

# Should I be able to speak in tongues?

**1. I Corinthians 12:4,5 says:** *“There are different kinds of spiritual gifts, but the same Spirit. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord.”*

**A.** When we are baptized we receive the Holy Spirit as a “gift” (**Acts 2:38**).

**B.** When the Apostles, and **only** the Apostles, according to **Acts 8:12-19**, laid their hands on Christians that got the promised Holy Spirit after they were baptized, those Christians received *“different kinds of spiritual gifts.”*

**2. I Corinthians 12:6-10 explains the different kinds of spiritual gifts the Holy Spirit gave Christians:** *“There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men. Now to each man the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. To one there is given through the Spirit the ability to speak with wisdom, to another the ability to speak with knowledge by means of the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another the ability to speak in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues.”*

**3. I Corinthians 12:11 tells us who decides what spiritual gift or gifts a Christian receives:** *“All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and He gives them to each man, just as He determines.”*

**A.** Notice, neither the Apostles nor the Christian receiving the spiritual gift, had any say in which gift was given.

**B.** Remember **verse 7**: *“Now to each man the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.”* A Christian's gift or gifts depends on the Church's need, and that Christian's willingness, faith, and ability to fulfill that need.

**4. I Corinthians 12:12-27 explains why the Holy Spirit gives different spiritual gifts to different people within the Church:** *“The body (Church) is a unit, though it is made up of many parts...they form one body. So it is with Christ. For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body...and we were all given the one Spirit...Now the body is not made up of one part (everyone having the same spiritual gift) but of many...But in fact God has arranged the parts in the body, every one of them, just as He wanted them to be. If they were all one part, where would the body be?...Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.”*

**5. I Corinthians 12:28-31 makes it very clear that not everyone had the same spiritual gifts:** *“And in the church God has appointed first of all Apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, also those having gifts of healing, those able to help others, those with gifts of administration, and finally those speaking in different kinds of tongues. Are all Apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret?”*

A. And, as was made very clear in this chapter, the answer is “NO!” Not every Christian has these gift (including tongue-speaking), and only the Holy Spirit can decide what, if any, spiritual gift you will receive (**12:11**).

**6. Furthermore, in *I Corinthians 13:8-12* (the very next chapter), Paul says:** “...*But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when the perfection comes, the imperfect disappears...Now we see but a poor reflection, then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully...*”

A. Paul said *prophecies, tongues and knowledge* (imperfect spiritual gifts) would *pass away when perfection* came. At the time he wrote this first letter to the Corinthians, he said (as an Apostle, who prophesied, spoke in tongues, and had Divine knowledge) that he only knew *in part*; but when *the perfection* came, he would *know fully*.

1. The word “*perfection*” is the Greek word “*teleion*” which is translated: “...having reached its end, finished, complete..”

2. In *verse 10*, the word “*perfect*” is also neither masculine nor feminine, but neuter: “perfect thing.” In other words, it is literally translated: “*when the perfect thing comes, the imperfect (prophecies, tongues, and knowledge) disappears...*”

B. So, what *perfect* (finished, complete, having reached its end) *thing* would come...that would cause the *imperfect* (unfinished, incomplete, not reaching its end) spiritual gifts of *prophecy, tongues and knowledge* to disappear?

1. *Verse 12* says that before the *perfect thing* came, Paul and the early Christians could only see a “*poor reflection,*” (as in mirror), and only knew “*in part.*” But, after the *perfect thing* came, they would be able to see “*face to face,*” and would know “*fully.*”

C. **James 1:22-25 says:** “*Do not merely listen to the Word and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. Anyone who listens to the Word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror (remember *I Corinthians 13:12?*), and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. But the man who looks intently into the *perfect* (finished, complete, reached its end) **Law that gives freedom (New Testament)**, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it — he will be blessed in what he does.*”

1. Yes, the word “*perfect*” (*teleion* or *perfect thing*) used here by James is the exact word used by Paul in ***I Corinthians 13:10!***

2. Notice James also uses a *mirror* (like Paul’s “*face to face*” reflection) to describe “*the perfect* (complete, finished, having reached its end) **Law that gives freedom;**” which he goes on and warns in **chapter 2:12:** “*Speak and act as those*

*who are going to be judged by the Law that gives freedom (New Testament).”*

**D.** When Paul wrote I Corinthians, he still only had a poor reflection of the finished or completed New Testament Scriptures. That means he only knew in part (even he had not yet been given II Corinthians and other Scriptures he wrote later). But as he told those early Christians, when the perfect thing (New Testament Law that gives freedom) came, they would know fully, and see clearly. Then, they would no longer need prophecy, or Divine knowledge to speak or write Scripture in any language (tongues).

**7. John 16:13 says that Jesus promised the Apostles at the Last Supper that the Holy Spirit would guide them (the Apostles were the only ones in the room) into all Truth.**

**A. Ephesians 2:19 - 3:5 and II Peter 3:2** say only an Apostle could write Divine Knowledge or Scripture.

**B.** When the last book of the New Testament was written, the last Apostle (John) wrote **Revelation 22:18,19**: *“I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds anything to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book. And if anyone take words away from this book of prophecy, God will take away from him his share I the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book.”*

**1.** The perfect Law that gives freedom (New Testament) was now complete, finished, and reached its end...perfect! No prophet could add or take away anything from them. No new revelations would be given by God! That means you no longer need to listen to someone claiming to have Divine revelations from God through the gift of prophecy, tongues (the Bible translates into any language), or Divine knowledge! Now that the completed New Testament is here, we fully know all the information that the Holy Spirit wants us to know.

**2. Galatians 1:6-9** warns that not even an Apostle or an angel from Heaven can change the original New Testament Scriptures! **That would include the Pope, The Book of Mormon, the Koran, and a lot of books by TV Evangelists.**

**3. Hebrews 13:8,9** warns that the teachings of Jesus Christ are the same when the Apostles wrote it down, and will never change! Don't be carried away by varied teachings from those who continue to add to the revelations of Jesus Christ.

**4. II Peter 2:1** warns that just as there were false prophets, there will be false teachers among us Christians. They will secretly introduce false doctrine as they add to and take away from the original Truth.

**5.** So, Paul, himself, wrote in **I Corinthians 4:6**: *“Do not go beyond what is written. Then you won't take pride in one man over against another.”*

**8. So, what about all the religious leaders today who claim to have the same Baptism of the Holy Spirit that the Apostles had. They seem to be able to prophecy, drive out demons and perform miracles (especially healing) in the name of Jesus Christ?**

**A. Jesus warned in Matthew 7:15-23:** “Watch out for **false prophets**. They come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. By their fruit you will recognize them...Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of Heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in Heaven. **Many will say to Me on that Day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your Name, and in your Name drive out demons and perform many miracles?’ Then I will tell them plainly, ‘I never knew you. Away from Me you evildoers!’**”

**1. Paul warned us in Acts 20:30:** “Even from your own number (Christians) men will arise and distort the Truth in order to draw away disciples after them. So be on your guard!”

**B. Again Jesus warned us in Matthew 24:23-27:** “At that time if anyone says to you, ‘Look, here is the Christ!’ or, ‘There he is!’ do not believe it. **For false christs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and miracles to deceive even the elect (Christians)** — if that were possible. See, I have told you ahead of time. So if anyone tells you, ‘There he is, in the inner rooms,’ do not believe it. For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.”

**1. In Jesus’ day, the word “christ” is the Greek word “christos” or “anointed:”** According to *Vine’s Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*: “...the term applied to the priests who were anointed with the holy oil, particularly the High Priest. The prophets are called *hoi christoi Theou*, ‘the anointed of God’ ...A king of Israel was described as *christos tou Kuriou*, ‘the anointed of the Lord’.”

**2. In other words, the one who is the Leader or Spokesman for a religion (High Priest, King, etc.) was often referred to as *The Anointed* (thereby, *The Christ*).**

**3. Today, there are many that claim to be the “anointed” one of God:** The Pope (Catholic), Mohammad (Muslim), Joseph Smith (Mormon), and a host of TV evangelists. They all have tried to change the original Gospels with added revelations from God (even though **Revelation 22:18,19** forbids it); and they have all introduced new and different Gospels or Scriptures (Koran, Book of Mormon, etc.) even though the original Gospel condemns them for it (**Galatians 1:6-9**), and warns us not to follow them (**Hebrews 13:8,9**).

**9. What about all those who claim to speak in tongues, thereby proving they have the same Baptism of the Holy Spirit as did the Apostles, and that God is speaking through them? Remember, almost every religion today believes the Holy Spirit has given them the ability to speak in tongues. If this be true, then why is it that all religions and denominations**

**believe differently? If the Holy Spirit was truly speaking through all that claim He is, they would all agree with one another! Someone's not telling the Truth!**

A. "*Tongues*" is the Greek word "*glossa*" which, according to the Greek dictionary translates: "the tongue, as an organ of speech...a language...the supernatural gift of speaking in another language without its having been learnt..."

1. The proof is in **Acts 2:6-11**, which describes the original tongue-speaking on the Day of Pentecost. Here, **verse 8** makes it clear, that everyone heard the Apostles speaking in their "*own native language.*" **Verses 9-11** even lists the languages they were speaking in through the power of the Holy Spirit (none of which were a special Holy Spirit or angelic language).

B. The only time tongue-speaking occurred apart from the laying on of an Apostle's hands (**Acts 8:18,19**), was:

1. On the Day of Pentecost (**Acts 2:1-4**) with the Apostles, **for the first Jewish Christians.**

2. And later, with Cornelius and his household (**Acts 10:44-48**), **for the first Gentile Christians** (which the Holy Spirit did to convince Peter and the Jewish Christians to allow Gentiles to also be "*baptized with water...in the name of Jesus Christ*" in order to become Christians equal to the Jewish Christians).

3. And remember, that in all instances of tongue-speaking (according to **I Corinthians 12:4-11**), **only the Holy Spirit** decided who got this spiritual gift (not the person giving or receiving)!

C. So, if a person is still convinced that they (or someone else) has the spiritual gift of speaking in tongues, they must abide by the rules of tongue-speaking in **I Corinthians 14:**

1. **Verse 6** says tongue-speaking should only be used for "*some revelation or knowledge or prophecy.*" But, remember, since the New Testament was written down, we no longer need new revelations, Divine knowledge or prophecy (**READ POINT #6 IN THIS OUTLINE**)

2. **Verses 13-17** says if you **pray, sing or praise God in a tongue**, you must also interpret or pray, sing and praise God in your own language, so you and others who may be around you can understand what you are praying, singing, or thanking God for.

3. Most people today use their tongue-speaking ability in the Church, yet **Verse 18,19** says that even though the Apostle Paul spoke in more tongues or languages than anyone, yet in the Church he would "*rather speak five intelligible words to instruct others than ten thousand words in a tongue.*"

4. Most people today use their tongue-speaking ability to worship with other Christians in Church, Yet **verse 22** says: “*Tongues, then, are a sign **not for believers** (worship services), **but for unbelievers**...*” Tongue-speaking is a spiritual gift given to a Christian so that he might win a person to the Lord, and then continue to teach that person, even though he could not (without the Spirit’s help) speak that person’s language (just like the Day of Pentecost in **Acts 2**).

5. **Verse 27** says only two or three at the most can speak in tongues at a worship service, and only one at a time with someone interpreting everything they say: “*If anyone speaks in a tongue, two — or at the most three — should speak, one at a time, and someone must interpret.*”

6. But what if there is no interpreter available? **Verse 28** says: “*If there is no interpreter, the speaker should keep quiet in the church and speak to himself and God.*”

7. And what if the Spirit comes on someone who is not yet speaking, and they can’t control the Spirit and begin speaking in tongues out of order? **Verses 29-33** says the two or three speakers should still never speak at the same time, but speak only one at a time, for: “*The spirits of prophets are subject to the control of prophets. For God is not a God of disorder but of peace.*”

8. And, what about all the women who speak in tongues during a worship service? **Verses 33-35** says the women are not allowed to speak at all in the Church (either by prophecy or tongues). For all those who refuse to keep this “**command**” (**verse 37**), to “**all the congregations of the saints**,” (**verse 33**), the Apostle Paul adds a rare Biblical warning in **verses 36-38**: “*Did the Word of God originate with you? Or are you the only people it has reached? If anybody thinks he is a prophet or spiritually gifted, let him acknowledge that what I am writing to you is the Lord’s command. If he ignores this, he himself will be ignored.*”

9. So, **verse 39,40** ends these rules for tongue-speaking with this conclusion: “*...do not forbid speaking in tongues. But everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way.*” **In other words, if you think you have the spiritual gift of speaking in tongues, you must abide by the Holy Spirit’s rules here in I Corinthians 14!**