

# The Bible's Three-fold Purpose for Speaking in Tongues

*About the Tongues Movement*

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Acts chapter two and we are continuing our study on the Bible and tongues. Acts chapter two.

I was filling the sword boxes around at the stores in the community here and I pulled in to Oakmar Motel yesterday afternoon and the restaurant was closed and I just went in. I was coming out and there was a little boy on the balcony, the rooms up above there and he was standing there. When I come out he said—he was probably about six or seven—he says, “Cool truck, dude.” I was driving that old truck.

And I said, “Thanks, man.”

He says, “What kind is it?”

I said, “It’s a Dodge.”

He said, “Awesome.”

So I drove out of there my held high, you know? He liked my truck.

Acts chapter two and verse number 12. Notice what the Bible says.

It says, “And they were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another.”<sup>1</sup> Look at this last phrase, “What meaneth this?”

And, of course, they are trying to figure out what was going on because Peter previously, in verses before that had been filled with the Holy Spirit and he was preaching a sermon in tongues. And all this list of folks here, verse eight, nine, 10, down through 11 and 12, all of the people heard them speaking the wonderful words of God in their own tongues, verse 11 says. And the folks said, “What meaneth this?”

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<sup>1</sup> Acts 1:12.

And that is my thought tonight. What does it mean to speak in tongues? What is the purpose of it? And so let's have a word of prayer and we will look into this.

*Father in heaven, thank you, again, for giving us the Bible. Lord, I know it is often not very popular to stick to the Word of God and, Lord, to limit ourselves to what you teach us in your Word. Nevertheless, Father, we want to be obedient. We want to be scriptural in what we do. And we don't want to lean on our own understanding. So I ask for your help tonight as we look into the Word of God. Be our teacher, I pray, Holy Spirit, again tonight for the service. I ask, God, I yield myself anew to you. Lord, I surrender myself to you. I yield my body anew to you. I pray you would fill me with your Spirit. And as I ask, Lord, please be our teacher tonight that we can be correct on this very important issue. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.*

I want to point out, first of all, I am not out after anybody. I am not trying to attack or tear down any church or individual Christian certainly. But we do want to be biblical in everything we do. We want to understand from things from God's perspective. And let me say this quickly. And this will come out in the coming messages, lessons, but there are good people who I believe are genuinely saved and sincerely love the Lord are involved in some of the things that we are critiquing from God's Word. So please don't misunderstand what our motives would be in this or what we are trying to say. We are very grateful for folks that get saved in churches that practice this. We are... any time somebody gets saved we are thrilled with that. But, as I said, we want to be biblical and I think if you are involved in something that is not scriptural it does not Scriptural, it does not help you. And I think you will see by the time we are over with it can actually... can and will actually hinder and hurt a person's growth in the Lord.

So last lesson, last week we established beyond a shadow of a doubt, that speaking in an un-understandable language, in a language that nobody understands, that is not found anywhere in the Old Testament. You don't find anybody in the Old Testament, Genesis to Malachi, nobody speaks in an unknown tongue as the word is used today. So that is not there.

The second thing we notice, we establish beyond the shadow of a doubt is that the first several times that the word "tongues" is mentioned in the New Testament it clearly refers to a supernatural ability to speak in a foreign language. We saw that in Acts chapter two and various places. So the first several times the word "tongues" is mentioned in the New Testament, it clearly refers to a supernatural ability to speak in a foreign language.

In fact, you remember—and you can do your own research on this—the modern tongues movement as it began in Kansas City with the fellow Charles Parham and even the tongues speaking charismatic group will recognize him as one of the key people in the modern day tongues movement. It began with the understanding that the ability to speak in tongues was the ability to, the supernatural ability to speak in a foreign language.

The very first person in the modern tongues movement to speak in tongues thought that she was speaking in Chinese as did everyone else involved with it. Later, a few days or a

few weeks later she was speaking in tongues and everyone believed she was speaking in Bohemian.

Well, of course, as it turned out that was proved false and as a result of that, rather than stopping the practice, they simply changed their understanding of what tongues was and they declared that they were speaking in an angelic language, that it was an unknown language, when it became obvious it was not an actual human language.

So, but my point is this. In the Bible it is clear that at least the first several mentions that tongues is the ability to speak in a foreign language, God giving that. And the founders of it, modern day tongues movement, believed that also.

Last week's conclusion was this. Well, let me back up here. The third thing we found last week that I think we established beyond a shadow of a doubt, is that the last eight references to tongues refer to various languages that man speaks throughout the world. Again, known languages.

So our conclusion was this. There is no reason when we get to 1 Corinthians which is where we are going to spend the rest of our study for the most part, there is no reason to interpret tongues in the book of 1 Corinthians any different than it is interpreted in the Old Testament in the first several references to tongues and the last eight references to tongues. When we get to Corinthians there are... we have no reason to think we should interpret it any other way.

And so we come to it with that understanding.

Tonight I want us to consider the purpose for the gift of tongues.

Now we said before there definitely is... there definitely was a gift of tongues given. The Bible mentions it. The Bible gives a fair portion of Scripture on it. We see people in the Bible practicing it. So the question is this. Why did God give tongues to the Church? Why did God enable Peter on the day of Pentecost to speak in tongues? Why do you have several people throughout the book of Acts? What is the purpose behind it?

Well, let me give you some reasons that are suggested. Charles Parham, again, a fellow that introduced the modern tongues movement said and taught that tongues, the supernatural gift of tongues was to be used for evangelism. It was to be used... it was enablement to speak a foreign language so you could go to that people group and that language they spoke and God would give you the ability and you could declare to them how to be saved.

Of course we found out that that didn't pan out and what they were experiencing, that was not the case.

Other people suggest that the gift of tongues is given to us as a gift of praise, that when they are speaking in tongues it is unknown language, they are actually praising God. ‘

A person wrote this, a person who practices in one of their articles wrote this.

“As I used the unknown language God had given me, I felt rising in me the love, the awe, the adoration that I had not been able to achieve in any thought out prayer.”

In other words, this person was saying that when I spoke in this quote, unquote, tongues, I felt the presence of God. I felt the love of God. I felt the awe of God more than I ever experienced in any prayer where I knew what I was saying.

Now there is a key word there. Let me explain a few things. First of all, prayer is not praise. There is a difference between praying and praising God. Now sometimes we will include in our prayer praise, but prayer in and of itself is not praising God. Praise is simply expressing to God my appreciation, my gratitude, my wonder at things that he has done for me, with me or through me, things that he has done. We praise God for his salvation. We praise God for giving us the Word of God.

Prayer, on the other hand is asking God for something. John R Rice wrote a whole book defining prayer as asking and receiving. And so prayer and praise are two different things. The emphasis of praise is God's goodness. When we praise God, the focus and the emphasis on praising God is not how we feel, but on how good God has been and how good he is to us. That is what the focus of prayer is. Are you with me? Everybody follow what we are saying?

So if you will notice here in this person's testimony—and let me read it again—they said, “As I used the unknown language God had given me, I felt rising in me the love, the law, the adoration that I had not been able to achieve in thought out prayer.”

Now here is the point I am trying to make and that is very representative of the idea behind a lot of people who speak and pray in tongues.

And the point is this. The emphasis of prayer and praise is not how it makes me feel, but the object is the God who I am praying to, the God who I am praising. Whether I feel like it or not is very incidental. I gave you a formulas. It has probably been several weeks or maybe a couple of months ago and I made reference to it over the years and I asked you to write it in your Bible and it goes like this.

I have to remember. It goes like this. Facts then faith and then feelings. And the problem is in modern Christianity a lot of places we get those things out of order. We must begin with facts. Well, or we could use this word. I used facts just to keep it alliterated. But we must begin with truth, the facts.

And then we place our faith in the truth in that fact which will often produce what? Feelings. But we must never put feelings before facts. If I base my... if I determine what is true and what is not true, what is fact and what is fiction based on how I feel, I am going to get in trouble every single time.

And, by the way, you must have the facts before you have faith. We don't have just blind faith. We believe in something. We believe... did you ever think about this? The gospel is a historical fact. Jesus Christ died for our sins and was buried and rose again.

So someone said, "The unsaved say, 'Ah, you have just got blind faith.'"

No, I don't have blind faith. I know exactly what I am trusting in. I know clearly what my faith is in. It is in the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

So when we get this feelings and facts and faith out of line then we get into a lot of trouble. Feelings do not determine facts, but rather, our feelings are a result of our faith in our facts.

Let's put it this way. Suppose you go to the pharmacist and you give the prescription. The Pharmacist says, "I have no idea what that thing says. I can't read that doctor's writing." And he goes, "I just feel like you probably ought to take this medicine."

And how many folks here would be very eager to take that medicine if they just gave it, "I just feel like you ought to have this"?

Not me, buddy. I am nervous even when they know what they are giving me.

And so you don't just go by feelings. If you practice that in any other area of life you are in trouble, right?

You are coming up to an intersection and you just saying, "I don't feel like there is any other cars coming. I will just drive right through that."

It doesn't matter how you feel.

And so why do we exercise? Why do we follow that formula in every other area of life, but then when we come to Christianity suddenly we go on feelings rather? And very dangerous.

So some folks say that speaking in tongues is a gift of praise because of the feelings it produces. Some others suggest that God gave the Church the gift of tongues as an evidence of the baptism and or the fullness of the Holy Spirit.

Now they say, "Well, God gave the gift and when you get filled with the Holy Spirit, when you are baptized with the Holy Spirit, then you will speak in tongues and that will be an evidence of that."

Now let me say this. There is not one verse in the Bible that suggests that tongues is an evidence of being filled with the Holy Spirit. There is not one verse in the Bible that would suggest that tongues is a result or evidence of being baptized with the Holy Spirit.

In fact, all believers are baptized with the Holy Spirit at the moment of salvation. But in the Bible very few people recorded in the Bible spoke in tongues. The vast majority of the people in the book of Acts did not speak in tongues. It is only a handful of people in the book of Acts that are mentioned speaking in tongues.

But yet every believer is baptized with the Holy Spirit the moment they are saved. And in the book of Acts you find multitudes of believers being filled with the Holy Spirit repeatedly, but, again, there is only a handful of people that are recorded as speaking in tongues. And so there is no evidence. There is no verses suggesting that that speaking in tongues is evidence of the baptism or filling of the Holy Spirit. In fact, the Bible tells us what the clear evidence of the Holy Spirit's filling is.

Now, have you got your Bibles with you? Turn with me, if you would. Let's go... we are in Acts here. Come over to chapter one. Look with me at chapter one of acts and look at verse number eight.

Now if you have been in Bible institute Wednesday night you will know the answer to this question. In Acts chapter one verse eight had they been baptized with the Holy Spirit yet at this point? No, not yet. Not in Acts 1:8.

But look what it says.

“But ye shall receive power, after that the [what?] Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall [speak in tongues].”<sup>2</sup>

Is that what it says? No. Jesus said in Acts chapter one and verse eight that the evidence of the Holy Spirit coming upon, baptizing, filling a person was that they would be a what? A witness to the Lord. They would be a witness of the gospel. And so one of the clear evidences of being filled with the Holy Spirit is not speaking in tongues, but rather being a witness for the Lord.

Come over to chapter four and notice with me verse 31. Here is a great verse. Boy, this is a good one to underline in your Bible, Acts 4:31.

“And when they [the believers] had prayed, the place...”<sup>3</sup>

Now what did they pray? Well, come up to verse 29. This is what their prayer request is.

“And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word.”<sup>4</sup>

That is their request.

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<sup>2</sup> Acts 1:8.

<sup>3</sup> Acts 4:31.

<sup>4</sup> Acts 4:29.

Now look at verse 31.

“And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all [what?] filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake [in tongues]. the word of God with boldness.”<sup>5</sup>

Is that what it says? No. No reference to speaking in tongues at all. Now they are very clearly filled with the Holy Spirit, but this doesn't say anything about speaking in tongues. Look what it does say.

“And they all spake the word of God with [what?] boldness.”<sup>6</sup>

So another evidence of being filled with the Holy Spirit, being under the control of the Holy Spirit is that I will speak God's Word with boldness. I am not going to be ashamed to declare the Word of God. I am going to be bold about that on the job, in the family, in the home, in the neighborhood, Thursday night, Saturday, Sunday. I am out in the community. I am sharing the Word of God boldly, unashamedly.

And now let's look at one more. Come over to Ephesians chapter five. Evidences of being filled with the Holy Spirit. Ephesians chapter five and in verse number 18 is a command. And notice what it says.

“And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be [what?] filled with the Spirit.”<sup>7</sup>

Now notice the punctuation there. It is not a period. The thought continues.

And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ; Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.<sup>8</sup>

Now personally I take that to be a series of commands. But I think it is interesting that singing to yourselves in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs, giving thanks to the Lord, submitting one to another, all those are associated with being filled with the Holy Spirit. And so I would suggest that if a person is filled with the Holy Spirit, they are obedient to the command in verse 18. Then verse 19 and 20 and 21 would also be true in their life and so we find associated with being filled with the Holy Spirit is the idea of singing and giving thanks and submitting humbly one to another.

But nowhere do you find the idea that if a person is filled with the Holy Spirit, if a person is baptized with the Holy Spirit, then speaking in tongues is evidence of that. if

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<sup>5</sup> Acts 4:31.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Ephesians 5:18.

<sup>8</sup> Ephesians 5:18-21.

you work with somebody or if you have a family member, you have a neighbor or some acquaintance that tells you, “Oh, you are saved. You are a Christian. Have you received the Holy Spirit?” And they try to convince you, you need the Holy Spirit and evidence of that is to speak in tongues, you ask them. Show me where that is taught in the Bible?

And they will not be able to show you that, because it is not there. And so some people suggest that the gift of tongues was given to us by God to be evidence of the baptism or the fullness of the Holy Spirit, yet we don't see that anywhere in the Bible.

Now one thing we have to be careful about when we are considering what was tongues given to us for, we need to be careful about having a wrong attitude about this. We need to have the attitude that God is right and we are wrong. Amen?

Listen to what one woman said. This is in a book. I have it in my library. She wrote to a Bible preaching preacher, a Bible believing preacher who was preaching, teaching against tongues or not against it, teaching the biblical teaching of tongues. She wrote this. Listen very carefully.

She said, “You resort to Greek translations and fancy words to explain away what the Holy Spirit is doing in the Church today. Let me give you a piece of advice that just might save you from the wrath of almighty God.”

Now listen to her advice.

“Put away your Bible and your books and stop studying. Ask the Holy Ghost to come upon you and give you the gift of tongues. You have no right to question something you have never experienced.”

That is a dangerous advice. That is dangerous advice.

“Put away your Bible. Stop your studying and just ask God to give you the Holy Spirit and the gift of tongues.”

Now let me say this. God will never do anything that contradicts his Word. Our God is a just God. Our God is true. Our God is a God of integrity. He cannot nor will not violate his own Word. So if something is of God it must conform to God's Word.

This woman makes experience the authority of right and wrong. Well, if you have this experience, then that is what determines what is right.

Listen, again. If you apply that in any other area of life you are going to have a mess on your hands.

Years ago there was a song. I have no idea who wrote it and I don't know anything more about, but this phrase came to mind as I was preparing this. It goes like this.



“It seems so right, it can’t be wrong.”

And I think the song, what she was singing about was adultery. And the idea was this. I know we are not married. I know you are not my spouse, but, boy, it just feels so right between us. It can’t be wrong.

That is the exact same logic this woman is using.

“Well, I had such an experience and it felt so right. It has to be of God.”

Listen. That is a dangerous, dangerous approach. We had several years ago I had testimony of a fellow who was in a service in a church in our community. An evangelist was there and I shared this a number of times, but I think it illustrates so perfectly this mentality.

The evangelist said, “Listen, you can leave your Bibles at home this week. I have a word from God. I will share you what God’s Word is for us this week.”

Brother, if that is ever said from this pulpit you better raise a stink and if it is not corrected, you ought to leave this church. I will be the first one raising the stink. Believe me.

God’s Word is our authority, not our experience.

So when we come to the Word of God, we are going to... all right. Here is the subject of tongues. I want to know what the Bible teaches on this.

Well, we know the Bible says there definitely was a gift of tongues. No doubt about it. People spoke in tongues in the Bible. All right. Why did God give them? We talked about what they were, known language. Now why were they given?

Let me quickly give you what I see three purposes for the gift of tongues. I think I can do this quickly.

First of all, tongues were given as a means of revelation. Now we are going to go to 1 Corinthians chapter 14.

Now my approach to this is going to be we have no reason to think that tongues means anything other than what it meant in Acts chapter two, what it meant in Revelation, what it meant anywhere else in the Bible. It was a human language and God giving the supernatural ability to speak in that human language.

Now look at 1 Corinthians 14. Look at verse number one. I will give you a chance to get there, 1 Corinthians 14 verse on.

“Follow after charity, and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy.”<sup>9</sup>

So right here he is saying that, you know, it is ok to desire these gifts, but what is the thing you ought to major on according to verse one? What does it look? Prophecy.

“Desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy.”<sup>10</sup> That is the important one.

Now look at verse two.

“For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no man understandeth him; howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries.”<sup>11</sup>

Now the immediate context of this, if you read this chapter, read the context, you find that it is talking about the vanity of speaking in tongues without an interpreter. That is what the whole thing is. You get this whole chapter. It is saying, “You know, what good is speaking in tongues if nobody understands what you are saying if you don’t have an interpreter there.”

If you don’t have an interpreter, he is saying, then the only one who knows what you are saying is God and that is not going to help anybody.

Look at verse one. In verse one he says, “But rather that ye may prophesy.”<sup>12</sup>

Come over to verse three.

“But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort.”<sup>13</sup>

It is helping them.

Verse four.

He that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifieth himself; but he that prophesieth edifieth the church. I would that ye all spake with tongues, but rather that ye prophesied: for greater is he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues, except he interpret, that the church may receive edifying.<sup>14</sup>

The whole idea here is if you are speaking in tongues and there isn’t an interpreter it is not helping anybody. And we pointed out before that genuine biblical tongues the person

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<sup>9</sup> 1 Corinthians 14:1.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> 1 Corinthians 14:2.

<sup>12</sup> 1 Corinthians 14:1.

<sup>13</sup> 1 Corinthians 14:3.

<sup>14</sup> 1 Corinthians 14:4-5.

speaking in it knew what he was saying. So he is edifying himself, but he is not doing the Church any good. Paul says it is better to prophesy so everybody knows what you are saying and the Church can be built up and comforted and exhorted.

So prophecy, according to this, is a greater profit to the Church than tongues.

Now there is an interesting word in verse two. It says, “For no man understandeth him [there is no interpreter] howbeit in the spirit he speaketh [what is that last word?] mysteries.”<sup>15</sup>

That is an interesting word. The word “mysteries” simply in the Bible simply means something that was once unexplained, something that was once hidden, the meaning of it was hidden. The meaning of it was secret, but now it has been revealed.

He is saying here, “he speaketh in mysteries.”<sup>16</sup> In other words, he is proclaiming something or declaring something that was previously hidden. The reason that tongues was given according to verse two is to speak mysteries, is to declare things that people before did not know but now is being revealed to them.

The word “mysteries” is used 27 times in the Bible.

Turn with me to Colossians chapter one real quickly if you would, Colossians chapter one.

I tell you what. Closer is Romans. Let’s go back here to Romans first. I will try to put them in order here. Romans chapter 16 and verse number 25. Romans 16:25.

“Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ [now look at this], according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began.”<sup>17</sup>

So what is he saying here? He is saying the gospel, the fact that Jesus Christ would die, be buried and rise again, the preaching of Jesus Christ was a mystery. It was unknown before.

Now they knew a messiah was coming. They knew he would be a suffering Savior. But they didn’t know it was Jesus Christ. They didn’t have the details of the gospel and so Paul says, “Now we are declaring to you that mystery, who the Messiah is.”

Come over to Ephesians chapter three real quickly with me. Another time the word mystery is used, Ephesians chapter three and verse number two.

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<sup>15</sup> 1 Corinthians 14:2.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Acts 16:25.

If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you—ward: How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words.<sup>18</sup>

Now for sake of time, if you study this context out, he is saying that the dispensation of the Church age in the Old Testament was a mystery. It was hidden. The Jews didn't know about it. In fact, they had a rough time with it about Gentile and Jew being one in Christ. Man, they struggled. That was a mystery. And he says, "God is revealing this to you. He is giving revelation this thing that was once a mystery."

We can go over one more text... verse here in Colossians chapter one. Along the same lines verse number 25.

Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God; Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints.<sup>19</sup>

Again, the idea is that the Jews, the Old Testament, this fact of the Church and this dispensation of the Church age was hidden to them, but now he is revealing it to him. We are one in Christ. The barriers are broken down. There is no longer Greek, Barbarian, Jew, male or female, but we are all one in Christ. And that mystery is being revealed.

So when we come back with the biblical definition of the word mystery, how it is used, we come to Colossians chapter four and we find that tongues was a means that God gave further revelation of truths that were before hidden in the Old Testament.

And so it is nothing mystical or magical about it. Let me get back there, 1 Corinthians 14.

"For no man understandeth him; howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries."<sup>20</sup>

He is revealing these things that were hidden before. So tongues was given as a means of revelation. Let me throw this out. Christianity has no secrets. We don't have anything hidden, no doctrines that are hidden. Now cults like to have secret doctrines. They will have secret ceremonies, but everything in Christianity is wide open. We don't have any secret ordinances that only certain people do behind closed doors. The Mormons do. A person can't go into the temple just any old person can't go in. And you have got to be committed to that thing to find out what goes on in there. We don't have any secret baptisms. We don't have any secret anything. Christianity is not a mystery now. It has all been revealed.

Number two, a second purpose for the gift of tongues, that is one of them there, verse one. I see another one is a means to communicate the gospel.

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<sup>18</sup> Ephesians 3:2-3.

<sup>19</sup> Colossians 1:25-26.

<sup>20</sup> 1 Corinthians 14:2.

Look at 1 Corinthians 14. Are you with me? Everybody awake out there? Ok. Praise the Lord.

Somebody said that it is supposed to snow tonight. The temperature is dropping. Think about Bear County. Any time you say that in the back of your mind you wonder. Man, maybe it really might.

Look at verse 14, 1 Corinthians 14.

“For if I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful. What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also.”<sup>21</sup>

In other words, I am going to know what I am praying.

“I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also.”<sup>22</sup>

In other words, you ought to know what you are singing. By the way, you ought to know what is being sung.

Else when thou shalt bless with the spirit, how shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned say Amen at thy giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest? For thou verily givest thanks well, but the other is not edified. I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than ye all: Yet in the church [look at this] I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice [look at this. Why would he want to speak five words with understanding?] that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue [a tongue that people don't know what I am saying]. Brethren, be not children in understanding: howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men.

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. Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not: but prophesying serveth not for them that believe not, but for them which believe.<sup>23</sup>

So tongues, one of the purposes of tongues is as a means to communicate the gospel. Verse 19 he gives amazing odds. He says, “I would rather speak five words that people understand than 10,000 words that nobody understands.” That is pretty incredible odds. That means for every 2000 words... that means I should speak 2000 words in my own

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<sup>21</sup> 1 Corinthians 14:14-15.

<sup>22</sup> 1 Corinthians 14:15.

<sup>23</sup> 1 Corinthians 1:16-22.

language than for every one word I speak in a foreign language. That means a person is going to speak in tongues, it ought to be 2000 to one, 2000 words understandable, one word not understandable.

And so what is the purpose?

Verse 20 and 21.

The Corinthians failed to understand the purpose of tongues. Verse 21 is a quote of Isaiah 28 verse 11. And what he is doing in Isaiah 28 he is telling Israel, "You rejected your own prophets that God sent to you. Therefore God is going to send people of a foreign language and they are going to declare the coming Son of God."

And that is exactly what is happening today. How many Jews do you know that are traveling around declaring the Word of God? Not many. You had a founder of... down in Chattanooga, Gardenhouse, Dr. Jacob Gardenhouse and I think Hymen Appleman. I think he was a Jew. You have very few.

Most of it is speaking not in Greek, not in Hebrew, but it is being spoken in English and various languages around the world.

And God is saying, "You Jews, you rejected the prophets I sent to you to declare the coming Messiah. Therefore, I am going to have people of another language. They are going to declare the message of the Messiah."

And it was fulfilled after the Lord resurrected.

So through people of a foreign language, these other tongues. In Acts chapter two we already looked at that. It was a means of declaring God's message to those people in Jerusalem who did not speak Hebrew or Greek. They spoke foreign languages. God gave the ability of tongues so that they could hear the wonderful works of God.

Tongues is not given by God to be a toy for Christians to enjoy, but it was given as a powerful means of declaring the gospel and the dangers of rejecting the gospel.

And so another purpose for the gift of tongues was to declare the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Let me give you the last one real quickly. I see a third purpose for tongues and tongues were given as a sign to confirm God's message.

Look at verse 22 of 1 Corinthians 14.

"Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not."<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> 1 Corinthians 14:22.

So tongues were given as a sign. The question: Why would God's message require a sign? Why would God have to give a sign when he had a message given? The answer is because they at that point had no authority to confirm this new message. Paul shows up in a city and he goes to the synagogue and he goes, "Have you all heard of Jesus Christ the Messiah?"

They say, "We don't know what you are talking about it. We heard about it. We don't know anything about it."

So he declares that and they want to know, is this a legitimate message of God? So God would give them a sign.

In Jesus, particularly, the Jews would ask Jesus over and over to give him a sign, to confirm the fact that he was the Messiah.

In Matthew chapter 12 verse 38, Matthew 16 verse one, John chapter two verse 18, John chapter six verse 30, they asked Jesus over and over and over, "Show us a sign. Show us a sign. Show us a sign." They needed something to confirm that this was really of God.

Now, let me ask you a question. If I just speak in ... if the apostles are declaring that Jesus is the Messiah and there are Jews there and they say, "Oh, yeah, how do we know this is of God?" And they just speak in gibberish, what does that prove? It proves nothing. Anybody could do that. There is no way to say that that speaking in gibberish is of God.

And, by the way, I am getting a little ahead of myself here, but every religion known to man has some form of tongues practiced in that religion. So to say that it is of God, just some gibberish, they could say, "Well, so what. You could just be making that up."

But if that person is able to speak in every language in the audience hears them in their own language and what they are saying is true and makes sense, that can only be of God. That can't be manufactured. That can't be something the devil's... not synthetic, but counterfeit. If they are speaking in a known language, then those listening can confirm, yes, that is amazing. That is miraculous. This message must be of God, but simply speaking in some gibberish that nobody understands doesn't prove a thing.

In Ephesians chapter two and verse 20 the Bible says the apostles laid the foundation of the Church.

In 2 Corinthians chapter 12 and verse 12 it says that certain signs were given to the apostles so that they could confirm that this message had authority. Their laying the foundation of the Church wasn't just their Word. They had signs from God. They could do wonders and signs and speak in tongues to confirm their authority and confirm their message.

Now, what is the purpose of tongues? One it was to give further revelation that God was revealing truths about the Church and the new dispensation of the Church age. It was given to evangelize the lost.

Peter in Acts chapter two, 3000 people got saved. They heard him preaching in his own language, in their own language.

But it was given, I believe, primarily to be a sign, an apostolic sign that this Church being established, that what was happening was actually and genuinely of God and that is what the healings and other gifts that were given, the apostolic gifts were given to confirm that what they were doing was genuinely of God.

Now here is a question comes up and I end with this. Do we need those signs today? If something is taking place, if a message is being declared, something is taking place and I want to know whether it is really of God or not, we live in a day where we have the completed Word of God. They didn't have it at that point. The apostles were building the Church. This message was new. God was bringing his Word together.

But up to that point, the Word of God was not completed. By the time the last apostle died God's Word was completed, John.

When God's Word was complete, the apostles passed off the scene. Their sign, the apostolic signs passed off with them because now we have the Word of God.

And think about this of a moment. To seek a sign from God when we have his Word, think about it. If I am saying, "God, I know what your Word says, but I need a sign," what am I suggesting? I am suggesting that God's Word isn't good enough.

It is actually an act of doubt on my part on God's Word.

What is the old saying? God said it and that what? Settles it. I think the popular one goes, "God said it. I believe it. That settles it." That is out of whack. It should be, "God said it. That settles it. Therefore I am going to believe it."

And so we don't need sign gifts today because we have God's Word.

If I am asking God for a sign after he has given me his Word, that means I am doubting his Word, but also it means my faith is awfully weak if I need a sign on top of it.

How many here when you were kids were young you would stand in the swimming pool or somewhere off the dock in a lake or something and the kids would be there and you would say, "Jump to me. I'll catch you."

How many people ever do that with your kids? You teach them how to swim. Jump. I will catch you.



And they stand there and, boy, they didn't know if you would or not. Maybe your kids trusted you. Mine didn't.

Many they are, "Is Dad's word good or not?"

And I would say, "Come on. You can trust me."

And that is exactly. God's Word says, "Listen. You can trust my Word."

"And I need some sign, God. I need some..."

That is not a good thing. That is weak faith and that is doubting God.

Now, don't misunderstand what I am saying, but I believe this. The practice comes today. If I as pastor would introduce to Mountain Lake Independent Baptist Church the practice of modern speaking in tongues, several things, one of two things would be true. That would indicate either that I am ignorant of God's Word, I do not understand what the Bible teaches about it, or I am denying God's Word and I am making my own understanding the authority, not the Word of God.

Do you follow what I am saying?

I see it very, very clear in the Scriptures. I think it becoming an open heart, open mind, without preconceived ideas, it is very clear what tongues is. And to practice it means I am either I don't understand the Bible or I am rejecting what the Bible says and I am saying, "I want this experience anyway."

And that is a very dangerous thing. I think the thing I want to leave us with this evening and this message tonight is this. It is that we must not adopt the attitude of this lady we quoted a little bit ago in any form where we say, "My experience is the authority and God's Word must submit to my experience.

It is always God's Word the authority and I submit my experience... I critique my experience in light of God's Word whether it is right or wrong.

Make sense?

And we have got to do that with every area of life, not just tongues. Every day. All right is this scriptural? Is this in line with God's Word?

Well, I just feel...

Boy, you better not do that. The Bible says, "He that trusteth in his own heart is a..."<sup>25</sup> what? He is a fool the Bible says.

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<sup>25</sup> Proverbs 28:26.

Let's pray.

*Father in heaven, I ask you to help us to be scriptural as we always...*