

THE HOLY SPIRIT

LESSON 6: THE BIBLICAL BASIS FOR SPIRITUAL LANGUAGE

Main Idea: One of the major roadblocks to people receiving the baptism in the Holy Spirit is the issue of speaking in tongues. People have legitimate questions such as: What are the tongues saying? Who understands what is being said? Is your prayer language forced or is it led by the Spirit? How do I know that it is really me who is being led by the Spirit to speak in tongues or if it is just my imagination at work? What is the difference between a prayer language and speaking in tongues? How can a believer genuinely speak in tongues and not have the love of Christ, the fruit and gifts of the Spirit operating in their life? The most common question is whether or not all people who are baptized in the Holy Spirit speak in tongues. This lesson will help you gain a biblical basis for understanding spiritual language from the Old Testament through the New Testament.

Scripture: Leviticus 23:15-22; Isaiah 28:11; Mark 16:17; Acts 2:3-4, 11; 8-12; 10:45-46; 19:6; Romans 8:26-27, 1 Corinthians 12:28; 14:2, 4-6, 14-15, 18-19, 21-23, 39; Ephesians 6:18; Jude 20;





SIGHTLINE: Acquire Your Target

What did the Scripture mean to the original author and audience? As you explore information on the author, content, culture, history, land, and language of the Bible, you will gain a better understanding of the intended message of God's Word.

When the subject of the baptism in the Holy Spirit is discussed, people understand it in a variety of ways. These varied understandings can cause people to be unsure of Spirit baptism. Often, just the discussion itself can cause people to feel uncomfortable. It's not uncommon to hear statements like, "I have been baptized in water, but I really do not know what it means to be baptized in the Holy Spirit." Even worse, some religious organizations have contributed to a wrong understanding of the baptism in the Holy Spirit, going so far as to tell people they will go to hell if they do not receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit. As a result of much negativity around this topic, many people are no longer interested in the Baptism or anything else associated with the Holy Spirit.

Many Christians, when they hear "baptism in the Holy Spirit," associate this experience with speaking in tongues. Many sincere Christians are against the practice of speaking in tongues, usually for one or more of the following reasons: They have an off-putting mental image of tongues as uncontrolled speech or incoherent babbling ecstasy, or the result of a hypnotic trance. Or they may have been incorrectly taught or impressed upon by others that without spiritual language, they are somehow spiritually inferior or a second-class Christian. Sadly, some have even experienced the abuse and/or misuse of spiritual gifts within a worship service or by a church leader.

To provide a good framework for understanding the concept of speaking in tongues, we need to define the New Testament Greek word, "*glossolalia*." This word has two parts. The first is *glossa*, which means "tongue." The second is *lalia*, which means "to speak." So "*glossolalia*" means to speak in an unacquired tongue, language, or ecstatic utterance.

To help you get a grasp on this term, here are a few additional facts and definitions (some of which have nothing to do with the New Testament term):



- “Glossolalia occurred among adherents of various ancient religions.”¹
- Glossolalia can indicate “fabricated and non-meaningful speech, especially speech associated with a trance state or certain schizophrenic syndromes.”²
- Glossolalia has also been defined “as incomprehensible speech in an imaginary language, sometimes occurring in a trance state, an episode of religious ecstasy, or schizophrenia.”³
- One study indicated that “glossolalia is a learned behavior.”⁴

For the purpose of this study, we will examine a few selected passages of Scripture from the Old Testament focusing on the Feast of Weeks (Pentecost). The word, “Pentecost,” which means “fiftieth,” is not used in the Old Testament, but it is used three times in the New Testament. This feast took place fifty days after the waving of the sheaf of firstfruits (Leviticus 23:15-16). It would have been the third month after the Exodus from Egypt. This feast is a foreshadowing of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, which Luke describes in Acts. Comparing Old Testament Pentecost and New Testament Pentecost may help you see this foreshadowing more clearly.

Old Testament Pentecost	New Testament Pentecost
Fiftieth Day after Passover	Fiftieth Day after the Resurrection
Writing of Ten Commandments on two tablets (Exodus 31:18)	Writing of Commandments on tablets of heart and mind (Matthew 22:34-40; Romans 13:8-10)
The Ten Commandments were written by the finger of God	This was written by the Spirit of God (Luke 11:20; Matthew 12:28)
Three thousand people were slain (Exodus 32:28)	Three thousand people live (Acts 2:41)
A ministration of death	A ministration of life
The Law	The Spirit
Glory on the face of Moses	Glory on the face of Jesus

1 <https://www.britannica.com/topic/glossolalia> (accessed October 8, 2018)

2 <https://www.thefreedictionary.com/glossolalia> (accessed October 8, 2018)

3 <https://www.dictionary.com/browse/glossolalia> (accessed October 8, 2018)

4 <https://www.gotquestions.org/glossolalia.html> (accessed October 8, 2018)

Moses' face was veiled so people could not see the glory

Unveiled face so we can be changed into same glory

Old Testament Pentecost

New Testament Pentecost

Glory was temporary

Glory that remains

Ministers of the Old Covenant

Ministers of New Covenant

Took place on Mount Sinai

Takes place on Mount Zion
(Hebrews 12:22-24)

The following references help set a biblical framework for this feast:

- **The Feast of Weeks in the third month:** Exodus 19:1-2
- **The Feast of Weeks:** Exodus 34:22; Leviticus 23:15-22; Deuteronomy 16:10
- **Supernatural Manifestations at Mt. Sinai:** Exodus 19:16-24; Deuteronomy 4:32-40

While these verses do not detail all the events, they are meant to help you connect the dots between what took place in the Old Testament and how those events connect with the New Testament outpouring of the Holy Spirit at the Feast of Pentecost in Acts 2:1.

In the Old Testament, we see the Holy Spirit involved in the lives of chosen people. In Genesis 41:38, the Holy Spirit was active in the life of Joseph to give him supernatural wisdom. In Judges 15:14-15, the Spirit was active in the life of Samson to give him physical power. In Exodus 31:2-5, the Holy Spirit was active in the life of Bezalel to give him craftsmanship and artistic ability. In 1 Samuel 16:13, He was active in the life of David to empower him to lead a nation.

These are not the only places we can see a correlation of the Holy Spirit's activity between the Old and New Testaments. In the Old Testament, the Spirit's outpouring was only for a select few, such as prophets. God used these men to foretell what would take place in the New Testament. In Joel 2:28-30, Joel prophesies that the Holy Spirit will break down all barriers for all persons. The prophet Micah was from a small village near Gath which was close to Philistine territory. In Micah 3:8, Micah tells of being filled with power, with the Spirit, and with courageous strength. From Micah 2:1-13, it seems clear the purpose for Micah being filled with the Spirit was to proclaim God's judgment on the sin taking place in Israel. A contemporary of Micah, Isaiah was from



Jerusalem and, according to tradition, from a royal family. In an attempt to persuade the people to follow after God, Isaiah preached truths to cause them to seek rest and refreshment in the Lord. However, the people continued in their sinful ways. He prophesies in Isaiah 28:11 “For by people of **strange lips** and with a foreign tongue the LORD will speak to this people.” Paul actually quotes this verse from Isaiah in 1 Corinthians 14:21 to describe an aspect of the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

Everything the Holy Spirit did in the lives of Old Testament people was not just for their own benefit. Instead, it was to empower that particular individual to influence their community. There were four major types of leaders in the Old Testament: judges (they judged sin and righteousness); prophets (they spoke to man about God); priests (they spoke to God about man); and kings (they governed). All of these leaders were empowered by the Holy Spirit with unique gifts for the purpose of bringing the community back into fellowship and worship of Jehovah God.

The message of the New Testament writers presumes the ministry of the Holy Spirit to be so essential, foundational, and necessary for the Christian life that little time is taken to expand on it. To them, it is a given that the Holy Spirit is active in the New Testament like He was in the Old. Additionally, these writers assume as fundamental the ministry of the Holy Spirit in Jesus’ life.

The first statement Matthew makes about Jesus is about His miraculous conception Matthew 1:18–20. Matthew, without explanation, simply states two times that Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit. From this time forward, Jesus’ entire life is enmeshed with the Spirit.

While this is not a study about Jesus, perhaps a pause to give a little explanation of Jesus’ deity and humanity is needed. What is absolutely fundamental is the point that Jesus was both fully God and fully man at the same time. If one goes too far either way it destroys the work of Jesus. If you take Him as fully God and do not allow for His humanity, then we cannot be saved because the price for sin would not have been paid and we would still be under the Old Testament sacrificial system. On the other hand, if you take Jesus as fully man and do not allow for His divinity, we cannot be saved because Jesus Himself would have needed salvation. Thus, Jesus Christ is fully God and fully man which is a paradoxical mystery. Jesus was a real person, born at a real time, in a real place, to real parents. He grew as a real child, obeyed real parents, had real brothers and sisters, and learned a real occupational skill. Jesus was shaped and affected by the culture, politics, geography, family, society, and friends in the day He lived. But He was unique



in three ways. First, He was sinless. Second, He had a unique purpose in his life—redeeming sinful humanity. And third, He was fully God.

It's important to understand that Jesus was not the Son of God because of His miraculous birth; Jesus' miraculous birth was because He was the Son of God. John explains this in John 1:1–2, 14. Jesus was the Son of God prior to His birth. Jesus' birth allowed us to see God's Son in human form. Second, the role of the Holy Spirit in Jesus' birth resulted in Him being holy. In Luke 1:35, Jesus is described as a holy child. Holiness means three things: First, something holy is set apart from the arena of the mundane for the use of God. Jesus was set apart for God's purpose. Second, someone who is considered holy is one who bears the Holy Spirit. Jesus was a carrier of the Holy Spirit from conception. The third aspect of holiness is moral. Jesus was born free from all sin. He was pure, clean, undefiled, and uncorrupted. The activity of the Holy Spirit resulted in Jesus living full of the Holy Spirit. Luke 11:13–14 reveals that living full of the Holy Spirit results in a high-impact life.

Jesus is our Savior and Lord, and He is also our model for living. If Jesus, fully God, was filled with and relied on the Holy Spirit in His humanity, how much more must we rely on the Holy Spirit in our own lives?

The Gospel of John has the most to say about Jesus' teaching on the Holy Spirit. If you would like to explore what Jesus taught, you can find a great resource at <https://digital.myhealthychurch.com/Digital-Items/Mens-Ministries/Journey-through-John>.





CROSSHAIR: Focus on Your Target

What does this study say to you? Through studying the biblical explanations and principles in this study below, you will better understand what God is saying to you today.

The Bible provides guidance for every area of your life and has much to say about the Holy Spirit. As you walk through the pages of the Bible, the Holy Spirit will open your eyes to better understand who He is and the gifts He gives.

- Spiritual language is described as praying in the Spirit. (Ephesians 6:18; Jude 20)
- Spiritual language is described as speaking in tongues. (1 Corinthians 14:39; Acts 2:4; 2:11; 10:46; 19:6; 1 Corinthians 12:28; 14:6)
- Spiritual language is described as strange lips. (Isaiah 28:11)
- The Holy Spirit was influential in the maturing process of Jesus. (Luke 2:40-52)
- The Holy Spirit was active in the Early Church. (Acts 2:3-4, 8-12, 38; 10:45-46; 19:2-6)
- Guidelines for proper use of spiritual gifts are provided. (1 Corinthians 12:1 through 14:40)



BULLSEYE: Zero in on Your Target

How can this study apply to your life? By listening to the Holy Spirit's leading as you answer this series of questions, you can gain useful insights that will help you apply the truth of God's Word to your daily life.

Write down your answer to the following questions here or in your journal:

- Who appears in the passages you read?
- Where are these passages taking place?
- When are these passages occurring?
- Why are these passages important?
- What is happening in these passages?
- What verse stood out to you? Why?

- From the lesson, what is your understanding of speaking in tongues?
- In Joel 2:28-29, what are the four limits Joel said would be removed with the future Holy Spirit outpouring?
- Why do you think you could expect the Spirit to be poured out on all flesh and not just on Jesus?
- As you look at the difference between Old Testament Pentecost and New Testament Pentecost, describe in your own words the similarities and differences between the two. Why do you think this is important?
- From the lesson, describe in your own words Jesus' being led by the Spirit His entire earthly life.



- In Acts 2:38, what are three things Peter told the people they should do?

USING MY *FIREBIBLE*

Read the study notes for the following verses in the *FireBible* and answer the accompanying questions:

- Isaiah 28:11—How does this verse connect with Ephesians 6:18?
- Joel 2:28–30—What is the primary result of the Holy Spirit being poured out?
 - » On a scale of one to four, with one being often and four being not often, how often do you exercise these gifts in your life? How can you improve?
- Micah 3:8—What is the role of the Holy Spirit in the life of Micah? How does this apply to your life today?



- Acts 2:17-18—With what did Peter associate speaking in tongues? What does that mean?
 - » Describe the five instances of the Holy Spirit being poured out in Acts.
 - » What does the phrase “in those days” mean? How long are the power and benefits of the Holy Spirit available?
- Ephesians 6:18—Describe the importance of praying in the Spirit.

Read the *FireBible* article “Speaking in Tongues.”

- Summarize in your own words the three truths of speaking in tongues.



- Summarize in your own words the reasons why tongues were chosen.
- Why should you not believe every spiritual experience?

For additional study on Speaking in Tongues. You can access our free resource at <https://men.ag.org/Discipleship/Identity/16-Fundamental-Truths>





TRIGGER PULL: Hit Your Target

How does this study affect your relationship with God and others? You experience God's Word in action as you use it to direct your journey with Him and those around you. Answer the following questions and record the answers below or in your journal.

- Take some time to listen to the Lord about what you just studied. How did this study help deepen your love for God?
- Write down a thought from this study that you experienced this week.
- As a result of your deepened love for God, how can you practically demonstrate the thought you experienced to your family and to others around you?

Scripture quotations are from the ESV® Bible (The Holy Bible, English Standard Version®)
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