

Pentecost and Speaking In Tongues

Modern Speaking in Tongues Is Not of God

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I wish all of you could have heard Richard's sermon this morning, on what wisdom is. Included in that was the responsibility that we have to seek it, and also the cost to us involved in seeking it.

I am going to speak this afternoon on a subject that has a connection to Pentecost, but it is on foolishness—or a very specific "foolishness" that has a connection to Pentecost through the speaking in tongues.

Three events and one circumstance motivated me to speak on this today. The first was that Ambassador Auditorium was sold to the Harvest Church group, which is rooted in the so-called Toronto Blessings signs that features quite a number of activities that are strange to us. The second event is that speaking in tongues very definitely played a very noticeable part in the events that occurred on the day the Church of God was founded in 31 A.D. And the third is a circumstance, and that is that I could only find one set of notes in which I was the speaker on the tongues subject; and those notes were dated in June of 1983. The fourth is another event in that we received a challenging email from someone out there in the world giving statements with seeming biblical backing as to why speaking in tongues should be a part of every Christian's life in the church.

It is interesting to me that Bernard Schnippert, one of the chief officers in the Worldwide Church of God, publicly stated in announcing the sale of Ambassador Auditorium, the Hall of Administration, the men's dorm and the student center and gym that they were pleased that the sale was made to another Christian group.

Is it Christian for one to bark like a dog during services? How about clucking like a chicken? Laughing hysterically, roaring like lions, or staggering around as if drunk all the while the services are in progress? Those doing these things, and those approving this, claim that they are genuine manifestations of the Holy Spirit.

Is not the Holy Spirit the reflection of the mind and power of God? What does clucking like a chicken have to do with the Mind so awesome and powerful that it is able to make the universe and all of its heavenly bodies, create all of the animals and us besides, give us life, and keep it all in orderly living movement?

On the other hand, the man who wrote in did not advocate any of these manifestations. But he said that he did not know whether anybody who could not see that speaking in tongues is needful for communicating more fervently and intimately with God is trustworthy as a spiritual guide.

The Pentecostal movement began about 100 years ago. It has grown to be quite large—so large that the Toronto Blessing group Numbers 300,000 people. It has only been going on for about

12 years, but 300,000 people have been attracted to this nonsense.

There is no doubt that speaking in tongues is part of the founding of the church. In fact, Jesus even prophesied that speaking in tongues would occur. I want you to turn to Mark 16. This is during that portion of time when Jesus gave the church—the apostles—their commission. In verse 15, He tells them to go and preach the gospel in the world to every creature. Then, verse 16:

Mark 16:16-17 "He that believes and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believes not shall be condemned. And these signs shall follow them that believe; in My name shall they cast out demons; they shall speak with new tongues."

This is the only place in Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John where the speaking in tongues is mentioned. A significant word here for us is the word "new." That is, in "new tongues." It can only mean that they were going to speak in languages new to them—not a language that never existed before. We will see this as we go along. We will give more and more evidence to this.

If I say that Chinese is new to me, I do not mean that I never knew that there was such a language. I mean that it is new to me because I can neither speak it nor understand when others speak it. Now, on the other hand, Spanish is not new to me because I can both understand and read very small portions of it. So there is a difference between the two in terms of newness.

Acts 2:1-4 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. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

Here is the very beginning of the New Testament church. It was introduced to the world through the use of a number of signs—one of which was the manifestation of speaking in tongues. Notice that Luke did not say "new" as Jesus did. Instead, he used another Greek word—*heteros*—which means "other" (tongues). This simply means that they spoke in languages different from the language that they normally used. This is substantiated right in the context of chapter 2. I want you to look at verses 6-8.

Acts 2:6-8 Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language. And they were all amazed and marveled, saying one to another, "Behold, are not all these which speak Galileans? And how hear we every man in our own tongue [or, language], wherein we were born?"

The crowd that was there fully expected to hear them speak in the Galilean dialect. It is interesting that Luke used the Greek word for "dialect" here—not "languages." Where the word "tongues" is (in verse 8), in my margin it says "language, or dialect." And dialect is the correct translation of that word. So they expected these people to speak in the Galilean dialect.

Now let us read verses 9 through 12 because it gives us a listing of the people who were there listening.

Acts 2:9-12 Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judea, 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 does this mean?"

In these verses, all languages—spoken and heard—were all known and common languages; but they were new to those who were speaking them. Normally they would have spoken in the Galilean dialect, which was probably a branch of the Aramaic language with a Galilean twist to it.

What we need to do right here is kind of tuck away in our memory banks that right here before us, in Acts 2, is an example of speaking in tongues in its pure and unperverted form as God gave it. That becomes more important as we move along. This is the pure example of speaking in tongues.

We are going to go from here to Revelation 17, to continue to lay a foundation here.

Revelation 17:15 And he said unto me, "The waters which you saw, where the whore sits, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues [or, languages]."

It is interesting that this phrase, with slight adjustments to the wording, appears 7 times in the book of Revelation. This is the seventh time that we are looking at right here. If you want, I will give you where they appear. It is Revelation 5:9; 7:9; 10:11; 11:9; 13:7; and 14:6. In each case, the word "tongues" means the language associated with the various nationalities and races that are inferred within the verse. There should not be any doubt in anyone's mind that "tongues"—in Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Acts, and Revelation—all mean *languages*.

Now, back to the beginning of the sermon again. Are the barking, roaring, plucking, and gibberish done by the Toronto Blessings group the languages of any people on earth that you know? That ought to give you something to think about right off the bat. The closest that I know is that group of people in Africa that speaks with a strange clicking in their voice—the Bushmen. But they are still speaking a language that is interspersed with the clicks. Nobody speaks entirely or communicates to one another in barking (I do not even know that dogs

communicate with one another in barking.), clucking, roaring, or whatever.

What we are seeing here, at least in this foundation, is strong evidence in the Bible that the word *tongues* clearly refers to human languages. The biblical problems begin arising with the use of the same words that are translated "tongues" in I Corinthians 12, 13, and 14 (three chapters there), and when people insist that the word "tongues" mean ecstatic utterances NOT known in any country on earth.

Those who are among the more ignorant among these tongues speaking groups base this on the fact that the word "unknown" appears in a number of verses in those chapters. I will give you one, and I will show the example. The King James Version has had very wide circulation on the earth. And I am not sure, because I did not check it out, whether this appears in any modern translations. But it does appear in the King James; and many, many people are using the King James Bible.

I Corinthians 14:2 For he that speaks in an *unknown* tongue speaks not unto men, but unto God: for no man understands him; howbeit in the spirit he speaks mysteries.

You will notice that the word "unknown" is italicized—indicating that the word has been inserted in order to clarify (or, so they thought!). Actually, it caused a great deal of confusion. It was inserted by them. And it was inserted because no Greek manuscript has any word there. None, zilch!

In other words, it just says "tongues" without the "*unknown*" in front of it. They thought they were going to clarify by putting that "*unknown*" in. So what they inserted was their interpretation—NOT the translation of a Greek, or for that matter a Hebrew, word. And there is no warrant whatever for the translators doing this. The apostle was simply not inspired to use the word "unknown" because, in every other place in the Bible that the word "tongue" appears, it simply means another language available to and spoken by mankind somewhere on earth! It was simply a language foreign to the speaker, but NOT to the hearer.

I Corinthians 14:9 [Paul writes:] So likewise you, except you utter by the tongue words easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken? For you shall speak into the air.

What Paul does here is that he cuts through all the faldral by showing that there is no reason for anyone to speak at all, except to converse intelligibly. Incidentally, in a way this is an aside, but it is helpful--the Greek word translated "speak" in this chapter is NEVER used, anywhere in the Bible, for a mere sound or gibberish. It is solely used for speaking words. That eliminates roaring, plucking, barking. It is always used for words.

The tongues speaking in the New Testament was in the native languages of the people hearing, but not the people speaking. Thus, when things occurred correctly—as they did in Acts 2—the miracle was in the speaking. However, I mentioned Acts 2; and the phenomenon that took place on Pentecost was the exercise of the gift whereby many people of many languages heard

all of the speakers in their own native language regardless of who spoke and what language it might have been spoken in. So we have a double miracle here. In this case, the miracle was in the hearing as much as it was in the speaking.

So let us say that you have 5, or 6, or 7 of the men from that group there—those who were followers of Jesus Christ—who were all speaking. Of this I am sure: They were not all speaking at once. If they were all speaking at once, they were situated in such a way in which there would be no clash at all between each speaker and what the speaker was saying to the group to whom he was speaking. If they were close enough together that such a thing would have created confusion and disorder, then each man spoke in order; and, as he spoke, he spoke in a different language. But regardless of the language that he spoke in, those who were hearing heard him in their own tongue.

Let us say there were 12 different nationalities of people out there. Then, let us say just for fun that the man spoke in Greek. His voice came out in Greek; but everybody else heard it in Parthian, Egyptian, Arabian, or whatever else. Is that clear?

So we have two different kinds of tongues miracles. One just involves the speaking miracle; and the other is the speaking and the hearing miracle, and that is what occurred there in Acts 2. And that is one of the reasons why we say that in Acts 2 we have the pure example of speaking in tongues.

Now the speaking in tongues is given for the purpose of understanding the message—most specifically the gospel of the Kingdom of God, or some specific aspect of it. Is it not a strange interpretation of Scripture that teaches that the gift of tongues is incoherent, incomprehensible babbling, or barking, or clucking, or roaring? Or, as the man said in his challenging letter, totally private—when its major purpose is to communicate intelligibly. And its secondary purpose was to make a visible and audible witness.

Already you ought to be able to see that what we are leading to here in I Corinthians 14, which people today interpret as being babbling or whatever, but there is clearly something wrong with that.

I Corinthians 14:22 Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not?

We are getting more specific here about the purpose for tongues. Tongues are a sign for unbelievers. So where was all this tongue speaking taking place in Corinth? It was taking place in the congregation in Corinth, which was supposed to be all believers!

I Corinthians 14:22 Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not: but prophesying serves not for them that believe not, but for them which believe.

Signs are associated in the New Testament with a divinely given message. I want you to turn back to John 20.

John 20:30-31 And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written, that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you might have life through His name.

Jesus did a lot of signs. That word in Greek is *semeion*, and it is associated with pointing to Christ and the message that He had for people. Flip back to John 2, where we have the miracle of turning water into wine. This was the very first of the miracles that Jesus did.

John 2:11 This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth His glory; and His disciples believed on Him.

That word translated "miracles" there is exactly the same word in John 20:30-31 where it is translated "signs," which is the proper translation. Here it is translated "miracles," but it is the same word— *semeion*. It was a sign. The miracle, the changing of water into wine, John says was a sign.

Signs were never performed without a purpose. You can see right in the verse that the purpose was to convince His followers of Whom He was, and they believed. It had that affect. So signs are never performed without a purpose. Think of this in relation to tongues. Signs always communicated a message. They are indicators of something significant. And the something significant is not just the miracle that was performed. They are pointing to something else.

Signs, just like signs on the street, give direction for one to look. But who is supposed to look? Primarily, unbelievers. Signs are for unbelievers. For these people in Corinth to use the gift when unbelievers were NOT present would be exercising the gift beyond the purpose for which it was given.

We are beginning to see that something tragically wrong was happening in Corinth, in the church there. These people were using a God-given gift to them during services when it was NOT needed. You know, from much of the chapter, that what it created was disorder and confusion within the congregation.

On top of that, we can begin to add another thing to that; and that is that it was never given for vanity-driven self-satisfaction and glory within the congregation; and yet that was where they were using it—within the congregation. So the true function of the gift of tongues is for a sign. It is given to communicate a message. But it becomes more needful for us to locate the problem in Corinth.

I will tell you what the problem was. It was a vanity-driven abuse and misuse of a gift—tongues—that motivated Paul to write these chapters. He devotes three chapters to this. (I Corinthians 12, 13, and 14) Back in I Corinthians 14:20, we begin to see where the problem was.

I Corinthians 14:20 Brethren, be not children in understanding.
Howbeit in malice be you children, but in understanding be men.

That is not really a very good translation, to say the least. But he is stating what the problem is. Children and men are being used to show relative ages—relative levels of maturity. Children are immature. Men (adults) are to be mature. Thus he said, "*Brethren, be not immature in understanding; howbeit in malice (in evil) be immature.*" In other words, do not have any. But in understanding, be mature.

Some who were gifted with this ability were showing off—acting like silly immature children in the use of their God-given gift; and it was offending some, causing jealousies, creating confusion, bickering and division in the congregation. We are going to see, very quickly here, how Paul confirmed the spiritual state of that congregation.

I Corinthians 3:1 And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal?

Was Paul bold, or what? He was telling these people, "*Get with it! You are carnal.*"

I Corinthians 3:1-3 ?even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat; for hitherto you were not able to bear it, either yet now are you able. For you are yet carnal: For whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are you not carnal, and walk as men?

We are going to look at this a little bit further. In Hebrews 5, the author of Hebrews says this, to that group there:

Hebrews 5:12-14 For when for the time you ought to be teachers, you have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that uses milk is unskillful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongs to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

Brethren, the Corinthians were no different from those people that the author of the book of Hebrews wrote to. They simply were not growing up in their relationship with God. They had been in the church a number of years, but they were stuck at a very immature age spiritually. They were victims of some arrested development in some area of Christian life.

Acts 2 in combination with I Corinthians 14 are the chapters that those tongues speaking groups look to for their authority to conduct themselves as they do. But Paul said that people who do such things are yet carnal. Does that give you some sort of an idea where these people are spiritually? These people doing these things are unconverted. They are yet carnal. They are childlike in terms of spiritual maturity because they do not even understand the Scriptures.

After saying to these people, "*Quit being children, but become men in understanding,*" Paul says:

I Corinthians 14:21 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," says the Lord.

What he is referring to here is that their failure lays in not being fully acquainted with the Old Testament Scriptures. It left them incapable to rightly use their gift. I Corinthians 14:21 is quoting a prophecy that is given in Isaiah 28:11. I want you to go back there and see it. Jesus picked up on this, and that is how He knew that people were going to speak in tongues following His death and resurrection. Isaiah 28:11 says:

Isaiah 28:11 For with stammering lips and another tongue will he speak to this people.

This is what Paul quoted there in I Corinthians 14:21, and it means that by means of the gift of tongues God overcame the language barrier separating people from understanding His message.

Acts 2:8 And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?

Again, if we would read more of this chapter, we would observe that the hearers were—by and large, overwhelmingly—Israelites who traveled from other parts of the Mediterranean area. They were probably overwhelmingly Jews born in nations outside of Israel. But they were hearing in the language they grew up with, not with the dialect of Aramaic-speaking Galileans. Thus the prophecy in Isaiah 28 was partially being fulfilled.

Now, Acts 10—where Peter was sent to speak to the Gentiles for the very first time.

Acts 10:44-46 While Peter yet spoke these words, the Holy Spirit 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 Spirit. For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God.

Here we have, for the first time, the gospel communicated to non-Israelitish people. Remember that, when the gospel was first preached to the Jews in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost, tongues were present. Now the first time that it is spoken to Gentiles, tongues are present. Why do you think that occurred? God was reassuring Peter, and all of the others of the circumcision, and eventually the Gentiles too, that the repetition of the signs was proof that what Peter had preached to them was right, and true, and was from God.

Now let us go to Acts 19, where Paul ran into an unusual situation.

Acts 19:1-6 And it came to pass, that while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples, he said unto them, "Have you received the Holy Spirit since [when] you believed?" And they said unto him, "We have not so much as heard whether there be an Holy Spirit." And he said unto them, "Unto what then were you baptized?" And they said, "Unto John's baptism." Then said Paul, "John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on Him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus." When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Spirit came on them; and they spoke with tongues, and prophesied.

Here we have people who had only a partial and academic understanding of salvation. They believed John's teachings, but they never carried things any further. What Paul did is that he extended out their knowledge—the knowledge of Christ to them; and they believed. Remember that tongues are a sign. So then the tongues were given as a sign—as evidence—that they were all headed in the right direction. They had no prior experience with anything like this, and this is the way that God responded.

Up to this point in time in this sermon, the first reason for the gift of tongues is to communicate the gospel message to unbelievers. There is a second and somewhat similar reason for the gift, and that is to confirm the gospel message. The key word here is "confirm." Confirm means to support or establish the certainty of.

I want you to look back in Mark 16 again, where we began this sermon.

Mark 16:20 And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following.

There it is, right there—that there would be signs following. Then in II Corinthians 12, Paul reports on this in relation to him and to the Corinthian church.

II Corinthians 12:12 Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds.

Why was this (the signs) necessary? And why do we not see these things today? The answer to both questions is the same. That is that we—the twenty-first century Church of God—have something that the first century Church of God did not have. What is it? It is the whole Bible. We have the completed Bible.

When Paul and the other apostles went about preaching, the message they gave was validated—it was confirmed—by the exercise of God-given gifts (among which was speaking in tongues). This is not needed today because the Bible either validates—or does not

validate—what is preached.

As you can begin to see, practically the whole answer to tongues speaking is right in the book of I Corinthians. Notice this:

I Corinthians 1:22 For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom.

This tells me something. The Jews were an exceptionally skeptical bunch of people. I am going to prove this to you, out of Jesus Christ's own ministry. I am only going to give you three scriptures, but they are all over the place.

Matthew 12:38 Then certain of the scribes and of the Pharisees answered, saying, "Master, we would see a sign from You."

Matthew 16:1 The Pharisees also with the Sadducees came, and tempting desired Him that He would show them a sign from heaven.

Their faith was in seeing, brethren. Next, John 2—right after the miracle of the changing of the water into wine, we find this:

John 2:18 Then answered the Jews and said unto Him, "What sign show You unto us, seeing that You do these things?"

Brethren, because we have the whole Bible, we should not need a sign. The Bible itself will validate what we say. It had better! Do you remember that Jesus said, in Matthew 12, that an evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign? Why are they evil? They do not believe the Word of God.

Be aware, because one is coming after the working of Satan with all signs, and power, and lying wonders. So says II Thessalonians 2:9. But we are to walk by faith in God's Word—not by sight! Just as a final scripture on this section, I want you to turn to Luke 16. Here is the principle for us today. This is the parable of Lazarus and the rich man.

Luke 16:27-31 Then he said, "I pray you therefore, father [He is speaking unto Abraham.], that you would send him to my father's house. For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment." Abraham said unto him, "They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them." [In other words, "They have the Word of God. Look in the Bible."] And he said, "No, father Abraham; but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent." ["Oh, if they just see a miracle. If they just see a sign."] And he said unto him, "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead."

All signs do is point to where the message is headed.

I Corinthians 12:1 [This introduces the subject.] Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant.

I Corinthians 12:10 To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits; to another divers [different] kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues.

This is the only place in the Bible where spiritual gifts are discussed and tongues is listed. Notice that "gifts" is italicized. Thus, it has been inserted (just like the word "unknown" in I Corinthians 14); but this time the insertion is correct.

Now, notice the word "ignorant" in verse 1. What is Paul calling their attention to? We are going back to I Corinthians 1, right in Paul's opening to the book.

I Corinthians 1:6-7 Even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you: so that you [you Corinthians] come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

In other words, Paul is saying (right at the very beginning of this letter) that the Corinthian church was foremost among all of the congregations of God in terms of receiving gifts from God by means of God's Holy Spirit. Feeding that back into I Corinthians 12:1, where the word "ignorant" appears, this shows then that these people were not ignorant of the fact of the existence of spiritual gifts. So where did their ignorance then lie? We can conclude that with the rest of the commentary that is given in the next couple of chapters. That is, that their ignorance was in the proper exercise—that is, the use of their gifts.

I Corinthians 12:2 You know that you were Gentiles, carried away unto these dumb idols, even as you were led.

He is not hitting them with feathers here. He is hitting them pretty hard. What he is doing here is touching on that subject that we touched upon a little bit earlier, and that is their lack of spirituality. He had earlier said, in I Corinthians 3:1-3, that they were still carnal. So what he is doing here, at the beginning of this listing of the gifts of God's Holy Spirit, he is providing a foundation for the correction that is going to come following the listing of the gifts. And this correction continues all the way through chapter 14.

What he is doing here in verses 1 and 2 is reminding them how easily they were led astray. It does not say it, but we can understand it—Satan had them by the nose and was just leading them all around to make use of their vanity, their searching for glory within the congregation.

Again, if we think about those who at this present time speak in tongues, the same sort of ignorance that Paul accuses the Corinthians of prevails to this day. From that ignorance arises a number of beliefs among those practicing the speaking in tongues in our day that are totally

wrong, and it leads them to practice disgusting things like clucking like chickens. And so the ignorance goes on.

I do not want to be guilty before God of keeping any of you in ignorance. I know that you do not believe in speaking in tongues. But you really may not have much of an answer for it either. So that is what we are getting to. Here are some of those mistakes, believing of wrong things. I have a number of them.

First, it is a mistake for these people to assume that speaking in tongues is synonymous with the baptism of the Holy Spirit. If any of you know the background of this teaching, it says that all who are baptized by the Holy Spirit will speak in tongues and that their speaking in tongues is proof that they have received it.

You might have some poor person who really is honestly sincere; and we will just say "on his way to conversion," but he does not speak in tongues after he is baptized. And all of these other people are speaking in tongues, while that person goes around hanging his head and feeling guilty that he does not have God's Spirit—and maybe he does.

I Corinthians 12:12 For as the body is one, and has many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ [meaning the spiritual body]. For by one Spirit are we all?

He uses the pronoun "we"—including himself—with those to whom he is writing. He is assuming that they are converted. He honestly believed that they were.

I Corinthians 12:12-13 For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

Is that not interesting? Do you find any evidence at all in I Corinthians 12 through 14 that everybody in Corinth spoke in tongues? No, there is none. It was only a small number of them who spoke in tongues. How do I know that?

I Corinthians 12:30 [Paul says:] Have all the gifts of healing?

Did everybody in the congregation heal? No.

I Corinthians 12:30 Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret?

No! But I have more proof for you.

I Corinthians 14:5 [Again, Paul says:] I would that you all spoke with tongues?

That is proof right there that they did NOT all speak with tongues; and yet he very quickly establishes, in I Corinthians 12:12-13, that they were all converted. But not everybody spoke in tongues. That knocks the props out from under the idea that unless you speak in tongues you do not have the Spirit of God. Not so!

Reading the entire chapter of I Corinthians 12 will clearly confirm what I have said there; but, in Paul's explanation (beginning in chapter 12), he shows that we all have differing roles in the body. However, the baptism of the Holy Spirit places everybody into the body of Christ equally—regardless of what gifts they have been given to perform their role.

Let me give you an example. Your liver is just as much a part of the body as your intestines. That is what he is saying. Every part of the body is placed in the body, and every part is equally responsible for carrying out its part. But not every part of the physical body receives the same gifts.

That is because the intestines do not need the same gifts as the liver; and the liver does not need the same gifts as the heart; and the heart does not need the same gifts as the brain; and the brain does not need the same gifts as the tongue. Do we get it? The same thing is true in the spiritual body. We are all equal within the body, but not everybody in the body has been put in the body to perform exactly the same thing. And the gifts are given to perform the responsibilities.

number 2 mistake: It is a mistake to assume that speaking in tongues is evidence of being filled with the Spirit. We are, indeed, commanded to be filled with the Spirit. Ephesians 5:18 says that.

However, let me remind you that I Corinthians 3:1-3 said the Corinthians were still carnal. Does that seem to equate being "filled with the Spirit" and being "carnal" at the same time? Something is wrong! And what is wrong is the interpretation of these people who speak in tongues. This fact contradicts that speaking in tongues indicates supreme spirituality.

I will give you two scriptures: Acts 4:31 and Acts 13:9-11. The reason I chose these scriptures is because in both of these places it very clearly and distinctively says that all the people present were filled with the Spirit. I take that testimony to be true. It is part of God's Word. But tongues is never mentioned, in either case.

What is "to be filled with the Spirit"? It is to be conducting one's life in a Christ-like way. (Notice what I said, "In a Christ-like way.") And there is no record that Jesus ever spoke in tongues. Nobody was ever filled with the Spirit like Jesus. Yet there is no tongue speaking by Him.

Mistake number 3: It is a mistake to assume that speaking in tongues is a fruit of the Spirit. Wrong again! The fruit of the Spirit is that which is produced by being filled with the Spirit. In other words, if we are living a Christ-like life, we are going to produce the fruit of God's Holy Spirit. The fruit of God's Holy Spirit are listed in Galatians 5:22-23. And not one of the fruits of the Spirit is speaking in tongues. Far more important than speaking in tongues are love, joy, peace, gentleness, goodness, meekness, faith, longsuffering, and so forth.

The books of Ephesians and Galatians speak of the fullness of the Spirit more than any other books. They both speak of the fruit of the Spirit. And not once, in either book, are tongues so much as even mentioned. Christ-like quality of life is the best evidence of the fruit and the

fullness of the Spirit.

Here we have another comparison, and illustration to draw upon. John the Baptist, according to Jesus, was not one of the greatest men of his day. He was one of the greatest men of all time, according to Jesus. He not only did no miracles, he did not speak in tongues! Can anyone deny that he was filled with the Spirit?

So we have Jesus and John the Baptist—the greatest and the near greatest of all men who ever lived; and neither of them spoke in tongues. Who in the world do these people who speak in tongues believe? Do they believe the witness of the Bible? They most certainly do not.

Here comes another one. It is a mistake to assume that speaking in tongues is evidence of one's faith. On the contrary, Jesus said that an evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign. If somebody is seeking after a sign, it is evidence that they do not have faith! Let us look at an example here, following Jesus' resurrection and appearance:

John 20:24-25 But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples therefore said unto him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said unto them, "Except I shall see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into His side, I will not believe."

Thomas was seeking after signs. Now notice what Jesus said, later.

John 20:29 Jesus says unto him, "Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed."

This is where Christ wants us to stand—among the blessed, those who trust God. Those who trust God's Word and do not require that a sign be given. Please understand that God, in His mercy, may give us a sign; but we are not to seek after it. There is a difference between the two.

Here is another mistake. It is a mistake to seek the gift of speaking of tongues. The modern tongues cults would have you believe that this is the only gift that really counts. But I want you to consider a couple of facts.

I Corinthians 12:8-11 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 [different] kinds of tongues; to another the interpretations of tongues.

I Corinthians 12:28-30 And God has set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles,

then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Are all workers of miracles? Have all the gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret?

Did you notice something there? In both cases, those things pertaining to tongues were listed last. This is an indication of its relative worth to the body of Christ and to the believer himself. We will see more confirmation of this. We are going to I Corinthians 14, and notice what Paul writes.

I Corinthians 14:1 Follow after charity, and desire spiritual gifts, but, rather that you may prophesy.

Being able to prophesy is greater than other things.

I Corinthians 14:5-6 I would that you all spoke with tongues, but rather that you prophesied. For greater is he that prophesies than he that speaks with tongues, except he interpret, that the church may receive edifying. Now, brethren, if I come unto you speaking with tongues, what shall I profit you, except I shall speak to you either by revelation, or by knowledge, or by prophesying, or by doctrine?

I Corinthians 15:19 Yet in the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an tongue.

What Paul is showing overall here is that tongues really is not that important. It has its place, but only under the right circumstances. But really what I have just told you is really only a secondary reason. I have not told you the most important reason that we are not to seek after tongues.

I Corinthians 12:11 But all these work that one and selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as He will.

The reason every believer does not have the same gifts is because God apportions the gifts—as He wills. God is Creator of the spiritual body of Christ, even as He is the Creator of our human bodies. And, brethren, He knows what He is doing! And just as surely as He designed the human body in wisdom, with each part functioning for the good of the whole and for His purpose—so He is designing and creating the spiritual body.

And that is God's point. God has determined that nobody is capable of choosing his own gifts. Any of them! It is sheer presumptuousness for any of us to assume that we know better than God what we specifically are being prepared for, and therefore specifically what we need. Are we going to tell the Creator what to do? I will tell you, He will slap that request down in no time

at all. That is pretty presumptuous.

To the Corinthians, tongues were a prestigious gift which they, in their vanity, abused. As the verses say at the tail end of I Corinthians 12, it is all right to desire the gifts; but let God do the choosing as to what He gives. Paul then launches into the Love Chapter, which is what he urges that they truly seek after and practice.

I Corinthians 12:30-13:1 Have all the gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? But covet [desire] earnestly the best gifts: and yet show I unto you a more excellent way. Though I speak with the tongues of men and angels?

I only read that first phrase [in chapter 13] because I want you to see that the Love Chapter was written within this tongues mix. Now, why? It was the solution to their vanity problem. They really did not love one another. They loved themselves! And the fruit of it was to create confusion, and disorder, and division, and quarreling in the congregation.

God gave them the gift to use rightly, but instead they used it to show off and put other people in the congregation down. *"Ah, you do not have my gift."* Oh, is that so? That poor person might have had something far greater than they had, it just was something that did not show on the outside. Paul even went so far as to say, in I Corinthians 14: 4, that he who speaks in an *unknown* tongue edifies himself! He did not say that he approved of that at all.

I Corinthians 14:12 Even so you, forasmuch as you are zealous of spiritual gifts?

This is why I say that it is not wrong to ask God for the gifts and to seek them. But here is the right way:

I Corinthians 14:12 ?seek that you may excel to the edifying of the church.

Not the self, but the church! The spiritual gifts are given to the individuals within the church for the same reason that special gifts are given to various parts of the body. They are given to the various parts of the body for the good of the whole.

I Corinthians 12:7 But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit [the whole] withal.

I am not going to go into this one for lack of time, but it is a mistake for a woman to speak in tongues. This is addressed in I Corinthians 14: 34. When I say that, it is obvious that there were women in the Corinth congregation who had been given the gift of tongues; and there is nothing wrong with that. But it has to be used in the right way. They were abusing it as well.

It is never given to a woman to use that gift before the whole group. That is, in place of a man. You can write down I Timothy 2:11-12 and Titus 2:4, which show the area that a woman is to use her gifts within. That is, her gifts for teaching. And, in that case, the tongues would be a gift in that regard. I do want you to see I Corinthians 14:36, where Paul says (in regards to a woman speaking in tongues within the congregation):

I Corinthians 14:36 What? Came the word of God out from you? Or came it unto you only?

Again, it is worded awkwardly. But what Paul was saying here was, "*Lady, what book of the Bible did you write?*" What he is saying is that God has already shown the pattern—that He will do the writing in the Bible through men. That pattern is already shown. And public preaching is always done through men. That is what Paul is saying.

The last of my points here is that it is a mistake to assume that the tongues expositions of our day are from God. The true tongues speaking in Paul's day were, indeed, a miracle from God. But there is evidence, right in the Scriptures, that God's activity in this area has ceased. They were only temporarily used as a means of teaching and confirming.

However, this does not stop the uninformed and disbelieving people from gauging or evaluating wrongly from their own experience that God inspired their speaking in tongues. And that truly is what happens. They think that it really came from God because they did it. They know that they did something that they seemingly did not have the ability to do.

Is the gift of tongues part of God's program for the church today? Here is the answer. First of all, remember that the overall subject of I Corinthians 12 through 14 is the abuse of this God-given gift. In I Corinthians 12:30 through 13:1, one chapter ends with tongues and the very next verse of the next chapter begins with tongues. But everybody knows that I Corinthians 13 is the Love Chapter, is it not? So why is the subject of love inserted into this discussion about tongues? It is the overall solution to the Corinthians' problem. The abuse of tongues was occurring because they lacked love for God and for each other.

Now, I want you to look at I Corinthians 13:8, as we begin drawing this to a close.

I Corinthians 13:8 Charity never fails: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail [or, end]: whether there be tongues, they shall cease: whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away.

Pay attention to what Paul says because it is significant to this subject. There will always be a need within the church for love, but the need for the gift of tongues will end. Paul is putting the gift into its proper perspective. Again remember, why tongues in the first place? To teach and to confirm during the absence of the completed Scriptures! The Scriptures contain the truth needed for salvation.

I Corinthians 13:9 For we know in part, and we prophesy [preach] in part.

So Paul is acknowledging here that, even in his day, they only knew in part—or imperfectly.

I Corinthians 13:10 But when that which is perfect is come?

Are you aware that word "perfect" in Greek actually means complete. It is translated literally, but what it means in English is "complete."

I Corinthians 13:9-10 For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect [complete] is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.

What is happening here is that the Scriptures are now completed. I want you to notice Revelation 22:18-19, where John wrote:

Revelation 22:18-19 For I testify unto every man that hears the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book. If any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.

This is a pronouncement that the Bible is complete. But let me give you an example of one person's experience as compared to what the Scriptures say. A person of some significance, who may have a theological doctor's degree, might pronounce something like this: *"I cannot believe in hell because I cannot perceive of a God of love doing such a thing."*

Now, that might sound right to an awful lot of people. That is the limit of his experience. But what does the Bible say? The Bible says that there is indeed a "hell," and that those who do not believe God will burn up. So that man, despite his advanced degrees, knows only in part. His knowledge is imperfect, incomplete.

The Bible is the final word on all things pertaining to God and His purpose, and the Israelitish people have made the book available to mankind in over 1,000 languages. Can you imagine that? Do you understand what that means? The Bible is available in (I think it is actually) 1200 or more different languages on earth. There is hardly anybody on earth that does not have a Bible within reach. It can be made available to them.

I Corinthians 13:11 When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child. But when I became a man, I put away childish things.

The tongues are no longer needed. By the time the apostle John died, the Bible was completely

written, and all of its various parts collected together and canonized—by and for the church. Tongues speaking today is a manifestation of Satan, not of God! It is one of his attempts to confuse.

Now, one final thought; and we will close on this. In Acts 2: 1 and 41.

Acts 2:1 And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.

You know what happened. The signs began. They spoke in tongues. They preached to the people.

Acts 2:41 Then they that gladly received his [Peter's] word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.

The tongues very likely had a lot to do with the conversion of those people on that day. But it all began with the people being in one accord and of one mind—talking about the disciples. God is still on this same track. On that day of Pentecost, He used tongues to draw those 3,000 converts to be of the same mind as those who were doing the preaching to them.

This concept has direct connection that I am currently progressing through. My last sermon drew attention to the importance to one's cosmology. One's cosmology, belief system, communication and conduct are intimately tied together. We saw in Genesis 11 that God purposely confused people's languages in order that their life's experience would produce differing cosmologies so that oneness—with one cosmology and belief system—was impossible.

Soon God is going to give a pure language, and one spirit, one cosmology, one belief system. Uniform conduct will produce oneness with God. Until then, we must exercise self-control—the kind of self-control founded upon love that Paul exhorted the Corinthians to do, so that we can be of one accord with each other and with God.

Tongues are no longer a manifestation of God's Spirit, because tongues are not needed to have one cosmology with God.