

Paul H. Dixon
Tongues and Their Purpose
circa 1980

Unedited Transcript

Paul H. Dixon:

All right today, we're studying tongues and their purpose. And we're starting in Mark Chapter 16, Verses Nine through 20. This is the first time you find any reference in the New Testament to tongues speaking, as we're thinking of it. Of course, the word tongue is found many times in reference to just using your tongue like I spoke about the tongue in chapel this morning from James and so forth. But when we talk about the gift of tongues, the first time you find it is in Mark 16.

Paul H. Dixon:

Now, let me say this. If you'll get this in your mind, it'll help you. There are really not many chapters in the Bible that speak of speaking in tongues and the tongues movement. There are just seven chapters that mention tongues. The first one is here before us, Mark 16. Three times in Acts, Acts Two, Acts 10 and Acts 19. Now, we're going to look at all of these, but I just want to give this by way of introduction. Mark 16, Acts Two, Acts 10, Acts 19, I Corinthians 12, 13, and 14. Now, this is important. Only once in the gospels, in the Book of Acts, the historical book of the New Testament and only one of the Epistles, I Corinthians, three times within that chapter, three chapters in succession, 12, 13, and 14.

Paul H. Dixon:

Now the main section that we want to look at in Mark 16. We'll start reading in Verse 15. "Jesus said unto them, 'Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned. And these signs shall follow them that believe. In my name, shall they cast out devils. They shall speak with new tongues.'" There it is, right there. "They shall speak with new tongues." That is the first reference to speaking in tongues as we're talking about it. "They shall take up serpents or snakes. And if they drink any deadly thing that would be any poison, it shall not hurt them. They shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover."

Paul H. Dixon:

Now, some people like to deal with this section by saying, and I'm going to mention it though I do not like to use it, I do not use this as an argument, but since many people do I want to share it with you. That verses Nine through 20 are not found in two of the best known manuscripts, Greek manuscripts, that we take our Bible from. These two manuscripts are called the Sinaiticus, S-I-N-A-I-T-I-C-U-S, or the Vaticanus, V-A-T-I-C-A-N-U-S. This entire section is left out in those two manuscripts. And so many will say, "Well, you can't go by this. You can't base your doctrine on this because the supporting manuscript evidence is very weak." I don't like to use that type of an argument. I believe that we have what God wanted us to have, and because it's not found in those two manuscripts, it is found in others, and I tend to accept this is just as much inspired of God as any other portion of scripture. I believe God has given us what He wants us to have, right here, as we have it before us.

Paul H. Dixon:

But I would make notice of this. The new Pentecostal is not fulfilling all of these signs mentioned. Granted, some of them are speaking in tongues. Some of them may say they can cast out devils. Some of them may be laying their hands on the sick and making them well in the healing lines. But most of them are not picking up snakes and handling them. I mentioned that there are a few Pentecostal groups in the South that do this, but most of your new Pentecostals wouldn't even think of it. Most of them are not

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going around drinking deadly poison and walking away alive. So Oral Roberts in answering that objection says that the snakes should be interpreted allegorically, that it means enemies, not literal snakes. The problem I have with that is how can you interpret in this list one thing as an allegory and the other literally. It's totally inconsistent.

Paul H. Dixon:

So I do not believe that really the Pentecostals are practicing all the signs. And if you're going to press this passage of scripture, you should not only practice one of them, but every single one of them. I think this is important. The word here for new tongues. There are two different Greek words for new. There is one word that means new to the speaker. That is the word that is used here. In other words, he's going to speak in a tongue that is foreign to him. There's another word for new that means new in time, that it never existed before, a tongue that had never been used before. That is not the word that is used here. I'm going to explain it later, but I believe all tongue speaking in the New Testament is foreign languages. That it's possible for somebody to understand. The Pentecostals teach that some of it's foreign languages and some of it is an utterance that never was spoken before. I do not believe the New Testament teaches this. This new tongue is new to the person, but it is not new in kind. You follow me there? You see what I'm saying? You get that? Okay.

Paul H. Dixon:

While we're in the gospels, I'd like to make reference to one more verse that doesn't have anything to do with speaking in tongues as far as saying that, but look, with one finger in Mark 16, look back to Matthew 6:7. As I mentioned, the Pentecostals teach that to pray in tongues is to many times disengage your mind and you don't even have to understand what you're saying and nobody else has to understand it either. It doesn't have to be a foreign language. It can be just some ecstatic speech. In Matthew 6:7, when Jesus says, "When you pray, use not vain repetitions as the heathen do, for they think they shall be heard with their much speaking." The Greek word for repetitions is the word for a stammerer. It's the word that has to do with an unintelligible utterance.

Paul H. Dixon:

It's a repetition of meaningless words. You see, the heathen back in that day many times spoke in tongues, especially Greek paganism. And so what Jesus is saying here, He's saying, "Don't you pray with these ecstatic speeches like the heathen do and think you're going to be heard." He rebukes this. And so I think this is a good verse to be used against devotional tongues that is some kind of unknown tongue, as they would call it. With the spirit, the question is, would the Holy Spirit inspire something that Jesus had condemned? I think the answer is obvious. The Spirit of God and the Son of God do not contradict one another.

Paul H. Dixon:

Now, if you turn back to Mark 16, I think it's very important that Jesus said why he would give the gift of tongues along with these other things. In Verse 17, He said, "I'm giving it for a sign, S-I-G-N. Don't forget that. He said, "I am giving this for a sign. These signs shall follow them that believe." These things were given so that when the unsaved would see it, it would confirm the gospel to them. They would say, "Hey, God must be in this," and would have a real impact. It would be a sign to them. Don't forget that. Now with that in mind, let's go to the Book of Acts and look at the next time you find the use of tongues, Acts Chapter Two.

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Paul H. Dixon:

Now this is a very important chapter, but some general observations about the entire Book of Acts. The Book of Acts is a transition book. Do you know what I mean by that? Can somebody explain to me what do I mean the Book of Acts is a transitional book?

Speaker 2:

[inaudible 00:10:25]

Paul H. Dixon:

All right.

Speaker 2:

[inaudible 00:10:29]

Paul H. Dixon:

All right.

Speaker 2:

[inaudible 00:10:34]

Paul H. Dixon:

All Right. It's a time when up until this time the whole emphasis of the gospel has been with the Jew. It's been to the Jew first. All the apostles have been Jews. The message has gone out to the Jews. And in the first part of Acts, the same thing is going to be true. But it's going to shift over to the Gentiles. And before long, the gospel is going to be going to the Gentiles, to the heathen, to those who are not Jews and they're going to start establishing churches and taking leadership in the churches.

Paul H. Dixon:

And there are many things found in the Book of Acts that you just don't find in the New Testament church today. For instance, we don't meet in the synagogue today. We don't worship God in a Jewish temple today like they did, as we find Peter and John in Acts Three going up into a temple, we don't do that. We don't sell everything to support the poor and have some kind of a purist Communistic system that evidently existed in the New Testament church. Now, let me say this. It wasn't a Communism like they teach today in Red China or Russia.

Paul H. Dixon:

The difference is the Communism that was taught in the Bible was everything I have is yours. The thing that Communism that is taught in China and Russia is everything you have is mine. There's a great deal of difference. There was much sharing. There was a willingness to distribute among the brethren. It broke down, it didn't work. And so they finally did away with it, but we don't do that today. We don't have special appearances of Christ like they did, like Christ appeared to Paul on the Damascus Road. That hasn't happened since. That only happened one time. I'm pointing it out that there are things that occur in the Book of Acts that were only intended to happen once or twice, and never happened to

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again. In Acts Chapter Two, we have the Day of Pentecost. What is significant about the Day of Pentecost? Can you tell me?

Speaker 3:

Beginning of the church.

Paul H. Dixon:

Beginning of the church, right. But what happened on that Day of Pentecost?

Paul H. Dixon:

The Holy Spirit came upon all these believers, to indwell them, to live within them. Up until this time, the Holy Spirit would come upon a person and He would leave them. But after the Day of Pentecost, every Christian who gets saved the Holy Spirit comes within them to live.

Paul H. Dixon:

And so when the Holy Spirit came upon them, in Acts Chapter Two, it says, Verse Four, "They were all filled with the Holy Ghost and began to speak with other tongues." They start doing what was prophesied by Jesus in Mark 16. They're speaking with other tongues, "as the Spirit gave them utterance. And there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men out of every nation under heaven. And when this was voiced abroad, the multitude came together and were confounded because every man heard them speak in his own language and they were amazed and they marveled, saying one to another, 'Behold are not all these who would speak Galileans and how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born, Parthians and Medes and Elamites and dwellers of Mesopotamia,' et cetera. Okay, when these people spoke in tongues, what were they doing? Was this some kind of unknown language that they were speaking and that nobody understood?

Paul H. Dixon:

Raise your hand. What was it?

Speaker 4:

[00:14:19]

Paul H. Dixon:

A known foreign languages. There's no question about it, but what these were known foreign languages and they understood them in their own tongue. Now, these people who were speaking in these tongues did not go to Spanish school, or they didn't go to study German, or Parthian. But they did suddenly have the gift of speaking in another man's language and every man heard him speak in such a language.

Paul H. Dixon:

Now, I want you to notice that when they did this, the gift of the Holy Spirit came and in Verse Three, excuse me, Verse Two, "a mighty rushing wind came with Him." Verse three, "There appeared unto them cloven tongues like a fire." And Verse Four, they began to speak with tongues. So when the Holy Spirit came on the Day of Pentecost, there was a mighty wind, there were tongues of fire, and they started speaking in tongues. Don't forget that. Because if the Pentecostals are going to stress that we

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need the same experience that they had back on the Day of Pentecost, why then when they're baptized with the Holy Spirit is there not a rushing wind? Why is there that there do not appear flames of fire, like cloven tongues, like as a fire? Why is there just the one sign when there were three Back in Acts Chapter Two.

Paul H. Dixon:

See the Pentecostals tell us that we ought to have the same experience today that they had in the second chapter of the Book of Acts. Now let's go on to the next place where the Pentecostals say that there are tongues. I don't believe it, but I want you to see where they say you find it. Acts Chapter Four, Verse 31.

Paul H. Dixon:

While you're turning, what would you say the purpose of the tongues was that God gave back in Acts Chapter Two?

Paul H. Dixon:

Yes.

Speaker 5:

[inaudible 00:16:38]

Paul H. Dixon:

To show what?

Speaker 5:

[inaudible 00:16:45]

Paul H. Dixon:

All right. To show that the Holy Spirit had come and that he was of God. You notice it says that there were all these people gathered there. What were they? Jews. It was a sign to the Jews. You remember what Jesus said in Mark 16, "This sign shall follow you." It was a sign to those unbelieving Jews.

Paul H. Dixon:

Now, some people would like to have us think that these men spoke in these languages and preached the gospel to those people. I don't believe that. Peter preached the gospel to them. And evidently they all understood. These people back in that day were bilingual. They not only spoke their mother tongue, like most of you probably are bilingual. You could speak Chinese, but you can also speak English. Maybe some of you can't speak Chinese. I don't know. I went to the restaurant in San Francisco with some of the Chinese guys from Oakland and the waiter started speaking in Chinese and most of the guys couldn't understand him, so I don't know.

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But in other words, these people, the common language of that day in the Roman empire, the trade language was Greek. Peter no doubt spoke his sermon in Greek and they all understood it. But they didn't make any kind of decision when these people spoke in the other tongue. I don't think that God gave those tongues so that they could preach to them. Some people say, "Well, God still gives tongues today to missionaries." No, you don't go to a language school and that's the gift of tongues. These people didn't attend a language school. Some people say, "Well, if suddenly I had a plane crash over in Africa, maybe God would give me the gift of tongues so I could speak to those people in Africa though I didn't know it before." No, I don't believe God ever intended tongues for that. He never intended tongues for evangelism.

Paul H. Dixon:

He intended tongues as a sign to the Jews. Now, you might stretch that and say it had to do with evangelism because eventually these people got saved because they saw the sign. But I mean, He didn't use it so that you could speak in their language and personally win them to Christ in their own language. That wasn't the purpose of tongues. In Acts Chapter Four, the Pentecostals say Verse 31 they must have spoken in tongues. What do you think? "When they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost and they spate the word of God with boldness."

Paul H. Dixon:

That sound like tongues to you? I can see where they could stretch it, but you've got to really stretch it a long way to say that the word boldness there should be translated tongues. Incidentally, the Pentecostal teaches that you can speak at tongues at will after you've once been baptized with the Holy Spirit. If that be the case, why did these be people have to pray for it? They prayed for it. They don't teach that you have to pray for it after you've once received it. So I don't believe that has anything to do with tongues.

Paul H. Dixon:

The third place that they contend that we need to see that has to do with tongues is Acts Chapter Eight. Now tongues is not mentioned in Acts Chapter Eight, but it is a very important chapter. Because beginning with Verse Five, Philip goes down to Samaria and preaches Christ. Can anybody tell me what was different about the Samaritans? In the Bible when we read about the good Samaritan and we meet about Jesus going to the well and meeting the woman of Samaria and here in Acts Chapter Eight, what were the Samaritans? Yes.

Speaker 6:

[inaudible 00:20:53]

Paul H. Dixon:

Right. They were half breeds. They were a mixture of what?

Speaker 6:

[inaudible 00:20:59]

Paul H. Dixon:

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Jews and Gentiles, and the Jews hated them. Boy, I mean, the Jews wouldn't give them the time of day. I don't know how it is with your people, but I know that there are some races that just if one of their people, for instance, would go out and intermarry, if a white person would marry a black, some Chinese, perhaps, if a Chinese would marry a black, or something like that, there would be great resentment. I'm not trying to justify the attitude. All I'm saying is that was the attitude back in that day. If a Jew married a Gentile, they had had it. That's true in our day.

Paul H. Dixon:

Boy, the Jews do not want their children marrying Gentiles. And so those were called Samaritans. Now we're seeing the transition. We're going to look at Acts Chapter 10 when the gospel is going to go to the Gentiles. But before it goes to the Gentiles, it's going to go through this time of going to the Samaritans, to people who are half Jew and half Gentile in Acts Chapter Eight. And Peter goes down, excuse me, Philip goes down in Verse Five and he preaches Christ to them. And Verse 12, "When they believe Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ were baptized both men and women. Then Simon himself believed also and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done." Verse 15, "Who when they were come down prayed for them," Peter and John come down and they, "prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Ghost, for as yet he was fallen upon none of them, only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus, they laid their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost."

Paul H. Dixon:

All right, get the picture. Look up here a minute. Here are these Samaritans. Philip goes down. He preaches Jesus to them. They get saved, they get baptized, but they don't receive the Holy Spirit. Peter and John come down from Jerusalem and they lay their hands upon them. And by laying their hands upon them, they receive the Holy Spirit. That doesn't happen today. You don't have to have somebody lay his hands upon you to receive the Holy Spirit. Again, this is something that took place during that transitional time when the church was becoming more Gentile, it was leaving the emphasis of Judaism, and we're seeing the importance of the apostles. The epic making advance of Christianity, beyond the bounds of Judaism, into Samaria was not to be accomplished without the direct intervention of the apostles.

Paul H. Dixon:

They came, they laid their hands, they received the Holy Ghost. Now, it doesn't say anything about them speaking in tongues. The Pentecostals say they must have spoken in tongues. Well, they can say that until they're blue in the face, but I can very dogmatically say it does not say they spoke in tongues. If the writer of Acts, Luke, was trying to establish a principle that every time you were baptized with the Holy Spirit, you spoke in tongues, he had ample opportunity to say that they spoke in tongues in Acts Eight, and he did not do it.

Paul H. Dixon:

You do not find tongues in Acts, but in Acts Chapter Two. Now in Acts Chapter 10, turn over there with me. The 10th chapter of the Book of Acts. What happens in Acts Chapter 10 that makes this very important in the Bible? Anybody know? Very important chapter. Yes.

Speaker 2:

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The Gentiles [inaudible 00:25:10]

Paul H. Dixon:

The first Gentile gets saved. Who is this Gentile who gets saved? Somebody give me his name. Yes.

Speaker 7:

Simon.

Paul H. Dixon:

No, the Gentile who gets saved? Who is it? [crosstalk 00:25:24] Cornelius. That's right. Who takes the gospel to him?

Speaker 8:

Peter.

Paul H. Dixon:

Peter. Can anybody tell me the whole story here? Just kind of paraphrase the 10th chapter of Acts about how Cornelius gets saved. You remember? You want tell us?

Speaker 3:

Peter had a vision, if I remember. Yeah, Peter had a vision about eating unclean meat. And God had told him that, "What I make clean is clean." And so when Cornelius had then spoken to God he sends some soldiers to get Peter and bring him down, and Peter come down and witnessed Cornelius, and Cornelius was saved. He actually started [inaudible 00:26:16].

Paul H. Dixon:

Right. See, this was the thing. Here's Cornelius, a Gentile, searching after God and God's going to save him. But God knows that Peter is not going to be very willing to go down and talk to a Gentile. No way. So he prepares him by giving him this vision of a sheep coming down with all these unclean animals that's supposedly forbidden by the Old Testament scriptures and the Old Testament law. And God says, "Eat." And Peter says, "No way, Lord." He says, "Do not call unclean that I call clean. I have a right to say that something's unclean. I have a right to turn right around and say that it's clean." So He's preparing him so when these soldiers come from Cornelius' house and say, 'Cornelius wants somebody tell how to get saved,' Peter got the message and he goes, and he preaches. He takes some other Jews along and notice what happens in Acts Chapter 10, Verse 44,

Paul H. Dixon:

"While Peter yet spate these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter because on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost." They couldn't believe it. They had the Holy Spirit. "They heard them speak with tongues and magnify God. Then answered Peter, 'Can any man forbid water that these should not be baptized which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?'" And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord." You get the picture? The first Gentile get saved, Acts

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Chapter 10. God demonstrates. Again He gives this as a sign to who? Who needed the sign in Acts 10? The Jews again, but this time are they unsaved Jews?

Paul H. Dixon:

No. Saved Jews get the sign in Acts 10. That was the thing that proved to these saved Jews that this Gentile really got saved when they heard them speak in tongues. They said, "Just like we did," back in Acts Chapter Two. It's quite possible that nobody had spoken in tongues since Acts Chapter Two. This may be the next time anybody speaks in tongues in is in Acts Chapter 10. So again, God gave tongues on this one time only, the Day of Pentecost. God gave tongues on this one time only when the first Gentile gets saved. Very important to remember that.

Paul H. Dixon:

But I want you to notice this. In Acts Two they got tongues when they were waiting. In Acts Two they got tongues, but they also got the wind and the fire. When did they get tongues in Acts 10? Were they praying for it? No. Were they waiting for it? When did Cornelius speak in tongues?

Speaker 7:

When the Holy Spirit.

Paul H. Dixon:

When the Holy Spirit came. But when did the holy spirit come?

Speaker 7:

[inaudible 00:29:38]

Paul H. Dixon:

When they were talk, as soon as he got saved. Immediately upon salvation, he received the Holy Spirit and he started speaking in tongues. Now surely our Pentecostal friends do not use Cornelius' pattern because they say that you have to have a second experience, even a third experience, but here Cornelius got it all one at the same time. The thing I'm trying to show you is that there is no pattern in the Book of Acts. There's no wind in Acts Chapter 10. There's no fire in Acts chapter 10. They're different. So how can you form a pattern for being baptized with the Holy Spirit and receiving tongues today if there is no pattern in the Book of Acts?

Paul H. Dixon:

Now the last time you find in the Book of Acts is Acts 19. Could you turn there please? Maybe you don't know this, but can anybody tell me what's different about Acts 19 Verses One through Seven? Have you ever studied this before? Very important chapter. What happened in Acts 19 One through Seven? If Acts Two is important because it's the Day of Pentecost and they spoke in tongues, and Acts 10 is important because it's the salvation of the first Gentile, Cornelius, and they spoke in tongues. What happened in Acts 19? What makes it different? Why is it transitional?

Paul H. Dixon:

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Let me read the verses and I think you'll see. "It came to pass," Verse One, "while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coast came to Ephesus and finding certain disciples he said unto them, 'Have you received the Holy Ghost since you believed?' They said unto him, 'We haven't heard so much whether there be any Holy Ghost.' He said unto them, 'Unto what then where you baptized?' They said, 'Unto John's baptism. John the Baptist baptized us.' Then said Paul, 'John barely baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people that they should believe on Him which should come after him, that is on Christ Jesus.' And when they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came upon them and they spake with tongues and prophesy, and all the men were about 12."

Paul H. Dixon:

Okay. Now look up for a minute. Follow me here. Here Paul comes upon disciples of a man by the name of Apollos. And they had been baptized of John the Baptist baptism, who had said, "The Messiah is coming. He hasn't come yet, but he is coming." And he was pointing to Jesus. And they had accepted that truth, but they had not accepted the fact that Jesus Christ was that Messiah that he was talking about. And they had not been baptized of Christ, and of Christ's baptism, but rather of John's baptism. This is what we would call an Old Testament saint. They were saved just like people would be saved back in the Old Testament, just like people who were saved under John the Baptist's preaching and who died before the preaching of Christ.

Paul H. Dixon:

And now these disciples come upon him, they explain to them that Christ is the Messiah, that He's already come. They gladly received this and now they're baptized of Christian baptism as we know it today. Therefore these people are in that transition time. They're in that gray time in there. You can see it again. When Christianity is leaving its emphasis upon Judaism, and it's going over to the emphasis to Gentiles. And these people too are baptized with the Holy Spirit and they receive the gift of tongues. But notice this time somebody lays their hands upon them. In Acts Two nobody laid any hands on anybody. In Acts 10 there wasn't laying on of hands. But in Acts 19, there is a laying on of hands, and they speak in tongues, but there's no fire and there's no wind.

Paul H. Dixon:

And the point is, there is no pattern in the New Testament Book of Acts as to how you receive the gift of tongues. And so you cannot use these chapters to say this is the way that it has to be today. We have no more mention of it in the Book of Acts. God gave it as a sign to the unsaved Jews in Acts Two. God gave it as a sign to the saved Jews in Acts 10. In Acts 19, I'm not sure who was there. It might have been a sign to the saved Jews. It might have been a sign to some unsaved Jews who were present. It might have been a sign to those 12 who had been baptized of John.

Paul H. Dixon:

Okay. Now let's tomorrow, we're going to take up 1 Corinthians and The problem with speaking in tongues as presented itself in 1 Corinthians 12, 13, and 14. I might just quote a man by the name of Roy Laurin that I think it's a good enough quote for you to write down. Roy Laurin, L-A-U-R-I-N. "We must not make the mistake of teaching the experience of the apostles. We must not make the mistake of teaching the experience of the apostles, but rather experience the teaching of the apostles," which would be what they gave us in the epistles. And I believe if we use this as a guideline in the church today

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we'll be well off. You don't need to teach the experience of the apostles, but rather to experience the teaching of the apostles is found in the epistles.