

SPEAKING IN TONGUES

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Reading: Acts 2:1-13

INTRO: My wife and I spent a week helping with her parents who have been sick, and who live quite a distance from here. We wanted to give those in the family a break who had spent so much time doing that for the past few months.

While we were there we joined Church Sunday morning. In the Sunday School class, the subject was the baptism and filling of the Holy Spirit and the topic that was raised several times was the matter of speaking in tongues. It is a very long time ago since I studied that subject and there were some questions raised I could not answer. However, for the first time in a long time my interest was tweaked. I have not had this interest since I completed a booklet on the subject of tongues many years ago. In that booklet I deal with tongues in 1 Corinthians 12-14. I will attach it to the end of the notes on this message which we will post on sermonaudio.com/mecl for those who might be interested. There I deal with some very difficult questions.

Well, in discussing this subject after church, a thought was raised that we probably don't have answers to what is meant by the gift of tongues on this subject. I said to my wife, "That is a good thought for me. I have to look at it again." Well, for the first time in many years I had a renewed interest in the subject.

Since there is only one Sunday between now and the Passover season, which we call Easter, I decided to take a little break from our studies in Hebrews and cover this subject in the passages where it is dealt with before one gets to Corinthians. I have not spoken on these before. Now the subject of the gift of tongues has two interpretations. Either it means speaking in foreign or other languages or it means ecstatic utterances.

In this message we will take a look at tongues in the book of Mark and Acts with a few points from 1 Corinthians. For those interested in studying 1 Corinthians 12-14 I will attach a booklet to the printed notes of this message and post them online sermonaudio.com/mecl.

I. MARK 16:

The first occurrence of tongues, as we are studying them, is in Mark 16. Turn there. I'll just mention that many question whether Mark 16:9-20 is in the original text. I view them as part of the Bible. This passage gives the first occurrence of speaking in tongues as a gift from God. We will begin in verse 14. Mark writes:

14 Later He appeared to the eleven as they sat at the table; and He rebuked their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they did not believe those who had seen Him after He had risen.

15 And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.

16 "He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.

17 "And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues;

18 "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."

It says these signs will follow those who believe. 1 They will cast out demons in Jesus' name. 2 They will speak with new tongues. 3 They will take up serpents. 4 If they drink anything deadly, it will by now means hurt them. 5 They will lay their hands on the sick, and they will recover.

Our question is with regard to tongues. I take it that not every Christian will experience all these signs. I know very, very few Christians who cast out demons, so this cannot be a sign that all believers experience. It is a sign that some experience. We will see later why. Second, they will speak with tongues. I would gather that this is not meant for all believers either. Third, they will take up serpents. The meaning seems to be that they will not be hurt by the serpent. We see an example of this when Paul in the book of Acts was bitten and should have dropped dead, but nothing happened to him. Albin Douglas, a long-time teacher at Prairie Bible Institute said that he had never heard of a Christian bitten and killed by a deadly serpent. I gather that this is not a sign experienced by all believers either. Fourth, if they drink any deadly thing it

will not hurt them. I gather that this is a gift that not all will experience. I have not heard of this taking place nor read of it in the NT.

I believe that it is clearly evident that not every believer is meant to experience all these gifts. Let me make this note: The word "new" in "new tongues" is a word that does not mean tongues that are new to mankind. There are two words for *new* in the NT and the word here is something that is new to the speaker, but it is not something entirely new.

II. ACTS 2:1-11

Our second passage is Acts 2:1-11. Here we have the birth of the Church. In Acts 2 we come to a major, major shift in God's program. This needs a whole message in itself. But the Jew will no longer be the center of God's program. Jew and Gentile will now become one, to form the Church. Leviticus 23:17 which speaks of the day of Pentecost says this:

17 'You shall bring from your dwellings two wave loaves of two-tenths of an ephah. They shall be of fine flour; they shall be baked with leaven. They are the firstfruits to the LORD.

I believe these two loaves picture Jews and Gentiles becoming one, and on the day of Pentecost we have the firstfruits of the Church. It is most interesting that these two loaves are baked with leaven. I don't want to take much time here except to say I believe this pictures that the Church is made up of converted sinners.

Now that the Gentiles were to become a major part of this new work was a very bitter pill for the Jew to swallow, and most refused. We begin in 2:1:

1 When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.

2 And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting.

3 Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them.

4 And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

5 And there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven.

6 And when this sound occurred, the multitude came together, and were confused, because everyone heard them speak in his own language.

7 Then they were all amazed and marveled, saying to one another, "Look, are not all these who speak Galileans?"

8 "And how is it that we hear, each in our own language in which we were born?"

9 "Parthians and Medes and Elamites, those dwelling in Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia,

10 "Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya adjoining Cyrene, visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes,

11 "Cretans and Arabs – we hear them speaking in our own tongues the wonderful works of God."

12 So they were all amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "Whatever could this mean?"

13 Others mocking said, "They are full of new wine."

Note in verses 3-4, that two signs accompanied this event. First, divided tongues of fire sat on each of them, and second, they spoke with tongues. Now the big debate ever since the Pentecostal movement began is are these tongues ecstatic utterances or are these human languages as spoken by people? I think the word "new" in Mark 16 tells us these were languages.

By the way, let me just mention here that the phrase "ecstatic utterances" never occurs in the Bible. Tongues have been called ecstatic utterances because that is what some gather they are from the wording 1 Corinthians 14 which we will not deal with here. It is all in the booklet I will add to the printed message online. There I give the

evidence I find that speaking in tongues always refers to human languages.

In this passage we see that speaking in tongues is certainly languages. There were three feast seasons in the Jewish year. On each of those, all Jewish males were to attend the feast. Pentecost was one such feast and there would have been Jews from all over the then known world and would have spoken many different languages and they heard the disciples speak in languages which they had not known before but the listeners understood them. Again, I will not take time to give evidence for all this but there is plenty any student can easily find.

Mark 16 said they would speak with "new" tongues which, as I mentioned before, are not brand new, tongues. So they spoke in languages the foreigners that attended the feast could understand and they were amazed at that.

The miraculous gift of speaking in foreign languages for these unlearned Jews enabled them to share the Gospel with all those present who spoke other languages. Spiritual gifts, in my understanding, are always for the edification of others and for the glory of God and never for the glory of man and that is what we have here because that day 3,000 people were saved.

III. ACTS 8:

We go next to Acts 8. The Church had begun with those disciples gathered in the upper room, and there were about 120 of them. Then 3,000 more were added. And then the Gospel spread out and we come to Acts 8. What happened is that the Jews so hated this new movement we know as the Church, that they persecuted the believers in Jerusalem and the newly born Church began to spread out. So note what happened as recorded in verses 1-8:

1 Now Saul was consenting to his death. At that time a great persecution arose against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles.

2 And devout men carried Stephen to his burial, and made great lamentation over him.

3 As for Saul, he made havoc of the church, entering every house, and dragging off men and women, committing them to prison.

4 Therefore those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the word.

5 Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria and preached Christ to them.

6 And the multitudes with one accord heeded the things spoken by Philip, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did.

7 For unclean spirits, crying with a loud voice, came out of many who were possessed; and many who were paralyzed and lame were healed.

8 And there was great joy in that city.

Now this is simply an amazing account. Saul, who would later be converted and become that great Apostle Paul, was persecuting the Christians and here they had just stoned Stephen, the newly appointed deacon. Stephen was stoned to death for his faith. And Philip, another deacon of the new church went to Samaria. Now you know that the Jews had no dealings with the Samaritans. They even resisted going through Samaria and went the long way around. But after becoming a Christian Philip now preaches the Gospel to these untouchables, and amazingly many got saved. As Mark had said, miracles happened and people were saved and there was great joy in that city!

We will leave the story of Simon the sorcerer, which has to do with drugs, and go to verse 14:

14 Now when the apostles who were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them,

15 who, when they had come down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit.

16 For as yet He had fallen upon none of them. They had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

17 Then they laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.

I was recently questioned about this passage. I had not studied the subject of tongues for a long time and could not recall if I had come to a conclusion on this passage. Later, as I reread this passage I realized why. This passage does not mention tongues at all. It is easy to jump to that conclusion but because it says they received the Holy Spirit.

However, I would not be at all surprised if they did they did speak in tongues. Actually, I would be surprised if they did not. Why? Answer: God chose to use tongues as evidence to verify the Gospel message for the Jewish nation. And we will look at this more later.

But the facts are neither the word "gift" or "tongues" are mentioned here at all. What we are told is that the Apostles came from Jerusalem and prayed for these believers and they received the gift of the Holy Spirit.

IV. ACTS 10:

We go now to Acts 10. In Acts 8, the Gospel went to the Samaritans. That will have been very difficult for even the Christian Jews to accept. The Samaritans were Jewish people who were mixed with much Gentile blood and the Jews would have nothing to do with them for that reason. To accept that the Samaritans have entered the kingdom of God and are on equal footing with the Jews, this will have been extremely hard to accept.

Just before Jesus ascended He told the disciples this, and I'll read it from Acts 1:6-8:

6 Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, "Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?"

7 And He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority.

8 "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

In Acts 2 the Gospel is proclaimed in Jerusalem. In Acts 8 it is now being proclaimed in Judea and Samaria. The Gospel is now moving outward. When we come to Acts 10 it is heading towards the ends of the earth. So now, not only do Samaritans enter the kingdom of God as full fledged children of God, but now something unthinkable for the Jew takes place; Gentiles enter the kingdom of God as well!

We begin in verse 1 and I'll comment as we read:

1 There was a certain man in Caesarea called Cornelius, a centurion of what was called the Italian Regiment,

2 a devout man and one who feared God with all his household, who gave alms generously to the people, and prayed to God always.

3 About the ninth hour of the day he saw clearly in a vision an angel of God coming in and saying to him, "Cornelius!"

4 And when he observed him, he was afraid, and said, "What is it, lord?" So he said to him, "Your prayers and your alms have come up for a memorial before God.

5 "Now send men to Joppa, and send for Simon whose surname is Peter.

6 "He is lodging with Simon, a tanner, whose house is by the sea. He will tell you what you must do."

7 And when the angel who spoke to him had departed, Cornelius called two of his household servants and a devout soldier from among those who waited on him continually.

8 So when he had explained all these things to them, he sent them to Joppa.

Here is a Gentile, a Roman centurion, and God is calling him. And note that as a Gentile he is to call for a Jew, one of the Lord's apostles to give him the message of truth. Salvation is of the Jews.

Verse 9:

9 The next day, as they went on their journey and drew near the city, Peter went up on the housetop to pray, about the sixth hour.

10 Then he became very hungry and wanted to eat; but while they made ready, he fell into a trance

11 and saw heaven opened and an object like a great sheet bound at the four corners, descending to him and let down to the earth.

12 In it were all kinds of four-footed animals of the earth, wild beasts, creeping things, and birds of the air.

13 And a voice came to him, "Rise, Peter; kill and eat."

14 But Peter said, "Not so, Lord! For I have never eaten anything common or unclean."

15 And a voice spoke to him again the second time, "What God has cleansed you must not call common."

16 This was done three times. And the object was taken up into heaven again.

Well, what is this all about? God is trying to get the message through to Peter that what has been considered unclean until now, the Gentiles, will be cleansed by the Gospel. Now you will notice that God had a hard time persuading Peter and Peter begins to wonder, what is this all about.

Verse 17:

17 Now while Peter wondered within himself what this vision which he had seen meant, behold, the men who had been sent from Cornelius had made inquiry for Simon's house, and stood before the gate.

18 And they called and asked whether Simon, whose surname was Peter, was lodging there.

19 While Peter thought about the vision, the Spirit said to him, "Behold, three men are seeking you.

20 "Arise therefore, go down and go with them, doubting nothing; for I have sent them."

21 Then Peter went down to the men who had been sent to him from Cornelius, and said, "Yes, I am he whom you seek. For what reason have you come?"

22 And they said, "Cornelius the centurion, a just man, one who fears God and has a good reputation among all the nation of the Jews, was divinely instructed by a holy angel to summon you to his house, and to hear words from you."

23 Then he invited them in and lodged them. On the next day Peter went away with them, and some brethren from Joppa accompanied him.

24 And the following day they entered Caesarea. Now Cornelius was waiting for them, and had called together his relatives and close friends.

The Gospel carrier is Peter. Those who are to be the recipients of this message are Gentiles. This is unthinkable to the Jews. But Peter is believer enough to obey God.

Verse 25:

25 As Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him and fell down at his feet and worshiped him.

26 But Peter lifted him up, saying, "Stand up; I myself am also a man."

26 But Peter lifted him up, saying, "Stand up; I myself am also a man."

27 And as he talked with him, he went in and found many who had come together.

28 Then he said to them, "You know how unlawful it is for a Jewish man to keep company with or go to one of another nation. But God has shown me that I should not call any man common or unclean.

29 "Therefore I came without objection as soon as I was sent for. I ask, then, for what reason have you sent for me?"

30 So Cornelius said, "Four days ago I was fasting until this hour; and at the ninth hour I prayed in my house, and behold, a man stood before me in bright clothing,

31 "and said, 'Cornelius, your prayer has been heard, and your alms are remembered in the sight of God.

32 'Send therefore to Joppa and call Simon here, whose surname is Peter. He is lodging in the house of Simon, a tanner, by the sea. When he comes, he will speak to you.'

33 "So I sent to you immediately, and you have done well to come. Now therefore, we are all present before God, to hear all the things commanded you by God."

Peter is about to experience one of the greatest revelations. This is such a major shift in God's program that it will affect the entire world.

So we go to verse 34:

34 Then Peter opened his mouth and said: "In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality.

35 "But in every nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him.

36 "The word which God sent to the children of Israel, preaching peace through Jesus Christ – He is Lord of all –

37 "that word you know, which was proclaimed throughout all Judea, and began from Galilee after the baptism which John preached:

38 "how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him.

39 "And we are witnesses of all things which He did both in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem, whom they killed by hanging on a tree.

40 "Him God raised up on the third day, and showed Him openly,

41 *"not to all the people, but to witnesses chosen before by God, even to us who ate and drank with Him after He arose from the dead.*

42 *"And He commanded us to preach to the people, and to testify that it is He who was ordained by God to be Judge of the living and the dead.*

43 *"To Him all the prophets witness that, through His name, whoever believes in Him will receive remission of sins."*

44 *While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard the word.*

45 *And those of the circumcision who believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also.*

46 *For they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God. Then Peter answered,*

47 *"Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?"*

48 *And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then they asked him to stay a few days.*

Now we read this as Gentiles and it does not sink in how huge the shift is that is taking place in God's work. It was to them somewhat as it would be to us if someone told us that Mormonism was the truth and we needed to accept that. That is different, but that gives us a bit of an idea how hard this was for the Jews.

When it says the Gentiles heard the word of the Gospel, it means they believed it. And as soon as they believed the Gospel they received the gift of the Holy Spirit, and they spoke in tongues.

Now let me just say again that I believe the tongues are languages. First, Mark said they would speak with "new" tongues. That is tongues new to them but they are in existence already. Second, in Acts 2 tongues are foreign languages. And third, I cannot see how this can be what is called "ecstatic utterances." The difficulty with ecstatic

utterances is first, that tongues are never called that in the Bible. The biggest difficulty is that ecstatic utterances have no objective proof. When someone speaks in ecstatic utterances, there is no objective way of knowing what those utterances mean. There can be no edification without understanding. 1 Corinthians 14 requires an interpreter when tongues are spoken to others, but one can never verify the interpretation of ecstatic utterances. There is simply no way to verify that what someone says the speaker said is what they actually said unless tongues are languages. Christian linguists have tried to interpret such utterances and there is no way it can be done.

Then, note that this is the first time the Gospel goes to the Gentiles, and I propose that what these new believers experienced is the normative Christian experience. First, one is saved. Second, one immediately receives the Holy Spirit. But what is normal with regard to gifts is that it is God who chooses which gifts will be manifested. I believe God used tongues especially to give evidence to the Jewish believers that these Gentiles were saved with evidence which they could not refute. Since tongues were first given by God in Acts 2, by giving these believers the gift of tongues God verified that the Gentiles too have experienced the same Gospel the Apostles did when the Holy Spirit came. If the Samaritans spoke in tongues, this would hold true there as well.

With regard to God choosing which gifts will be manifested turn to 1 Corinthians 12. This is a chapter on spiritual gifts and we'll read 7-11:

7 But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all:

8 for to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit,

9 to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit,

10 to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another different kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues.

11 But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills.

I think I can safely say that today you do not hear anyone break out in tongues as soon as they are saved, unless they have been taught that beforehand. Why not? What gifts are manifested is God's choice, not man's. For the Jews in this transition period He chose tongues. Hebrews 2:3-4 says this of the Gospel:

3 which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him,

4 God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will?

Listen to 1 Corinthians 12:27-30:

27 Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually.

28 And God has appointed these in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, varieties of tongues.

Now as I read on, after each question I want you to answer the question:

29 Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Are all workers of miracles?

30 Do all have gifts of healings? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret?

One more point. Why did God use tongues in Acts as the gift that would be manifested? First, in Acts 2 it was used to share the Gospel with all the Jews from other parts of the world who were at Pentecost who spoke different languages.

Second, I believe the Lord may well have used this gift in Samaria to verify to the Jews that the Samaritans were truly saved. Then He used this same gift at Cornelius' house to verify to the Jews that salvation had come to these Gentile people whom they would have had a very hard

time receiving as believers. So let me give evidence for that.

Turn to Acts 11. This is recorded immediately after the account of the salvation of the Gentiles. We begin in verse 1:

1 Now the apostles and brethren who were in Judea heard that the Gentiles had also received the word of God.

2 And when Peter came up to Jerusalem, those of the circumcision contended with him,

3 saying, "You went in to uncircumcised men and ate with them!"

The Jewish believers were horrified that Peter would go to Gentile homes and to top that off, even eat with them!

Verse 4:

4 But Peter explained it to them in order from the beginning, saying:

5 "I was in the city of Joppa praying; and in a trance I saw a vision, an object descending like a great sheet, let down from heaven by four corners; and it came to me.

6 "When I observed it intently and considered, I saw four-footed animals of the earth, wild beasts, creeping things, and birds of the air.

7 "And I heard a voice saying to me, 'Rise, Peter; kill and eat.'

8 "But I said, 'Not so, Lord! For nothing common or unclean has at any time entered my mouth.'

9 "But the voice answered me again from heaven, 'What God has cleansed you must not call common.'

10 "Now this was done three times, and all were drawn up again into heaven.

11 "At that very moment, three men stood before the house where I was, having been sent to me from Caesarea.

12 *"Then the Spirit told me to go with them, doubting nothing. Moreover these six brethren accompanied me, and we entered the man's house.*

13 *"And he told us how he had seen an angel standing in his house, who said to him, 'Send men to Joppa, and call for Simon whose surname is Peter,*

14 *'who will tell you words by which you and all your household will be saved.'*

15 *"And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell upon them, as upon us at the beginning.*

16 *"Then I remembered the word of the Lord, how He said, 'John indeed baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit.'*

17 *"If therefore God gave them the same gift as He gave us when we believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could withstand God?"*

18 *When they heard these things they became silent; and they glorified God, saying, "Then God has also granted to the Gentiles repentance to life."*

Notice verse 17. Peter said to these Jews who had such a hard time with believing Gentiles could be saved: "If therefore God gave them the same gift as He gave us when we believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could withstand God?" What did God use to convince the Jewish believers that the Gospel is even for the Gentiles? The gift of tongues!

V. ACTS 19:1-6

We have one more passage to look at and that is Acts 19. We'll read verses 1-6:

1 *And it happened, while Apollos was at Corinth, that Paul, having passed through the upper regions, came to Ephesus. And finding some disciples*

2 *he said to them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" So they said to him, "We have not so much as heard whether there is a Holy Spirit."*

3 And he said to them, "Into what then were you baptized?"
So they said, "Into John's baptism."

4 Then Paul said, "John indeed baptized with a baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe on Him who would come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus."

5 When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

6 And when Paul had laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied.

The Gospel has now gone beyond the borders of Israel and is fully penetrating Gentile regions. Here it has gone as far as Corinth. Corinth was mostly a Gentile city though there were many Jews there as well. And here these Jews who had only known John's baptism were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And what we note that this time God gave them the gift of tongues **and** they prophesied. That is an addition now. I think that the tongues are a sign for the Jews, and the prophesying is for the Jews and the Gentiles.

Turn now to 1 Corinthians 14 for one point.

21 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.

22 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.

Tongues as a sign to "this people" means the Jews. Paul says here that tongues were given for a sign, not to those who believe, but to unbelievers. The quote from Isaiah that he uses says, "With men of other tongues and other lips I will speak to this people." "This people" refers to the Jews and the Jews were the unbelievers referred to. Since they had a hard time believing that the Gentiles could get saved God used the sign of tongues to give evidence for the Gospel.

Now the prophesying that it speaks of here, if you study the context, is not foretelling the future. Go back to verse 14:1:

1 Pursue love, and desire spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy.

2 For he who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God, for no one understands him; however, in the spirit he speaks mysteries.

3 But he who prophesies speaks edification and exhortation and comfort to men.

4 He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself, but he who prophesies edifies the church.

5 I wish you all spoke with tongues, but even more that you prophesied; for he who prophesies is greater than he who speaks with tongues, unless indeed he interprets, that the church may receive edification.

This prophesying is speaking edification, that is building up Christians, exhortation, and comfort to believers. So someone has said that prophesying can mean either foretelling or forthtelling, and it is the latter that is meant here. In every case in Acts, the speaking in tongues has to do with the Jewish people. 1 Corinthians 12-14 is an entirely different problem and I will attach the notes to those chapters to this message for those who are interested.

CONCL: So let us conclude. The Gospel of Mark said the believers would speak with "new tongues." That is these are new to the speakers, not the hearers. Mark lists five gifts and we know the facts that few believers experience any of those gifts. In Acts 2, at the birth of the Church God miraculously enabled the disciples to speak in a lot of languages they had never learned before. In this way they shared the Word of God with those who had come from all over to the feast of Pentecost.

I believe that tongues may well have accompanied the baptism of the Holy Spirit in Acts 8 when the Gospel went to Samaria. This, I believe, would have been to verify to the Jewish Christians that the Samaritans had experienced the same salvation they had.

Then in Acts 10 the Gospel went to the Gentiles and once more, as we saw, this gave evidence to the Jewish believers that Gentiles truly could experience the same salvation they had experienced.

And last, in Acts 19 we have some Jewish believers in Corinth. The Gospel is now going to the uttermost parts of the earth and here these believers also experienced the gift of tongues. It may well have been for the same purpose as the other occurrences since it still involves Jewish people. But now these believers also received the gift of prophesying. And this had greater value for the Gentile people at Corinth.

But tongues is not the only gift evidenced in the book of Acts, there were miraculous healings; a snake bite that was harmless, and other great miracles. God was bearing witness through the disciples to the truth of the Gospel as Hebrews 2 says. And God gave gifts as He saw fit. When Paul was in Philippi, a co-worker got sick and Paul did not heal him. Why not? It was God who chooses the manifestation of such gifts.

Today, God chooses to do miraculous healings in some countries. He has done other great things in the past and He will yet do others in the future. Gifts and their manifestation are God's choice, not man's.

So let me ask:

29 Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Are all workers of miracles?

30 Do all have gifts of healings? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret?

11 But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills.

And again, consider the Gospel and this great salvation:

3 ...which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him,

4 God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will?

Yes, let God be God, and let us submit ourselves to Him in His choice of the manifestation of the gifts of the Spirit.

TONGUES:

ECSTATIC UTTERANCES

OR

FOREIGN LANGUAGES?

TONGUES: ECSTATIC UTTERANCES OR FOREIGN LANGUAGES?

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TONGUES: ECSTATIC UTTERANCES OR FOREIGN LANGUAGES?

prepared
by
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INTRODUCTION: In the course of Church history many doctrinal problems have been faced by God's people. Various doctrines have been problematic and have been hammered out on the anvil of human minds grappling with God's Word. In early Church history such doctrines as the human and divine nature of Christ and the doctrine of the Trinity were hotly debated until the Christian position was established. In the nineteenth century the doctrine of eschatology (end time teaching) was on the anvil. In the late nineteenth and into the twentieth century the doctrine of the Holy Spirit and especially the baptism of the Holy Spirit came under scrutiny as never before.

The doctrine of spiritual gifts, particularly the gift of speaking in tongues, has caused much grief among believers and has split many churches. It is therefore well for any church to determine from the Word of God where they stand on this issue and then develop a statement that will help them to maintain unity.

1. THE PROBLEM OF SPEAKING IN TONGUES

The problem with regard to speaking in tongues simply stated is this: Does speaking in tongues refer to ecstatic utterances or to speaking in foreign languages?

Those who refer to speaking in tongues as ecstatic utterances mean that these tongues are not human languages. They are tongues which only God understands. Such Scriptures as 1 Corinthians 14:2, and 28 are cited to prove this position, "For

he who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God, for no one understands him; however in the spirit he speaks mysteries" (14:2).

Those who take the view that speaking in tongues are ecstatic utterances fall into a camp of Christendom we call *Charismatics*. It is not an accurate name but it has stuck and is in common use. The word *charismatic* comes from the Greek word *charisma* meaning a *gift of grace*. The gifts of the Spirit given to be exercised in the Church are charismata from which we get the name *Charismatics*. Truly it is a misnomer. All Christians believe in spiritual gifts. Our Pentecostal friends have exalted the gift of tongues especially (the Pentecost gift, Acts 2) along with healing and miracles, and from this they have been named Charismatics. There are many branches of Charismatics and there is not enough agreement among them to become united. One teaching all Charismatics have in common is the teaching on speaking in tongues. When a person believes in speaking in tongues as ecstatic utterances that person falls into the Charismatic camp.

The view that speaking in tongues means speaking in foreign languages is self explanatory. Speaking in tongues simply refers to speaking in languages either foreign to the hearers or foreign to the speaker.

Speaking in tongues is not new with present day Charismatics. Various groups besides Christians have practiced speaking in tongues. Some early radicals of the Mennonite movement have also spoken in tongues according to Encyclopedia Britannica. Recently I was reading the doctrinal statement of the Mormon church. In their book, *Doctrines and Covenants/Pearl of Great Price* is found this seventh article of the Mormon faith, "We believe in the gift of tongues, prophecy, revelation, visions, healing, interpretation of tongues, etc." In studying Mormonism one finds that by the gift of tongues they mean ecstatic utterances.

Within Christendom then, the two major positions are that speaking in tongues means speaking in foreign (human) languages or ecstatic utterances. Although those are the two major positions an alternative view is taken by some. This third view accepts the position of speaking in tongues as being ecstatic utterances but they say, "It is not for me." These people are classed as non-charismatics but in doctrine one might call them charismatics. They are charismatic in belief but not in

practice. Surprisingly we find men like Billy Graham in this camp. To my understanding the Alliance church is in this position. When speaking of this doctrine they hold to this line of teaching, "Seek not; forbid not."

I want to say without hesitation that I believe that speaking in tongues means speaking in foreign languages and I mean by that human languages. I want to say further that I believe that speaking in tongues as ecstatic utterances is not Biblical. God is not speaking through these people. Such speaking in tongues is either generated by the falsely trained human spirit or by evil spirits.

In this study I will explain what I believe to be the Biblical teaching of speaking in tongues.

2. THREE PROPOSITIONS FOR INTERPRETING "TONGUES"

Two schools of thought (basically) have developed from the teaching in Scripture on speaking in tongues. One is that speaking in tongues is ecstatic utterances given by the Holy Spirit which are not human languages. The second is that speaking in tongues is speaking in foreign languages. From a careful study of the Scriptures I believe the latter to be correct and present the following principles or propositions regarding interpreting speaking in tongues in the Bible.

In determining the meaning which can or cannot be conveyed by certain words in Scripture one must study all the occurrences of that particular word. Then one must find occurrences of the word which clearly indicate the meaning conveyed by that particular word. If certain passages are difficult to interpret then the unclear must give way to the clear. In other words, one should not teach dogmatically as the meaning of a certain word that which one cannot clearly show as a meaning that word conveys in the Bible.

Proposition # 1. When the Greek word *laleo* (to speak) is used in its literal sense it ALWAYS refers to a spoken word or words in a language that is understood by speaker. To speak (*laleo*) is to give a verbal communication or message. Below is a list of references that contain the word *laleo* in one of its various forms. There are several passages where the word to speak is used figuratively. These do not affect the issue of speaking in

tongues. These passages are marked with an asterisk (*) in the references below.

Matthew 9:18, 33; 10:19 2x, 20 2x; 12:22, 34 2x, 36, 46 2x, 47; 13:3, 10, 13, 33, 34 2x; 14:27, 15:31; 17:5; 23:1; 26:13, 47, 28:18. **Mark** 1:34; 2:2, 7; 4:33, 34; 5:35, 36; 6:50; 7:35, 37; 8:32; 9:6; 13:11 2x; 14:9, 43; 16:17, 19. **Luke** 1:19, 20, 22, 45, 55, 64, 70; 2:17, 18, 20, 33, 38, 50; 4:41; 5:4, 21; 6:45; 7:15; 8:49; 9:11; 11:14, 37; 12:3; 22:47, 60; 24:6, 25, 32, 36, 44. **John** 1:37; 3:11, 31, 34; 4:26, 27 2x; 6:63; 7:13, 17, 18, 26, 46; 8:12, 20, 25, 26, 28, 30, 38, 40, 44; 9:21, 29, 37; 10:6; 12:29, 36, 41, 48, 49 2x, 50 2x; 14:10 2x, 25, 30; 15:3, 11, 22; 16:1, 4, 6, 13 2x, 18, 25 2x, 29, 33; 17:1, 13; 18:20 2x, 21, 23; 19:10. **Acts** 2:4, 6, 7, 11, 31; 3:21, 22, 24, 4:1, 17, 20, 29, 31, 5:20, 40; 6:10, 11, 13; 7:6, 38, 44; 8:25, 26; 9:6, 27, 29; 10:6, 7, 32, 44, 46; 11:14, 15, 19, 20; 13:42, 46, 14:1, 9, 25; 16:6, 13, 14, 32; 17:9; 18:9, 25; 19:6; 20:30; 21:39; 22:9, 10; 23:7, 9, 18; 26:14, 22, 26, 31; 27:25; 28:21, 25. **Romans** 3:19; 7:1; 15:18. **1 Corinthians** 2:6, 7, 13; 3:1, 9:8, 12:3, 30; 13:1, 11; 14:2 3x, 3, 4, 5 2x, 6 2x, 9 2x, 11 2x, 13, 18, 19, 21, 23, 27, 28, 29, 34, 35, 39. **2 Corinthians** 2:17; 4:13 2x, 7:14; 11:17, 23, 12:4, 19; 13:3. **Ephesians** 4:25; 5:19, 6:20. **Philippians** 1:14. **Colossians** 4:3, 4. **1 Thessalonians** 1:8, 2:2, 4, 16. **1 Timothy** 5:13. **Titus** 2:1, 15. **Hebrews** 1:1, 2; 2:2, 3, 5; 3:5 2x; 4:8; 5:5; 6:9; 7:14; 9:19; **11:4***, 18; **12:24***, 25; 13:7. **James** 1:19; 2:12; 5:10. **1 Peter** 3:10; 4:11. **2 Peter** 1:21; 3:16. **1 John** 4:5. **2 John** 12. **3 John** 14. **Jude** 15, 16. **Revelation** 1:12; 4:1; 10:3, 4 2x, 8; 13:5, 11, 15; 17:1; 21:9, 15.

I believe this point is irrefutable in Scripture. It can be clearly shown in many, many Scriptures that the speaker understands the words which he speaks. It can never be shown conclusively that the speaker himself does not understand the words which he speaks.

Proposition # 2. When the Greek word *glossa* (tongue) is used alone it always refers to:

- a. The tongue as the physical member of the body, or the organ of speech.

References: Mark 7:33, 35; Luke 1:64; 16:24; Acts 2:3 (In appearance like physical member); Romans 3:13; 14:11; 1

Corinthians 14:9; Philippians 2:11; James 1:26; 3:5, 6 2x, 8;
1 Peter 3:10; 1 John 3:18.

b. A language.

I define language as a system of verbal or symbolic communication by which persons communicate meaning to others. The universal experience of mankind is that such a system has grammatical laws and rules which govern its usage.

A verbal communication that cannot be analyzed and its meaning objectively tested is no communication at all. It is open to the imagination of the interpreter.

References: 1 Corinthians 12:10 2x, 28; 13:8; 14:26;
Revelation 5:9; 7:9; 10:11; 11:9; 13:7; 14:6; 17:15.

Proposition # 3. When *glossa* and *laleo* (speak + tongue/s) are used together in a clause the reference is always, without exception, to a foreign language or languages. The apparent exceptions to this point in 1 Corinthians 14:14, 19 and 22 are explained in the commentary.

References: Mark 16:17; Acts 2:4, 11; 10:46; 19:6; 1
Corinthians 12:30; 13:1; 14:2, 4, 5 2x, 6, 13, 14, 18, 19, 22,
23, 27, 39.

a. A foreign language which is foreign to the speaker (Acts 2, 10 and 19).

When we diagnose a clause in Acts 2 which contains *glossa* and *laleo* we can prove in no uncertain terms that the meaning intended by the usage of those two words used together is "foreign languages." In Acts 2:6 the foreigners marveled, not that they heard them speak in tongues but that they heard these Galileans speak in the languages of the foreigners. This is repeated in verse 11. The languages were foreign, not to the hearer but to the speaker. In this case God gave the miraculous ability to Galileans to speak in many various languages foreign to themselves. It is to be noted that in this case there was no need for an interpreter. The reason is clear. The communicator was given the miraculous ability to communicate in languages he had never learned before. So the language in this case was foreign to the speaker.

In Acts 2:4 the Greek word is *glossa*. In 2:6 and 8 this is explained as *dialektos*, language. In 2:11 these *dialektos* are explained as *glossais* (tongues). One simply cannot get around the fact that speaking in tongues in these references is speaking in foreign languages.

There is no reason to take Acts 10 and 19, two other passages where speaking in foreign languages occurs, to be something else than the miraculous ability to speak in languages they had never learned. It would seem that in both cases God gave this miraculous ability to speak in foreign languages to verify the experience of the new believers. In neither case was there a need for an interpreter indicating that this was the miraculous ability to speak in languages the hearers understood.

b. A foreign language spoken which is foreign to the hearer (1 Corinthians 12-14).

In 1 Corinthians we have the words *glossa* and *laleo* used in the same clause in a number of references. However there is a significant difference between the tongues spoken here and in Acts. In every case here the speaking in tongues is in languages foreign to the hearer not the speaker as in Acts. The gift of speaking in tongues here could not have been the miraculous gift of speaking in other languages for if it had been there would be no need for an interpreter.

We have here the gift of speaking in languages foreign to the hearers. This raises the need for interpretation. It is clear from such verses as 14:11, 14-17, and 27-28 that these are languages and that they are foreign to the hearer. It is also clear from verse 28 that the one speaking in tongues understands what he is saying for he "speaks to himself." According to our first point on speaking (*laleo*) he understands what he is saying. Also, it could not be said that he edifies himself (v.2) if he does not understand what he is saying, for then he would need an interpreter before he is edified.

Furthermore, according to verse 28 there is to be no speaking in tongues if there is not an interpreter present. How can it be ascertained that there is an interpreter present if the tongues spoken are not languages?

There are several important words in 1 Corinthians 14 that need careful study by anyone seriously interested in this topic. The words, *understand* in its various forms, *interpretation*, and *edification* in their various forms.

If the propositions given above are accurate then speaking in tongues means foreign languages, not ecstatic utterances. This is clearly the case in the first recorded incident where speaking in tongues occurred. It is also clear from Paul's reference to Isaiah 28:11 that this is the meaning in 1 Corinthians. No one will question whether the tongues mentioned in that reference is a language or an ecstatic utterance for it has reference in its context to the Assyrians. Furthermore, this quote indicates that tongues are a sign of judgement not blessing. Taking the view that speaking in tongues is foreign languages the translation in this interpretation will always refer to glossalalia as foreign languages.

2. HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL SETTING

One important rule of Bible interpretation is a consideration of the original historical and cultural setting. No text of Scripture can now mean that which it did not mean to the original hearers when it was given. We must remember that the letter to the Corinthians was not written to us directly. It was written and intended directly for the Corinthians and indirectly for us. In order to determine what this passage means to us we must first know what it meant to the original reader. To determine what this passage meant to the original readers we must seek to understand the historical setting.

a. The geographical setting of the church of Corinth

Corinth was a cosmopolitan city because of its importance to the shipping industry. It was situated near the great isthmus of Greece. Today a canal joins the Aegean Sea and the Ionian Sea. This canal shortens the journey from the Aegean Sea to Athens by some 200 miles. These were 200 treacherous miles which often resulted in the loss of the ship. The isthmus is only a few miles wide and in ancient times ships were either unloaded on one side and another ship took the goods from the other side or if the ship was small

enough it was dragged across to the other side. So Corinth naturally was a cosmopolitan city.

What does this have to do with tongues? When you have a cosmopolitan city you have many different tongues spoken - various languages. Now let us say a Greek leads a German speaking man to the Lord. The German convert is an evangelist type person and he speaks both German and Russian and in no time he has led a man who is conversant in Russian only, to the Lord. Of course they will go to church together. This situation could be multiplied as the church grows. So you have people from various backgrounds and languages gathering together. They have a common faith but not a common language or culture. Being a relatively young church, and a carnal church, this will doubtless lead to problems.

b. The spiritual climate of the church of Corinth

We note from the first letter to Corinth that this group of people had many problems. This letter is mostly a letter of correction. Note that in this issue of tongues Paul is not commending the Corinthians as if they had some good thing going. He is correcting them. The Corinthian church was a carnal church (3:1-4). They were not a spiritual group. In this letter Paul deals with one problem after another.

So when one comes to 1 Corinthians 12-14 Paul is not dealing with some strong point in the Corinthian church, rather he is dealing with another problem, the problem of how to handle spiritual gifts. Nor does Paul exalt tongues speaking but he lowers their view of this gift they have so exalted.

c. The form of service in the church of Corinth

It is held by some that the Corinthians gathered in house churches. It seems more likely from the type of worship meeting described in this chapter that the system of worship was that of the synagogue. If they met in house churches they seem to have continued some parts of the format of the synagogue service.

It is without doubt that the Jewish element in the Corinthian church was strong (Acts 18.) It is also highly likely that the Corinthians had heard of speaking in tongues that took

place in Acts 2, 10 and 19. They may well have determined that speaking in tongues was very important to the Christian experience and exalted this gift to the head of the list. However, Paul in 1 Corinthians 12:7-10; 12:28 and 12:29-30 three times lists tongues speaking and their interpretation as last in the list.

The order of service in the synagogue was as follows:

-Shema - an adult male Jew puts on the prayer shawl and phylacteries and says the shema, "Shema yishrael adonai elohenu adonai echad."

-Singing - Psalm 140-150

-Prayers

-Scripture reading

-Benediction

-Sermon - (the message and the interpretation) the sermon could be given by anyone, but usually one who had already given some thought to a Scripture. Ordination was not required.

According to the NISBE "The interpreter was responsible for interpreting the Scripture and the sermon, which meant not only translating it into the common language (if necessary), but expounding or explaining it (Mish. Megillah ii.3; cf. 1 Cor. 14:27f.) [pg.681]. "In a sense the interpretation was a running commentary on the scriptural passage. The *meturgeman* (interpreter) was to interpret the passage, verse by verse into the language of the people (Aramaic in the East, Greek in Alexandria and the West). This interpretation consisted of *pesat*, 'translation, the plain sense' (T.B. Erbin 23b), and *deras*, "exegesis, expansion to situations other than the original.' As every translator knows, a strictly literal translation often becomes meaningless, whereas a loose paraphrase may become fanciful. In dealing with the Word of God, the Jewish translator sought to be faithful to the original meaning while at the same time making it applicable to current needs. The task is difficult. Rabbi Judah ben Llai said, 'He who translates a verse literally is a liar, and he who adds to it is a blasphemer'" (NISBE IV:683-684).

The interpretation in the synagogue was two-fold, from one language to another and from its original meaning to application to daily situations.

A number of the parts of the synagogue service seem to have been part of the Corinthian service. In 1 Corinthians 14 we see most of the aspects of the synagogue order of service practiced in the Corinthian church.

3. ORIGINAL PROBLEM ADDRESSED BY PAUL IN CORINTH

Out of the foregoing studies we can begin to reconstruct some of the problem Paul is addressing in 1 Corinthians 12-14. They had people from many languages present in their meetings. Many of these people probably spoke numerous languages. In verse 18 Paul says that he speaks in more languages than all or any of the Corinthians, indicating that many of them spoke in a number of languages. Put into this the fact that there was much carnality in the church (1 Cor. 3:1-4). When carnality exists in the church much self glory seeking also exists. On top of that a number of men might share from the Word of God in the service. Add to that that the Corinthians viewed the ability to speak and pray in various languages as a sign of spirituality and then one begins to get the picture of the problem Paul is addressing at Corinth.

How will Paul deal with this problem? In the following interpretive outline of the structure and flow of 1 Corinthians 14 we find how Paul will deal with this problem (providing the interpretation is correct). Paul will first show the Corinthians that prophesying (speaking to people to edification, exhortation and comfort, see 14:3) is a superior gift to speaking in foreign languages. Then in the second section Paul will lay down regulations regarding prophesying and speaking in tongues.

4. THE DILEMMA IF TONGUES MEANS ECSTATIC UTTERANCES

Before considering the interpretive outline and then the verse by verse commentary of 1 Corinthians 14 I want to briefly mention a major problem with the ecstatic utterances view. If speaking in tongues is ecstatic utterances and not human languages then that person cannot be understood except by God. God then must communicate the interpretation of that utterance to another who gives the message to man. If in a certain meeting a person wants to speak in tongues how does anyone in the audience know if he can interpret what will be said? Furthermore, if someone interprets the utterance so all may understand then who is to say that the interpreter interpreted correctly? There is simply no objective way to know if an interpreter is present and there is no objective way to prove that what the interpreter indicated was said is what was actually said.

On the other hand, if the tongues are foreign languages one can objectively determine if there is an interpreter present and that interpretation can be objectively tested.

Several years ago a certain church had certain members who were swayed to the charismatic position. Since I had family in that church and that church was historically not a charismatic church I called the pastor. In our discussion I asked what he would do if someone in church wanted to speak in tongues. He said he would ask if there was an interpreter present. So I asked how he would know there was an interpreter present if someone claimed he were an interpreter. Of course he did not know because you cannot know. You must take such a person's word for it without any proof whatsoever. Furthermore I asked that if that interpreter said the Lord said thus or such how he would know that the Lord had said thus or such. And again he did not know for you cannot know. You cannot even tape record a tongues message and prove anything by it for nobody can prove or disprove what an interpreter claims is said.

I asked this pastor if he knew anywhere else in the Bible where God operated in such an uncertain manner. And again he did not know.

How open to the Spirit of God are we to be with regard to accepting what others claim? As open as the Word of God and not beyond. Just because somebody makes great claims and he calls

himself a Christian that is not ground to accept every thing put forth. If speaking in tongues is ecstatic utterances let it be shown from Scripture. If that cannot be done let us not be open to it.

5. INTERPRETIVE OUTLINE OF 1 CORINTHIANS 14

I. THE PREFERABILITY OF PROPHECY TO TONGUES RELATED
(14:1-25)

A. Exhortation with relation to this preference
(14:1-5)

1. Content of this exhortation (1)
2. Cause of this exhortation (2-4)
3. Conclusion of this exhortation (5)

B. Explanation with relation to this preference
(14:6-19)

1. Explanation from lifeless things (6-9)
 - a. Question (6)
 - b. Illustration (7-8)
 - c. Conclusion (9)
2. Explanation from living beings (10-19)
 - a. Proposition (10-11)
 - b. Application (12-14)
 - c. Conclusion (15-19)

1) I will use both spirit and
understanding

2) I will promote the importance of
understanding

C. Exhortation with relation to their purpose
(14:20-25)

1. Exhortation (20)

2. Example (21)

3. Conclusion (22-25)

a. Prophecy and tongues with respect to insiders

1) Tongues are a sign to doubters

2) Prophesying serves for the faithful

b. Prophecy and tongues with respect to outsiders

1) Tongues will confuse them

2) Prophesying will convict them

II. THE PRACTICE OF PROPHECY AND TONGUES REGULATED
(14:26-40)

A. The potential for edification (26)

B. The regulations for gifts (27-33)

1. With regard to tongues (27-28)

2. With regard to prophesying (29-33)

C. The regulations for women (34-35)

1. With regard to speaking (34)

2. With regard to questioning (35)

D. Defence of these regulations (36-40)

6. COMMENTARY ON 1 CORINTHIANS FOURTEEN

Note: The translation used in the commentary is that of the New King James Version with the exception of the references where *glossa* and *laleo* occur in the same clause. Here the translation is changed from *language/s* to *foreign language/s* on the basis of the three propositions given earlier.

14:1 Pursue love - Chapter 12 begins the discussion of spiritual gifts and introduces us to the problem of tongues speaking in Corinth. Chapter 13, which lies between the introduction to this problem and the more in depth treatment of it, shows that the most crucial aspect is that of love. So Paul begins this chapter with the exhortation to pursue love. - **and desire spiritual (Gk. spirituals) gifts** - Now Paul brings in the balance. We ought to eagerly pursue love but we must not do this to the exclusion of spiritual gifts. God gave gifts for a purpose and they are to be exercised. - **but especially that you may prophecy.** Paul has given a partial list of spiritual gifts in chapter 12 but now he encourages the Corinthians to desire the gift of prophesy above the others he has mentioned. We will take a closer look at the meaning of prophecy in verse three.

14:2 For he who speaks in a foreign languages - Paul now explains why he said what he did in verse one. We come to the first clause in chapter fourteen that contains the two words *laleo* and *glossa*. The translation as it stands literally (he who speaks in a tongue) leads to confusion. The KJV has translated a number of passages where *glossa* and *laleo* occur together as *unknown tongue/s*. This is because what was meant to the original reader and what is conveyed to our mind is two different things. If we translated literally this passage would read, "He that speaks in a language does not speak to men but to God." However, that is clearly not true and in this discrepancy some find ground that what is meant here is ecstatic utterances. The clearest answer, and the one intended (I think) is as follows: For he that speaks in a foreign language does not speak to men but to God.... - **does not speak to men but to God** - How can it be said that someone who speaks in a foreign language does not speak to men but to God? Well it is quite clear. Men do not understand the foreign language except through an interpreter but God needs no interpreter. This is clearly the answer as the following words indicate, - **for no one understands him;** - In our proposition on *laleo* we said that the speaker understands what he is saying. Verse 28 indicates that

he does not speak to God alone but to himself as well. He understands, God understands, but if there is no interpreter no one else present understands. - **however, in the spirit he speaks mysteries.** - The meaning of speaking in the spirit is later contrasted with speaking, (praying or singing) in the understanding. It is through the human spirit that man communes with God. The words are for our benefit. When a person speaks in a foreign language his spirit is expressing itself to God and his words express meaning to him but since the hearers do not understand and are not edified he is speaking mysteries in the spirit, mysteries to the hearer not the speaker.

14:3 But he who prophecies - Paul now shows the contrast between prophesying and speaking in foreign languages. To prophecy may carry one of two meanings. One, it is to foretell something in the future before it happens. This is how we usually understand it. However, the more common biblical use of the word is to forthtell, to expound or clarify the Word of God. It is this second meaning that is used throughout this chapter. - **speaks edification** - The one who speaks in foreign languages speaks mysteries to the hearer but the one who prophecies speaks edification to the hearer. The word "edification" comes from the Greek word oikodomeo. This word comes from two words, *oikos* = house + *demo* = to build which means to build up. So the one who prophecies builds up the listener. - **and exhortation** - The Greek word is *parakleesis*, a calling to one's side. (This is the same word from which we get the name "Comforter" for the Holy Spirit.) It is a calling to one's side either for exhortation or consolation, the context determines which is meant and here likely means exhortation as the next word speaks more specifically to the idea of consolation. - **and comfort to men** - Comfort (*paramuthia*), to speak closely to someone. This is a tender comforting. These three great benefits come from prophesying, while foreign languages yield mysteries only.

14:4 He who speaks in a foreign language edifies himself - Here is clear evidence that the one who speaks in foreign languages (tongues) understands what he is saying for how else could one say that he edifies himself? One cannot be edified without understanding as the rest of the chapter clearly indicates. We might add here as well that if the speaker does not understand himself and is edified how then should not the hearer be edified though he does not understand? But since speaking in tongues is speaking in a foreign language it is clear that the speaker understands what he is saying and therefore he edifies himself

for he understands. But he does not edify the hearers for they do not understand. - **but he who prophecies edifies the church.** - Again we have the reason for the preferability of prophecy to foreign languages related. The purpose of a church gathering is to edify, build up believers, and foreign languages do not help to this end unless they are interpreted.

14:5 I wish you all spoke in foreign languages - Certainly in a cosmopolitan place like Corinth it would be of great benefit if all spoke with various foreign languages. - **but even more that you prophesied** - Though the ability to speak in various languages would be a great benefit outside the church, in the church the ability to prophecy would be greater. - **for he who prophecies is greater than he who speaks in foreign languages** - The reason the one who prophecies is greater is because he benefits the whole church as the preceding verses indicate. - **unless indeed he interprets, that the church may receive edification.** - If the one who speaks in foreign languages is also able to interpret then he is just as great as the one who prophecies for to speak an explanation of the Word of God in a foreign language and interpreting it is the same as prophesying. However, if the speaker could interpret as well he might as well speak in the common language right from the start unless there are others who understand the foreign language but do not understand the common language (or do not understand it well).

14:6 But now, brethren, if I come to you speaking in foreign languages, what shall I profit you unless I speak to you either by revelation, by knowledge, by prophesying, or by teaching? - We have a shift in Paul's argument at this point. In the first five verses he has established the fact that prophesying should receive the focus of attention in the church not speaking in foreign languages. Now Paul will give a lengthy explanation for his teaching in 1-5. His question is what profit they might receive of him if he came to them speaking in foreign languages? We know the answer to that. Unless he comes and speaks to them things that have been either revealed to him (illumination or possibly divine revelation), or knowledge he has gained, or clarifying Scripture, or teaching on a particular topic he will not profit them at all. I am not certain of the difference meant between revelation, knowledge, prophesying and teaching. However, the following verse indicates clearly that these would all be given in a language understood by the hearers.

14:7 Even things without life whether flute or harp, when they make a sound, unless they make a distinction in the sounds, how will it be known what is piped or harped? - Paul now illustrates what he has said in verse six. To speak in a foreign language is like a flute or harp giving sounds unfamiliar to the hearer. On the other hand speaking revelation, knowledge, prophecies or teachings in a language that is understood is beneficial.

14:8 For if the trumpet gives an uncertain sound, who will prepare himself for battle? - How crucial is understanding in the communications of the church? It is as crucial as blowing the right sound to begin a battle. A confusing sound could mean loss of the battle.

14:9 So likewise you, unless you utter by the tongue words easy to be understood - (Lit. So also you, unless you give by means of the tongue [intelligible speech, BAG] - **how will it be known what is spoken?** In the same way, as a trumpet giving an uncertain sound, if you do not speak in intelligible speech (foreign languages) how can people know what you have spoken? - **for you will be speaking into the air.** - Speaking in foreign languages does as much good as speaking into the air. The hearer has not benefitted at all.

14:10 There are, it may be, so many different languages in the world - The word rendered languages here is *phnon*, sounds or better voices. The context of verse 11 indicates that the meaning of **phnon** is languages. - **and none of them is without signification.** - The word "signification" is literally "dumb" (See its use in Acts 8:32; 1 Cor. 12:2; 2 Pet. 2:16). No language is dumb, or meaningless! It carries meaning.

14:11 Therefore, if I do not know the meaning of the language, I shall be a foreigner to him who speaks, and he who speaks will be a foreigner to me. - Since it is true that lifeless things that make an uncertain sound are useless and since it is true that every language has meaning the result is that if I do not know the meaning of the language I will be a barbarian (foreigner) to the speaker and he to me. The reason being simply that I do not understand what he is saying. Though we are both Christians and both go to the same church if he speaks in a foreign language we will be like foreigners to each other.

14:12 Even so you, since you are zealous of spiritual gifts - The words "spiritual gifts" are literally *spirits* in Greek. The meaning does seem to be that of spiritual gifts and is translated thus in the NKJV. - **let it be for the edification of the church that you seek to excel.** - The Corinthians had a desire for spiritual gifts but it seems that they particularly enjoyed the showy gifts. Paul again points to the importance, not of show, but of edification for the body, the whole church. The Corinthians are exhorted to seek for that which will help others not that which exalts self.

14:13 Therefore let him who speaks in a foreign language pray that he may interpret. - If there is someone present who either cannot express himself in the common language and speaks in a foreign language for the benefit of others of his language he is to pray that he can interpret for the benefit of the people of the common language.

14:14 For if I pray in a foreign language, my spirit prays - (It will be noted that the translation gives praying in tongues as praying in a foreign language. According to principle # 3 given earlier tongue/s mean foreign languages when *laleo* and *glossa* are used in the same clause. However, the word *laleo* does not occur in this clause. With the possible exception in Romans 8:26 prayer is speaking and thus foreign languages are meant here. We might mention also that Romans 8:26 does not refer to praying in tongues because the text says the groanings are unexpressable, that is cannot be spoken, *laleo*. The tongues in 1 Corinthians 14 however, are spoken.) Words communicated towards God are communicated through the man's spirit to God. To God it is a spiritual communication. The words spoken are for man's own benefit. So if I pray in a foreign language my spirit is communing with God. - **but my understanding is unfruitful.** - The word for understanding is *nous*. The *nous* is the storage part of the mind. Things grasped and understood are stored here. (The *phreen*, the active part of the mind is not here spoken of.) Now if I have a prayer in my mind (*nous*) and I verbalize it in a foreign language my spirit communes with God but my understanding or mind is unfruitful in that the hearers do not understand what I am saying. Luther brings this out clearly in his translation when he says, "mein Sinn bringt Niemand Frucht." My mind does not bring fruit to anyone.

14:15 What is the result then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding, - If my mind does not

profit anyone else if I pray in a foreign language then I will seek to pray with the spirit and the understanding as well. And how can this be done? Very simply by praying in a language the hearers can understand. Then my spirit will pray and my understanding will be fruitful. - **I will sing with the spirit, and I will also sing with the understanding.** - Same explanation as above.

14:16 **Otherwise, if you bless with the spirit** - that is, in a foreign tongue. - **how will he who occupies the place of the uninformed** - Literally, *idiotees* from which we get the word idiot. Vine says it means, "primarily a private person in contrast to a State official..." Likely by indication here he would not be one who understood several languages. We might note here that if speaking in tongues be considered to be ecstatic utterances an educated man would be no better off to understand the foreign language than an uneducated person. - **say "Amen" at your giving of thanks, since he does not understand what you say.** - The meaning of amen is something like "so be it" or "I agree." How can one agree or ask something to be when you do not understand what is said? You simply cannot.

14:17 **For you indeed give thanks well, but the other is not edified.** - The fact that the hearer cannot say amen is no reflection on the prayer. The problem is he did not understand the words of the prayer. Again, this verse points to the importance of edification.

14:18 **I thank my God I speak in foreign languages more than you all.** - It is no doubt that Paul is very thankful for his ability to speak in many foreign languages. He could communicate the Gospel wherever he went. A great advantage to evangelism is the ability to speak in various languages but it is quite worthless to edification unless there is an interpreter.

14:19 - **yet in the church I would rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in a foreign language.** - We note here first that the last clause has an elliptical verb, "than ten thousand words in a tongue." According to principle # 3 this clause needs to have the verb *laleo* in it if it is speaking of foreign languages. For those who understand grammar the elliptical verb is *laleo* (speak) and could literally read, "than speak ten thousand words in a foreign language." The ratio given here by Paul indicates the use of tongues in the church is

quite useless. Five words that can be understood will do more good than ten thousand in a foreign language. One cannot teach others when he is speaking in a foreign language. To speak with the understanding is to speak words the listener understands.

14:20 Brethren, do not be children - When the present imperative is negated by the Greek negative *mee* the idea is that something already in progress is to stop. A good translation would be, "Brethren, stop being children..." When you consider a church gathering and various people speaking in foreign languages that benefit no one or at best a few it is easy to understand this imperative. It also reflects great immaturity on the part of the Corinthians. - **in understanding;** - Up until now the Greek word translated understanding has been *nous*. The word for understanding in this passage comes from the root of *phreen*, the active part of the mind. The picture given is that the Corinthians were children in their thinking and Paul is ordering them to stop it, like one would a little child. - **however, in malice be babes,** - Paul is spanking the Corinthians. He has told them to stop thinking like children. The implication is that they were adults in malice. The Greek word *kakia* speaks of vicious character. The indication is that the gift of speaking in foreign languages had caused malice in the church. One wonders how Paul treats the subject of tongues so fully and so kindly in light of these implications. - **but in understanding be mature.** - Rather than being mature in malice they are to be mature in their thinking (*phreen*). Paul is preparing them for mature thinking. He will show them how to use the Scriptures to deal with these things.

14:21 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. - This is a rough quote from Isaiah 28:11-12. Here is a great evidence that Paul is dealing with languages in this chapter and not ecstatic utterances. The quote comes from a time when Assyria was a threat to Israel. Israel was disobedient to God and God was going to let judgement fall. The judgement was a terrible one should it come to pass for woe to the people who were conquered by the Assyrians. Their torture for the conquered knew no bounds. It would be these people of Assyria, a people of another language, that God would use to speak judgement to the unbelieving nation of Israel. These tongues would be a sign to Israel but not a good sign by any stretch of the imagination.

So hard had Israel become in its unbelief that Paul says in spite of this treatment they would still not turn their ways.

14:22 Therefore foreign languages are for a sign, not to those who believe but to unbelievers; - This is the final reference where principle # 3 might bring the translation into question. The clause in which the word *glossa* appears does not have the word *laleo* in it and according to the principles set out should read *languages* or *tongues* rather than foreign languages as I have given it here. However, in the Greek language the word *tongues* has the definite article before it and in this case pointing to a previous reference. This reference is verse 21 where the word *glossa* has the word *laleo* with it. The previous reference then does away with the need to repeat the verb. We have mentioned earlier that the sign signified by tongues is not a good one. It does not indicate spirituality but rather unbelief. The unbelievers in mind here are religious unbelievers; Israel to be specific. In the Isaiah passage Israel was the one nation that knew the true God, yet they were unbelieving toward God. When God gave the gift of tongues at Pentecost, it was not to show the superior faith of the speakers but to confirm to unbelieving Israelites that the Apostles were His spokesmen. When God again gave the gift of tongues in Acts 10 it was, I believe to confirm to the Apostles who would doubt that Gentiles could be partakers of the Jewish faith without being circumcised and becoming Jewish proselytes. - **but prophesying is not for unbelievers but for those who believe.** - Paul has maintained all through this chapter that tongues are not of much value in the church. It is prophecy that is beneficial.

14:23 Therefore if the whole church comes together in one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in those who are uninformed - The uninformed (Gk. idiotai) are people of the class given as the uninformed in verse 16. - **or unbelievers** - This is not the same group of unbelievers as given in verse 22. Those were religious unbelievers. The unbelievers in this verse are those who do not know the true God. - **will they not say that you are out of your mind?** - Paul is saying that if the uneducated people who would not understand other languages or if worldly people should come in and the church is speaking in tongues they will say you are out of your mind. Understandably so.

14:24 But if all prophesy, and an unbeliever or an uninformed person comes in, he is convinced by all, he is judged by all. - If all are discussing and clarifying the Word of God and sharing their faith and an unbeliever or uninformed person comes in he will be convicted and convinced of his need for salvation.

14:25 And thus the secrets of his heart are revealed; - It is only through the very natural way of an understood language that God's message reaches the heart of the unbeliever. - **and so, falling down on his face, he will worship God and report that God is among you.** - Small wonder that Paul has been stressing the importance of prophecy over tongues. Here is the result we all long for or should long for in the church.

14:26 How is it then, brethren? - In verses 1-25 Paul has shown the superiority of prophecy to tongues. The effort has been to correct the Corinthians on their practice of speaking in tongues in the church. Paul clearly indicates the superiority of prophecy to tongues in 1-5 and then proceeds to explain the basis of this superiority. All of this is done to correct what is happening in the church at Corinth. Now Paul will deal with how, what he has said, is to affect the church. This leads to the opening question to this section which Gordon D. Fee gives thus, "What then is the upshot of all this?" How is this to affect the church practically? What follows are regulations regarding speaking in tongues and prophesying but it is not totally regulatory but also correctional. The corrective nature of this section is evident. - **Whenever you come together, each of you has a psalm, has a teaching, has tongue, has a revelation, has an interpretation.** - The common error of almost all commentators on this passage is that they see this as speaking of gifts. One has the gift of singing another of teaching etc... However, the verse does not say one has this gift and another that. If the verse is speaking of gifts it should say, "Each one of you has *either* the gift of singing or the gift of etc..." Verse 6 has such a construction and the correlatives are given in the text. I think Paul is indicating in this verse the potential for edification in the Corinthian church. Each Christian had some **song** to share or call for. That each one had a song or psalm does not necessarily mean they had the gift of singing. That is to jump to a conclusion not indicated in the text. Each one had some **teaching** to impart. Let us say that the speaker is speaking on God's covenants. Someone in the congregation had some teaching to impart on this. If the discussion was on this or that topic there were some who

could speak to those issues. All were capable of adding knowledge on one topic or another. Furthermore each one has a tongue. Every one had a language of one sort or another. If they spoke the common language well, they were able to help the church by teaching or singing etc... If they spoke in a foreign language they would be able to interpret for another of that language or communicate with them. Every one of them had a **revelation** of some kind. There are two types of revelation. One is receiving divine revelation which is recorded as Scripture. This may be the idea in verse six. The other is what we now call illumination. The Holy Spirit enlightens the minds of believers as they study the Word of God by giving them some new insight into the Word. Maybe some application to a certain local situation or some understanding. Paul is saying that they all had some such illumination to share when the topic may come up. The last item Paul mentions that each one has is an interpretation. Interpretation is of two kinds. One is to interpret from one language to another, the other is to expound or explain the application of the Scriptures or of message. The teacher in the synagogue might give a message and the interpreter might explain how this applied to the believer in daily life. It is probably the latter Paul has in mind here. The potential for edification was great in Corinth but if each one did his own thing potential for division and every evil work was also great. This brings Paul back again to one of those crucial themes that is woven throughout the whole chapter, or rather the whole topic in 12-14. - **Let all things be done for edification.** - With this great potential for good or for evil there could only be one "purpose statement" that could keep everything on track and Paul gives it here. As the overall theme outside the church is evangelism so the overriding theme in the church should be edification.

14:27 If anyone speaks in a foreign language, let there be two or at the most three, - The most important thing in the church meeting, as Paul has stressed over and over is edification. If anyone speaks in a foreign language and he wants an opportunity to share his insight in another language then Paul says this restriction is to be enforced. A question we need to consider here is does this mean that only two or three speakers should share in this way in any given meeting or that only two or three should share before an interpretation is given? Since the interpretation involved is interpreting from one language to another it only stands to reason that the interpreter would be

interpreting sentence by sentence or phrase by phrase. It would seem that one or two speakers per meeting is probably meant. - **each in turn,** - They are to speak in turn so as reduce the potential for confusion. - **and let one interpret.** - The third restriction is that one person is to interpret for the speaker. I would take it that each speaker should have only one interpreter.

14:28 But if there is no interpreter, let him keep silent in church, and let him speak to himself and to God. - From these two verses and the need for these regulations we gather that the practice of tongues in Corinth was not edifying and was practiced even when there was not an interpreter. The regulation here is clear; no interpreter no speaking in a foreign language (singular in context). [We need to ask this question here in light of the fact that some see tongues as ecstatic utterances. If tongues are indeed ecstatic utterances and the speaker himself does not understand what he is saying how can it be ascertained that there is an interpreter in their midst? If someone claims to have the gift of interpretation, how can it be known that his interpretation is indeed the right one?] Furthermore, if the proposition given at the outset is correct then the speaker here understands what he is saying. He could not be told to speak to himself if he does not understand what he is saying. The reason he is not to speak in the church is because he is not understood. If he does not understand what he is saying then he should not speak to himself either. The fact that speaking in tongues is speaking in foreign languages clears up this problem. Though no one in the church might understand his language, yet God does and he does and thus he is exhorted to be silent in church and to speak to himself and to God.

14:29 Let two or three prophets speak, - Though the formula for regulating prophecy is much the same as that for tongues yet a basic distinction lies in the fact that this section does not begin with the condition "if." Tongues may or may not be in a church service but prophecy will be. There is no "if" about it. Though prophesying is superior to speaking foreign languages it appears that even in this the Corinthians were not well ordered thus calling for regulations for this as well. It would seem to follow that if the regulation of two or three speaking in tongues means two or three in any given meeting then that would apply here as well although some argue otherwise. - **and let the others judge.** - Several things are to be noted here. First, the

ones sitting by are to judge (discern) what the speaker is saying. Discernment is necessary to determine that what is said is indeed correct. One would expect that this discernment would be based, not on the subjective experience of the judge but the objective Word of God. Second, the prophets may not just speak anything they feel led to speak. What they speak is to have its source in the objective Word of God. It is the job of the other prophets to make sure each message is in tune with God's Word. [It is sometimes bemoaned by commentators that we do not exercise freedom of worship in the way it was exercised in this early church. We must remember however, that at this time the Church did not possess the New Testament Scriptures. For example, the Corinthians are here just receiving the first letter to the Corinthians. Not even the Gospels have been written at this time. We now possess the entire revelation of God and it has become one of the primary sources of exposition in the church. Also, Paul does not commend the Corinthian way of worship as the best way of worship nor does he seek to alter their system. He lets them be in charge of the order of service but he corrects them as to how to carry it out so that edification may receive its proper stress.] Third, the "others" who are to do the judging are also prophets. In other words the "other" does not refer to any member of the congregation. The word "others" comes from the Greek word *allos*. This refers to others of the same kind in contrast to *heteros* (also meaning other) which means other of a different kind. So it would appear that the ones who prophecy are those in the church with the gift of prophecy (expounding the Scripture, see verse 3).

14:30 But if anything be revealed to another who sits by, let the first keep silent. - The word "revealed" refers to illumination (not divine revelation in giving Scripture). The word "other" is again *allos* and keeps this revelation as being to one of the prophets. If when one prophet is speaking another prophet gains an important insight the first speaker is to be silent while the one with the revelation shares his insight.

14:31 For you can all prophecy one by one, - Within its immediate context "you can all prophecy" would refer to the prophets. With the restriction of verse 29 in place it would seem that there would be no more than three sharing in a foreign language in any given meeting and no more than three who would give a message. The words "you can all prophecy" then likely refers to the prophets taking turns meeting by meeting. - **that all may learn and all may be comforted.** - The purpose of the

above instructions is that all may learn and all may be comforted. The variety of speakers would minister to the variety of needs.

14:32 And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets. - The one who is gifted to proclaim God's word must be one who is well in control of his spirit. If he is the one who must do all the speaking and he cannot allow the next his turn or if he cannot be silent if something is revealed to another then he is not in control of his spirit. Did the Corinthians pride themselves in being spiritual because each one felt he had so much to say? Being loaded with things to say is not the only test of being spiritual, being able to be silent is also a test. This text is a warning against experiences where control is lost of one's spirit.

14:33 But God is not the author of confusion but of peace. - If there is that which leads to confusion in the church meetings we may be sure that God is not the source of that message or whatever the event happens to be. But God is the author of peace. He is the source of peace. Here is one of the surest evidences of God's working; peace. The devil is well capable of creating confusion but he is not capable of giving peace. Peace has its source in God and in Jesus Christ as the first verses of so many of Paul's writings so clearly claim.

[There are several possibilities of interpretation with the phrase "as in all the churches of the saints." The one taken by the A.V. is that it is related to the subject of tongues and prophecy and is thus the conclusion of verse 33. Another position, that of Martin Luther's German translation, the NIV and numerous commentators is that it begins the admonition for women not to speak in church and reads thus, "As in all the churches, let your women keep silent in the churches...." I think it probably belongs to verse 33 and that the section dealing with women is not so much directly connected to the whole argument of the passage as that Paul includes this as an after thought or parenthesis to the fact that God is not the author of confusion but of peace. It seems that verses 34-35 do not fit into Paul's whole argument regarding tongues and prophecy but that he has wanted to mention this issue. Now as he mentions that God is not the author of confusion but of peace he is reminded of the disorder caused by women speaking in the church and he inserts these verses parenthetically. If this is correct the best way of indicating this would be to put this

section in parenthesis. (Some think verses 34-35 have been inserted by someone other than Paul. There is little textual evidence to warrant such an argument.)]

14:33b-34 - Let your women keep silent in the churches, for they are not permitted to speak; but they are to be submissive,
- The reason Paul gives for the silence of women in the church is that they are not permitted to speak. To speak in the church is to assume a position of authority. **John Calvin says, "For what is there," some one will say, ' to hinder their being in subjection, and yet at the same time teaching?' I answer, that the office of teaching is a superiority in the Church, and is consequently, inconsistent with subjection" (Vol. xx pg. 468).**
- **as the law also says.** The antithesis Paul gives to speaking in church is to be submissive. In Paul's view for a woman to speak in church and to be submissive is not compatible. The Greek word for submission is *upotasso* which is a military term meaning "to arrange under." As certain ranks arrange themselves under ranks of higher authority so a woman is to arrange herself under male authority. This is not a palatable teaching in our day but if we maintain the authority of the Word of God then this is a requirement for us as well. - **as the law also says.**
- Paul appeals to the law for backup to his requirement against women speaking in church. This teaching regarding women's submission to men begins in Genesis 3:16 and never is it changed.

14:35 And if they want to learn something, let them ask their own husband's at home; - Paul either anticipates that somebody is going to say, "What about their asking questions during the service" or he knows that this is taking place so he deals with this point. If the women have questions they are to ask their husbands at home after the service. - **for it is a shame for women to speak in church.** - Paul now gives the reasoning for not letting them even ask questions in church. He does not say specifically why this is a shame but perhaps "as the law also says" given earlier answers this question as well.

14:36 Or did the word of God come originally from you? Or was it you only that it reached? - To what are these words to be attached? I suggest that verse 34-35 are parenthetical and that verse 36 is attached to the preceding thought so that we might get the connection like this, "For God is not the author of confusion but of peace as in all the churches. Or did the word of God come originally from you? Or was it to you only that it

reached?" There is a hint here again at the Corinthian arrogance that comes out a number of times in this letter. They seemed to say, "We are the spiritual ones, it does not matter what other churches do. And who is Paul anyway? Who does he think he is?" Paul points out to them that God is not the author of confusion but of peace as shown by other churches. Paul, as though anticipating their attitude to his mentioning the example of other churches adds these biting words found in this verse. First, "Or did the word of God come originally from you?" These words indicate that the Corinthians thought that they had a corner on God's Word and that Paul's teaching might have little affect on them because they were so "spiritual." Paul may be subtly reminding them that not only did God's Word not originate with them but it was Paul who brought it to them. Second, "Or was it you only that it reached." Do you think the example of other churches does not need to be an example to you? Do you think it reached you alone and no other churches can be an example to you? So Paul may be simply saying, "Look, you need to listen to me because I am the one who originally brought God's Word to you. You would not even have ideas about being spiritual in this sense if I had not brought you the Word of God. Consider also that I brought this Word to other places and they have found that God is a God of order and not of confusion as seems to be the case from the your experience."

14:37 If anyone thinks himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things which I write to you are the commandments of the Lord. - Paul again anticipates the response of those who consider themselves to be prophets or spiritual. Paul indicates that there is other evidence than spiritual gifts that a person is truly spiritual. That evidence is one's response to the Word of God.

14:38 But if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant. - (Some translate this, "...let him be ignored" on the basis of a textual variant.) If anybody cannot perceive that the things I write to you are the commandments of the Lord then he is ignorant. The word "ignorant" stands as a contrast to the word "acknowledge" in the previous verse. - let him be ignorant. - This last clause stands as a judgement against anyone who did not recognize the commands Paul gave as being commandments from the Lord. It has a similar ring to it as that of Revelation 22:11, "He who is unjust let him be unjust still; he who is filthy, let him be filthy still..."

14:39 Therefore, brethren, desire earnestly to prophecy, and do not forbid to speak in foreign languages. - The superiority of prophecy to tongues again comes to the front but the final word is that they are not to forbid people from speaking in foreign languages. The Corinthians were forbidden to speak in foreign languages if there was not an interpreter present. The reason Paul does not forbid speaking in foreign languages is that if someone gives a word in a foreign language and it is interpreted then it has edifying value to the church.

14:40 Let all things be done decently and in order. - Indecency and disorder are sure signs that God is not in control. To do things any other way is to do things contrary to the nature of God and thus this final admonition.

CONCLUSIONS:

I have given objective criteria by which one can determine what is meant in any passage when the word tongue/s is used. Numerous lexicons and commentaries indicate that in some passages tongue/s refers to languages but in others it refers to ecstatic utterances. Several problems arise: First, there is no objective criteria given to determine whether ecstatic utterances or languages is meant in any given text of Scripture. Second, there is no passage of Scripture that clearly shows that speaking in tongues is an ecstatic utterance. On the other hand, Acts 2 is conclusive evidence that speaking in tongues is speaking in foreign languages. Third, further questions arise on the following verses if speaking in tongues is ecstatic utterances:

Verse 3 - If speaking in tongues is a message from God to man through the one gifted to give ecstatic utterances how can it be said he does not speak to men but to God?

Verse 4 - How can it be said that the speaker edifies himself if he does not understand what he is saying? If he edifies himself when he does not understand what he is saying why could he then not edify others who also do not understand what he is saying?

Verse 16 - If the speaker does not understand what he is saying how can he know he is giving thanks?

Verse 19 - If ecstatic utterances are a gift from God and a message for the church why would Paul rather speak five words in the church with his understanding than ten thousand words in an ecstatic utterance? Would God give a gift so useless?

Verse 22 - If tongues are for a sign to unbelievers why should they be practiced for personal edification?

My conclusion is that practicing ecstatic utterances is extremely dangerous since it does not have its source in God. When I open myself up to let anything roll over my tongue that wants to come I am placing myself in a very dangerous position. Neither I nor anyone else can ever determine with certainty what I am saying nor where it is coming from.

On the other hand if speaking in tongues is speaking in foreign languages as I believe it is, then I have objective criteria by which I can determine what I or others are saying. That is a position much more in keeping with the character of God than the ecstatic utterance view.