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## Speaking in Tongues

### What Are “Tongues” and Why Do We Use Them?

What is *Speaking in Tongues* and why does God say in 1 Corinthians 14:5 that He would like each Christian to do it?

I believe that knowing the answer is vital for maximizing the quality of your life as a follower of the Lord Jesus Christ. The primary reason, as a study of Scripture will clearly show, is speaking in tongues is the only absolute proof a Christian has, that he is born again

*“Now it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ. He anointed us, set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.” —II Corinthians 1:21-22*

*“And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God’s possession—to the praise of his glory” —Ephesians 1:13-14*

*“Those who obey his commands live in him, and he in them. And this is how we know that he lives in us: We know it by the Spirit he gave us.” —I John 3:24*

The Lord gave us the Holy Spirit as a guarantee—a *down payment* of what is to come. I believe, speaking in tongues is the only valid external, tangible evidence that the internal, intangible gift of the Holy Spirit who lives in one’s heart the moment of his new birth.

PLEASE do not hear me saying that you must speak in tongues in order to be born again. No! If you confess Jesus to be your Lord, and that you believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you are saved! Permanently! Why? Because according to I Peter 1:23, the moment you confess Jesus as your Lord, you are *“born again of incorruptible seed.”* However, as we will see, speaking in tongues is the vitally important proof that you are forever a child of God.

Another important reality about speaking in tongues is that it vividly illustrates to the believer the most basic principle of the Christian walk, which is trusting the Word of our Heavenly Father.

Beyond that, speaking in tongues is a beautiful way to circumvent the limited vocabulary of our native tongue and tell our Father that we love Him. It is a way to perfectly worship and praise the Creator (Phil. 3:3; 1 Cor. 14:16), to give thanks (1 Cor. 14:17), to speak of the wonderful works of God (Acts 2:11), to magnify Him (Acts 10:46), to edify yourself (1 Cor. 14:4) and to build yourself up in faith (Jude 20).

In this relatively brief piece, I cannot set forth the biblical background for every statement I make about the new birth, the gift of the Holy Spirit and speaking in tongues. My goal is to grab your attention (or at least skirmish with it) to the end that you choose to dig deeper into the Word on this critical subject. Although the phrase is overused, this is one subject that just might “change your life.”

As with many important biblical issues, an understanding of speaking in tongues relates specifically to an understanding of the *administrations* in Scripture. Unless we understand what parts of God’s Word are written to Jews, what parts are written to Gentiles, and what parts are written to Christians, we can neither understand nor apply its truths in our daily lives.

We are currently living in what the Bible calls the Administration of the *Sacred Secret* (Eph. 3:9), which began on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1ff) and will conclude with the gathering together of the Church (all living and dead Christians) to meet the Lord in the air (1 Thess. 4:13-18). Unique to this administration is the salvation a person attains by adhering to Romans 10:9—confessing with his mouth “*Jesus is Lord*” and believing in his heart that God raised him from the dead. At that moment he is “*born again of incorruptible seed*” (1 Pet. 1:23) and baptized/filled with the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:5; 2:38). As the Word says of each Christian, God has “*anointed us, set his seal of ownership on us, and put his spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come*” (2 Cor. 1:22). Amen!

And you may say: “GREAT! Uh, how do we know?”

Some would reply: “Well, because God says so.”

“Yes, but I didn’t feel anything happen when I got saved, and the next day I smoked, drank whiskey, cursed, and cheated at miniature golf. So how do I know for sure that the Holy Spirit of God is permanently within me? Are there any evidences in the sense-realm, the realm where I’ve lived from birth and to which I am almost completely attuned?”

And I say: “Evidences? You mean like something you can see, hear, touch, taste or smell?”

“Yep.”

You are in luck, because speaking in tongues is one of the nine *manifestations* (1 Cor. 12:7) of the gift of the Holy Spirit. The word *manifestation* comes from two Latin words, *manus*, meaning *hand*, and *festare*, meaning to *touch*. It refers to something concrete and tangible. The gift of the Holy Spirit each person receives when he is born again is not tangible, because it is spirit, something not in the realm of the five senses. That is why Scripture does not promise that you will feel anything when you are born again. That is why God has provided indisputable proof that something did happen, something so indescribably miraculous that there can be no *ifs*, *ands*, or *buts* about it!

This principle of tangible evidence in the sense-realm is illustrated in Matthew 9:1-8, which I will paraphrase: Some people brought to Jesus a paralyzed man, and Jesus said to him, “Cheer up, your sins are forgiven.”

Some grumpy Pharisees who were hanging around said to themselves, “Who does this guy think he is to forgive sins?”

It was risky to think things like that around Jesus, and he nailed them: “Now why do you have to rain on this guy’s parade? Say, I’ve got a question: which is easier to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or, let’s see, hm-m-m, how about ‘Pick up your mat and take a walk’?”

“Well, uh, err . . .”

“Forget it, I’ll show you that I have the authority to forgive sins—watch this: Hey bro, pick up your mat and go home.” And the paralyzed man was healed!

What’s the point? When Jesus told the man that his sins were forgiven, no one could see anything happen. The Pharisees saw no change in the man, so they said that Jesus’ words were bogus—the man’s sins were not forgiven. Jesus said, “Really? OK, let me try saying something else and see if that happens . . . Well, what d’ya know? Look at that.” He gave them indisputable proof in the sense realm that something had happened inside the man. Ditto for the new birth and speaking in tongues.

NOTE: Many Christians mistakenly refer to speaking in tongues, prophecy, etc., as *gifts* of the SSpirit, but Scripture never does (except in modern translations that add words to the Greek text, but do not italicize them as the KJV does, so the reader knows that it was added). The (one) gift is the Holy Spirit, the divine nature of God, who is called “the Holy Spirit,” the Giver.

If someone gives you a Swiss Army knife or a Leatherman tool, you get one gift, but within that gift are many ways to use it—many *manifestations*. Likewise, anyone who is born again of God’s spirit has the ability to utilize all nine manifestations of the spirit. Most need only a little instruction. Every Christian can speak in tongues whenever he decides to do it. If you do not speak in tongues, stay tuned for instructions on exactly how to do it.

Do you know that all but two of the nine manifestations of the gift of Holy Spirit were operational in the Old Testament and the Gospels? Only speaking in tongues and its companion manifestation, interpretation of tongues, are conspicuously absent prior to the Day of Pentecost. The question then becomes, what is so unique about speaking in tongues that God reserved it just for us who are born again of His spirit?

It is not what is unique about speaking in tongues; it is what is unique about salvation in the Church Administration, which necessitated speaking in tongues as the indisputable proof of that unconditional salvation. In no other administration was salvation equated with seed, birth, and therefore permanent *sonship*. At no other time was salvation permanent, and no one ever dreamed it would be. Talk about “the world’s biggest deal?!” This is it! God came up with a proof that to the ignorant may seem absurd, but which is actually very ingenious and practical.

Remember II Corinthians 1:22? God put His spirit in each Christian as a *deposit*, guaranteeing what is to come. The Greek word for *deposit* is *arrabon*, and it means a token, a down payment, a guarantee. In the KJV it is translated *earnest*, as in an *earnest payment* that is put down on a house. I John 3:24b says, “*And this is how we know that he lives in us: We know it by the Spirit he gave us.*”

But wait a minute—you can’t feel the Holy Spirit, so how is that spirit the guarantee? By the manifestation of the spirit known as speaking in tongues, which only Christians can do. I John 5:11 refers to it as “*the witness that God has given us eternal life.*” Hey, that fits perfectly with Acts 1:8, when Jesus told his disciples that when they received the Holy Spirit, they would be witnesses of him. Why? Because they would then have within them his witness that they were equipped with all they needed to go forth in his name!

To speak in tongues is to fluently speak a language of either *men* or *angels*, a language that does not come from your mind, but by way of God’s spirit within you. It is primarily designed for one’s internal use, but it is also to be utilized in a gathering of Christians by following it with its companion manifestation, interpretation of tongues, so that the Church is edified by one’s praise to God (1 Cor. 14:5b). *Tongues* are a language that God gives you, just as He first did on Pentecost when the Church was born. That record in Acts 2:1-4 brings up the pattern God intended for every Christian, which is that each one speak in tongues right after he is born again.

Why? So that one immediately knows finally that, (a) he has everlasting life, (b) the Word of God is true, (c) Jesus Christ is alive, (d) he is filled with the power of God and can utilize all the other manifestations. That is why God clearly says in I Corinthians 14:5 that He would like each Christian to speak in tongues. I think that for our Father, hearing a newborn Christian speak in tongues parallels how a mother feels when she hears her newborn baby make its first cry—it’s alive! The difference is that when God hears a child of His speak in tongues, He knows that life will be forever.

How tragic that countless Christians never take advantage of this marvelous ability. They don’t, because they can’t—if they are taught that speaking in tongues ended with the

first-century apostles, or that it is devilish, or that it is a gift for only some people, or if they are taught nothing at all about it. I have had the awesome privilege of helping to lead many saints into speaking in tongues, couple of whom were 60-80 years old and had longed for it for decades. With a few minutes of instruction, they easily did it, and many cried tears of great joy.

“OK, you said a few paragraphs ago that speaking in tongues is very practical. How so?”

Good question. The second vital truth about speaking in tongues, and why God wants every Christian to start doing it immediately, is because it perfectly illustrates the *bottom line* principle of the Christian walk, which is trusting God and His Word.

How so? Think about it—God goes first, if you will, and gives His Son for us. Jesus takes his turn and goes to the Cross. God raises him and promises us salvation. Now it’s our turn. If we believe Romans 10:9, it’s God’s turn, and the Lord Jesus fills us with Holy Spirit (Acts 2:33).

God says, “*I would like every one of you to speak in tongues*” (1 Cor. 14:5).

Our turn again: “Huh? You want me to fluently speak a language I’ve never learned?”  
The Lord Jesus Christ’s turn: “That’s right.”

You: “Seriously?”

The Lord: “Yes.”

You: “How?”

The Lord: “Good question. Remember Pentecost? What happened? They spoke in tongues as I gave them the words. So all you have to do is speak, but don’t speak a language you know.”

“Let me get this straight. You want me to open my mouth and employ the mechanics of speech, and you’re telling me I’ll be speaking a real language?”

“Absolutely.”

Does that require any faith, any trust in God, Jesus Christ, and the Word? It sure does, and isn’t that what being a Christian is all about? It always comes down to whether or not we really believe what God says.

Want a biblical record that vividly illustrates exactly the same principle involved in speaking in tongues? Matthew 14:25ff. The disciples are in their fishing boat amidst a great storm on the Sea of Galilee. Jesus strolls by—on the water. They freak out.

Jesus says, “Chill, it’s I.”

Peter piped up: “Yeah, well, if it’s really you, let me walk on the water too.”

“Come on, bro.”

Now put yourself in Peter’s potentially soggy shoes. Does he have a promise? Yes. What is it? That he can walk on the water—Jesus would not ask him (or you) to do anything he could not do. And with the promise comes a provision—“If you step out, I’ll help you.” Now it is Peter’s turn. How will he find out if the promise is true? There is only one-way—step out of the boat! And he did! However, it was not until the split second his foot touched the water that God “took His turn” and made it firm under his feet. Had Peter put his foot one inch from the water and said, “Oh, this won’t work,” he never would have experienced the power of God.

Do you see the principle? It is the same about speaking in tongues. If you are born again (if you are not sure, see Romans 10:9 for instructions), you can speak in tongues. How do you know? Because God would not ask you to do something, you cannot do. He clearly says, “*I would like for you [each Christian] to speak in tongues*” (1 Cor. 14:5). As you begin to search, He gives you plenty of incentive and motivation by laying out its benefits.

So whose turn is it now? That’s right . . . It’s yours. What do you have to lose to give it a shot? OK, if you are reading this during a break at work amidst a gaggle of co-workers, you had better wait ‘til you get home.

Good, you’re home. So, how do you do it?

Simple—you just open your mouth and utilize the mechanics of speech, but do not speak English or any other language you know. What you will be speaking is whatever language God chooses to give you. If it is a language of men, someone somewhere on the earth (among the approximately 6000 or so dialects) could understand it. If it is a language of angels, no one on earth would understand it.

NOW HEAR THIS! When it comes to speaking in tongues, there is only one-way to fail—and that is not to speak. Please hear me. If you open your mouth and speak (not a language you know), it cannot fail—you will speak in tongues.

You doubt me? . . . then consider this:

*Now, it happened that while Apollos was away in Corinth, Paul made his way down through the mountains, came to Ephesus, and happened on some disciples there. The first thing he said was, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed? Did you take God into your mind only, or did you also embrace him with your heart? Did he get inside you?”*

*“We’ve never even heard of that—a Holy Spirit? God within us?”*

*“How were you baptized, then?” asked Paul.*

*“In John’s baptism.”*

*“That explains it,” said Paul. “John preached a baptism of repentance—of a radical life-change so that people would be ready to receive the One coming after him, who turned out to be Jesus. If you’ve been baptized in John’s baptism, you’re ready now for the real thing, for Jesus.”*

*And indeed they were. As soon as they heard of it, they were baptized in the name of the Master Jesus. Paul put his hands on their heads, the Holy Spirit entered them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied. Altogether, there were about twelve people there that day. Acts 19:1-7*

Now then, if you do move your lips, your throat, and your tongue and formulate different words, and you fail to speak in tongues, do not call me—call the Guinness Book of Records, because you will be the first human being since the Day of Pentecost for whom it did not work. If it does work, I would love to hear from you.

Through the years, I have shared these same truths with many people. Some have come back to me and said, “I tried it and it didn’t work.”

I always ask: “Did you open your mouth and project sounds? Did you speak?”

And they say, “Well, no.”

And I say, “Then you did not try.”

Just as with Peter’s foot touching the water, so God cannot give you the words until you speak. Do you see how this perfectly illustrates what the Christian life is all about? God makes many promises to us, but the only way they happen is when we act on them. Our heavenly Father makes wonderful promises to us because He adores us, and oh, how He longs to fulfill them to us for our benefit.

So why not relax, take a deep breath, let it out slowly, and focus your mind on the God and the Lord who love you immeasurably. Thank them for having filled you with the Holy Spirit, take another breath, and let it rip—speak forth words of praise, thanksgiving, and worship. That is exactly what you will be speaking. In addition, be BOLD—the words you are hearing are the proof that Jesus is alive and well—and that so will you be—forever! It cost him his life for you to be able to praise and worship God in this wonderful way, so get into it!

One more thing—not only will you hear the words you are speaking, like when you speak in your native tongue, but because you are not using your mind to speak in tongues, you

can also listen to what you are saying—and that is why it may sound really strange at first. However, so would any language you have never heard before.

If you decide to speak in tongues now, and it is your first time, keep doing it for a while so that you become convinced that it is real. The junk part of your mind may tell you: “That’s ridiculous; you’re just making it up.” Here are some appropriate replies (that are printable): “No way—I couldn’t make that up.” “Take a hike.” “Get lost.” “Put a sock in it.” “SHUT UP!” Just keep speaking in tongues, and eventually that part of your mind will get tired of telling that lie to you.

## The Importance of Speaking in Tongues

When we begin to talk about speaking in tongues, there are several things to consider. We need to consider the *importance* of speaking in tongues; why we should *want* to speak in tongues; and why we should speak in tongues *more*.

I am referring primarily to those of you that speak in tongues, as a word of exhortation to speak in tongues more. To those of you that speak in tongues, but your language is not developed enough that you are comfortable with it, I encourage you to push yourself. For some of you, if you do not speak in tongues, I hope that this message is a word of exhortation to speak in tongues, and then develop that language and speak in tongues continually.

What I mean when I say develop the language—of course the Lord is pouring out the language for us. We just have to be relaxed enough and confident enough and have the faith enough to receive it from the Lord and speak out clearly what he is sending us, because he will give us a language, a developed language. I Corinthians 14:5 says, “*I want every one of you to speak in tongues.*” I think that is the base where we start. We start with God’s desire. God wants us to speak in tongues.

What is speaking in tongues?

This is a little rudimentary. Speaking in tongues 101. Speaking in tongues is a language that you, the speaker, do not understand. However, it is a language that the Lord gives you, and it is a language of men—it can be a language that’s spoken on earth—or a language of angels—a language that the angels use to communicate with each other and to communicate with God.

*If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. —1 Corinthians 13:1*

So speaking in tongues is a language given to you by the Lord, and it is a language of *men or angels*. Moreover, speaking in tongues is a brand new thing that God did for the Church. You can read the Old Testament from Genesis 1 to Malachi 4 and you will not find anyone speaking in tongues. You can read the Four Gospels and you will not find anyone speaking in tongues. The first time anyone spoke in tongues was on the Day of Pentecost in Acts chapter 2, at the birth of the Church, and tongues is something that God did for the Church.

We know that when God moves in the Church, according to Ephesians chapter 3, it is for His glory, and according to I Corinthians 2:7 it is for our glory. Therefore, God moved in the Church powerfully for both His glory and for our glory.

In that sense, speaking in tongues is a part of the *Sacred Secret*, and I want you to go to Ephesians chapter 3. Now I would like to talk about the Greek word *musterion*. For years

and years, I have taught and translated the word *musterion* as *secret*, and I am changing that translation. I need to credit this to a scholar who is long dead now named Rotherham, and he did the translation called *The Emphasized Bible* and I have been reading out of that lately. It is a fabulous work. Ephesians chapter three, Rotherham instead of just using the word *secret* like some other translators do, he used the word *sacred secret*.

*Surely you have heard about the administration of God's grace that was given to me for you, that is, the mystery [musterion—secret] made known to me by revelation, as I have already written briefly. —Ephesians 3:2-3*

As I was reading my *Rotherham Bible* over a period of months, it kept hitting me that every single time the word *musterion* appeared he translated it *sacred secret*. Finally I just got to the point that I said “What’s going on here? Why does he do this?” Then I did a much more in-depth study of the word *secret*. What I found was that the Greek word *musterion* was used of secrets in the religious realm, even in the realm of the Greco-Roman mystery religions. In fact, if there was something secret in the secular world, *musterion* was not even used at all. Take a look, for example, at the 6<sup>th</sup> chapter of Matthew.

*But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, So that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. —Matthew 6:3-4*

Here, *musterion* is not used. Instead, the word *kruptos*, is used. We get our word *crypt* from that. A crypt—you know, you put a body in it—it is hidden away. In the Greek, when something was secret, but not in the religious realm, in the secular realm, they used *kruptos*. Now I am going to give you a couple of examples, but obviously if you want to see this fully developed, get a Greek Concordance, like *The Englishman's Greek Concordance*, or *Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*, and look up the Greek words *kruptos*, and *musterion*.

*For there is nothing hidden that will not be disclosed, and nothing concealed that will not be known or brought out into the open. —Luke 8:17*

See, things that are hidden are *kruptos*—they are secret.

*This will take place on the day when God will judge men's secrets through Jesus Christ, as my gospel declares. —Romans 2:16*

God will judge men's secrets—not their *musterion*, but their *kruptos*, our secrets, the things we hide in our heart. It is not *musterion*, and that's important.

*But if an unbeliever or someone who does not understand comes in while everybody is prophesying, he will be convinced by all that he is a sinner*

*and will be judged by all, and the secrets of his heart will be laid bare. So he will fall down and worship God, exclaiming, “God is really among you!” —I Corinthians 14:24-25*

See, the secrets of his heart—*kruptos*—those secrets in the secular realm. In contrast to this in the Bible, when the word *musterion* is used, it is used of secrets in the religious realm. Literally, as Rotherham pointed out to me through his translation, *sacred secrets*. A good example would be Matthew 13:10-11. Jesus Christ was speaking in parables and the people did not understand:

*The disciples came to him and asked, “Why do you speak to the people in parables?” he replied, “The knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of Heaven has been given to you, but not to them. —Matthew 13:10-11*

Secrets of the kingdom—*musterion*. The knowledge of the *sacred secrets*.

What we are dealing with in our *Administration*, called the *Administration of the Grace of God* in Ephesians 3:2, is that it is the *Administration of the Sacred Secret*. The Administration of God’s secret. In this *Administration of the Secret*, God did something that He did not do in the Old Testament, and did not even *foretell* in the Old Testament. That is, He gave believers, He gave you and me, He gave people that were born again, a language directly from the Lord Jesus Christ, that would do a number of rewarding and beneficial things that we will read about, such as praise and magnify God.

The Devil did not know anything about this. Go back to the 2<sup>nd</sup> chapter of I Corinthians. This is a point we have to make about the secret, the Sacred Secret, the Administration of the Grace of God, this Administration in which we live. What God has done for us is so wonderful, so amazing, and so magnanimous, that had the Devil known it, he would not have crucified Christ.

*We do, however, speak a message of wisdom among the mature, but not the wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. No, we speak of God’s [sacred] secret wisdom, a wisdom that has been hidden and that God destined for our glory before time began. —I Corinthians 2:6-7*

See that? The things of the Sacred Secret are for our glory. Somebody says “Well, gosh, doesn’t God get all the glory?” No. In this Administration God did something for our glory. Now, we find out in Ephesians chapter three that what God did was also for His own glory, because when God magnified us, it magnified Him. I think you understand, for example, if you are in relationship with somebody, and you lift that person up, it also lifts you. Therefore, God did something very special for us, that also gives Him glory. Part of this is speaking in tongues. He says in verse eight:

*None of the rulers of this age understood it, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. —I Corinthians 2:8*

Our ability to speak in tongues and then to interpret, as part of the Sacred Secret of God, glorifies us, and also glorifies God, and was completely unknown to the Devil.

*However, as it is written: “No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him” —I Corinthians 2:9*

Yahoo and Yippee! The Devil did not know anything about speaking in tongues. It was not part of the Old Testament revelation; it was not part of the Gospels.

*. . . but God has revealed it to us by his Spirit . . . . —I Corinthians 2:10*

Now, a person receiving the Spirit has been part of the Bible since Genesis, and when people received the Spirit, they were specifically empowered by God to do certain things. I want to point out a pattern in the Old Testament.

In the Old Testament, when someone received the Spirit, they prophesied. This is important to understand. One of the primary indicators in the Old Testament that you had received the Spirit was that you prophesied. Let us go to the 11<sup>th</sup> chapter of Numbers.

*I will come down and speak with you there, and I will take of the Spirit that is on you and put the Spirit on them . . . —Numbers 11:17*

God says I will take of the Spirit that is on you, Moses, and put the spirit on them, on the seventy chosen to rule Israel.

*Then the LORD came down in the cloud and spoke with him, and he took of the Spirit that was on him and put the Spirit on the seventy elders. When the Spirit rested on them, they prophesied, but they did not do so again. —Numbers 11:25*

You see, the Spirit inside you is powerful and it enables you to do wonderful things. Here in the 11<sup>th</sup> chapter of Numbers, the people received the Spirit and they prophesied.

In the 10<sup>th</sup> chapter of I Samuel, we are going to see Saul, the first King of Israel, get the Spirit. In this verse, Samuel is talking to Saul about the Spirit of the LORD.

*The Spirit of the LORD will come upon you in power, and you will prophesy with them; and you will be changed into a different person. —I Samual 10:6*

And of course that's exactly what happened.

*When they arrived at Gibeah, a procession of prophets met him; the Spirit of God came upon him in power, and he joined in their prophesying. —I Samuel 10:10*

So just like in Numbers when the Spirit came on the seventy that would rule Israel, here in I Samuel, when Saul received the Spirit, he prophesied.

*Then the Spirit came upon Amasai, chief of the Thirty, and he said: “We are yours, O David! We are with you, O son of Jesse! Success, success to you, and success to those who help you, for your God will help you.” So David received them and made them leaders of his raiding bands. —I Chronicles 12:18*

What is that? It is a word of prophecy. What happened? The Spirit came upon Amasai, and he prophesied. The Spirit came upon the elders of Israel in Numbers, and they prophesied. The Spirit came upon Saul, and he prophesied. Hope you are seeing a pattern here.

*Then the Spirit of God came upon Zechariah son of Jehoiada the priest. He stood before the people and said, “This is what God says: ‘Why do you disobey the LORD’s commands? You will not prosper. Because you have forsaken the LORD, he has forsaken you.’” —II Chronicles 24:20*

What happened? The Spirit of the LORD came upon Zechariah, and he gave a word of prophecy. Do you see the pattern here? In the Old Testament there was no tongues, there was not even foretelling that tongues would come. A man of God or a woman of God received the Spirit and they prophesied. Sometimes they were empowered to do other things. I want to show you the contrast in our Administration. Jump back to Acts 2:4, which as you all know is the birthday of the Church, it is the Day of Pentecost. We will start in verse three.

*They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them. —Acts 2:3-4*

Now actually the Greek text reads, “*All of them were filled with Holy Spirit*” —the word *the* is not in the Greek text. The records in the Old Testament were that you were filled with the Spirit and you gave a word of prophecy. Now, here it is the Church, the Age of Grace, the Sacred Secret, a brand new thing. You are saved, you are filled with the Spirit, and you speak in tongues.

Peter goes to Cornelius. He would not have gone if he had not received revelation—the sheet being let down three times, and the Lord speaking to him and saying “Go with them, don’t ask any questions.” So Peter is teaching about Jesus Christ to the Gentiles:

*While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message. The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles. For they heard them speaking in tongues and praising God . . . —Acts 10:44-46*

So again, in the Old Testament, you received the Spirit and you gave a word of prophecy. In the New Testament, the Church Age, Age of the Sacred Secret, you received the Spirit, and you spoke in tongues.

The Apostle Paul meets with disciples who had not even heard of the Holy Spirit:

*When Paul placed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied. —Acts 19:6*

Ah-ha, a double header! They spoke in tongues *and* they prophesied! Nevertheless, they spoke in tongues. The Holy Spirit came on them, and what? They spoke in tongues. I want to make the contrast here that in the Old Testament when the Spirit came there would often be a word of prophecy. However, in the book of Acts, what we see is when the Spirit comes, when people get born again, often what they do right away is speak in tongues.

God has done something different. Somebody might say “Well gosh, sounds like prophecy would be more beneficial than speaking in tongues. What’s the great advantage of speaking in tongues instead of speaking a word of prophecy?”

That’s a great question. There is a good answer, too. The problem with Spirit power is that it can easily be from God or from the Devil. There are many prophets of God in the Old Testament. There are also false prophets, prophets of Baal, for instance—deceived prophets. Therefore, we have false prophecy. In Deuteronomy for example, God talks about lying signs and wonders. “*If a prophet speaks to you a sign or miracle and it come to pass, but the prophet is trying to turn you from the living God . . .*”

The problem with power, the manifestation of Spirit power, is that it can be from God or the Devil. You can walk into a room and see somebody levitating. I doubt that is from God. The Adversary does that kind of thing. However, speaking in tongues is different.

One of the things that make speaking in tongues such a wonderful thing is that God says it cannot be counterfeited. Now that is not to say that a devil cannot make somebody speak in a foreign language. That is not the person’s free will. That is the key! Speaking in tongues is not God *taking you over*, as you well know. Speaking in tongues is *you speaking out of your own* free will. You start when you want, you stop when you want, you set the amplitude, and you set the pace. You can speak in tongues fast, you can speak in tongues slow, you can speak in tongues aloud, and you can speak in tongues to yourself, stop and go when you want.

If a demon causes you to speak in another language, it is not in your control. Of course, that would be obvious to you. You would say “Wait a minute, I didn’t mean to do that. I couldn’t stop, I couldn’t start, I was taken over.’ Well, then that’s not God. That is what I mean when I say that genuine speaking in tongues cannot be counterfeited.

*Therefore, I tell you that no one who is speaking by the Spirit of God says, “Jesus be cursed,” and no one can say, “Jesus is Lord,” except by the Holy Spirit. —I Corinthians 12:3*

We know that “*speaking by the spirit of God*” is speaking in tongues from I Corinthians 14:13-14. You can give a word of prophecy—Spirit power—and there can be great concern. “Well, was that prophecy of God or was that prophecy of the Devil?” Does that prophecy indicate that God’s Spirit is there? Or could it be a prophecy by Baal? Because remember false prophecy is often true. However, when it comes to speaking in tongues—one of the wonderful things about it is that it cannot be counterfeited. If you are speaking in tongues and you know you are in control, then you have received the living God inside of you. You have received the Lord Jesus Christ talking with you. That’s one of the reasons God wants us to speak in tongues.

*Follow the way of love and eagerly desire spiritual gifts, especially the gift of prophecy. —I Corinthians 14:1*

*Spiritual gifts* is *pneumatikos*—spiritual things—not spiritual gifts as many Bibles read, including my NIV, but spiritual things. Well, if we are going to *eagerly desire* spiritual things, *tongues* is a spiritual thing, we should desire it. No wonder in verse five he goes on to say “*I would like every one of you to speak in tongues.*” I rest my case. I think this is a fabulous translation of the Greek; it picks up the intent of the Greek very well. I think it is the will of God and the will of the Lord Jesus Christ stated in a way that is so clear it is hard to believe that anyone could misunderstand it. Do you want to know what God wants you to do? “*I would like every one of you to speak in tongues.*” Enough said.

*Therefore, my brothers, be eager to prophesy, and do not forbid speaking in tongues. —I Corinthians 14:39*

We should want to speak in tongues and certainly never want to forbid it. What are you doing when you speak in tongues? Well, according to I Corinthians 14:1 it is a language of *men or angels*.

*For anyone who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God. Indeed, no one understands him; he utters mysteries with his spirit. —I Corinthians 14:2*

Praise the Lord. What am I doing when I speak in tongues? I am speaking to God. The Lord Jesus Christ gave me the language, and I am speaking to God. Absolutely! Furthermore it says “*Indeed, no one understands him; he utters mysteries with his spirit.*”

The Greek does not read that way, though. It says '*Indeed no-one understands.*' The word *him* is not in the Greek text. It is not that people never understand what is being said—every once in a while people will understand. That happened in Acts chapter two, when the Apostles spoke in tongues, and the crowds heard them speak in their languages.

Normally, though, when you speak in tongues you do not have a clue what you are saying. Praise the Lord! "He utters *mysterion* with his spirit." I know when I speak in tongues I am uttering *sacred secrets* to God that come to me through the Spirit of God. He utters *mysterion*—*sacred secrets*.

Do you want to know why you should speak in tongues? First, because God says to. It is speaking a language, and it is speaking sacred secrets. We have already read I Corinthians 14:5—God says He wants us to. We could almost close the Book at that point and just say "God says we should and that's good enough, even if there is no other reason. God says we should, so be it. Ok. Done." However, there is more, of course.

*Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. —I Corinthians 12:7*

To each one—that's you, if you're a Christian—the manifestation of the spirit—we know that speaking in tongues is a manifestation, a making obvious of the gift of the Holy Spirit inside of us—now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. Why should we speak in tongues? Because it is for the common good. It helps build the Church. "The strength of the wolf is the pack, and the strength of the pack is the wolf."

That is exactly right. You see, my strength comes from the Body of Christ, and from Jesus Christ, the Head. If there were just me, one solitary Christian, alone on the face of the earth, there would not be a whole lot that I could do. I would not have you wonderful people to teach, for one thing. The strength of a Christian is all Christians, and the Head that is Jesus Christ, who is pouring out strength and power and revelation. The strength of the Christian is the pack, but the strength of the pack is the Christian. It's the Christian who stands up for the Lord and does what the Lord wants and obeys the Lord and stays in fellowship, that then feeds into the common good, so that Christianity as a whole can be stronger.

Why should we speak in tongues?

God says He wants us to. As a manifestation, it is for the common good. I will tell you something else; it proves that we are born again. I want to tell you how unique this is again for the Administration of the Sacred Secret. You cannot go into any verse in the Old Testament and find a verse that says, "If you do this, it proves that you're going to be in paradise." There is no such verse. Because you could lose your salvation and you needed to stay faithful to the end. However, in the Administration of Grace, God did something new and different for our glory and for His Glory, and that is He made permanent salvation available for the first time in history. When you speak in tongues, it

proves that you have received the spirit inside you, that you have been sealed, forever sealed, with the Holy Spirit.

*And this is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us. —I John 3:23*

To believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ—which according to Romans 10:9-10 gets you born again—and to love one another as he commanded us.

*Those who obey his commands live in him, and he in them. And this is how we know that he lives in us: We know it by the Spirit he gave us. —I John 3:24*

Those who obey his commands live in him, and he in them—if you are born again, God and Jesus live in you. This is how we know that he lives in us: We know it by the spirit he gave us. Do you want to know how you are born again? Do you want to know how Christ lives inside you? You know it by the Spirit. Let us look at that a little more closely. We know that you cannot contact the Holy Spirit through any of your physical senses. There are many people that think they are saved, but they are not, and there are people who think they are unsaved, but they are.

Why does that exist in the world? Because when a person is born again and receives the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit, as I just said, is not accessible to the five senses. However, if *you* manifest the Spirit, if the power of the Spirit flows out of *you*, then you know you are born again. But prophesy? Gosh, that can be counterfeited. Miracles and signs? Well, they are great, and they can come from the true God, but they can be counterfeited, as well. Then there is speaking in tongues, which cannot be counterfeited. If you are speaking in tongues properly, out of your free will, and have a genuine language of men or angels flowing out of you, then you know you are born again. That's exactly what the Scripture says:

*And this is how we know that he lives in us: We know it by the Spirit he gave us. —I John 3:24*

We speak in tongues because God says He wants us to. We know it is for the common good. It proves that we are born again. In Acts 2:11 it says when we speak in tongues we speak the wonderful works of God or we magnify God.

*(both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs-- we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues! —Acts 2:11*

I think we could agree that for all of human history, God's horn has not been tooted, enough. For all of the billions of people that have lived and died on planet earth, God has not received the recognition that He deserves for all He has done and all the great things He will do. It is nice to know that there is a language out there, a language provided word by word by the Lord Jesus Christ, which speaks the wonders of God. Speaking in tongues

does that. Speaking in tongues praises God. Look at Acts 10:46. We have actually read this verse before, but I did not put pressure on the word praise.

*For they heard them speaking in tongues and praising God . . . —Acts 10:46*

Amen. We read in I Corinthians 14:16-17 that speaking in tongues is again stated as praising God. That brings up the next point, which is that speaking in tongues is giving thanks well.

*If you are praising God with your spirit, how can one who finds himself among those who do not understand say “Amen” to your thanksgiving, since he does not know what you are saying? You may be giving thanks well enough, but the other man is not edified. —I Corinthians 14:16-17*

Sure, chances are you speak the same language that the people in the congregation speak—like in my home fellowship I speak English and everybody who comes speaks English, and so when we speak in tongues, no one will understand what we said. Pretty simple! Although, verse seventeen still says you may be giving thanks well enough.

So speaking in tongues is praising God.

Speaking in tongues is giving thanks well.

Speaking in tongues is prayer in the spirit.

*For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays . . . —I Corinthians 14:14*

Many times people wrestle with prayer. What should I pray about? We can pray by speaking in tongues. It is prayer in the spirit. It also edifies the one who is speaking.

*He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself . . . I Corinthians 14:4*

Now the word *edify* is *to build up*. Speaking in tongues can build you up many different ways. It can remind you of your salvation, and that your situation spiritually is secure. It can calm your mind, if your mind is racing. Speaking in tongues can give you peace at times when you just do not seem to have any peace. In addition, speaking in tongues builds you up in the spirit. I run into people who spend a great deal of time speaking in tongues, they are generally more spiritually sensitive than those who do not. Read this passage in Jude:

*But you, dear friends, build yourselves up in your most holy faith and pray in the Holy Spirit. —Jude 1:20*

Now the word and in the middle there—build yourselves up in your most holy faith and pray in the Holy Spirit—makes it seem like there are two things going on. I build myself

up in my faith and then then I pray in the Holy Spirit. The Revised Standard Version is closer. It simply reads:

*But you, beloved, build yourselves up on your most holy faith, pray in the holy spirit.* —Jude 1:20 (RSV)

The Greek is actually a little better than that, because instead of *pray*, it is the middle present participle—*praying*. It's not that I pray in the Holy Spirit and build myself up—i.e. “Well, I pray in the holy spirit, yeah, I prayed last week and I prayed last month, so yeah, I pray in the holy spirit.” By being a middle present participle, it is *praying*. Build yourself up in your most holy faith, *praying*—be praying—in the Holy Spirit. You are not effectively building yourself up if you are only praying for a couple of seconds. You need to spend time praying in the Holy Spirit.

I want to now look at 14<sup>th</sup> chapter of I Corinthians. Paul begins this chapter after I Corinthians 13, a chapter on love, where love is said to be a more excellent way—to be with people, to be with God. We do things out of love, and when we have a loving heart, I Corinthians fourteen says:

*Follow the way of love and eagerly desire spiritual gifts, especially the gift of prophecy.* —I Corinthians 14:1

Follow the way of love and eagerly desire spiritual things. It is not an *either/or*. It is not “Well, you guys speak in tongues, but I'm loving.” Or “Well, I speak in tongues, but he focuses on love.” It is a *both- and*. We are supposed to follow the way of love and eagerly desire—*zealo*—or zealous for spiritual things, especially prophecy—because prophecy builds up the Church. Why am I to be eager of spiritual things?

*For anyone who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God. Indeed, no one understands him; he utters mysteries with his spirit.* —I Corinthians 14:2

That verse should answer any questions regarding whether the Devil or anyone else knows what you are praying. For anyone who speaks in a tongue, does not speak to men or angels, but to God. I should be eager to speak to God. In the Old Testament, they could not do it. Now God, to magnify us, and to magnify Himself, has given us a language whereby we can speak to Him—no wonder God says, “*Be zealous of spiritual things.*”

Anyone who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men, he speaks to God. How many thousands and thousands of people have felt defeated in their life, crying out and saying, “God, I wish I could talk to you. God, I wish I could commune with you!” The whole time, God says, “Anyone who speaks in a tongue speaks to God.” Not just a regular language. No! He is uttering sacred secrets via his spirit.

*But everyone who prophesies speaks to men for their strengthening, encouragement and comfort.* —I Corinthians 14:3

That is an important point regarding prophecies. They will always strengthen, encourage and/or comfort whoever receives it. We should want to do that, too. We should want to edify people in the Church.

*He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself, but he who prophesies edifies the church. —I Corinthians 14:4*

We build ourselves up when we speak in tongues, but if you prophesy, you build up the Church. This is so important. We have to be mindful of other people and our effect on them. We need to know how we can bless and help other people.

*I would like every one of you to speak in tongues, but I would rather have you prophesy. He who prophesies is greater than one who speaks in tongues, unless he interprets, so that the church may be edified. —I Corinthians 14:5*

God's concern is with the Body of Christ. Again, the strength of the pack is the wolf. God knows that the Body will be strong, as you are strong. If you speak in tongues a lot, edify yourself a lot, you will not have any problem with prophecy. However, God knows that as you desire to bless the Church, you will do what it takes to get yourself to the point where you can do it. If you are a football player and you desire to bless the team, you are going to do it by making yourself a great football player. If you desire to bless the team of Christianity, you do it by making yourself a strong Christian, and speaking in tongues edifies you. What is the goal in your heart? You say, "Man, I want to be the best I can be for God and the Lord Jesus Christ and the Body, and I'm going to do what it takes to get there. And speaking in tongues edifies me and helps me get there."

*Now, brothers, if I come to you and speak in tongues, what good will I be to you, unless I bring you some revelation or knowledge or prophecy or word of instruction? Even in the case of lifeless things that make sounds, such as the flute or harp, how will anyone know what tune is being played unless there is a distinction in the notes? Again, if the trumpet does not sound a clear call, who will get ready for battle? So it is with you. Unless you speak intelligible words with your tongue, how will anyone know what you are saying? You will just be speaking into the air. —I Corinthians 14:6-9*

Sure. If we just march into a Church and speak in tongues, it just goes into the air. People look at us and say, "Well, that guy is speaking in tongues," but it does not edify them.

*Undoubtedly, there are all sorts of languages in the world, yet none of them is without meaning. If then I do not grasp the meaning of what someone is saying, I am a foreigner to the speaker, and he is a foreigner to me. So it is with you. Since you are eager to have spiritual gifts, try to excel in gifts that build up the church. —I Corinthians 14:10-12*

*Manifestations* are not gifts. The gift is the Holy Spirit, and that is not what we are talking about. We are talking about spiritual things that build up the Church, the manifestations of the spirit. Secondly, the word *try*—it’s not about trying, it’s about doing it. A better translation might be:

*So also you, since you are zealous of spiritual things, with a view to the edification of the Church, seek that you abound. Seek to abound to the edification of the Church, via spiritual things. —I Corinthians 14:12*

Amen. That is what we are supposed to do. Seek that we can abound in the edification of the Church.

*For this reason, anyone who speaks in a tongue should pray that he may interpret what he says. —I Corinthians 14:13*

The understanding of this is simple. It is not that we pray to interpret. “Oh Lord, please help me interpret. Oh Lord, please give me an interpretation. Oh Lord, I am just praying so much for an interpretation.” That is not what the verse means. He has already told you that speaking in tongues is prayer. When you speak in tongues, interpretation is a manifestation. “If you are seeking to excel in building up the Church,” he says “because of that, if you speak in tongues and then pray, then do it so that you can interpret.”

You are not going to be able to interpret, if you do not speak in tongues. So pray, speak in tongues, so that there is something there to interpret. That is what he is saying. For this reason—for the reason that you are zealous in seeking to build up the church—if you speak in tongues you should do it—pray—so that you can interpret. Amen.

*For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my mind is unfruitful. I Corinthians 14:14*

That is correct, Ladies and Gentlemen, speaking in tongues is prayer—in the spirit. That is important to understand. In fact, I will say it again, Speaking in tongues is prayer in the spirit. However, my mind is unfruitful—which is what verse two said—nobody can understand what he is saying.

*So what shall I do? I will pray with my spirit, but I will also pray with my mind; I will sing with my spirit, but I will also sing with my mind. If you are praising God with your spirit, how can one who finds himself among those who do not understand say “Amen” to your thanksgiving, since he does not know what you are saying? You may be giving thanks well enough, but the other man is not edified. —I Corinthians 14:15-17*

That makes good sense. I’m in the Church, I’m speaking in tongues like crazy, I’m praying in my spirit—but the guy sitting next to me can’t say “Amen” to my prayer. Because he does not have a clue what I am praying. Actually, I probably do not either! I

am just enjoying speaking in tongues! But God says, “Don’t do that. If you go into the Church, you speak in the language that everyone understands. Then they can say ‘Amen.’”

*I thank God that I speak in tongues more than all of you. But in the church I would rather speak five intelligible words to instruct others than ten thousand words in a tongue. —I Corinthians 14:18-19*

Verse 18 has a very powerful point. “I thank God that I speak in tongues more than all of you” —what does that make Paul—one-up-manship? “Well, I’m sure better than you are. I thank God that I speak in tongues more than you do! If I spoke in tongues as little as you did, I couldn’t imagine even living. I’d probably just go jump off a cliff! Why, I sure thank God that I speak in tongues more than you do!”

Ladies and Gentlemen, that is not what this verse is saying. The Apostle Paul here is not pulling rank or making anybody feel bad. He is talking to them because they are speaking in tongues but they are doing it in a way that is not edifying the Church. The Apostle Paul here is going to make a very powerful statement. If you check your Greek, he says:

*I thank God, I speak in tongues more than all of you. But in the Church I would rather speak five intelligible words to instruct others than ten thousand words in a tongue. I Corinthians 14:18-19*

Now, why do I think this verse is so important? Because the Apostle Paul, writing by revelation, says, “I thank God. I do. I speak in tongues more than all of you.” In the Greek, the word *you* is plural. What Paul learned by the spirit, by revelation, as he was writing to the Corinthians, was that he, that one man, the Apostle Paul, was so focused on speaking in tongues, on speaking the wonderful works of God, on speaking a divine secret language, a sacred secret language of God, on edifying himself, on praising God in the spirit, on praying—the Apostle Paul was so focused on doing all those wonderful things for God, that he received the revelation that he spoke in tongues more than the entire Church of Corinth put together!

This really hit my heart a few weeks ago, and I want to tell you there are a lot of us who speak in tongues that are not as properly focused on it, as we should be.

Speaking in tongues speaks the wonderful works of God.

It praises God.

It gives God thanks.

It speaks a sacred secret to God.

It prays—that language is prayer.

There are many people—and I’ve been through a period of this in my life, also—where I think if I look back on a Sunday night over my week, I may have spoken in tongues a couple of times. Speak in tongues maybe a little bit when you’re driving down the road in your car; speak in tongues when there is something you really want to pray for and you really want to add some extra punch—truth be known, over the week I didn’t focus on speaking in tongues. I did not concentrate on speaking in tongues. I did not think of it as something I was doing for God. I thought of it as something that would get me where I wanted to go. Speaking in tongues will edify me. Speaking in tongues is my prayer, which God will hear because it is spoken in the spirit. Speaking in tongues praises God and gives thanks to God. The Apostle Paul, who writes in I Corinthians chapter eleven “*Be followers of me,*” writes to the Church at Corinth “*I speak in tongues more than you all.*”

So, I have a question and a challenge for you at this point. How do you feel about your speaking in tongues? Do you speak in tongues a lot? When I Thessalonians says, “*Pray without ceasing,*” do you live there? When Colossians four says “*Devote yourselves to prayer,*” and Romans twelve says “*Be faithful in prayer,*” do we live there?

We can speak in tongues when we are driving a car, we can speak in almost everything we do. There are some things that might require so much concentration, you just cannot, but in almost everything that we do, my experience is that we can be speaking in tongues in the background, because it is a spiritually generated language and it does not interfere with what we are doing, thinking, or saying. The Apostle Paul wrote by revelation that he spoke in tongues more than the entire Church at Corinth put together. I’ll tell you what, when I read that a few months ago—talk about getting a reproof and correction from the Word of God instead of from people! I was reprovved and corrected from the Word of God, and I am making a concerted effort to bring my life back to praising God a lot, edifying myself, obeying God when He says, “*I want all of you to speak in tongues.*” Then it goes on, and he says “*But in the Church I would rather speak five intelligible words to instruct others than ten thousand words in a tongue.*” Then verse twenty is somewhat interesting. It says:

*Brothers, stop thinking like children. In regard to evil be infants, but in your thinking be adults. —I Corinthians 14:20*

Now, what does that mean—regarding evil, be infants? Well, if you have ever dealt with infants and toddlers, they forget things and move on in their life so quickly. They do not harbor things; they do not harbor bitterness. They do not sit around with little thunderclouds over their head for days and days because somebody said something to them or something bad happened. Infants and toddlers move on from evil and bad things so quickly. That is what he is saying here—do not let the evil of the world get you down. Do not walk around with a thundercloud over your head. Do not be angry and bitter. Gosh, when it comes to evil, just be an infant and move on. However, in your thinking, be adults.

*In the Law it is written: “Through men of strange tongues and through the lips of foreigners I will speak to this people, but even then they will not listen to me,” says the Lord. Tongues, then, are a sign, not for believers but for unbelievers; prophecy, however, is for believers, not for unbelievers. —I Corinthians 14:21-22*

Now, what is this referring to? To understand this we have to go to what is being quoted. In Isaiah 28:11, we see that Isaiah lived at a time when the Assyrian army was attacking Israel. God had come to Israel again and again and again by Prophets, to turn them from evil. The Israelites did not want to turn from evil. I need to point out the Prophets were speaking Hebrew. In other words, the Prophets came in to Israel and said, “Put away your idols. Tithe to God. Release your slaves every seven years.” The Prophets would tell the people what to do, what the commands of God were. They were speaking to the people in Hebrew, a language they could understand. What did the people do with these reproofs and corrections from the Prophets? This language they could understand? Well, they ignored it! They did not obey the Prophets at all. Read from verse seven of Isaiah twenty-eight.

*And these also stagger from wine and reel from beer: Priests and prophets stagger from beer and are befuddled with wine; they reel from beer, they stagger when seeing visions, they stumble when rendering decisions. All the tables are covered with vomit and there is not a spot without filth. “Who is it he is trying to teach? To whom is he explaining his message? To children weaned from their milk, to those just taken from the breast? For it is: Do and do, do and do, rule on rule, rule on rule; a little here, a little there.” —Isaiah 28:7-10*

In other words “I have come to you and spoken to you very plainly, do and do, rule and rule, and here and there, but you’re hard-hearted. You still hang on to your wine, you can’t make decent decisions, and you have idols all around you.” So he says in verse eleven:

*Very well then, with foreign lips and strange tongues God will speak to this people. —Isaiah 28:11*

How is He going to do it? Well, the Assyrian army is going to come through. It is going to trash Israel. They are going to rape and pillage and burn. They are going to steal and kill. In addition, they are going to speak Assyrian and the people of Israel are not going to understand. On top of that, God says, “You know what? I came to you, and I came to you, and again, I came to you in a language you should have understood, and you didn’t get it. So now, you’re going to be spoken to by people that you don’t understand. Maybe you will wake up and say ‘Why is this happening to us?’ And you’ll come back to your senses about your sin and your idolatry.”

He says the language that they did not understand was to get them to wake up to what God was doing and what God had done. You know I read last night in Judges about how

God sent the people a Prophet because they were in slavery, and He said, “I brought you out of Egypt. I fed you with manna for forty years. I sustained you in the wilderness. I told you to turn away from your idols, but you have not done it. And now you’re in slavery.”

That is exactly what was happening in Isaiah. God had told them what to do, in a language that they could understand. So now, they are going to hear in a language they cannot understand. That language they cannot understand is going to speak to them about the power of God, and the need for God, and what God could do in their life if they would get serious about the Lord.

*“Look, in the Law it is written: ‘Through men of strange tongues and through the lips of foreigners I will speak to this people, but even then they will not listen to me,’” says the LORD. Tongues, then, are a sign, not for believers but for unbelievers —I Corinthians 14:21-22a*

Unbelievers can listen to someone speaking in tongues and say “Wow! That was a sign. I get it! Where did that language come from?” That is a great reason why if when you speak in tongues you speak in tongues with fits and starts, or you just seem to speak the same word repeatedly, work with your language. Let the Lord work in you to relax and let that language flow out of you, so that everyone can see that you have a language by the Lord Jesus Christ. That people can look at you and though they do not understand the language, they understand that God is moving powerfully in our day and our time.

Tongues are a sign, not for believers but for unbelievers. You hear that language pour out of somebody and you say, “What was that?” That is what happened to me in 1971. Some girl spoke in tongues right in front of me, and I knew, something on the inside of me knew, “Wow, there’s something great going on here!”

*Tongues, then, are a sign, not for believers but for unbelievers; prophecy, however, is for believers, not for unbelievers. So, if the whole church comes together and everyone speaks in tongues, and some who do not understand or some unbelievers come in, will they not say that you are out of your mind? —I Corinthians 14:22-23*

Another point that is important to understand, God says that speaking in tongues is under your control. You can speak in tongues when you want to, stop when you want to— God’s going to tell you that there are certain things that are decorous, are proper, are respectful when it comes to speaking in tongues. I think we have all heard the horror stories about the stranger who goes into a Church where everyone is shouting in tongues, and they become scared and afraid, and the Scripture tells us that. When we speak in tongues we do it in a way that is a blessing, and we interpret what was said, in order to bless the people.

Well, I think you get the point about speaking in tongues, and all that it does.

It's proof that we're born again.

God says He wants us to.

It's speaking a sacred secret with God.

It speaks God's wonderful works.

It's praise to God.

Friends, we should be pushing ourselves to speak in tongues a lot. I know that these last few months I really have been, and I want to exhort you to go back to Scripture and talk to the Lord, and if you are not speaking in tongues a lot, I want to encourage you that that is the will of God. If you are not speaking in tongues at all, then please hook up with some believers that are, that know about them, that encourage the use of tongues, a place where you can learn to speak in tongues, and learn the value of speaking in tongues, and speak in tongues in your life.

As I said, "the strength of the pack is the wolf." I know that the manifestations of the spirit are given for the common good. I want to manifest the spirit because I know it helps me, and I am in a position to then be a better help in the Christian world.