



Tongues, Spiritual Gift

The temporary spiritual gift of tongues was the ability of a person to speak eloquently in a language without knowing that language. When speaking in tongues, there was a great flow of words in the mind of the speaker, but the vocabulary that came from their mouth was in a language they had never learned to speak. The content of the gift of tongues was always the Gospel. This gift was the ability to share the Gospel in a foreign language.

Tongues was not emotional gibberish or drunken speech. It was a spiritual gift that functioned only under certain circumstances and involved the Holy Spirit controlling the vocal cords so that the speaker uttered a foreign language not previously known by the communicator, but known to some unbeliever nearby who was listening. The use of the gift was a warning to the Jews of the impending fifth cycle of discipline. The fifth cycle of discipline for Israel transpired in 70 AD with the destruction of Jerusalem.

The Greek word for tongue or a language is *glossa* where we get the theological word glossophalia. This word combines the Greek word *glossa* with the Greek word *phalia* which means speaking. Therefore, glossophalia means to speak in another language or tongue. It simply means the gift of foreign languages. *Glossa* means a common, everyday language.

The word "tongue" in the New Testament, means a language or dialect that someone else understands. The word "unknown" in the King James Version of 1 Corinthians 14:4, is not found in the original autograph and manuscripts. It is not in an unknown tongue. The Christians in the early church who had this gift had a supernatural gift to communicate in a language which they did not understand.

"He that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifieth himself; but he that prophesieth edifieth the church." (1 Corinthians 14:4, KJV)

"One who speaks in a tongue edifies himself; but one who prophesies edifies the church." (1 Corinthians 14:4, NASB)

The purpose of speaking in tongues was always to give the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The content of tongues was always the Gospel and was only for unbelievers. 1 Corinthians 14:21-22 is a quotation from Isaiah 28:11-12. Tongues was a warning of the fifth cycle of discipline to the Jews.

"In the Law it is written, "BY MEN OF STRANGE TONGUES AND BY THE LIPS OF STRANGERS I WILL SPEAK TO THIS PEOPLE, AND EVEN SO THEY WILL NOT LISTEN TO ME," says the Lord. So then tongues are for a sign, not to those who believe but to unbelievers; but prophecy is for a sign, not to unbelievers but to those who believe." (1 Corinthians 14:21-22, NASB)

"Indeed, He will speak to this people Through stammering lips and a foreign tongue, He who said to them, "Here is rest, give rest to the weary," And, "Here is repose," but they would not listen." (Isaiah 28:11-12, NASB)

Tongues was never necessary for salvation. Tongues was never a sign of spirituality. 1 Cor. 12:3; 1 Cor. 12:11.

"Therefore I make known to you that no one speaking by the Spirit of God says, "Jesus is accursed"; and no one can say, "Jesus is Lord," except by the Holy Spirit." (1 Corinthians 12:3, NASB)

"But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually just as He wills." (1 Corinthians 12:11, NASB)



First Uses of Tongues

The gift of tongues was the first spiritual gift to be used on the day of Pentecost. The use of tongues on the Day of Pentecost was evangelism. The operation of tongues was a warning of the fifth cycle of discipline to Israel. Because tongues was the first gift used, it does not imply that it was the most important. 1 Corinthians 12:28 says it is least of all spiritual gifts. 1 Cor. 14:22.

"And God has appointed in the church, first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, various kinds of tongues." (1 Corinthians 12:28, NASB)

"So then tongues are for a sign, not to those who believe but to unbelievers; but prophecy is for a sign, not to unbelievers but to those who believe." (1 Corinthians 14:22, NASB)

Jerusalem was filled with many people who spoke many languages on the Day of Pentecost. Religious unbelievers had come for the holy days. A language barrier existed which was overcome by the gift of tongues.

The first occurrence of the gift of tongues is presented in Acts 2:1-4. All the disciples were gathered in one place waiting for the Day of Pentecost. As Jews, they knew the Jewish timetable of the feasts. It was now the feast of Pentecost and they knew that was the sign of the beginning of God's divine discipline to Israel. When the tongues or languages were distributed along with the indwelling and filling with the Holy Spirit, they began to speak in foreign languages. Remember that these disciples were uneducated Jews from Galilee who spoke only their native language of Aramaic with a bit of Hebrew they had learned. They did not know Gentile languages.

"When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly there came from heaven a noise like a violent rushing wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them tongues as of fire distributing themselves, and they rested on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit was giving them utterance." (Acts 2:1-4, NASB)

Acts 2:5-11 describes the audience. During the time when the first four feasts were celebrated (Passover, Unleavened Bread, First Fruits, and Pentecost), Jerusalem always had a tremendous number of Jews, visiting from Africa and Turkey, Greece and Rome, even India and China. At this time, many were Jewish unbelievers.

"Now there were Jews living in Jerusalem, devout men from every nation under heaven. And when this sound occurred, the crowd came together, and were bewildered because each one of them was hearing them speak in his own language. They were amazed and astonished, saying, 'Why, are not all these who are speaking Galileans?' 'And how is it that we each hear them in our own language to which we were born?' 'Parthians and Medes and Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the districts of Libya around Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs—we hear them in our own tongues speaking of the mighty deeds of God.'" (Acts 2:5-11, NASB)

These devout Jews had moved to Jerusalem. When this sound occurred, the crowd of Jewish pilgrims came together and were thrown into confusion because they were each hearing the first Church Age believers speak in their own Gentile language. They were astonished at this because they knew those who spoke their language were uneducated Galileans. They were amazed at how they could hear them speaking their native languages of the Parthians or Persians, Medes, Elamites or Akkadians, residents of Mesopotamia who spoke Assyrian and Babylonian, residents of Judea who spoke Hebrew and



Cappadocia who spoke old Hittite, residents of Pontus and the Roman province of Asia who spoke the language of Phrygia, residents of Pamphylia, residents of Egypt who spoke Egyptian, Coptic and Arabic, the districts of Libya around Cyrene or northern Africa, visitors from Rome who spoke Latin, both Jews and Cretans and Arabs who spoke five different dialects. These Jews were told that Jesus Christ was the God of Israel and that the Messiah had already come and had gone to the Cross and was judged for all the sins of the entire human race. This is an example of how the gift of tongues had doctrinal content even from the beginning.

With all those different languages being spoken at the same time, it sounded very confusing to one approaching - almost like stammering or stuttering. To those negative to the Gospel, it sounded like drunkenness and slurred speech. Peter cleared up this misunderstanding in Acts 2:15.

"For these men are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only the third hour of the day;" (Acts 2:15, NASB)

In Acts 10:44-48, Peter had heard about the Gentile Pentecost. While Peter was still talking, those who were listening to the message received the Holy Spirit. The Jewish believers who were with Peter were amazed because the Gentiles had also received the gift of tongues. They heard the Gentile believers speak in foreign languages. The gift of tongues was first given to Jewish believers and then to Gentile believers. Acts 19:2-7.

"While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who were listening to the message. All the circumcised believers who came with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also. For they were hearing them speaking with tongues and exalting God. Then Peter answered, 'Surely no one can refuse the water for these to be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we did, can he?' And he ordered them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked him to stay on for a few days." (Acts 10:44-48, NASB)

The religious unbelievers are the hardest to reach, especially Jewish unbelievers. They are the hardest nuts to crack. They had all come to Jerusalem for the holy days. There, all the religious unsaved Jews gathered and there was a tremendous barrier. How was it going to be penetrated? It was to be penetrated through the gift of tongues. This was the sign of tongues and the prophecy of tongues. Tongues was used by God to evangelize these hard-headed religious Jews. Though there were many who would reject Christ as their Savior, there were still 3,000 saved on the Day of Pentecost. The barrier was penetrated. It was overcome by the gift of tongues.

The Legitimate Use of the Gift of Tongues

The purpose of tongues was only to communicate the Gospel. The Holy Spirit guided the person in the use of tongues, as it was for evangelism. The individual, on his own, did not know when to use the gift. God the Holy Spirit knew when unbelievers were present and would motivate the believer with the spiritual gift to put the gift into operation. He would control the believer only while they were filled with the Holy Spirit. This believer would choose either to follow the leading of the Spirit or reject His leading. Prayer in tongues was bona fide only under conditions of someone receiving Christ as Savior. The prayer was offered in tongues, the evangelism being in tongues.

The legitimate use of the gift of tongues was speaking the Gospel in a foreign language understood by at least three people. Further, no more than three should speak in tongues in any single gathering. Further, they should do it in order. This was wherever people gathered to hear. It was in congregations, in open fields, and in meeting places. This was true no matter what the evangelistic setting, whether it was personal evangelism, a group of unbelievers, whether it was outdoors or in a church building. 1 Cor.



14:26-28.

"What is the outcome then, brethren? When you assemble, each one has a psalm, has a teaching, has a revelation, has a tongue, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification. If anyone speaks in a tongue, it should be by two or at the most three, and each in turn, and one must interpret; but if there is no interpreter, he must keep silent in the church; and let him speak to himself and to God." (1 Corinthians 14:26-28, NASB)

At least one of the three had to be an unbeliever that needed to hear the Gospel in his own language. Another of the three had to be a believer with the gift of tongues. The third had to have the gift of interpretation of tongues. The target of the gift of tongues was always the one being evangelized. There was great power when speaking in tongues. There was a great flow of words in the mind of the speaker. The believer who possessed this temporary spiritual gift had the vocabulary come out of his mouth when he did not even know what he was saying.

The local churches met primarily in homes up to the fifth century AD. They met wherever a group would gather to hear the Word. They never met in a so-called church or religious building until the advent of Catholicism. It may have been one of the worst things to happen to Christianity. If people today came to a home or some type of study that was very relaxed, not something beautiful and appealing to one's esthetic side, the issue would more likely be clearly taught Bible doctrine. Instead, in many churches, they appeal to the emotions with colorful stained glass, pipe organs, and beautiful classical music as a preliminary to some worship services. Worship of God should be very informal and non-ritualistic. That's the beauty of having Bible study in homes. Every denomination in the United States recorded a significant loss in membership and attendance in recent years. What an open market we have today to evangelize and share Bible doctrine with those who might be positive.

With the church meeting in homes until the fifth century AD, those early centuries were the most powerful, the most fruitful, and the most productive as far as outreach was concerned in both evangelism and missionary activity. In a church service in the period between 30 and 70 AD, God the Holy Spirit motivated certain Christians who were Spirit-filled to get up and give the Gospel to unbelievers in the group in a foreign language. God the Holy Spirit knew there were unbelievers there who needed to hear the Gospel in their own dialect.

The believer with the gift of tongues, whether in Jerusalem or somewhere else, would think the Gospel very quickly, stand up and open his mouth and lo and behold, he gave all Gospel information in Koine, maybe in Hebrew or Aramaic, Latin or whatever was indigenous to the people to whom he was speaking. Apparently, the gift of tongues was always the eloquent use of the idiom of another language. Generally, it was a common presentation, the language of the street, and that is what the Greek word *glossa* implies.

The person with the gift of tongues would not get up and tell the unbeliever he was spiritually dead. He would not tell them that Adam's original sin had been imputed to their Old Sin Nature and that they needed regeneration and propitiation. It was not something that was eloquent in technical theological language. The Greek word *glossa* means, common, everyday language. So much so that Paul dipped into the language of the gutter in Galatians 5:10-18 really to make a point. The Galatians had been saved by grace through faith and justification by faith. Nevertheless, they had apostatized and had rebelled against salvation by grace and believed they were saved by keeping the Mosaic Law with a big emphasis on the men being circumcised. Paul told them that if they thought circumcision had anything to do with salvation, then they should go ahead and emasculate themselves like some priests did in that day. That's



the language of the gutter. That really communicates the point of doctrine. There was not a person in the Galatian church who did not know what Paul was saying. He was using the common everyday idiom of the streets.

"I have confidence in you in the Lord that you will adopt no other view; but the one who is disturbing you will bear his judgment, whoever he is. But I, brethren, if I still preach circumcision, why am I still persecuted? Then the stumbling block of the cross has been abolished. I wish that those who are troubling you would even mutilate themselves. For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. For the whole Law is fulfilled in one word, in the statement, "YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF." But if you bite and devour one another, take care that you are not consumed by one another. But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law." (Galatians 5:10-18, NASB)

Those with the gift of tongues always gave the Gospel in the eloquent use of another language. This eloquence produced fantastic stimulation in the emotion, from which the speaker had a soulish response. The emotions are in the soul. The emotional response had nothing to do with his being filled with the Holy Spirit. It had nothing to do with the content of the Gospel information in the human spirit and resident in the speaker's soul. The emotion was a response to all of that fantastic grace function.

The Misuse of Tongues and Emotionalism in Corinth

The Corinthians had made tongues, the least of all spiritual gifts, the most important. They thought of it as the badge of spirituality. It was a very stimulating thing to the emotions of the believer to use the gift of tongues. This would often produce ecstasies and these ecstasies would confuse the Corinthians. Here is where the abuse of tongues occurred.

The Corinthians made speaking in tongues the basis for spirituality and the spiritual life. It was confusing to them and to others in the congregation who desired the emotion and the ecstasies. They were making emotion the criterion for spirituality which meant they were not filled with the Holy Spirit and behaving as though they were unbelievers. This was confusing to the believers and unbelievers alike.

1 Corinthians 2:13-14 says that unbelievers are natural which is body and soul only. Believers are body, soul, and human spirit. Unbelievers cannot understand Bible principles because learning God's Word requires both a human spirit and the filling of the Holy Spirit. Only believers have these.

"which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words. But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised." (1 Corinthians 2:13-14, NASB)

From the soul, you can have emotional activity so much so that the emotions can control the soul. That's what happens to Christians who make emotion the criteria for spiritual life rather than Bible doctrine. What we need to be is not natural people, but spiritual people who have God the Holy Spirit controlling the soul, feeding on the Word of God every day, and having just a very natural, normal bona fide emotional response as a result of our spiritual growth.

What's the explanation for believers who allegedly speak in tongues? Emotion. Pseudo-tongues from the



believer is the expression of emotional arrogance. 2 Corinthians 6:11-12 is a warning against emotional revolt of the soul. Paul preached to them accurately, but they had been hindered by their own emotions or affections.

"Our mouth has spoken freely to you, O Corinthians, our heart is opened wide. You are not restrained by us, but you are restrained in your own affections." (2 Corinthians 6:11-12, NASB)

Emotion is not a part of spirituality. Emotion is related to the physiological function of the human body, not the human spirit. Under extreme emotion, anyone can cause strange sounds to come from their mouths. Believers are commanded to separate from emotional legalists, do-gooders, holy rollers, the tongues crowd, and everyone who uses their emotion rather than doctrine as a criterion for the spiritual life.

In Romans 16:17-18, Paul was urging fellow believers to look out for those who are causing dissensions or splits in churches and apostasies contrary to Bible doctrine. He was telling them to turn away from the emotional crowd because such believers in emotionalism are not slaves to the Lord Jesus Christ, but slaves to their own emotions. In this state, they deceive ignorant believers with their smooth and flattering speech. Emotionalism is not spirituality. The ecstasies and emotions which came from the use of tongues in leading the person to Christ were confused with spirituality by the Corinthians, and therefore not beneficial.

"Now I urge you, brethren, keep your eye on those who cause dissensions and hindrances contrary to the teaching which you learned, and turn away from them. For such men are slaves, not of our Lord Christ but of their own appetites; and by their smooth and flattering speech they deceive the hearts of the unsuspecting." (Romans 16:17-18, NASB)

Two unfortunate results from the practice of tongues today are that it obscures the Gospel, therefore keeping the unbeliever from finding Jesus Christ today. It also leads believers into false doctrine and prevents spiritual growth and divine good production. Knowledge of doctrine is at a minimum with people involved in tongues today.

A warning is given in 1 Timothy 4:1-2 and 1 Timothy 4:16 regarding the doctrine of demons. The command to grow in grace orientation and *epignosis* knowledge or Bible doctrine in the right lobe of the soul. *Gnosis* transferred from the mind by faith to the right lobe of the soul will build an edification complex and keep the believer out of emotional revolt. 2 Peter 3:18.

"But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons, by means of the hypocrisy of liars seared in their own conscience as with a branding iron," (1 Timothy 4:1-2, NASB)

"Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; persevere in these things, for as you do this you will ensure salvation both for yourself and for those who hear you." (1 Timothy 4:16, NASB)

"but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen." (2 Peter 3:18, NASB)

2 Corinthians 6:11-12 links the false practice of tongues in Corinth with emotionalism. The modern emphasis on tongues is also false. In unbelievers, it is demon possession. In believers at best, it is a psychological or emotional reaction. The phrase "Our mouth has spoken freely to you" refers to Paul teaching them Bible doctrine. The phrase "our heart is opened wide" refers to Paul's soul being full of Bible doctrine in his soul's frame of reference, conscience, and viewpoint when he taught Bible class.



"Our mouth has spoken freely to you, O Corinthians, our heart is opened wide. You are not restrained by us, but you are restrained in your own affections." (2 Corinthians 6:11-12, NASB)

He taught, but they would not listen. Why? Their emotions were in control of their souls rather than the Holy Spirit being in control. They were in emotional revolt of the soul. The Corinthians had let tongues become their primary criterion rather than Bible doctrine in their souls. They strove for the emotional experience of speaking in tongues rather than growing in the spiritual life.

The False Use of Tongues Today

The practice of tongues today is either emotional or ecstatic involvement or demon possession. The practice of tongues today is the worst manifestation of the apostasy of our times. Not one divine good work has come through this movement. Such false practice limits the believers' spiritual growth by emphasizing their feelings and emotions rather than Bible doctrine. 2 Cor. 6:11-12; 1 Tim. 4:1-2; 1 Tim. 4:16.

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Why the practice of tongues today - these "deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons?" One answer. Bible doctrine has not been taught categorically from our pulpits. Instead, there has been the substitution of programs and endless evangelistic messages to evangelize again the already evangelized, and schemes to bring in the bodies to grow their church. The practice of tongues obscures the Gospel for the unbeliever and keeps the believer from growing spiritually.

Such programs and schemes triggers a vacuum in the soul of the immature or negative believer who is in emotional revolt. Instead of drawing in Bible doctrine, they are attracted to false systems of Bible doctrine and emotionalism such as tongues. The individual on emotional revolt always rejects the authority of a pastor in a local church and is a troublemaker. They are negative to Bible doctrine and have a vacuum in their souls that pulls in false teaching.

A wide-spread condition of this sort in Christendom does much more damage to the cause of Christ than liberalism. Liberalism is by and large promoted by the unbelieving religious type. But this cancer, described above, is carried on by apostate believers who worship in high places. They are never grace-oriented, they are constantly restless, and they are reactors instead of responders. They claim to be authorities unto themselves, always witch hunters, always smelling out what they claim to be false doctrine, but only deluding themselves. We are to separate from people practicing tongues today. Rom. 16:17-18.

"Now I urge you, brethren, keep your eye on those who cause dissensions and hindrances contrary to the teaching which you learned, and turn away from them. For such men are slaves, not of our Lord Christ but of their own appetites; and by their smooth and flattering speech they deceive the hearts of the unsuspecting." (Romans 16:17-18, NASB)



The Perspective of Tongues

The fact that the gift of tongues was the first gift given by the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost does not mean that it was the most important gift. In the Pre-Canon period of the Church Age, especially from 30 to 70 AD, the emphasis was on spectacular, temporary supernatural gifts such as apostleship, prophecy, miracles, healing, and the gift of speaking in different languages or tongues. Tongues is the very last on the list. This is the very gift the charismatics make number one. Paul puts it last in 1 Corinthians 12:28.

"And God has appointed in the church, first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, various kinds of tongues." (1 Corinthians 12:28, NASB)

It is the least gift in order of importance. Tongues is the last gift listed. Unusual activities took place in the Book of Acts. Acts presents the early history of the Church Age which was a transitional period from the Age of the Jews to the Church Age. All of this information must be regarded in light of the fact that the Canon of Scripture was not yet completed or circulated.

The purpose of the gift of tongues was evangelism and is also mentioned in 1 Corinthians 14:9-12. Therefore, during this period of the Book of Acts, we have this great crash program called temporary spiritual gifts. It was a stopgap measure to take up the slack which later would be taken up permanently, completely and eternally by the Word of God in the completed written Bible.

"So also you, unless you utter by the tongue speech that is clear, how will it be known what is spoken? For you will be speaking into the air. There are, perhaps, a great many kinds of languages in the world, and no kind is without meaning. If then I do not know the meaning of the language, I will be to the one who speaks a barbarian, and the one who speaks will be a barbarian to me. So also you, since you are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek to abound for the edification of the church." (1 Corinthians 14:9-12, NASB)

The gift of tongues was discontinued in 70 AD with the fall of Jerusalem, when the Jews went out under the fifth cycle of discipline and entered into their worldwide dispersion because of their continual rejection of Christ. In perspective, the gift of tongues was used to warn of that event. This was both a warning to the Jews and to evangelize them. We see in 1 Corinthians 14:14-22, that tongues were a sign, not for believers, but the Jewish unbelievers in Jerusalem.

"For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my mind is unfruitful. What is the outcome then? I will pray with the spirit and I will pray with the mind also; I will sing with the spirit and I will sing with the mind also. Otherwise if you bless in the spirit only, how will the one who fills the place of the ungifted say the "Amen" at your giving of thanks, since he does not know what you are saying? For you are giving thanks well enough, but the other person is not edified. I thank God, I speak in tongues more than you all; however, in the church I desire to speak five words with my mind so that I may instruct others also, rather than ten thousand words in a tongue. Brethren, do not be children in your thinking; yet in evil be infants, but in your thinking be mature. In the Law it is written, "BY MEN OF STRANGE TONGUES AND BY THE LIPS OF STRANGERS I WILL SPEAK TO THIS PEOPLE, AND EVEN SO THEY WILL NOT LISTEN TO ME," says the Lord. So then tongues are for a sign, not to those who believe but to unbelievers; but prophecy is for a sign, not to unbelievers but to those who believe." (1 Corinthians 14:14-22, NASB)

The proper perspective of tongues must be based the consistent correct teaching from the Word of God in Bible class rather than the apparent sincerity of those believers caught under false teaching. It doesn't matter how sincere they sound, what they say, what they do, or how they say they use tongues as a



personal worship for the Lord. Tongues was never designed for that purpose. It was a public gift. It was to be used in the public setting of the local church in giving the Gospel to an unbeliever. If there was no one to interpret, they were not to speak in tongues. They were to stay in their seats and think the Gospel through without speaking it aloud. We must remember the proper perspective on the gift of tongues.

The Old Testament Prophecy of Tongues

The beginning of the prophesy of tongues was with Isaiah's warning of the impending destruction (Fifth Cycle of Discipline) of the Southern Kingdom of Israel. Isaiah's prophecies also applied to the Northern Kingdom which was spiritually degenerating the same way due to national negative volition to the Word of God. Isaiah 28:8-12 describes some of the degeneracy of the Northern Kingdom of Israel.

"For all the tables are full of filthy vomit, without a single clean place. "To whom would He teach knowledge, And to whom would He interpret the message? Those just weaned from milk? Those just taken from the breast? "For He says, 'Order on order, order on order, Line on line, line on line, A little here, a little there.'" Indeed, He will speak to this people Through stammering lips and a foreign tongue, He who said to them, "Here is rest, give rest to the weary," And, "Here is repose," but they would not listen." (Isaiah 28:8-12, NASB)

The prophets and priests had very few to teach doctrine to because of the widespread negative volition. This national degeneracy was causing God's divine discipline to their client nation to be increased to get them to understand the error of their ways and to return to God's plan for their individual lives. They did not. Isaiah wrote that the only hope was in the children because the adults were indifferent to the spiritual life.

Alcoholism was prevalent in the Northern Kingdom of Israel. The majority of the Jewish population was drunk most of the time and had continual slurred speech due to their inebriated state. As a client nation, God had instructed them to send out missionaries to convert the Gentiles around them. They failed to do so. Instead of giving the Gospel to unbelieving Gentiles, they were drunk and had slurred speech which sounded like a Gentile language instead of their own clear, concise, and smooth flowing Hebrew. The Northern Kingdom was about to be destroyed by the Assyrians and the Southern Kingdom would soon be destroyed by Chaldea. In Isaiah 28:11, "Indeed, He will speak to this people through stammering lips and a foreign tongue" speaks of the last Jewish client nation, Judea, and the clear warning it would receive before its destruction. Judea was destroyed in 70 AD by Rome.

Hearing the Gospel communicated in a foreign or Gentile language was to be the warning to the Jews in the last client nation of Judea that they were going to be under a double curse and about to be destroyed due to national negative volition and spiritual degeneracy. The double curse was spiritual death for the negative believers in that nation plus the fifth cycle of discipline for the nation due to the number of negative believers in the nation. This was the prophecy for the temporary gift of tongues. Tongues was used to evangelize Jews in Gentile languages.

Because the Jews failed to go to the Gentiles as missionaries, the gift of tongues or Gentile languages was used to evangelize the Jews. This was fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost. That was the beginning of the warning that the Jew's nation would be destroyed by God's discipline to their nation. Judea would cease to exist and will never exist again until the Second Advent of Jesus Christ. From 30 to 70 AD, the Jews were evangelized by the gift of tongues. This gift came to a very sudden close in August of 70 AD when Jerusalem was overrun and destroyed by the Romans.

Though Jews traveled widely as merchants, they hated the Assyrians. Jonah was a good example. Although God told their missionaries to go to Assyria to evangelize them, most went elsewhere. The few



missionaries that did go there resulted in thousands being saved which changed the course of Assyrian history. Jonah illustrates this in Jonah 3:1-5 and Jonah 3:10. This positive response to the Gospel only made Jonah angry such that he went out and sulked for days. How God dealt with his sin is the story of the worm and the gourd or plant in Jonah 4:1-11.

"Now the word of the LORD came to Jonah the second time, saying, 'Arise, go to Nineveh the great city and proclaim to it the proclamation which I am going to tell you.' So Jonah arose and went to Nineveh according to the word of the LORD. Now Nineveh was an exceedingly great city, a three days' walk. Then Jonah began to go through the city one day's walk; and he cried out and said, 'Yet forty days and Nineveh will be overthrown.' Then the people of Nineveh believed in God; and they called a fast and put on sackcloth from the greatest to the least of them." (Jonah 3:1-5, NASB)

"When God saw their deeds, that they turned from their wicked way, then God relented concerning the calamity which He had declared He would bring upon them. And He did not do it." (Jonah 3:10, NASB)

Jonah was typical of Jewish missionary activity. Very few missionaries went out. Those few who went out were highly successful because God sent them to places where the people were literally waiting for the Gospel message. Isaiah prophesied the destruction of all three Jewish client nations: the Northern Kingdom, the Southern Kingdom, and Judea at around 725 BC when Isaiah 28 was written. The Jews sought signs and Isaiah was the great prophet of signs. Isaiah warned of the coming of the fifth cycle of discipline which would occur four years later to the Northern Kingdom. From the alcoholic slurred speech of the drunks of Israel came the speech warning of the future, the warning of the fifth cycle of discipline through the spiritual gift of tongues during the first years of the Church Age.

Just as drunken speech was a warning in 725 BC, so the gift of tongues would be a warning on the Day of Pentecost and thereafter for 40 years until the fall of Israel. Interestingly enough, those who spoke in tongues on the Day of Pentecost were considered drunk by the crowds. So drunkenness was in the prophecy and drunkenness was alleged though not true in the fulfillment of the prophecy. Isaiah 28:11 was so important that it was quoted by Paul in the tongues passage in 1 Corinthians 14:21-22.

"Indeed, He will speak to this people Through stammering lips and a foreign tongue," (Isaiah 28:11, NASB)

"In the Law it is written, 'BY MEN OF STRANGE TONGUES AND BY THE LIPS OF STRANGERS I WILL SPEAK TO THIS PEOPLE, AND EVEN SO THEY WILL NOT LISTEN TO ME,' says the Lord. So then tongues are for a sign, not to those who believe but to unbelievers; but prophecy is for a sign, not to unbelievers but to those who believe." (1 Corinthians 14:21-22, NASB)

Isaiah 28:11 presents the fulfillment of the sign or prophecy of tongues. This prophecy was given in the overall context of God's judgment being visited upon the Northern Kingdom. Isaiah prophesied that Israel would be conquered by a foreign nation. It would be a nation that spoke a faltering and stammering tongue or language when compared to the beautiful flow of Hebrew. This prophecy concerned the Assyrians. The Assyrians, a Gentile people, speaking a language that the Jews did not speak, would come in and conquer the Northern Kingdom. They would destroy them and would remove them from their lands and put them into slavery under the fifth cycle of discipline. The Southern Kingdom of Judah would be put under the fourth cycle of discipline. See category on the [Five Cycles of Discipline](#).

The prophecy in Isaiah 28:11 deals with a future event when foreigners or Gentiles would come and present the Gospel to the Gentiles living in the nation of Israel in a language other than Hebrew. In this



way, God is going to speak to His ancient people in Israel in Gentile languages. This prophecy concerns the Jews being judged by Gentiles speaking in Gentile languages.

Three Different Operations of the Gift of Tongues

The gift of tongues operated three different ways. One way involved preaching the Gospel to groups of unbelievers because tongues was for unbelievers, not believers. The content for the gift of tongues was always the Gospel. The second way involved someone praying in tongues. The third way was when someone was singing in tongues. The believer often thought the Gospel and was motivated to sing the message. 1 Cor. 14:14-15.

"For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my mind is unfruitful. What is the outcome then? I will pray with the spirit and I will pray with the mind also; I will sing with the spirit and I will sing with the mind also." (1 Corinthians 14:14-15, NASB)

We don't know if the Holy Spirit provided the melody as well as the lyrics in a foreign language. It's possible He provided both. The most probable way was the believer with the gift of tongues using common folk melodies to present the Gospel. Under the power of the Holy Spirit, they would use psalms, Gospel songs, and testimony songs and stand up and sing in tongues.

The charismatics do that in our own day and age, but when they get up, it's gibberish. They do not interpret or have someone else to interpret, because it is not in any known language at all. 1 Corinthians 14:26-28 says that if more than one with the gift of tongues were motivated to share the Gospel message, there should be two or at most three who decide to do it and each should do it in turn. Most importantly, they should let someone with the gift of interpretation of tongues interpret, but if there is no interpreter present, then they should all refrain from speaking in tongues in the church. Whether it's preaching, praying or singing, the believer speaking in tongues had to have someone else with the gift of interpretation to provide the interpretation.

"What is the outcome then, brethren? When you assemble, each one has a psalm, has a teaching, has a revelation, has a tongue, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification. If anyone speaks in a tongue, it should be by two or at the most three, and each in turn, and one must interpret; but if there is no interpreter, he must keep silent in the church; and let him speak to himself and to God." (1 Corinthians 14:26-28, NASB)

Paul says, in 1 Corinthians 14:15, that he would pray with his spirit which is motivation and enthusiasm. He also said that he would also pray with his mind. In other words, Paul knows how to pray, to whom to pray, in whose name, and in whose power. He knows the difference between thanksgiving, intercession, and petition in worshiping the Lord in prayer. You must understand the doctrine of prayer before your prayer life will be meaningful. See category on [Prayer](#).

Paul also says he would sing with his spirit and with his mind. You do that when you sing a song that you really feel attached to and produces great blessing and emotional response. Beyond this response in your mind, you should know what those words mean, the message they are conveying, and how they apply to your life. In other words, when you sing the doctrinal lyrics, you should know what they mean so your emotions can have a bona fide response.

"What is the outcome then? I will pray with the spirit and I will pray with the mind also; I will sing with the spirit and I will sing with the mind also." (1 Corinthians 14:15, NASB)

Paul was dealing with people within the worship service that included unbelievers. Therefore, the preaching would be in tongues, praying in tongues, or the Gospel would be sung in tongues. This was



during the worship service. The gift of tongues was never given for comfort or consolation or a personal worship experience. Many Pentecostals wrongly use this as their basis today. What encouragement, and consolation could you get from completely incomprehensible jabbering to each other? Encouragement, comfort, and consolation come only from the Word of God. The Word of God is the basis for our consolation, not some temporary spiritual gift which we seek after to produce all kinds of ecstatic activities. The Gospel was always the content of the message whether prayed or sung. It was never for anything other than the Gospel!

Cessation of the Gift of Tongues

The gift of tongues was the first temporary spiritual gift to cease. It was removed in 70 AD with the destruction of Jerusalem. 1 Corinthians 13:8-10 shows us that this gift was temporary and ceased to function because its purpose was over. The “perfect” is the completed written Canon of Scripture. The “partial” are the temporary spiritual gifts. They were no longer needed once the Canon of Scripture was written and disseminated throughout the Roman Empire.

"Love never fails; but if there are gifts of prophecy, they will be done away; if there are tongues, they will cease; if there is knowledge, it will be done away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part; but when the perfect comes, the partial will be done away." (1 Corinthians 13:8-10, NASB)

To understand why 70 AD, one must understand the five cycles of divine discipline in Leviticus 26. Tongues were a sign of judgment to Israel – that the fifth cycle of divine discipline from God was coming and to facilitated a crash program of proclaiming the Gospel to the early church. Isaiah 28:10-13; 1 Cor. 14:21-22.

""For He says, 'Order on order, order on order, Line on line, line on line, A little here, a little there.' Indeed, He will speak to this people Through stammering lips and a foreign tongue, He who said to them, 'Here is rest, give rest to the weary,' And, 'Here is repose,' but they would not listen. So the word of the LORD to them will be, 'Order on order, order on order, Line on line, line on line, A little here, a little there,' That they may go and stumble backward, be broken, snared and taken captive." (Isaiah 28:10-13, NASB)

"In the Law it is written, 'BY MEN OF STRANGE TONGUES AND BY THE LIPS OF STRANGERS I WILL SPEAK TO THIS PEOPLE, AND EVEN SO THEY WILL NOT LISTEN TO ME,' says the Lord. So then tongues are for a sign, not to those who believe but to unbelievers; but prophecy is for a sign, not to unbelievers but to those who believe." (1 Corinthians 14:21-22, NASB)

The prophecy of tongues had been fulfilled at that point in time. From 30 to 70 AD, the Jews had 40 years of maximum spectacular evangelism in Jerusalem. Jerusalem had been evangelized through supernatural abilities such as tongues, interpretation of tongues, healings, miracles, and other signs and wonders. People even came by and touched the hem of Peter's robe to be healed. Handkerchiefs were distributed and by touching one, people were healed.

The responsibility of the nation of Israel was the development and custodianship of the Old Testament Scriptures, doctrinal teaching within the nation, and evangelism of other nations (Gentile) through missionary activity. Even though Jews traveled extensively as merchants making money, they did not send out missionaries to evangelize the Gentiles, as they should have.

The experience today called the gift of tongues is really pseudo tongues and is either demon possession when it involves unbelievers, or demon influence, or emotionalism. In believers, it is not demon possession, but demon influence or emotionalism. 2 Thess. 2:7-12.



"For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only he who now restrains will do so until he is taken out of the way. Then that lawless one will be revealed whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming; that is, the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders, and with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved. For this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they will believe what is false, in order that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness." (2 Thessalonians 2:7-12, NASB)

The mechanics of pseudo tongues is found in Isaiah 8:19, Isaiah 29:4, and illustrated by Revelation 16:13-14.

"When they say to you, 'Consult the mediums and the spiritists who whisper and mutter,' should not a people consult their God? Should they consult the dead on behalf of the living?" (Isaiah 8:19, NASB)

"Then you will be brought low; From the earth you will speak, And from the dust where you are prostrate Your words will come. Your voice will also be like that of a spirit from the ground, And your speech will whisper from the dust." (Isaiah 29:4, NASB)

"And I saw coming out of the mouth of the dragon and out of the mouth of the beast and out of the mouth of the false prophet, three unclean spirits like frogs; for they are spirits of demons, performing signs, which go out to the kings of the whole world, to gather them together for the war of the great day of God, the Almighty." (Revelation 16:13-14, NASB)

Also, the extraordinary ability of a missionary or linguist to master a foreign language and evangelize and edify is not the gift of tongues. A person may be “gifted” in ability, but that is not the same as the spiritual gift of tongues used between 30 and 70 AD. For believers not to be biblically straight on the tongues issue is disastrous. It is the chief form of apostasy today in so called evangelical Christianity. The tongues movement within and without the holiness movement is horrible and the very worst sort of empiricism.