

The Biblical Definition of Tongues

About the Tongues Movement

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Bible Text: Acts 2:1

Preached on: Wednesday, August 27, 2008

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Chapter two. I am just using this as a springboard and we are going to look at this passage. I don't know if we will get to it tonight or not. There is two things I wish tonight. Well, there is a lot of things I wish, but two tonight in particular is I wish I could take this lesson that I have this evening and I wish we could all just buckle down and I could give the whole lesson in one sitting. I really wish I could do that. I don't think you all could handle it, but I would really... I think it would be helpful if we could do that, but it is a lengthy lesson so I don't think I am going to be able to accomplish that. But I really wish we could I think it would be most effective in that way.

And the other thing I wish is I wish that everybody would enroll in Bible Institute, because what I am doing tonight is I am not going to be preaching. It is going to be teaching. And what we get in Bible institute is we get grounded in the doctrines and what the Bible teaches about the important doctrines that the church believes, that we believe as individuals. And so it is so important. I believe this series is going to help you and so I want to invite you and encourage you to, boy, if you have a little notebook or maybe somewhere jot these things down. This is a good lesson. This will help you. It will help our church to guard against unscriptural practices and I just feel this is real important and very, very helpful.

Acts chapter two. I am just going to read a few verses. Again, we are not going to start out here, but do you notice verse one? It says:

And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.¹

Now notice there was no wind here. It was the sound. What is the next word? As a rushing mighty wind. There is no wind blowing. It just sounded like that.

Verse three.

¹ Acts 2:1-2.

“And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them.”²

And verse four.

“And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.”³

I want us to look in the next several weeks about what the Bible teaches about speaking in tongues, the Bible and tongues.

Let's pray and we will share this with you and hopefully it will be of help and blessing to us.

Father in heaven, I thank you for the Word of God. Lord, I ask that you would help us to be faithful to your Word. I pray you would help me not to teach anything that is not taught in your Word. Help me not to teach anything that is contrary to your Word. I pray you would help me to teach everything that is in your Word. Lord, I can't do this on my own mental ability. We need the Holy Spirit to be our teacher. And so I yield myself to you anew this evening. God, with all my heart, the best of my ability I present you anew tonight my body. I pray you would fill me with your Spirit that you would be our teacher and, Lord, give us all open ears here and, Lord, maybe some folks aren't interested in this. I pray they would understand how important this is. And so please help us now and bless, I pray, in Jesus name. Amen.

Talking about the Bible teaching of tongues.

You say, “Why would you take some time on a Wednesday nights to teach about tongues? What is the big deal? Why does it matter?”

I think there is two reasons it is important for us to study the subject of tongues. Number one, because tongues, because of the widespread practice and the acceptance of the tongues phenomenon. I said as we were promoting this series just about every one of us either knows someone one who speaks in tongues or we know someone who goes to a church where it is practiced or taught.

I don't know. I am not trying to get information. Please don't misunderstand what I am saying here. Perhaps I am talking to someone this evening who at some point in your life past or maybe currently you practice speaking in tongues. It is very important we understand what the Bible says. It is very, very widespread. It is very, very popular in many areas.

So let me give you a little history here. In January 10 of 1901 a fellow by the name of Charles Parham, he was the founder of a Bible school it is called Bethel Bible School in

² Acts 2:3.

³ Acts 2:4.

Topeka, Kansas. He had been praying leading up to January 10, 1901. He had been praying, according to the records we have, he had been praying that God would restore to the Church everything the Church had in the apostolic days. He was praying that everything the Church did and all the things the Church experienced in the book of Acts, that the Church in 1900 would experience the same thing.

That led up to this January 10th. They were having a prayer meeting. There was a young lady who was in his school, Bethel Bible School there in Topeka, Kansas and he laid hands on her in prayer, very similar to what we do, perhaps, when we send a missionary off or have prayer on a mission trip or something, brother Allen the other day. He laid hands on one of these students and this young lady allegedly began to speak in Chinese.

Later as this practice continued, she spoke in what they claimed was Bohemian and they said that this young lady, as a result of Charles Parham laying his hands on her, could not speak English for three days.

This, of course, was big news in the school and then eventually in the community. You can go on and look up news articles from this event in the local newspapers.

The entire school, as a result of this, began to speak in, quote, unquote, tongues.

The interesting thing was when these—and this is the beginning of the modern tongues movement—when these young people were speaking in tongues, they believed—now this is important—they believed that they were speaking in a known language. They thought they were speaking in Chinese. They believed they were speaking in Bohemian. Their own diaries and records of this event bears witness to the fact that they thought they were speaking in a known foreign language, but was unknown to them.

These early experiences were never confirmed that they were actually speaking in a foreign language. A local newspaper that came out—this was big news in that area—a local newspaper sent a reporter out to one of their meetings where this speaking in foreign languages was taking place—and the newspaper reporter described it as, and this is his word, “gibberish.” He said, “There is no language at all. It is just gibberish.”

One of the fellows that got caught up in this and, again, at this point these early days of the modern tongues movement, they believed they were speaking in a known language. One of the men went to India as a missionary and he was convinced that he was given the gift to speak in that Indian language, whatever the dialect was in that area was.

In fact, Charles Parham was so excited about this gift that God had given to the Church, or, as he put it, restored to the Church, he was so excited about it, he believed that missionaries could go to the foreign fields now without language schools.

But this one young man went to India believing he spoke the language, got there and began to speak and nobody knew a word what he was saying and he wasn't speaking that

language at all. He was just speaking—to use a reporter’s words—gibberish. And their effort, their idea of what was taking place was completely wrong.

Parham then moved to Texas. He founded the Houston Bible School and there he influenced a man by the name of William Seymour. William Seymour received this gift of tongues and he moved to Los Angeles and there in Los Angeles he established the Azusa Street Mission.

Now if you are familiar with the Pentecostal movement, the charismatic movement at all, you know about the Azusa Street Mission. That is where modern charismatic movement, the modern Pentecostal movement traces its roots to the Azusa Street Mission. It actually comes back to Topeka, Kansas under this preacher named Parham.

From the Azusa Street Mission, tongues and the charismatic or Pentecostal movement took root and took off across the country.

Now with that little bit of history, there is two warning lights here that go off immediately. The first one is: Tongues began in a school and not in a church. Now there is nothing wrong with a school. I thank God for the Bible college I went to, university. I thank God for many good schools around the country. But God did not set up the school to be the pillar and ground of the truth. God set up the Church to be the pillar and ground of the truth. So the fact that it began in a school rather than in a church, sends up a warning light.

1 Timothy 3:15 tells us the Church is the pillar and ground of the truth.

The second thing... now this is going to be significant when we get a little bit later on in the study. And that is why is said I wish I could sit down and just teach this whole thing at one shot. But the second warning light—and, again, as I said, this will be significant as we get more information later on in the series—but the second warning light is it began with a woman speaking in tongues.

Now you say, “You got something against women?”

I don’t have anything against women. I married one. And thank God for that. My mother is a woman. So I don’t have anything against women. But I do have something against when people are practicing things that are outside the biblical limits for those people. And so we will get into that later.

But two warning lights: one it started in school; two, it begin with a woman.

I think there is a third thing to note also and we really don’t have time for all of this, but this Charles Parham who initiated the modern idea of speaking in tongues and receiving these gifts, he had a tremendous number of doctrinal heresies. He believed and taught that when a person, an unsaved person dies, they do not spend eternity in hell. They are annihilated in hell. They do not spend eternity in hell.

I have a list of his heresies here. He believed in annihilation of the unsaved. He believed in the unscriptural doctrine of Anglo Israelism. In other words, the nation of England is one of the tribes of Israel. He believed in ... he taught there were two separate creations. He taught that Adam and Eve were of a different race than people, another group of people who lived outside the Garden of Eden. He said the first people that God created did not have souls. He had just all kinds of unscriptural teaching.

And so there is a lot of problems right at the beginning of the modern tongues movement. So why should we study tongues? Why should I take time on Wednesday nights for about a month or so and study tongues? Why don't we just have the attitude I had when I first got saved? I was exposed to people speaking in tongues and I didn't study it and my attitude was, hey, if they want to do that and that is between them and God, what is the big deal? I am not going to bother with it. Why don't we just have that attitude? Why should we look at this?

I think there is one reason. Number one, because it is so widespread. We need to face it and examine it. And, second of all, the gift of tongues is discussed in the Bible. The Bible does deal with it and therefore we need to deal with it also.

Paul said that God tells us we are to preach the whole counsel of Scripture. We are to deal with all issues that are dealt with in the Bible. And because of its popularity and because it is dealt with Scripture, we ought to deal with it.

There is great division over the subject of tongues. Tens of thousands, I could probably say hundreds of thousands of people claim to have the gift of tongues or they are seeking the gift of tongues.

On the other hand, there are thousands, perhaps tens of thousands, maybe hundreds of thousands of people who have experienced it and are so turned off by it, they want nothing to do with Christianity.

I know I can take you to the house of a fellow right now. He is a young man. He is younger than me. I say he is a young man. He is younger than me. His wife and kids, he was involved in a church here in our town. He was taught—and a number of other people from that church say the same thing, so I assume it is correct—he was taught that you have to speak in tongues to be saved.

He came to our church a few times. He asked to meet with me and we sat down. I went out to his house. We spent probably an hour and a half, two hours. Somebody, Jerry may have been with me on that. And he told me the situation.

Do you know what? That guy was so turned off, he is not going to church anywhere. It just affected him in such a negative way.

Now that, in and of itself, does not make it right or wrong, but it does say it is an important issue. The Bible lists tongues two times in the Bible. Tongues is listed as a gift that God gives.

Now I don't know how you feel about this, but I am being totally honest with you right now. I want everything that God has for me. Let me put it this way. If God says that should speak in tongues, then I want to speak in tongues. Amen? If God says we should do that, I want to do it, amen? I don't want to deliberately do some... not do something that God says I should do. I don't want to go without something that God says I should have. So the Bible deals with tongues. The Bible talks about tongues. The Bible says two times that tongues is a gift that God has given to the Church and to his people.

So I suggest to you we come to this with an open mind. We all have preconceived ideas, but I think we should come and let's see what does the Bible say? Let's face this from a scriptural perspective, put our preconceived ideas out, aside and just go by what the Bible says. Fair enough? Amen?

So, number one, and we are not... I doubt we will get through all of this. I wish we could. If you guys are deeper Christians you could handle it, but...

Number one, we must first identify what tongues is in the Bible. What does the Bible say tongues is? Let's get the Bible definition. Here is an important principle. And you ought to jot this down. This would be a good thing to write in the fly leaf of your Bible. We do not determine truth by experience. We determine truth by the Word of God. Let me say that again. We do not determine truth by experience. We determine truth by the Word of God.

“Well, preacher, I know what I felt.”

That is wonderful and I am sure you felt something that seemed very real to you, but what does the Bible say about it? What does the Bible say?

If I have an experience—I know I am being a little repetitious here, but this is so important and we live in a day where experience is the final authority. If I have an experience what I need to do is I need to go to the Word of God and determine whether that experience was of God or of some other source. I do not have an experience and come to the conclusion, this is of God, and then go to the Bible and try and defend that position. Follow what I am saying? I don't have an experience and then interpret God's Word in light of my experience. I interpret my experience in light of God's Word.

So let's look what the Bible says about tongues. First of all, in the Old Testament. The Hebrew word for tongue is used approximately... in fact, the best I can study, 115 times. And it is used in only one of three ways. There is a fourth very obscure way. I will touch on that. Most of the time in the Old Testament, when the word “tongue” is used and the Hebrew word “tongue” translated into English, most of the time it refers to the physical muscle in your mouth.

For some of us it is the strongest muscle in our whole body. But the physical muscle in your mouth, the tongue, the literal tongue. That is the majority of the times in the Old Testament where tongue is used. It refers to that.

The second most common usage of the word tongue in the Old Testament is to mean to communicate a message. And I could give a slew of verse, just Proverbs 18:21.

“Death and life are in the power of the tongue.”⁴

It is not talking about the literal muscle in your mouth, but the ability to communicate is a powerful force.

So the second most common use of the word “tongue” in the Old Testament is the ability to communicate a message, a tongue, the power of the tongue.

Number three, the third most... the third time it is used in the Old Testament is to refer to a known language. The Bible says somebody spake in their own tongue. Sometimes they go to war. You remember, who was it? Hezekiah was surrounded and the Syrian commander spoke in the Hebrew tongue and said, “Don’t speak in the Hebrew tongue. Just speak to us in the Syrian tongue. We know that. We don’t want the people on the wall to hear.”

He was saying... he was referring to a known language, a common spoken language that was known to mankind.

Now there are, I think, just a couple of obscure passages that use the term tongue to refer to like a peninsula of land. It is called a tongue of land, referring to a peninsula, but that is insignificant.

So as far as we are concerned, the Hebrew word for tongue means either a literal tongue or a ability to communicate a message or a specific known language.

The Hebrew word for language in the Old Testament is used 164 time and it always refers to a spoken human language, never used in any other way. Hebrew word of language is always used to refer to a spoken human language.

Now here is an important point. You can get your Bible out, get your Strong’s concordance out. Study it all you want. You will not find one time in the Old Testament a person speaking in an unintelligible language. Not one time throughout the whole Old Testament. Every time somebody speaks in the Old Testament it is in a language that is understandable to the people either that are speaking it or the people that are hearing it. It is never an unintelligible language throughout the whole Old Testament.

⁴ Proverbs 18:21.

So that is the Old Testament. Let's come and look at the New Testament. We are making more ground than I thought we would. In the New Testament, take your Bibles, if you would, turn to the book of Mark chapter 16, last chapter to the second book of the New Testament.

Look at verse 15. This is a [?] verse for us.

“And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.”⁵

Verse 16.

“He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.”⁶

Now look at verse 17.

“And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues.”⁷

That is the first time in the New Testament that the word “tongues” is mentioned. The very first time in the New Testament.

Now we already talked about how it is used in the Old Testament, literal tongue, power to communicate in a specific language. Here is the first time it is used in the New Testament. And, by the way, it is the only time the word “tongues” is used in the gospels. Nowhere else, Matthew, Mark, Luke or John do you find the word tongues being used. Nowhere do you find John the Baptist ever speaking in tongues. Not one time do you find Jesus Christ speaking in tongues. Those are the two most significant individuals in the gospels and not one time do either of them speak in tongues.

The word “tongues” in the New Testament is used in Greek. The word tongues here in Mark is Greek. It is translated from the Greek. That is the language of the New Testament. And it means one of three things every time the word “tongues” is used in the New Testament.

First of all it is used to refer to a muscle in the mouth. In Mark chapter seven verse 33 the Bible says Jesus touched his tongue, the literal muscle in his mouth. It is used to refer to the physical, literal muscle in the mouth.

It is referred one time it is used to describe a flame of fire in acts chapter two verse three. We just made reference to that a few moments ago. There was tongues as of fire above their heads.

⁵ Mark 16:15.

⁶ Mark 16:16.

⁷ Mark 16:17.

And, number three, it is used to refer to a speech or a language.

Now in Acts, in Mark chapter 16 here and verse 17 it says they will speak with new tongues. What does that word “new” mean? The word “new” simply means this. Something that is unused or a new kind of something. It might not necessarily be a new kind... you might... in one instance it is something that is not necessarily a new kind of car. It is just a new car. It has not been used before. That is a new car. Or it may refer to a whole new kind of car. They have got this new car that runs on water. It is a new kind of car.

So that is how the word is used. And Mark... in Matthew chapter nine verse 17 Jesus makes reference to new bottles. In Luke 22 verse 20 the reference is made to the New Testament. The Old Testament, this is a new kind of testament. And so in Mark 16 verse 17 Jesus is clearly stating that the disciples would be speaking in languages that were new to them. They will be speaking in languages that they did not speak in before. All right. Is everybody with me? Are you glad you are here tonight?

I am having a good time. I don't know if anybody else is, but this is good stuff.

Acts chapter two. Come over here. We just read this a little bit ago. Acts chapter two.

So we said in Mark 16:17 the first mention of the practice speaking in tongues is used, the first time that is referenced to speak in new tongues. Now we get to Acts. This is the second time there is reference made to speaking in tongues. Acts chapter two look at verse four. We read it a few minutes ago.

“And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.”⁸

But let's read on.

“And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven. Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded.”⁹

What does it mean they were confounded? They were confused. They didn't understand what was happening.

“...because that every man heard them speak in his own language.”¹⁰

I circled that phrase “own language” and I circled the word “tongues” in verse four and I drew a line between the two.

⁸ Acts 2:4.

⁹ Acts 2:5-6.

¹⁰ Acts 2:6.

Verse four says they were speaking in tongues. Verse six says they are hearing them in their own language.

Verse seven.

And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galilaeans? And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born? Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judaea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia, Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes, Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God. And they were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another, What meaneth this?¹¹

This is the first instance you have in the Bible of someone actually speaking in tongues.

Now let me give you a principle that is very important in Bible study. It is called the law of first mention. And if you are going to understand Scripture you must follow the law of first mention or you are going to get messed up. The law of first mention is very simple. It simply is this. The first time something is referred to in Scripture you understand the rest of the time it is referred to as meaning the same thing it meant the first time it was referred to. Do you follow what I am saying?

Let me say it the way I have it written in my notes. The first time something is mentioned in the Bible sets the precedent for all future uses, unless it is clearly stated that it means something other than what it is first time it was used.

For instance, we get to the book of Genesis, we find the word “altar” used. You know, Cain and Abel or whatever, brought their sacrifice to the altar. All right. We understand what that means. We look in that context. We get a definition of the word. We find out it means a place where people brought their sacrifices to meet with God.

So the rest of the time we read “altar” in the Bible, we assume it means, law of first mention says it means the same thing it meant the first time, that is a place where people, a literal place people put something together to bring their sacrifice to meet with God.

And so here we have the first times tongues is being spoken in the Bible. So that sets the precedent for all other understandings of what tongues is throughout the Bible unless it is clear it is something else.

So what does it mean here? It says they spoke in other tongues. The word “other” there in verse four means of a different kind, not the same. In other words, they were speaking in a language that was a different kind than what they normally spoke in.

¹¹ Acts 2:7-12.

Come over to 1 Corinthians chapter 14. Keep your place in Acts here. Come over to 1 Corinthians 14 real quick.

Now let me make a statement here and I am not trying to be unkind or a smart aleck in any way, but the fact of the matter is we just had more Bible teaching on tongues than what every single person that has ever sat in my office that believed in tongues came and sat down asked me about it. They did not know anything what I have already just given you about tongues and they believe in it and practice it.

So it is very important. 1 Corinthians 14 notice verse 21.

“In the law it is written, With men of other tongues and other lips will I speak unto this people; and yet for all that will they not hear me, saith the Lord.”¹²

Now we know that the word here means foreign languages. You get your Strong’s concordance out. Look up this number. Go to the back, to the Greek definition and it will say this, “foreign languages.”

So God says here... and, by the way, this is the exact same word that is used in verse number four of Acts chapter two, new tongues, other tongues, verse 21, other tongues, same word, exact same word as verse four and it means, very clearly, foreign languages.

Now, come back to Acts chapter two. Look with me at verse four again.

“...and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit...”¹³

Now, again, we are coming with an open mind. We want to know what the Bible means. You will hear some people say, teaching, perhaps, you can get in certain churches and they will make a big deal about that word utterances. The word “utterances” simply means this, the ability to speak. It means to sound forth words. That is all that word means. It does not mean gibberish. It says utterances, not mutterances. It is not muttering. It is not gibberish. It is simply the ability to speak.

So let’s read this again.

“And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues [began to speak with foreign languages], as the Spirit gave them [the ability to speak, the ability to utter those words.”¹⁴

When they were filled with the Holy Ghost they began to speak forth words of another or a different language.

¹² 1 Corinthians 14:21.

¹³ Acts 2:4.

¹⁴ Ibid.

Now let me show you something very interesting here. Look at verse six. Are you still with me? Look at verse six.

“Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language.”¹⁵

That is the exact same word used in verse number eight where it says, “How hear we ever man in our own tongue?”¹⁶

It is the exact same word: own languages, own tongue.

Look at verse four.

“And began to speak with other tongues.”¹⁷

Exact same word as verse 11.

“Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God.”¹⁸

In Acts chapter two verse four where it says they began to speak with other tongues, same word as verse 11 and they said in verse 11, “We do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God.”¹⁹

How did they know they were saying... talking about the wonderful works of God? They could understand what was being said.

So in Acts chapter two verse four when they spoke in other tongues, the people standing there heard them speaking in their own languages and they understood that they were talking about the wonderful works of God.

Acts chapter two is not speaking in some angelic language. It is not speaking in some unintelligent language. Everybody there heard them speak and understood what they were saying. That is the law of first mention. That is what the first time tongues is used in the Bible, spoken of in the Bible, it was a foreign language, the ability to speak in a foreign language. People understood what was being said. Very important.

Here tongues is clearly the supernatural ability given by the Holy Ghost to speak in a foreign language.

¹⁵ Acts 2:6.

¹⁶ Acts 2:8.

¹⁷ Acts 2:4.

¹⁸ Acts 2:11.

¹⁹ Ibid.

Come with me quickly. Now these last few will go quickly, trust me. Acts chapter 10. Look at verse 44 real quickly with me.

Here you have a Gentile getting saved and in verse 44 we start the story.

While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter, Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?²⁰

Peter immediately recognized that this was the same experience he had had in Acts chapter two and verse four. He says, “Hey, the same thing is happening to these Gentiles that happened to us back in Acts chapter two at Pentecost. They ought to get baptized. They have received the Holy Ghost. They have spoken in other tongues just like we did.”

You say, “Oh, that is not what that says.”

Come over to verse 15 of chapter 11.

“And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning.”²¹

When did the Holy Spirit come on Peter? Acts chapter two verse four.

And so Peter understood that the tongues that he had spoken in Acts chapter two was the standard for understanding tongues throughout the rest of his experience. Peter interpreted what took place here as being the same thing that happened to him in Acts chapter two when he spoke in foreign languages. And we know that in Acts chapter two, tongues there was an ability to speak in a foreign language. Are you with me?

So this isn't Gentiles speaking in some angelic gibberish. Peter immediately recognized that they are speaking in a foreign language. The Holy Spirit gave them the supernatural ability to do that just like he did in Acts chapter two.

Now let's go down... well, we will just going to make reference. Put this down in the book of Revelation. We are looking at how tongues is used through the New Testament. The book of Revelation tongues is referred to eight times. Guess what the number one meaning of the word tongues as it is used in Hebrews... in Revelation means? A literal, physical muscle in your mouth, most common time.

It is also used to refer to a known language, seven times. Actually it is used more of the

²⁰ Acts 10:44-47.

²¹ Acts 11:15.

known language than the physical tongue, but it is seven times it is used to refer to a known language.

So our first observation we are making here is this. Number one, the first time tongues is used in Acts chapter two, it is an existing language. The last time tongues is exercised in the book of Revelation it is an existing language. So first and last time it is a language. Are you doing ok? Is everybody all right? Let me quick crank these down. I am making better time than I thought and let's crank these out.

Come with me if you would quickly to 1 Corinthians chapter 12. This is better teaching than your amening. 1 Corinthians 12. Look at verse seven.

But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues.²²

Aha! Here we find in verse 10 tongues is given as a gift by the Holy Ghost. Very important thing we notice here, tongues is not the same as the gift of the Holy Ghost. Right? Follow what I am saying? The Holy Ghost was given. The gift of tongues is something separate than the giving of the Holy Ghost. Tongues is given by the Holy Ghost, the ability to speak in tongues.

Now notice verse 10.

“...to another divers kinds of tongues...”²³

What did we say it means Acts four? An existing language.

“...to another the interpretation of tongues.”²⁴

That tells us that it was possible to interpret these tongues. One is given the ability to speak in different kinds of known languages, therefore this tongues here, you are able to interpret them.

What does it mean to interpret something? It means to give or explain the meaning of. It has to be an existing language or nobody would know what the meaning of it was.

So it was possible to interpret these tongues which means they had to have meaning to them. There had to be some substance, existence to them.

²² 1 Corinthians 12:7-10.

²³ 1 Corinthians 12:10.

²⁴ Ibid.

Turn over to chapter 14 and we are winding down here. Chapter 14. We are going to get into this in some more detail later on. Notice verse four of chapter 14, a big tongues chapter.

“He that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifieth himself; but he that prophesieth edifieth the church.”²⁵

So, what does the word “edify” mean? To lift up, to build up, to strengthen. So the first verse here says the person that speaks in tongues edifies who? Himself. All right. To edify means to build up, to make stronger, to develop. So the idea here is tongues had to have been understood by the people who were speaking them. Or how could they have been edified? If they were just making noise and they didn’t understand what they were saying, how could that build them up? How could that strengthen their faith? How could that develop their walk with God?

Now it is important. Edification is not a description of a feeling. It is the establishment of my faith. It is the building up of my understanding and my love and devotion to the Lord. It is not describing some feeling I had. And the modern tongues movement, for the most part, when they speak in tongues the statements are this. And I have heard them.

“Oh, I felt so close to God. You could feel the presence of God.”

That is not edification. I am not casting doubt on the feeling a person had, but I am saying that is not biblical edification, feeling good. I can give testimony. I went to rock concerts as a teenager. I mean, ungodly satanic, perverse rock concerts. I came out of there feeling good and that was not edification. Do you see what I am saying? Feelings has nothing to do with it. You can fabricate feelings. You can set the atmosphere. That is what a lot of this contemporary music is. It is setting feelings. It is not establishing the faith.

And so they edified.

Now you say, “What about that word ‘unknown’ there? Look at that.”

“He that speaketh in an unknown tongue...”²⁶

Oh, see, they didn’t know what it was.

I want you to look carefully at your King James Bible and what does... what do you notice different about the word “unknown”? It is in italics. That to me verifies that God’s hand is upon the King James Bible because that is an act of integrity and honesty on the part of the translators. What they did was there was no corresponding Greek word for the word “unknown.” And if you get yours Strong’s concordance out, you try and look up

²⁵ 1 Corinthians 14:4.

²⁶ Ibid.

that word “unkonwn” there it is not there, because there is no corresponding Greek word of the English word “unknown” in your King James Bible.

You say, “Oh, so that is a mistake.”

Oh, no, no. It is a help. The translators put that word “unknown” there because there was no English, one English word to describe the Greek word what was being said. So the integrity and honesty they said, “We are going to add a word that is not here in the original. We are going to add that to explain the meaning of what is going on here.” And I say, “Praise the Lord for that.” You get any other translation of the Bible, any other version of the Bible you want and they will not be honest. They will change words, put things in, and make no indications of the changes they make.

Now I am not suggesting they change the translation here. I am saying when you translate from one language into another, the words don’t always line up. And so sometimes you have to use two words to translate one word in the other language.

If you speak Spanish you know exactly what I am talking about. Anybody that speaks another language, you know exactly. So they added that word there.

Is it wrong? No. It is simply they were using that, I believe, under the direction of God, to explain that word “tongue” there that it was a language that was not known previously to that person. All right? Do you follow me? It is not difficult. It was added by the translators to aid in our understanding.

Let me go one more and then we will shut it down. We will pick it up next week.

Look to 1 Corinthians 13. And this verse is used often. And, again, I want to set our biases aside. I want to come to this and look exactly what it means, what the Bible says.

1 Corinthians 13 look at verse one.

“Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.”²⁷

Now, what is the subject? The subject here is not tongues. The subject here is what? Charity. Having love.

He says, “Though I speak with the tongues of angels have not love, I am nothing.”

The subject is the love that he is supposed to have. He is simply using, speaking of tongues of men and angels to illustrate this point, all right? Are you with me?

But what does it mean to speak with the language of angels?

²⁷ 1 Corinthians 13:1.

Well, let's look what the Bible says. You go back to the Bible and look at every instance where an angel spoke whether it is in heaven or whether it is on earth and not one time from Genesis to Revelation do you have an angel speaking in anything other than a language what the hearers understand what is being said. You never have the angels speaking among themselves in some ununderstandable language. You never have the angels speaking to mankind in some ununderstandable language. You never have angels speaking to God or God to angels in some language that is not understood. It is always understood. And so the reference to tongues of angels does not mean some language that nobody understands.

You can go back in Genesis. The angels came down. They are going to burn up Sodom and Gomorrah. The spoke to Abraham. Guess what language they spoke in? Early Hebrew. That is what Abraham spoke.

In Daniel, Daniel is praying that God would help him to understand the prophecy of Jeremiah, when the 70th week was and how all this fits together. And Gabriel shows up and Gabriel speaks to Daniel. Guess what language he spoke in? Aramaic. He was in Babylon. That is what he was raised, taught to speak.

In Matthew you have Joseph, Mary's husband and the angel appears and says to take the child down to Egypt for two years and in a dream the angel spoke to him. Guess what language the angel spoke in. Greek.

Nowhere in the Bible are angels speaking in anything other than known languages.

So what is our conclusion? And this is what I end with. Tongues in the Bible, if we put out all our preconceived ideas, just go by what the Bible tells us and we will get into the... later one we will talk about how this is to be practiced. He gives guidelines there about how it is to be exercised and what not, but tongues in the Bible our conclusion is this: is a known, translatable language that is understood by the person speaking it. Tongues. What the Bible says.

I don't now how to give an invitation on something like this, other than this. Let's make sure that what we believe and what we practice is in line with Scripture. Amen?

Let's pray.

Father in heaven, bless, Lord. I hope, Lord, the substance and the Spirit by which I am trying to teach this comes across clearly, Lord.