**The Gift of Tongues, No. 2 – BD29-01**

This is the second in the series on the spiritual gift of tongues. Some of the spiritual gifts we have thus far learned which the Holy Spirit has provided for Christian service were temporary. They were meant to exist at the opening stages of the church in its early days and then to be phased out. Other gifts are permanent. Each of us has at least one gift, and it is this gift that we exercise in spiritual service, in Christian service, and it is with this gift that we accomplish divine good.

These temporary gifts were designed to serve a special purpose until the Scriptures were written. Now the Word of God gives us the revelation that God wants us to know. Until the Scriptures were written, God had to have prophets so that a man could stand up in a service and say, “God has given me a message,” and he would deliver it. But that necessitated having somebody with the gift of discernment, to say, “God enables me to confirm that this man speaks the truth.” A person would stand and speak in a foreign language and He would deliver a message from God. Somebody had to confirm what he was saying. He couldn’t just interpret his own words because nobody would know whether he was really telling the truth, but somebody else had to listen and say, “Now this is what God is saying.”

Now all of this has been moved off the scene once we had the written scripture and the order of the church has been established with a local organization and a teaching pastoral ministry within it. Gifts of a miraculous nature such as tongues and healing were to authenticate the message and the messengers of Christianity to the people in New Testament times. God’s purpose for the miracle of tongues has now been served, so the gift of tongues, we say, has ceased. It no longer exists.

Now immediately you would find considerable debate about that because this is the hottest issue. Almost everywhere I go the first question people want to ask when they hear that you’re a minister, they want to ask, “What do you think about tongues? What do you think about Oral Roberts? What do you think about Kathryn Kuhlman? What do you think about the Full Gospel Businessmen’s Association? They just met out in California, and while they were meeting, a fellow stood up in the meeting and said, “I have a message from the Lord. He has just given me a prophecy and He has said, ‘You will see me in a few hours.’” Pandemonium broke out among these businessmen. And a few hours later the prophecy was fulfilled because they went outside and they saw a halo in the form of clouds gathered over the building. And there He was, just like he said. And people feel like they’ve had a real experience.

Now Satan can counterfeit spiritual gifts, and he can perform miracles. Let’s get that established once and for all. I trust you know enough about the Bible to know how Satan can perform miracles. He is going to perform miracles. He does perform miracles, and he can counterfeit the spiritual gifts. He imitates tongues obviously today in order to deceive people who are low on doctrine. Tongues today are not the real thing. It is a fraud that comes from demon possession in unbelievers, or from demon influence upon believers, or from self-hypnosis in both.

Now you may say, or you may hear someone say, “Well, now listen. When I talk about tongues, and I speak in tongues, when I go to a healing meeting, I give God the glory for something that is done and somebody has been healed. I know that Satan can counterfeit this.” You can go to any Pentecostalist and he will say, “Yes, I know Satan can fool us about this. He can deceive us, but we give God the glory. We give God the praise.”

I want you to turn with me to Matthew 7:21. This is the passage where the Lord Jesus Christ is describing the tribulation judgment—at the end of the tribulation—the judgment of the Gentiles. He says concerning them, “Not everyone who says unto me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven.”

At this time there will be many sincere people who are professing allegiance to Jesus Christ as Lord, and they’re going to be calling him “Lord.” Yet they will be excluded and rejected from entering the millennial kingdom—the kingdom of heaven. This is a technical term in the book of Matthew and it refers to the Messianic millennial kingdom of Jesus Christ. He is deciding which of the Gentiles are believers, and therefore are in the category of sheep and are to enter the millennial kingdom; and which are in the category of goats and are to be put to death and forbidden from entering that kingdom.

Now here you have a vast number of people who are standing before the Lord. He has returned from heaven in the second coming. He is judging the Gentiles and getting ready to establish His kingdom. And he says, “Goat…, Goat…, Goat…” The person says “Goat? Well I called you ‘Lord, Lord.’ How can you say this?” How can He say it? They give you evidence. “You’re wrong, Lord.” Verse 22 says, “Many will say to Me, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name?’” They will say, “We gave revelations from God. We stood up and gave revelations that you gave us to people. And in thy name we cast out demons. We actually went out and here were demon-possessed people, and in the name of the Lord Jesus we commanded those demons to leave. And in thy name we have done many wonderful works.” This word “wonderful” means “miraculous” works. Do you see what they’re talking about? White magic. Not black magic done in the name and power of Satan, but white magic done in the name of God but still under satanic empowerment and enablement.

I’m amazed how Christians cannot get this through their heads once and for all. You can call Jesus Christ “Lord” and be a total unbeliever. These people here are sighting their experience as proof of their genuine relationship to God. They claim that the power was of God the Holy Spirit, and yet the Lord said, “No, it wasn’t. What you worked with was the power of Satan, and I reject you.” He rejects their salvation. He rejects their works.

Verse 23 says, “And then will I profess unto them.” The Greek word “profess” is that same word in 1 John 1:9 for “confess.” That is, He will state a case against them. “I will declare unto them, ‘I never knew you.’” And here you have that word connoting intimacy of relationship and salvation in the family of God, “… knew you.” “Depart from me ye that work iniquity.” Now what did they work? What were these works of iniquity? What were these works of human good that God rejects, because they were good thing? They prophesied. They gave people encouragement. They gave them declarations from God. They cast out demons. That’s always a good thing. They did many wonderful things—things that were miraculous, things that were beneficial. And yet God says, “This came from your old sin nature, and I reject it.”

So it is entirely possible for a person who is short on doctrine and heavy on experience to be a plumb stupid asinine sucker when it comes to the working of Satan. And to be claiming that he’s doing something that is praising God, that he is calling upon God to do. And Satan is standing in the wings, and he is glad to have somebody who is playing religion, and he is glad for you to give credit to God. You think he doesn’t want to give credit to God. You bet he does. Because as long as you give credit to God, and he sits behind and pulls and manipulates the strings on your life, he’s got you. That’s exactly what he does to everybody in the tongues movement or anybody who rides on emotion as the basis of deciding the will of God.

Now if you don’t get that straight, I’m going to tell you what’s going to happen to you. You are going, sooner or later, to begin to be sympathetic with people who are in the tongues movement. You are going to be sympathetic with people who pursue ecstatics as an expression of spirituality, and you are going to get to the point where you’re just not sure. The very words will begin coming from your lips. “I’m not sure about this.” You will become so uncertain of doctrine that you will not be able to say, “Anybody who talks in tongues today is moving under satanic inspiration, either under satanic possession, under satanic control, or under self-hypnosis manipulated by Satan.” And you will come to the place where you will not be able courageously, on the basis of doctrine, to say, “This is wrong.” You will begin to move off to where experience begins to deceive you.

So read this passage over carefully. Put yourself out there at the end of the tribulation. Understand what these people came through. They came through a hell-hole situation of the tribulation. They were religionists who were saying, “We’re still with God. We’re reaching out and we’re calling the real Lord Jesus ‘Lord, Lord.” And when he gets there, He says, “You’re goats. You’re religion. You have never received me in your life as savior. You have never accepted Me. You have practiced religion, and Satan has duped you. Don’t try to prove something with your experiences. He never knew them. Their works were iniquity.

What they had forgotten is what Isaiah 8:20 tells us; an excellent summary of how we decide what is of God and what is of Satan. When we forget this, there’s no hope. Isaiah 8:20 says, “To the law and to the testimony if they speak not according to this word it is because there is no light in them. The law and the testimony, that is the written revelation of the Word of God. If they speak not according to this word it is because there is no light.

If you look at verse 19, you’ll see that he’s talking about the Old Testament mediums who were demon-possessed and who spoke prophecies and revelations under demon control, just like a medium speaks today. He speaks about them muttering and peeping. Here are people, instead of looking to their God, should look to such, to the dead, seeking to contact the dead.

Now all of this may be very realistic. You may sit there in a séance. You may here this person talking. You may have known this person in life, and suddenly out of the mouth of this medium comes the voice of the person, and you know it is that person. You had known him all his life. You know the sound of his voice, the way he phrases things. And there he is, talking through the mouth of the medium. And you think you have contacted that person on the other side of the grave. That’s what verse 20 means, to the law and to the testimony. If they speak not according to this word it is because there is no light in them. Isaiah says, “I don’t care what your experience is. The Word of God is our guide.

So doctrine alone is the means for doing the will of the Father in heaven. That’s what Matthew 7:21 says. “Not everyone who says unto me, ‘Lord, Lord” shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my father who is in heaven.” And you will never do the will of the Father who is in heaven unless you are a doctrinally-oriented Christian.

Please know and remember that Satan can heal, and in fact Satan can cause you to speak in a true foreign language. Put that aside. Just remember that Satan can cause you to speak in a true foreign language.

One of the Dallas seminary professors pointed out one of the ridiculous things about Pat Boone’s excursions into the tongue movement, and he’s big with it now—very influential. He was reporting (I think it was) his wife who spoke a Latin phrase, “Lord I love you.” The Dallas seminary professor is an expert in Latin. He said the strange thing about what she said was that it was bad grammar. She said it grammatically wrong. And he thought, “Now this is really ridiculous that God can’t at least learn good Latin grammar if He’s going to let people talk in Latin, who supposedly don’t know it.”

Now I’m not going to go through with you extensively into what this person says and what this person claims and this experience. We could go on for weeks. You just read the books, and you just hear the stories, and you just pursue that on your own. What I’m going to try to do is to establish what the Bible says, to give you the basis, to give you the frame of reference, and then you go from there. You will know then on your own what to do and what not to do, unless you’re sitting there quizzical, doubting, negative, and resisting. That’s all the wedge Satan will need. But you read the Word and you listen to what’s said. If this confirms with what the Word declares then no matter what you know, no matter what you’ve heard, no matter what you’ve seen, no matter what experience you’ve had, stay with the Word and reject the avenues by which Satan may delude you.

We had indicated last week that the purpose of gifts is stated in only one place in the Bible, and that is in 1 Corinthians 14:21-22. There it is quoting Isaiah 28:11. That is the only place in the Bible that tells you the purpose of gifts. We found that Isaiah 28:11 was a warning to the Jewish people that national destruction was going to come upon them for their apostasy.

In Leviticus chapter 26 (and we won’t go into this morning. I’ll just mention it.) In Leviticus chapter 26 God tells the Jewish people that when they turn from Him as a people, He will lead them through a cycle of discipline, and this cycle of discipline will have five stages. Each stage will be a discipline of a certain type. They’ll have famine, they’ll have troubles of various kinds, and so on. Finally they will get to the fourth stage of discipline which will be their nation dominated by a foreign military power, but they will still be living in their land. And if they persist in their apostasy, then God would bring the fifth stage of discipline which will be this foreign military power taking them out of their land into dispersion. This is the stage that was reached in the 70-year Babylonian captivity. They came to the fifth stage of the cycle of discipline.

Now God after 70 years brought them back to the land. They had returned to Him. They had turned from their apostasy. After the Babylonian captivity they never went back to idolatry again. They started at the beginning, stage number one. But again gradually the nation fell away from God, and they began going through the steps of the cycle of discipline until at the time of the Lord Jesus Christ, and at the beginning of the New Testament church they had reached the fourth stage of discipline. They were now in their land but they were under the military domination of the Roman Empire.

Isaiah told them, here in Isaiah 28:11, that the time was going to come in their history when God was going to bring judgment upon them for their apostasy, for their resistance to the word, and that the signal for this was going to be that they the Jews who had been the depository of divine revelation and the avenue of missionary enterprise, were going to find God’s revelation and the gospel preached to them in Gentile languages. Instead of in their own Hebrew language, they were going to be the object of Gentile language missionaries.

The apostle Paul takes up this prediction in 1 Corinthians 14:21-22. He identifies Pentecost as the day when this was fulfilled, when the Jews found themselves being evangelized in Gentile tongues. Then the sign of tongues was brought to bear. What was the sign? The sign was simply this: that you had now incurred the last stage of discipline. God was going to disperse you among the nations. As a matter of fact, this happened about 30 A.D., but the dispersal didn’t come for 40 more years until 70 A.D. God gave a 49-year period of grace where a Jew who knew what was coming could turn to the Lord Jesus Christ and he could get out from under the anti-Semitism that was to come upon him as a Jew when he was dispersed all over the world, and he could get out from under the condemnation and curse of God that was upon him because of his old sin nature. For 40 years he had that opportunity. For 40 years the gift of tongues was extant. It was in operation. It was working, gradually decreasing. Finally when 70 A.D. came, and Jerusalem was destroyed and Jews scattered all over the world, tongues and its purpose had come to an end. So it ceased completely and it has never occurred since that day in August of 70 A.D.

Paul says that tongues are a sign to unbelievers (1 Corinthians 14:22). Now the context, if you will read that, indicates that the unbelievers he’s talking about are Jewish unbelievers. In 1 Corinthians 14:21 it means unbelieving Jews. Verse 22, by the Greek language, indicates that this is a conclusion drawn from verse 21. What Paul is saying is that tongues is a sign, as Isaiah said it would be, to a special group of people, the Jews. Therefore tongues was never meant to be practiced in front of anybody except Jews. The only point of tongues was during that period before 70 A.D. was to be practiced in front of Jews to remind them that the time of apostasy was now going to bear its fruit, and that God was giving them an opportunity to change that doom of discipline to blessing by turning to Christ.

“This people” is the phrase you have in 1 Corinthians 14:21. This by context and by the passage in Isaiah can only refer to the Jews. In Luke 21:20-24 the Lord previews the discipline which finally came upon the Jewish nation. Since God’s purpose has now been fulfilled, tongues has ceased.

**Acts 2:1-5**

Now when did the historical fulfillment take place? Let’s look at it a little more carefully. What Isaiah 28:11 predicted was fulfilled on the day of Pentecost. If you’ll turn to Acts chapter 2, we’ll pick up the passages this morning in Acts. Acts chapter 2 beginning at verse 1: “And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. The expression “they were all” refers to the Christians who were Galileans, as we find a little later. They spoke Aramaic which was a combination of Chaldean and Hebrew. They apparently also spoke the trade language of the New Testament world which was Greek.

On the day of Pentecost, Jerusalem was flooded with Jews, from all over the Roman Empire, who spoke not Hebrew. They spoke probably the trade language of Greek, but they normally conversed in their local dialect—their local languages. So here in Jerusalem were Jews flooded from all over the Roman Empire—religiously-oriented Jews who came for the religious holy day of Pentecost. They were in Jerusalem on this day.

Now how was God going to fulfill Isaiah 28:11? Well He had to set up the condition where He had Jews who understood a variety of Gentile languages which is exactly what God brought about on the day of Pentecost. So here they are, milling about the streets on this morning, the 50th day after the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The day of Pentecost has arrived. They’re milling about the streets from all over the Roman Empire speaking all kinds of different languages. A great event had been planned by God for this particular Pentecost. From this day a new thing was to be begun in the program of God which He had never revealed before, and that was the church, which was to be the body of Christ. Jesus Christ was the head. This was an entirely new group of people—a group of people who would be given the most fantastic privileges and liberties and freedom that God had ever bestowed upon a people; people who had everything done for them by grace. They would do nothing but accept eternal life. They would do nothing in their lives except but accept the blessings which God had performed and committed and created for them in Christ Jesus.

**The Baptism of the Holy Spirit**

It was an era that was marked by the fact that God himself would indwell their bodies, which had never been true before. Now the day of Pentecost and the formation of the church was a brand new work. It was going to take Jew and Gentile, and form them into one body. This was going to be done by an act of God the Holy Spirit called the baptism of the Holy Spirit. In Acts 1:5, the Lord Jesus Christ predicted that this baptism of the Holy Spirit would come shortly. As a matter of fact it came ten days later. 1 Corinthians 12:13 defines what the baptism of the Holy Spirit is.

Here’s where the Pentecostalists goes off-beat. The Pentecostalists will tell you in a meeting, and frequently they will say, “Now how many of you want to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit?” And if you do, you raise your hand. Then they go through the rigmarole and the mumbo-jumbo, and they say that the sign that you have the baptism is that you’ll start pouring out the gibberish of what they call tongues.

But in 1 Corinthians 12:13, you discover that the baptism of the Holy Spirit is the work of God the Holy Spirit baptizing us, or placing us, as individual believers into union with Jesus Christ. We become part of His body. A believer enters into union with Jesus Christ at the point of salvation, automatically upon receiving Christ as savior. That’s what 1 Corinthians 12:13 says. For by one spirit were we all baptized into one body.” By the way, this is talking now to these Corinthian Christians, and the Corinthian church was the most carnal church of the New Testament. It was the most fantastically sinful church you could imagine. And every one of them could say, “We have all been baptized into one body whether we be Jew or Greeks, whether we be bound or free, have been all made to drink into one spirit.” Without the spirit of Christ, Paul tells us in Romans, we are not of Him—we have no part with Him. So every (believer) is baptized into the body of Christ.

The word “baptized” is in the aorist tense in Greek which indicates a position which is received at the point of salvation and it’s something you see. It’s not an experience. It’s a point action. That’s the implication of the aorist tense. It’s just something that happens. An experience would take time, but this is something that is simply given. The baptism of the Holy Spirit is received by every Christian at the point of his believing in Christ.

Now this couldn’t happen in the Old Testament, for several reasons. Number one, Jesus had not come in the flesh. Number two, Jesus Christ had not died on the cross. Number three, Jesus Christ had not been raised from the grave and ascended to heaven. And four, the Jewish nation had not reached the maximum stage of apostasy which, when they did reach it, they were willing to crucify the Messiah. Now all of these things had to take place, but when they did, the scene was set for this particular Pentecost for the church to be born. It was born that day, here in verse 2: “And suddenly there came a sound from heaven like a rushing might wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.” A sound from heaven like a tornado filled the room. “And there appeared unto them cloven tongues as of fire and it sat upon each of them.” The tongues of fire on each believer signaled the arrival of the Holy Spirit who Jesus said He would send as another comforter like Himself. It perhaps also signaled, as fire does in the Bible, the judgment of God which was now coming upon the Jewish nation.

Verse 4 says, “And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues as the spirit gave them utterance.” The Holy Spirit descended. He baptized all of these who were gathered in this room. (He) put them into the body of Christ, and the church was born. These believers were filled with the Holy Spirit so that they were not in a status of spirituality, and therefore they were capable of exercising spiritual gifts. You cannot exercise your spiritual gifts unless you are in a status of spirituality. That is, being filled with the spirit. The gift that they began exercising was the gift of tongues. I think this would only apply to the men. I think only the men spoke in tongues in this situation because of the restrictions upon women giving instructions in the assembly.

Now the word for tongues is important. It is the Greek word “glossa.” We’re going to have another word, but I want you to note this word here. In Acts 2:4, it is this word “glossa.” This word is used as the normal word for simply the tongue as an organ in your mouth. It is also used in the sense of a spoken language. We speak about “glossa” as a language. It may also be used, we find from Greek literature, in reference to broken speech of people who are in a religious ecstasy—a kind of a gibberish outpouring. And the word “glossa” is used to describe that kind of an ecstatic speech which was common among pagan and heathen religious exercises (by) priests and priestesses.

It says that they spoke with “other” tongues. This word is important because it is the Greek word “heteros.” Now a “heteros” is a word that means another of a different kind. It was a different kind of tongue. That is, it was a different language from the one that they normally spoke. We have another Greek word for “other” which we have mentioned to you (which is) “allos.” “Allos” means another of the same kind. But these people spoke in a language which was another of a different kind than the one that they normally spoke. It’s like when the Lord Jesus said, “I’m going to send you ‘another’ comforter.” This was the word he used: “allos,” because He was going to send a different comforter, but one who was of the same kind as he was—both deity. This is a numerical difference, “allos.” “Heteros” is a qualitative difference. And in Acts 2:4, because they began speaking in different kinds of languages from their own, the Greek word “heteros” is used. The source of this amazing sudden linguistic ability, that every college student and seminary student wishes he could possess, was God the Holy Spirit.

Verse 5 (says), “And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews devout men of every nation under heaven.” (They were) dwelling on a temporary basis for the feast of Pentecost. And you notice they are identified as Jews from all over the Roman Empire. They were devout men because they were positive God. That’s why they took the trouble to travel to the temple in Jerusalem from wherever they lived—all these nation groups within the Roman Empire.

Verse 6 (says), “Now when this was noised abroad, a multitude came together, and were confounded because every man heard them speak in his own language.” The multitude here are these devout but unsaved Jews in Jerusalem for the holy days. “They were confounded” means they were amazed. They were astonished. The reason that they were astonished was that they recognized these men as Galileans. And yet these Galileans were speaking their own native languages of these visitors fluently. It was absolutely amazing to them. When it says that every man speak in his own language, the Greek is very emphatic. It’s his very own language. It was clear to the man when he heard this man open his mouth that he immediately recognized the language.

Now you can experience if you know one of the modern languages, or you’ve grown up in a bilingual home like some of us did. (When) you get back with your parents or especially the older relatives, they have a way of falling into both languages. They will be talking to you and they will speak English, then they will drop over into the old language, and back and forth. But you will be aware that they’re cycling back and forth, and yet you’ll understand what’s going on without any problem. But immediately you will recognize what’s happening. Well these people who knew these languages looked at these Galileans. They were fishermen. They weren’t all that bright. They knew how to speak Aramaic. They knew the trade language Greek. Yet here they were speaking languages that were far distant around the Roman Empire. How could that be? Very curious. Many of these Hellenistic Jews couldn’t speak Hebrew at all anymore. All they could speak were these national dialects.

So they heard and they understood. What was happening was the fulfillment of Isaiah 28:11. In verse 6 we have the word “languages” again. This is important. Here the word “language” is a different word in the Greek: “dialektos.” Of course you immediately recognized that we get our English word “dialect” from this word. This word in the Greek language always means a known language. It never means ecstatic talk. It never means like ‘glossa’ can mean: broken, erratic, or ecstatic sounds that maybe don’t mean anything. This word always means a known language.

Now the thing that’s important to notice is that in this context Luke drops back and forth between these two words. Sometimes he says, “glossa.” Sometimes he says, “dialektos.” This indicates, it identifies for us, specifically what he has in mind, and that is a known language. So either word is used. And this “glossa” which could mean ecstatic talk is qualified by the fact that he uses a word that can only mean a known language when talking about exactly the same situation. In other words, what the apostles were doing were speaking real languages. Each visitor heard the language into which he was born fluently spoken.

Verse 7 says, “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, wherein we were born?” Here in verse 8 you have the word “tongue,” and this time it’s again “dialektos.” The English version here, the authorized version, goes between the word “language” and “tongue,” but the Greek in both verse 6 and in verse 8 has “dialektos,” a known definite language.

Then they begin listing them: Parthians—were once a great empire actually rivaling Rome. Their country extended from the Euphrates River to India. They were located on the southeast of the Caspian Sea. Medes—who once ruled the world. Their language was allied to that of the Persians. Elamites— who lived in the hills above Chaldea from the days of Abraham on. And then “dwellers in Mesopotamia.” That would include a number of languages: Syrian, Assyrian, and Chaldean. Judea—probably referring to Hebrew which wasn’t used much outside of religious ceremonies. Cappadocia—This was in eastern Asia Minor. This was a country which was locked in by other nations. It was hard to learn that language—to get to it. Pontus, in the northeastern part of Asia Minor on the southern shore of the Black Sea. You may remember that this was the home of Aquila and Priscilla.

Asia—all the various dialects of Asia Minor in general. Phrygia—a mountainous land in central Asia. Pamphylia—on the southern coast of Asian Minor on the Mediterranean Sea, surrounded by the tallest mountains. Egypt—referring to ancient Coptic. Libya—in North Africa. Cyrene—in North Africa and west of Egypt. The man who was compelled to bear the cross of Jesus came from here. Rome—the Latin language. “Jews and proselytes”—In verse you notice that phrase at the end of verse 10. Both “Jews and proselytes,” almost thrust in there to remind you once more, “Hey, I’m talking about a special sign gift to the Jewish people. These were the ones standing there hearing this happening because they were experiencing the fulfillment of Isaiah 28:11. Then it says “Cretes”—from the island in the Mediterranean where Paul was driven by bad weather. Arabians—all of the languages of the Sinai Peninsula. “Our tongues”—the languages of the nations mentioned.

Tongues here in verse 11 is again the word “glossa,” as we had previously. Acts 2:11 uses the same incident here. The same incidents are described by “dialektos” in verse 6 and 8, and in other places here by “glossa,” so that they’re interchangeable—that all of the mean known languages.

So on the day of Pentecost, the languages spoken by the apostles were not meaningless gibberish. The listeners heard about the wonderful works of God in salvation, and about the message of rest and refreshening that Isaiah 28:12 told about.

So verse 11 says, “They were all amazed, and were perplexed, saying one to another, ‘What meaneth this?’ And others mocking saying, ‘These men are full of new wine.’” The crowd’s reaction was, “I don’t know what to think about this.” Some said that the apostles were drunk. Do you know why they said that? Because to some of them what they heard was gibberish babbling. The reason it was babbling to them was because some of them were talking languages they didn’t understand. But out of the mass of babbling they heard one guy talking a language they did understand. But for the rest of them it was babbling.

So for most of them, they got the impression, “These guys are drunk.” They had been boozing it until early in the morning and that’s why they’re doing this. And … Peter got up and said, “No, it’s too early in the morning to get all boozed up. This is something entirely different. This is what the Bible predicted back in the days of Joel. This is the same type of thing.” Then he went on to preach that great sermon that resulted in 3,000 souls saying, “I’m positive. I believe.” And they entered that newly formed body, the church of the Lord Jesus Christ.

So the tongues was a sign of known foreign languages by the power of the Holy Spirit to explain the Word of God and this was understood by the Jews who understood the book of Isaiah.

In Acts chapter 10 you have another example in the book of Acts of speaking in tongues. We will just briefly look at these others. Acts 10:46. What I’m trying to do is to establish for you that what happened on the day of Pentecost was known languages. Whatever else we understand, it was known languages. I want to establish the purpose of it which was to the Jews to warn them of national judgment which was coming. They had a grace period of 40 years. Now they were to turn to Christ or to suffer the disaster which upon their nation. Remember that a million-and-a-half to two million Jews died when Titus finally broke through that blockade and entered the city of Jerusalem. It was the most fantastic slaughter. You can read the ancient accounts and it will turn your stomach of what they finally did to one another in their attempts to survive as they resisted for weeks on end the siege that the Romans laid against the city of Jerusalem, and it was a tremendous slaughter. Their escape would have been turning to Christ.

Acts 10:46 (tells of) the incident where Peter was in the house of Cornelius with Jews and Gentiles present. Always Jews were present when tongues were spoken. Verse 45 says, “And they of the circumcision who believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter.” That is, Jews. “Because on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Spirit.” Peter explains the gospel to these Gentiles as the result of God telling him not to consider Gentiles (to be) unclean anymore, and telling Cornelius to send a delegation to bring people up from Joppa. He comes to him. He explains the gospel to Cornelius, to his family, and to his friends he has gathered, and these Gentiles believed. Upon their believing, they were baptized by God the Holy Spirit into the body of Christ, just as had the Jewish believers, and that was what was important, and Gentile salvation was evidenced by the gift of tongues. While the gift of tongues had its purpose to fulfill Isaiah’s promise to the Jew of signaling their disaster, it also served to identify the fact of the coming of the Holy Spirit upon various groups of people. Now it identified that Gentiles also could experience the baptism of the Holy Spirit. They were part of the body of Christ. They were part of the church.

Now verse 46 uses the Greek word “glossa” just as Acts 2 does and it means, as it does in Acts 2, an existing foreign language. Jews were again present as was required. Cornelius and these in the Gentile group are given the miracle sign which authenticated Peter’s message and Peter himself as God’s messenger.

In Acts 19 we have another example in verse 6. Here the apostle Paul comes to Ephesus. He finds a group of disciples of John the Baptist. As he talks to these people, twelve men, he begins to sense that something is wrong. He begins to interrogate them concerning God the Holy Spirit, and he discovers that they don’t know anything about Him. Then he asks them into what were they baptized and they say, “… into John’s baptism.” Well John’s baptism was relative to the coming of the kingdom, the millennial kingdom of Jesus Christ which has been postponed because of His death at the hands of his nation. So they were in a kind of half-way position between Judaism and Christianity. They were as many people were. There were many Jewish believers who followed John who then, subsequent to the day of Pentecost when Christianity had begun and the church had begun, all of these Jewish believers had to be transferred over into the body of Christ. It was a specific act of carrying them through. Now here were twelve of them who had never been transferred over.

That’s why the book of Acts is a transitional book. There were some things to take place in a certain order in Acts which are not the normal way that it takes place in the church age. So Paul explains to them the gospel. They receive it. They believe it. The result is that they too, upon the laying on of the hands of the apostle Paul in verse 6, receive the Holy Spirit, and they give evidence of this with tongues and with prophecy. Again this is known languages and definite revelations from God.

In verse 2, I’ll just note in passing, Paul says unto them, “Have ye received the Holy Spirit since ye believed?” The Pentecostalists like to make a great deal of this (phrase) “since ye believed” in the King James translation, indicating that it is a mistranslation. It gives you the impression that you get the Holy Spirit after you have been saved. But this should be translated “when ye believed.” “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?” Because that’s when it normally happens.

Alright, so they identify themselves now with Christian baptism. They transfer over from the Old Testament order. They come into the full bonafide position as members of the body of Christ, again speaking in known languages as the sign.

Now there’s one other passage before we close and that’s in Acts chapter 8 in verses 14 through 17. This may be another case of tongues in the book of Acts though it does not say so. It says that Phillip preached the gospel in Samaria and many believed. The apostles in Jerusalem heard of these conversions of these outcast Samaritans, so they came down to verify the movement. When they laid hands on these people, the Holy Spirit is said in verse 17 to have indwelt these believers. “They laid their hands upon them and the received the Holy Spirit.”

Now it doesn’t say they spoke in tongues, but verse 18 says that Simon saw something that happened as a result of this laying on of hands. He offered the apostles money if they would give him the gift to be able to do this. There is not too bad a presumption here. We may perhaps presume that what Simon saw was this evidence of speaking in tongues, these miraculous evidences of the presence of the Holy Spirit. Now there’s another good reason for thinking this. That is because the Lord in Acts 1 told the disciples that they would be His witnesses in Jerusalem, in Judea, in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth. Now those are not only geographical locations but they are ethnic locations. You would be (witnesses) to the Jews (Jerusalem and Judea), to the Samaritans (half Jew and half Gentile), to the uttermost parts of the earth (pure Gentile). That’s the order in which it went: to the Jews; to the Samaritans; (then) to the Gentiles. Every time there was an apostle on the scene to verify that this ethnic group had entered indeed (into) the body of Christ. They were part of this new ball game. Therefore, we may conclude perhaps, with good reason, that we have here the experience again of speaking in tongues.

The conclusions we can reach from the book of Acts can only be that the experience of tongues as it was practiced on these three definite and on possible occasions was always known languages. They were never gibberish, they were always sin the presence of Jews because it was a sign testimony to that nation, and it continued for the period when the Jewish nation was in existence. When that nation fell, the sign gift had fulfilled its complete purpose. Therefore it does not exist today. Therefore, if anybody should speak in a known language today that he does not understand, it would not be of God. (I should not say it cannot be of God, for God can do that.) But it is not by doctrine His order now for this age. His purpose for the gift of tongues has been fulfilled. Therefore, if someone should speak even in a genuine known language, it would be satanic, and you would be on very hazardous ground by that experience to conclude that God has returned to this gift. Its purpose today is simply (for) kicks and ecstatics. Emotions will lead you down a blind alley and make a fool of you every time unless your emotions are oriented to the Word of God so that they are governed by the Word, not by dominating your soul in their own right.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1971