



SPEAKING IN TONGUES, HANDLING SERPENTS, AND DRINKING DEADLY THINGS

By George Lujack

This article is primarily directed at the various Pentecostal Christian denominations who believe in demonstrating their faith through displays of speaking in tongues, snake handling, and drinking strychnine poison.

SPEAKING IN TONGUES

There is nothing glorious or edifying in speaking in gibberish and rolling on the ground. The Scripture-declared purpose of speaking in tongues is to enable believers to speak the gospel to unbelievers and other people in their native language, so that they will have faith that those proclaiming the gospel message are truly sent from God (1 Corinthians 14:22). If someone claims to be speaking in a tongue (another language) and no one can interpret his or her words, it is better for them to keep quiet (1 Corinthians 14:27-28).

Paul cautions the modern-day tongue speakers, who attempt to manifest speaking in tongues, but are speaking in undecipherable gibberish, that others will perceive them as being "out of their mind."

1 CORINTHIANS 14:16-23:

If you bless with the spirit, how will he who occupies the place of the uninformed say "Amen" at your giving of thanks, since he does not understand what you say? For you indeed give thanks well, but the other is not edified. I thank my God I speak with tongues more than you all; YET IN THE CHURCH I WOULD RATHER SPEAK FIVE WORDS WITH MY UNDERSTANDING, THAT I MAY TEACH OTHERS ALSO, THAN TEN THOUSAND WORDS IN A TONGUE. Brethren, do not be children in understanding; however, in malice be babes, but in understanding be mature. In the law it is written: "With men of other tongues and other lips, I will speak to this people; And yet, for all that, they will not hear Me," says the Lord. Therefore tongues are for a sign, not to those who believe but to unbelievers; but prophesying is not for unbelievers but for those who believe.

THEREFORE IF THE WHOLE CHURCH COMES TOGETHER IN ONE PLACE, AND ALL SPEAK WITH TONGUES, AND THERE COME IN THOSE WHO ARE UNINFORMED OR UNBELIEVERS, WILL THEY NOT SAY THAT YOU ARE OUT OF YOUR MIND?

HANDLING SERPENTS AND DRINKING DEADLY THINGS

MARK 16:17-18:

“And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover.”

God is not a circus act (handling serpents / drinking poison). Believers are not required not handle poisonous snakes or drink strychnine poison to demonstrate their faith.

Believers do not need to display their faith, but rather proclaim it. Believers are not to put God to the test with dangerous stunts to demonstrate their faith. Believers shouldn't likewise jump off a roof of a building and say that God will protect them from falling to the ground and injuring themselves. Should believers, in like manner, put their necks inside lions' mouths or swim in shark-infested waters? OF COURSE NOT! God does not need us to perform dangerous stunts to prove to Him that we have faith. God will test us, or allow us to be tested, if He deems it appropriate. Sadly, many people have needlessly died handling poisonous snakes and drinking poison in the Pentecostal churches throughout the recent centuries.

Yeshua (Jesus) says believers shall "take up serpents," and "drink deadly things," and will not be hurt (Mark 16:18). What did Yeshua (Jesus) mean by this? God promises to equip us to handle SPIRITUAL SERPENTS AND WORKERS OF EVIL and to DRINK DEADLY DOCTRINES (LIES AND PROPAGANDA) that defy Scripture that spew from the false teachers and the workers of iniquity of this age (Luke 13:27). We will not be harmed by spiritual serpents and their servant workers of iniquity or be deceived by false doctrines, lies, and propaganda.

Yeshua (Jesus) often spoke in figurative language (John 16:25). Handling serpents and drinking deadly things is an example of figurative language. Satan is referred to as a serpent of old in Scripture (Revelation 12:9, 20:2). Yeshua (Jesus) referred to the false teachers of His day as serpents and a brood of vipers (Matthew 3:7, 12:34, 23:33; Luke 3:7).

LUKE 10:19:

“Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you.”

God empowers us to handle SPIRITUAL SERPENTS, SPIRITUAL SCORPIONS, and HAVE POWER OVER THE ENEMY. What enemy? Enemies of God! We are to beware of evil workers (Philippians 3:2). We are to put on the whole armor of God and withstand Satan and the spiritual hosts of wickedness in heavenly places (Ephesians 6:12-13) and the workers of iniquity here on Earth (Luke 13:27). It is these wicked spiritual serpents and serpent workers of iniquity that God has equipped us to take up and handle, not slithering poisonous snakes.