**WHEN** did the gift of tongues work and has it now gone away? **For those back in the early church who became careless, the Apostle gave them repeated guidelines to reign in their childish behavior:** 1 Corinthians 14:26-29: The Apostle Paul was dealing with an "infant" church. They were using this gift out of order and without respect for godliness. He told them: If you must exercise this gift, only do it with an interpretation. Order is critical and up-building the faithful is the most important thing. Speaking to yourself is NOT speaking in tongues, for Paul already warned against that as unfruitful (verse 14); it is rather using mind and spirit to quietly glorify God - meditate quietly to yourself instead.

We have only seen these gifts passed on to others in the presence of an Apostle - there is no evidence that anyone else could pass these gifts along.

Acts 10:44,46 Acts 19:6: Why? Because the Gospel needed to be spread beyond the natural landscape of Jewish language and scope. Others could not pass these things on because these gifts were merely a tool for the beginning stages of the Gospel work.

1 Corinthians 13:1-3: The Apostle Paul refers only to himself as speaking in the tongues of angels. He was given special visions - even one that brought him to "the third heaven" - none of us received. We do not know what he was capable of or what he saw that he specifically said he was not allowed to repeat. The Apostle Paul is making a dramatic point: Even if I could do *that*, there is a much better way - and then he goes into the chapter about love. Nowhere in Scripture are we given the gift to speak "in the tongues of angels."

**"Where does the gift of tongues rank?** 1 Corinthians 12:27-28: It was a miraculous gift but the least of the gifts. The peer pressure this creates is very sad. One might think, that person is doing this and they seem closer to God; what is wrong with me? It becomes an emotional need as part of inclusion. But that is never how the Gospel was built.

**What was prophesied to happen to these gifts?** 1 Corinthians 13:8-11: The gifts cease! Note which gifts are listed here: Tongues, prophecy (looking deeply into the Scriptures without study) and (instant) knowledge...these miraculous gifts were specifically used only to communicate, teach and preview the Gospel plan. The miraculous endowment ceases.

*When that which is complete arrives* - when the Apostles through whom these gifts were given finished their work and wrote down the Gospel message, the Gospel would no longer be at that beginning stage but would now be able to pass on without miracles!

*<sup>11</sup>When I was a child, I used to speak like a child, think like a child, reason like a child; when I became a man, I did away with childish things.* The Gospel in its infancy - spoken via miracle, understood (knowledge) via miracle and reasoned (prophecy) via miracle - the Gospel grows up and is now the communicated WORD of God!

*So, should Christians speak in tongues?  
For Jonathan and Rick (and Kathy!) and Christian Questions...  
Think about it...!*

**WHAT?** Speaking in an understandable foreign language.

**WHO?** The Apostles, who could then pass the gift onto others.

**WHY?** To communicate the Gospel message to others; not for personal gain or emotional satisfaction.

**WHERE?** At the time of the early church for the benefit of those not yet Christian converts; therefore not used IN the church meeting environment but used BY the church in places where communicating the Gospel would need to cross language barriers.

**HOW?** It inspired and taught the hearer, allowed praising God across cultural or language barriers and was a way to prophesy (convey miraculous understandings of the Scriptures).

**WHEN?** During the beginning stages of spreading the Gospel. It would no longer be needed once the Gospel was physically written.