

Speaking In Tongues

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“You shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit.”

Acts 1:5 NKJV

How is it possible that some of us in the Church have reduced one of the most glorious experiences of grace in the Christian life to simply an act of speaking in tongues (*glossolalia*)? I am concerned that the tenets of the Christian and Pentecostal life have not been transmitted effectively from one generation to the next.

Spirit-baptism has no bearing on salvation. It is clear in Scripture that justification (regeneration) is the initial experience of God for the believer (John 3:3–7). Although it is clear Scripturally that the Holy Spirit indwells the believer at the point of salvation, the believer has not yet been Spirit-baptized.

There is a definite, subsequent experience beyond salvation called baptism in the Holy Spirit. It relates not to salvation, but rather to service in the Kingdom of God. The believers in Acts 2 were baptized in the Holy Spirit and spoke in tongues as the Spirit administered the gift. But why was this needed? Jesus told them in Acts 1:8 that they would receive this power to witness all over the earth. These believers were filled with God, baptized in the Holy Spirit for the sake of mission and witness. It is important to note that while tongues is *evidence* of Spirit-baptism, witness is *essence*.

Salvation is participation in the mission and life of God. But here is the point we often overlook as Pentecostals: you can’t share His life without sharing His missionary passion. Why does He baptize believers in the Holy Spirit? To enhance their witness for Him to the unbelieving world!

Should one speak in tongues? Of course. But is tongue speech, itself, actually being baptized with the Holy Spirit? Of course not. It is the product and empirical evidence of a life that has just been set on fire for Christ’s mission to the ends of the earth!

Be born again. Hunger and thirst for righteousness. Be baptized with the Holy Spirit. Speak in tongues as the Spirit prays through you. Then share the Gospel of Jesus Christ with everyone around you. Just don’t let tongue-speech distract you—it is the evidence of a heart set ablaze for mission.

What is the Holy Spirit saying to me?

ACTIVATION

- Think about how and when you operate in the gift of tongues. Pray in the Spirit right now and let the Holy Spirit commune with your heart.
- Ask God to show you open doors for sharing the Gospel. Identify several people you can visit this week and introduce to Jesus.

FURTHER STUDY

1 Corinthians 14:1–22; Acts 2:4–21