**The Gift of Tongues, No. 1 – BD28-02**

This morning we come to a very crucial and controversial subject, and one that is raging in our day relative to another one of the temporary spiritual gifts. This one is the gift of tongues. This is one of the gifts which was temporary in the New Testament church. It was the ability that some Christians in the local congregations had to be able to speak in foreign languages which were unknown to them. Tongues was one of the miracle gifts. It was designed therefore to be a sign to authenticate the message and the messengers of the New Testament. Because tongues is a miracle gift, as we have learned, it would therefore phase out. There is nobody therefore today who can perform miracles, nor can anybody exercise the gifts of tongues today—the ability to speak in a foreign language that he himself does not know. He cannot do this under the power of God.

Now I’ll qualify what I said in the fact that Satan has the ability to perform the miraculous. Satan has the ability to bring about cures under certain conditions. Satan has the ability to take possession of a person and to enable him to speak even in a known language, but God is no longer exercising this miraculous gift. It served its purpose and it has been phased out. This happened with the fall of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. and with the completion of the New Testament scriptures with the book of the Revelation.

So all of the modern claims for speaking in tongues that you hear about is really nothing more than an experience that Satan has been often producing through the old sin natures of people in primitive societies. It is important that you understand that the ecstatic gibberish that you hear today as tongues was practiced by the pagan priests and priestesses of the Greco-Roman world. These were viewed as messages from the Gods. There were people who would take this gibberish that the priests and priestesses, under a detachment of soul and in absorption with their idol deity which you know has a demon behind it. They would receive this gibberish message and there were people who would seek to interpret this as a message from the gods, the oracles of the ancient world.

Today the witch doctors have the same experience. They put themselves in the position where they come to an ecstatic condition where they are babbling in ecstatic meaningless expressions. The condition of self-hypnosis, or the state of being detached from your own soul and united with another force, is a state of ecstasy where you have no consciousness of your own, and it is an ancient practice under satanic direction.

We have historical records of pagan tongues experiences. Associated with these experiences are such things as ecstasy and great sense of joy; a frenzy; howling; being in a trance; violent physical motions; foaming at the mouth; rhythmic sounds; and, singing. Well this is all the same thing that you have today. If you’ve been in a tongues meeting, you will immediately recognize that all of these things are present. It is exactly what happened in primitive societies in ancient times and it happens today. This occurs among non-Christian societies as well in our day—the expression of the gibberish type of tongues.

**Tongues in History**

In a little volume by Gromacki, The Modern Tongues Movement, I’d like to read you a paragraph. He says:

“Stoley reported that ecstatic speech is found in Muhammadanism. The Dervishes of Persia constantly utter the name of Allah accompanied by violent shaking of the body and trances which issue in foaming at the mouth. These violent motions lead to physical exhaustion and partial unconsciousness. During this period of ecstasy they preach moral sermons.”

Now if you have been in Pentecostal meetings you may have seen the site, frequently of women—men as well, but very often of women—who are just in what you would call a catatonic state. You would think they are having a convulsive fit. They’re shaking and they’re rigid. Their mouth is foaming and their eyes are rolling, and usually it takes two or three men to hold one woman down in the exuberance of the ecstatic possession of what they call the Holy Spirit’s coming upon them and the ecstasy of the moment.

This is followed, when the person comes to, by a state of extreme exhaustion. I wonder how much of a Pentecostal meeting has the satisfaction in it that a person goes in there, and he is of the emotional temperament type, and it just releases him.

Incidentally, a lot of defense for tongues, with its associated ecstatic expressions, and I find this on college campuses: I have kids coming back and saying, “We have a college professor who speaks in tongues.” This sometimes occurs in Christian schools. He speaks in chapel and he defends his position. He presents it as a vehicle by which he worships and praises God. I think that a misrepresentation of the scriptural issue of tongues.

If you are of the type that goes for a jiving jumping church service, and I know that some of you are, then that’s the kind of a church service you can find. Now it’s OK if you like to go to church services where they sing Amazing Grace to the Coca-Cola song and they clap their hands and that sort of thing. That’s OK. If you like a jumping jiving service, just say, “I’m the emotional type and I like to go in there and I like to jump and jive.” But don’t go in there and defend tongues, which I think as we unravel it you will see that it is a fantastically heretical practice today, and is satanic in its influence to the core. Don’t go in there and defend tongues as a way of expressing your praise to God. Just say, “I’m the kind of emotional character that likes to come in and jump and jive all over the place, and that’s the kind of a service I like. I like to worship God like that.” Well and good. Just do it. But don’t try to defend that and your temperament on a heretical ground.

So continuing our quote here: These things take place in non-Christian religions—the expression of tongues. He continues: “The Eskimos of Greenland are reported to have engaged in glossolalia (that is, tongues). Their religious services are led by an Angok, the medicine man or priest. In these services there is a definite attempt to get in touch with the Netherworld, the spirit world. The services are characterized by drum-beating, singing, dancing, and nudity of both men and women.

“Peter Freuchen in his book Artic Adventure observed glossolalia in this way: Suddenly one of the men … went out of his head, unable to contain himself to the regular rhythm of the service. He leaped to his feet, crying like a raven and howling like a wolf. In ecstasy he and a girl … began to yell in a tongue I could not understand. Certainly it was not the usual Eskimo language. If there is such a thing as speaking in tongues, I heard it then.”

Tongues advocates today defend their practice by pointing out how it improves them religiously. This is one of the favorite defenses—how it improves a person’s religious active life and his conduct. “I stopped swearing. I stopped drinking. I started reading the Bible. I started giving money to church. I got active in church services.” This is one of the most tiresome defenses, and I hear this from Christians. Here is some joker who sits in a church where he’s receiving the Word of God and he’s receiving sound doctrinal instruction. He is negative to the core because it is striking him right where he is resisting it. He is a spiritual do-do. Suddenly he finds himself in another church under another ministry where there are accommodations to his old sin nature, and he blossoms out and starts reading the Bible and going to church and attending prayer meeting and giving his money and getting into ministries. And there are Christians who are stupid enough to say, “Now he has gotten on the ball for the Lord.”

**Religion**

Don’t you realize that you old sin nature is steeped with religion? Don’t you realize that all those things are nothing but religion in a negative person toward the word? Are you so diluted to think that a person who is negative to sound doctrine in one place can go to someplace else and get on the ball spiritually? Never. What he has done is gone someplace else where he is comfortable in his negative resistance, and now he starts becoming religious in his expression. Unless you understand how Satan loves religion, you will be fooled.

Satan has no objection to your being religious. That’s the greatest thing in the world. He has no objection to your giving the credit to God. There’s another thing people bring: “I can’t see how healing and tongues could be so wrong. When we gather, we give God all the praise. We give God all the credit. We look to Him.” Do you think Satan objects to that? He knows that what you’re pursuing is out of the will of God. It’s out of the plan of God. He’s got nothing to lose. As long as he keeps you in religion, you’re not going to do the one thing he wants you to do as a Christian. You will not identify your spiritual gift and you will not start exercising it. When you find your spiritual gift and you start exercising it, then you start creating a lot of trouble for Satan. Until then he doesn’t care about you at all.

So religion comes from the old sin nature. That sin nature is corrupt. It’s spiritually blind, and it’s eager for emotional experiences. It’s quite willing to improve its conduct to impress itself. It’s hardened and it’s negative. Religion is a human good deception of Satan and you know that God rejects everything that comes from our human good—just as he does our sins, so he does our good. The imagined achievement of some level of desired spirituality in itself causes a person to be joyful and to have a sense of elation and excitement.

Suppose that somebody told you (and you believed him) that if you got up and spoke in this gibberish tongue, it would be the sign that you have entered an intimate relationship with God and that your life would be on a whole new dramatic plateau. And you so, “Oh, is that true?” So you would start pursuing the gift of speaking in tongues. And remember—anybody can speak in tongues. All you have to do is get around people who do it. All you have to do is concentrate on it and pretty soon you’ll let go and it will take over and you’ll be speaking gibberish without any problem at all. Then suddenly after you pursue this and you do it, because you have psyched yourself previously into thinking that if you do this you now have a beautiful relationship with God, you’ll be overjoyed. You’ll be rejoicing. You’ll be ecstatic. You’ll be elated. You’ll get out there and start hustling in your religion like crazy for God. And you have been diluted by Satan right down the line. So giving God the praise is no problem for Satan. He just wants to neutralize you in your permanent spiritual gifts.

So the problem with the tongues crowd is that they are not judging their experience by bible doctrine. Unfortunately most people in the tongues movement don’t have doctrine by which to judge. Most of them couldn’t come to it if they wanted to. It’s not available to them. All of our experiences which originate with God the Holy Spirit are going to conform to sound doctrine. A Pentecostal insists that it’s the other way around. They insist that a man who has had an experience cannot be confounded or confused by somebody’s arguments. If I had an experience, that’s all I need to guide me to the truth. We’ve already gone over how experience is deceptive.

So we see that the False Prophet in Revelation 13 is going to deceive people into worshipping the Antichrist on the basis of experience of miracles that he performs for them. Without doctrine you will misinterpret experience. If we seek to determine if today’s tongue’s practice qualifies as the New Testament tongues practice, which is what we’re going to do. We want to know: Is what happened in the New Testament is what’s happening today? Then we have to know doctrine. That’s the only way we can decide that. We have to see what God intended to do with tongues; why he produced it; how long He intended to use it; and, what it was really like. Then we can step back and we can walk into a Pentecostal meeting, and immediately we can analyze it, and on the basis of doctrine we can determine whether what is purported as tongues today is what the New Testament gift was.

So people with an emotional temperament need a frame of reference particularly in their minds of doctrine to guide them. I’m not saying that you will not have emotions as a result of God the Holy Spirit’s production in your life. You will. Your old sin nature will produce false emotions. But when you come with sound doctrine, God the Holy Spirit will give you great elation and great joy in what you have learned and in how He functions through you. There is a great deal of emotion in the Christian life, but emotion as the controlling element will destroy you.

Women, for this reason, are prominent in the tongues movement. They have a natural emotional bent, and Pentecostalism is the haven of the women’s lib in the religious realm consequently. Here is where women have their hay day. And if you have inclinations to be a woman preacher; if you want to get up and lead meetings; and if you want to get up and be an aggressive female, then join a Pentecostal church because it is the haven for the religious women’s lib movement.

**The History of the Tongue’s Movement**

I think it would be helpful to think through a little bit the history of the tongues movement. There were very few reports following the apostolic period of tongues. Those which were reported by the early church fathers were cases not of what they did but of what had been reported to them. George B. Cutten was an educator at Colgate University. He wrote a book called Speaking With Tongues. He made an extensive examination of all the ancient records following the apostolic period of speaking in tongues. His conclusion is that following the apostolic period there is not one demonstrated proven instance of speaking in tongues.

When we come to the Middle Ages we again have no verifiable records. We have a lot of superstition, like dogs and babies preaching and defending the faith, but you have again no accurate records of people speaking in tongues. When we come to the Reformation period and we have some reports of claims to tongues, but always among fringe groups. Among the reformers tongues was not a factor in recovery of New Testament doctrine. Since then the gibberish of tongues periodically flared up and then disappeared—always out on the fringe, never with great support, so it didn’t last.

But when we come to the modern tongues period, in the beginning of the 19th century, we find tongues in the Mormon group. Joseph Smith taught and practiced tongues. This is part of the doctrinal statement of the Mormon Church today—belief in tongues. This was how he received, in effect, the Book of Mormon. It was given to him in a language that he had to interpret on those tablets.

The Shakers were another cult group who practiced tongues gibberish with ecstatic dancing, jumping, and shaking. Their founder, Mother Ann Lee (a lady, you notice), claimed the ability to speak in 72 languages. Today’s tongue movement that you and I are acquainted with, in the Pentecostal Holiness churches really began in about the year 1900.

**Tongues in Modern Times**

In 1900, the beginning of the 20th century, a man named Charles Parham opened the Bethel Bible School in Topeka Kansas. Part of his teaching was that tongues was for our day. This school had no teachers. It just had students and Bibles and they taught themselves. They read the Scriptures and they pursued seeking the practice of speaking in tongues.

However, the real solid beginning of Pentecostalism was in Los Angeles in the year 1906. There the modern tongues, as we know it today, broke out on Azusa Street. I want to read you a quote that describes a little bit of what happened. This is by Carroll Stegall in The Modern Tongues and Healing Movement, a little brochure. This is referring to this outbreak from which the modern Pentecostal movement has come. This happened in Los Angeles, California.

“A negro named W. J. Seymour, who had been at a Bible school in Houston, Texas, began preaching to a group of Seekers in a home at 214 Bonny Brae Street. On April 9th, 1906, the people in this group, having been in intense prayer for some days, began to break into ecstatic utterances which were joyously hailed as the apostolic tongues. The group grew and move into a tenement basis meeting hall at 312 Azusa Street. To the tenement people, the tongues were the sure sign of the approval of the Holy Spirit. They felt certain that God was preparing to usher in the end of the age with the promised latter reign of power spoken of in Joel. They considered this prophecy only partially fulfilled at Pentecost.

“Night after night the meetings continued as scores of people, whipped into a high state of emotional fervor, broke into the babbling torrent of monosyllabic sounds and appeared to be possessed of super human power. The meetings continued almost without end for three months or more and the excitement swept the entire area. People came from far and wide to scoff, and were convinced. They returned to their places, carrying the movement with them. It swept like fire across America, and thence across the seas to India, Sweden, and other lands. It is today well established in several foreign countries although its greatest following is in America.”

**Tongues Today**

So the tongues movement began from this beginning and spread rapidly. It has various names today: The Assemblies of God; The Church of God in Christ; Pentecostal Assemblies; Pentecostal Holiness Church; Full Gospel Churches; Four Square Gospel Church, and so on. But on April 3rd, 1960, a dramatic new era in the tongues movement began. On that day Dennis J. Bennett, the rector of St. Mark’s Episcopal Church in Van Nuys, California, stood up on that Sunday morning and announce to his congregation that he had had the experience of speaking in tongues. This was immediately caught up by the news media and it was given extensive coverage in Life magazine and in the Post magazine. The congregation was torn apart by this issue. They finally secured the pastor’s resignation and he began another church in the Episcopal tradition but devoted to the tongues practice.

From this beginning, however, something new happened in the tongues movement as we know it today. Up to now, tongues had always been out in the usual Pentecostal Holiness groups. From that day, tongues moved into the old line denominations so that today the tongues movement is no longer (only) among Pentecostal groups. You’ll find it in Methodism. You’ll find it among Northern and Southern Baptists. You’ll find it among Presbyterians and Reformed Churches. You’ll find it among Lutherans. And you’ll find it among Roman Catholics. So the tongues movement has invaded even evangelical colleges and missions, creating great havoc in those institutions.

Now you have religious leaders today, and institutions, who are reflecting great spiritual confusion now that tongues has moved into their own realm. It was alright when it was out there among the Pentecostalists. Then they could make declarations and speak on it. You would be surprised how many spiritual religious leaders in the circle of your acquaintance that you would go up to and say, “What about tongues?” How often you would get an equivocal answer. You would be surprised how many people in evangelical denominations, in strong churches, and in educational institutions are now beginning to cop out on saying that tongues is either of Satan or it is psychological self-hypnosis. One or the other, but it is not of God.

You’re going to find that it’s going to be hard for you to hear a preacher who gets up on a basis of the exposition of doctrine and says it that pointedly. They’re all going to hedge. Do you know why? Because once Mr. Bennett broke this loose into the open among regular denominational groups, vast numbers of people have been drawn into this delusion, and the support of congregations and the support of educational institutions is now dependent upon people who are sympathetic to the tongues practice.

College students will come home and, because they have had college professors, nice people, people they know who practice tongues, and who have a chance to get up and defend it. They’ll come home and they’ll have a sympathy for it instead of saying, “He’s wrong. He’s out of line with Scripture. Whatever he is experiencing, it is not the practice of New Testament tongues.” So you’re going to have to have a pretty clear idea on this subject.

**Isaiah 28:9-12**

The place to begin is in the book of Isaiah. Will you turn to chapter 28? We’re going to begin at verses 9-12. Isaiah chapter records two great failures of the Jewish people. The first eight verses tell you about extensive alcoholism in Israel which led to national disaster. For example, verse 7 says, “But they also have erred through wine, and through strong drink are out of the way. The priest and the prophet have erred through strong drink. (Even the religious leaders are on booze.) They are swallowed up of wine. They are out of the way through strong drink, they err in vision, and they stumble in judgment. For all the tables are full of vomit and filthiness so that there is no place clean.” That’s their first problem. Alcoholism was destroying the Jewish nation.

Consequent to this came a second destructive issue in verses 9 through 12. These tell us of the negative volition to doctrine which led ultimately to the nation’s dispersion in 70 A.D. Verse 9 says, “Whom shall he teach knowledge.” The word “knowledge” indicates understanding of doctrine. When he says, “Whom shall he teach knowledge,” he’s indicating that few would gather to listen to instruction in Bible doctrine. This is the same problem we have today. A preacher can break his neck with all kinds of pleading, all kinds of admonition, and all kinds of exhortation, and people say, “Ho hum, yeah, I should be in church to learn doctrine. I should do this every day.” And then vast periods of time pass and you never see them. Then they phase in for a while and then they phase out. And they think they’re getting away with something. You don’t know what you’re doing to yourself eternally. But here’s an example. It destroyed this nation. And you will destroy yourself and you will destroy your nation. When a maximum number of people become confused and disoriented to God’s viewpoint, the nation goes down the tube. That’s exactly where I think our nation is headed very very rapidly. Maybe that’s all well in keeping with prophetic Scripture.

“Whom shall he teach knowledge and whom shall he make to understand doctrine.” Most of the Jews were negative to teacher, teaching, and technique. Because they were negative, they were plumb ignorant of doctrine. Now mind you: They were religious to the core. It was religion that was destroying them. They weren’t discontinuing all of their religious practices. You could have said, “Oh, isn’t it wonderful? This fellow has really gotten on the ball here. He used to kill one animal in sacrifice. Now he kills five every week. He has gotten so active for the Lord. Isn’t that wonderful?”

But when he was negative to teaching, teacher, and technique; when he was rejecting Isaiah’s instruction, he was through. He was religious but he was not accomplishing anything that God was commending or rewarding. So he says, “Whom shall understand doctrine.” Why couldn’t they understand it? Because they were rejecting it. Consequently, the Jews remained in the babyhood stage of spirituality. It says they have been “weaned from milk, and drawn from the breasts,” and that’s where they stayed. He got them far enough along that they were living off of the basics, and there they stayed. Instead of growing on spiritually into adolescence and into maturity, they stopped there.

In verse 10, here is the means of growth that they rejected: “Precept must be upon precept.” The word “precept” is a principal of doctrine. It says that one doctrine has to be added to another doctrine to develop a necessary frame of reference for the classification of truth, precept upon precept. Then he goes on and says, “Line upon line,” which means expository explanation of the revealed written Scriptures: word by word, verse by verse, “line upon line, here a little, and there a little,” meaning that you keep at it. You don’t just show up for church once in a while. You don’t just open your Bible once in a while. You don’t just play some arrogant role and say, “Well, Sunday School is not for me,” as if you were that capable of getting along without a segment of doctrinal instruction. It’s a regular thing.

Now ignoring this divinely provided means of spiritual maturity because it was too much trouble or because they knew all that, led to the destruction of the destruction of the Jewish nation as it will to ourselves.

Notice verse 11: God says, “Here’s the judgment.” This is the sign of divine rejection of Israel. This is the sign. In this verse God says because you’re great for living it up in pleasure and fun which has led to alcoholism; because I can’t get you out to Bible class to listen to the Word and to respond to it and learn it and act upon it, you have come to the point where I’m going to reject you as a nation. Now mind you: This is hundreds of years before the event has happened that God is declaring this. This is even before the first 70-year captivity in Babylon.

Verse 11 says, “For with stammering lips and with another tongue will He speak to this people.” Now here’s what Isaiah is saying: The expression “stammering lips” in the Hebrew means a language which is erratic, jerky, or choppy. A choppy type of language which has a choppy sound to it. Hebrew has a rather melodious and flowing sound to it. He is contrasting this with the Hebrew tongue. “You are going to be taught the Word of God in a choppy erratic language.” Right away they knew what that meant—not in Hebrew, not in our melodious psalm-like language.

Then he adds to it: another tongue will he speak, meaning tongues foreign to them; that is, gentile languages. He would speak to them. What would God speak to them? The Word of God which they had rejected. He was saying that the time is going to come when you Jews who have consistently rejected Bible doctrine taught to you in your own Hebrew language are going to come to the place where I am going to reject you as a nation, and then I’m going to bring Gentiles with their choppy jerky gentile-type of languages and they’re going to teach you the Word of God in those languages.

Now that is so humiliating to a Jew to think that he would be taught by a Gentile. This would be like somebody coming up and saying, “Do you know what? The Asian/Afro nations, let’s say China and Africa are getting together and they’re forming mission organizations to send missionaries to the United states—Christian missionaries to the United States.” Immediately there is something that would cause you to say, “They’re going to send missionaries to the Unites States? We’ve got Bibles to burn here. They’re going to send missionaries to us?” And it seems unbelievable that some nation would going to send missionaries to us. And that’s the way it was with the Jews. “You must be kidding, God. You can’t be serious that Gentiles are going to come and teach us the Word of God.” That was offensive to them.

**The Tower of Babel**

And to whom was this to be done? Verse 11 says, “To this people.” Who are the people, in this context? The Jewish people. Now that’s very important. God is going to speak in foreign languages to the Jewish people. Have you got that? Not to Gentiles. A tongues language to Jews alone. From Adam to Abram was a period of the Gentiles. All the world spoke in one language. All evangelization was carried on in that one language. Apostasy set in after the flood and the people responded to a plan that Satan proposed for a one-world government in the form of the tower of Babel.

If you read the historical record in the Scriptures concerning the Tower of Babel, you will see that if God permitted man to go to one-world government, no evil would be restrained unto him. God knows that He has to restrain the old sin nature by having nations which can counter one another, in balance of power to one another, so that no nation can have a totalitarian control to destroy access to the Word of God. Any time a totalitarian control comes in, a one-world-like government comes in within a segment of people, the first thing that is destroyed is access to divine truth and the Word of God. So that’s why the Tower of Babel came, because God saw a united nations being formed, a one-world government, and God knew that no evil would be restrained then to man in his old sin nature in the governmental authorities. Furthermore, access to the Word of god and to enlightenment would be destroyed.

So He confounded the languages. He mixed them up and confused them into many languages in order to ensure national entities which are God’s plan for society. This protects the race and the access to the Word of God, and it restrains evil.

Now, from Abraham to Pentecost was the period of the Jews. It was a period of many languages. The Jews were made custodians during that period of the divine revelation, and they were responsible for bringing the Word of God to all nations. They were the missionaries. They, however, turned apostate. So they rejected God’s revelation. They failed in their missionary responsibility. So God has sent the Jews into dispersion and He has raised up a new missionary agency in the form of the Christian church. It is Gentiles with their many languages who are now responsible as the body of Christ for the missionary enterprise of reaching humanity. The Jews had failed in it.

Now what Isaiah 28:11 is doing is predicting a national destruction resulting in the Jews themselves being evangelized in Gentile languages. There’s going to be a destruction of the Jewish nation so that they are evangelized in turn by the Gentiles. When did this take place? It took place on the day of Pentecost. When they stood in Jerusalem from all the nations of the world and they were Hellenistic Jews. Many of them couldn’t speak Hebrew. All they knew was Greek, the trade language, and the local language of the country they came from, and they found themselves hearing their native country’s speech being spoken to them by people (Galileans), who weren’t too hot at speaking their own language, speaking to them in their own language.

That was the fulfillment of Isaiah 28:11, that they were being evangelized in the stammering foreign tongues of Gentiles. This (was the) signal to the Jews, that they were no longer God’s custodians of the Word, and that the church had taken over. It indicated what Leviticus 26 verses 27-46 describe as the fifth stage of discipline that God promised He would bring upon the Jewish people where they would be brought under a foreign power and dispersed out of the land of Palestine.

Now this condition of dispersion will continue until the return of Jesus Christ. The Jews found this prediction with the sign of tongues hard to believe, and they rejected it. Their whole national failure stemmed from their indifference to doctrine and their not going on to spiritual maturity.

So Isaiah 28:12 says, “To whom ye said, ‘This is the rest by which ye may cause the weary to rest, this is the refreshing. Yet they would not hear.’” Here he is offering the rest of the gospel. The Lord Jesus said, “Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest.” In Gentile languages there will be offered spiritual refreshment. This was the low point in Jewish history, for them to be given spiritual refreshment as Jews in Gentile languages.

Now the response of the Jews as a whole would be negative to this, as historically was confirmed. They were negative to the New Testament church, to the apostles, and to the message of salvation. And they would not hear, which is what verse 12 says. “Yet they would not hear.” In 40 years from Pentecost would come national dispersion in 70 A.D. It was a grace period for them to escape the curse which was upon them.

Now, if you will turn to 1 Corinthians 14, we’re going to give you the connection for all that has been said. 1 Corinthians 14, beginning at verse 21: Here the apostle Paul, in a segment of the book of 1 Corinthians, which goes from chapters 12 through 14: This segment of 1 Corinthians deals with spiritual gifts, and particularly with the abuse of the gift of tongues in the New Testament church. In this segment of Scripture dealing with tongues, the apostle Paul in verse 21 connects the gift of tongues on the day of Pentecost with the verses in Isaiah that we just looked at.

**The Purpose of the Gift of Tongues**

Verse 21 says, “In the law it is written (that is, in Isaiah 28:11-12), ‘With men of other tongues and other lips will I speak unto this people, and yet for all that will they not hear me,’ saith the Lord.” This passage is the only direct declaration which we have of the purpose of the gift of tongues. Now be sure you get that. When you ask, “Why tongues?” Only this passage, beginning as a matter of fact with verse 20, 1 Corinthians 14:20-22 is the only passage you have in the New Testament that explains to you the purpose of tongues. If you miss it here, you’re going to be wrong all the way through in your thinking concerning tongues.

Here’s what it says: Paul places tongues as the gift of the least value in these chapters. He points out that every Christian would not have tongues. In 1 Corinthians 13 he stresses that what is of value is “agape” love, that is being filled with the spirit. That’s what’s important—not some spiritual gift. Then in 1 Corinthians 14 he points out that the primary purpose of all spiritual gifts is edification, building up of individual believers in the local church (1 Corinthians 14:26). A spiritual gift is not exercised for your own edification. It is only exercised for the edification of other people. That’s its purpose.

So verse 20 says, “Brethren, be not children in understanding; however, in malice be children, but in understanding be men.” This introduces God’s purpose for the tongues gift. There is here a caution against being immature about this gift, thinking as a spiritual child—exalting the tongues gift while overlooking its purpose. The word “men” at the end of verse 20 is the Greek word “teleioi” which means “mature.” This is the very failure of the tongues movement today. They have not come to a mature understanding of this gift.

Then in verse 21 he quotes Isaiah 28:11-12. This was fulfilled on the day of Pentecost. This is when god sent His messengers to evangelize the Jews in Gentile languages. Then verse 22: This begins with the Greek word “hoste,” wherefore. This word in the Greek indicates that a conclusion is being reached on the basis of the verse just quoted, verse 21. What he says is, “Therefore, tongues are for a sign.” Tongues are for a sign. This is a Greek way of expressing a purpose. The purpose of tongues is (to be) a sign, to prove something. Isaiah 28:11-12 revealed to us that the miracle of tongues in the church age was for the purpose of a sign. Paul connects it to the Isaiah passage. Paul says, “And tongues came on Pentecost—the purpose of God in the gift was to be a sign.” To whom? This people, the Jews—not to Gentiles. It has no purpose beyond the Jews, and it has no purpose beyond the Jews who lived in the New Testament period.

Tongues, also here, has the definite article, “the tongues,” which indicates the tongues that Paul has been about through these chapters 12 through 14, the New Testament gift of tongues. It refers as a sign. The word “sign” means something that is concrete to reveal a spiritual truth. “Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not. But prophesying serveth not for them that believe not but for them who believe.

Verse 21, speaking of this people, identifies that tongues as a sign gift is to this people which is the Jews. The tongues would be a sign to them that believe not—Jews who believe not, not to Gentiles who believe not. In the Greek, the words here “believe not” express a state of hardened condition that these people are in. They reject the evidence that God is giving to them through this gift of tongues as a sign.

So verses 23 through 25 here in 1 Corinthians 14 go on to indicate that Gentile unbelievers would listen to tongues in an assembly and they’d say, “You’re crazy.” But when a Jew listened to it, because he knew Isaiah 28, he would say, “Do you know what’s happening? What’s happening is Isaiah 28:11-12. We are hearing tongues. We are hearing the Word of God preached to us in Gentile languages as Isaiah told was going to happen to us. And it signaled to them that God is through with the nation that He is now turning to Gentiles. And it signaled to them that the fifth stage of discipline, when Israel is to be dispersed from her land, is immediately upon them. This was 30 A.D. The dispersion didn’t come until 40 years later. 40 years of grace. Why?

Well, a Jew is under a two-fold curse. He is under a curse now nationally that God has placed upon him. He is also under the curse that you and I are under because of our spiritual death. He could escape the curse nationally and of spiritual death by turning to Christ as Savior. In Luke chapter 21, we have the Lord’s declaration that this stage of discipline is coming upon the Jewish people. Luke 21, beginning at verse 20. The Lord says, “And ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies. Then know that its desolation is near. That’s what happened in the invasion in 70 A.D. Then let them who are in Judea flee to the mountains. Let them who are in the midst of it depart. Let not them that are in the countries enter into it. For these are the days of vengeance that all things which are written may be fulfilled. Woe unto them that are with child, them that nourish children in those days, for there shall be great distress in the land and wrath upon this people (the Jews). They shall fall by the edge of the sword” And about a million-and-a-half of them did in the invasion and siege of Jerusalem. “And shall be led away captive into all nations.” Which is where they are today and will remain until the return of the Lord. “And Jerusalem shall be trodden down by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.”

What the Scriptures reveal, beginning with Isaiah and Paul’s connection in 1 Corinthians 14, is that God is now reaching humanity through Gentiles. And Jews may escape their position of spiritual death and of the curse of their nation by turning to Christ as Savior. Gentiles, according to Galatians 3:13, escape their spiritual death by returning to Christ. The Jew today who rejects Jesus Christ remains under his two-fold curse. The day of Isaiah’s curse began the same day that the blessing began, because cursing is turned to blessing when we receive God’s solution. The solution was to receive Christ as Savior.

The picture I want you to understand clearly this morning is that Isaiah 28 tells you what the purpose of the gift of tongues was. What was the purpose? To go to the Jewish people and to signal to them that God was not through with them as a nation; that He was rejecting them; that He was delivering God’s understanding in the Word of God to them in Gentile languages; that national dispersion was just over the hill; and, that they had to turn to Christ to escape the double curse that was upon them as Jews. You can see obviously that once this purpose was fulfilled, the point of tongues ceased. We don’t have tongues today because God is no longer testifying to the Jews. You’re going to discover that when tongues occurred in the New Testament, there were Jews present. The tongues were directed toward them, not the Gentiles. You could not have the New Testament gift of tongues operating today. Whatever is operating, it is not the New Testament gift of tongues.

Now that’s just the beginning point. There is a lot more evidence and factors than that which we’re going to come to. But I want you to understand that the purpose from Isaiah, as Paul connects it, was to the Jewish people. It was a sign to them: Get ready, it’s almost over for the Jewish nation. Turn to Christ. That’s your only route of escape. The curse of God is upon you.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1971