



## BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Systematic Theology

“The Holy Spirit and the Gift of Tongues – I: Evidence of the Book of Acts”

TRANSCRIPT

[Prayer] Father, we thank Thee again for the holy Scriptures and for the opportunity to open them and read them and study them. We pray that we may not be over them but under them, subject to them. And, may the Holy Spirit be our teacher and guide; for since he is the author of Holy Scripture, it is he that is best able to teach it. And we pray, Lord, that Thou wilt guide the human instrument; guide each one of us who listen. May we sense just exactly that teaching, which will build us up in our faith and draw us closer to Thee. So, we commit this hour to Thee and pray Thy blessing upon each one of us.

In Jesus' Name. Amen.

[Message] Now, this is the first in our series of studies on The Holy Spirit and the Gift of Tongues. And, providing my schedule holds out, I yesterday, indicated to Mr. Prior and he announced that it would be a two-part series, but I think it would be much better for us if we try to do a fairly thorough job. And so, I'm going to devote three times to it instead of two. And tonight, we will look, we'll introduce the subject and look at the evidence of the Book of Acts. And then, next time, we will consider Roman numeral II in

our outline, which I’ve put up there, which is part of the outline, the evidence from 1 Corinthians. And then the last hour, we will consider the evidence of history and seek to give an interpretation of some of the things that are happening today in the so-called Tongues movement.

So, this is our first study and I think that we should begin where the subject begins with Acts chapter 2, verses 1 through 13. And so will you turn there? And let’s read as our Scripture reading for tonight, Acts chapter 2, verse 1 through verse 13. In the study of the Holy Spirit, we have often referred to Acts chapter 2, and it is surely one of the most important chapters in the Bible on the subject of the Holy Spirit, particularly, from the historical standpoint. And so we should be very familiar with the things that happened on that day, which was the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy in the coming of God’s Spirit to inaugurate the age of the Spirit. Now, Luke writes.

“And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven. Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language. And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galilaeans? And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born? Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judaea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia, Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes, Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God. And they

were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another, What meaneth this? Others mocking said, These men are full of new wine.”

The Holy Spirit and the Gift of Tongues. The events of the last decade, concerning the gift of speaking in tongues, have made the topic of speaking in tongues of some significance to Evangelicals. And, by the term Evangelicals, I mean all who have genuinely believed in our Lord, Jesus Christ.

While modern Pentecostalism’s beginning is usually traced to meetings in a former Methodist Church at 312 Azusa Street, in Los Angeles. Some, I might say incidentally, trace the movement to Topeka, Kansas, and some evidences of speaking in tongues then, January the 1<sup>st</sup>, 1901, five years before the meetings in Azusa Street. Still, a new and more important beginning was made on April the 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1960. On that date, Dennis J. Bennett, who was rector of St. Mark’s Episcopal Church in Van Nuys, California, entered into the pulpit on Sunday morning and spoke to his congregation and told them that he had had an experience of speaking in tongues. He was asked to resign, which he did, and the event drew considerable publicity to the tongues movement. In fact, it gave it a kind of nationwide publicity. The church split as a result of his action and the modern, or the contemporary, tongues movement really began to take off with that event.

Now, it began to spread through many of the major denominations and today, there is a tongue movement of sorts, in almost all of the major denominations: The Baptists, both Northern and Southern, The Presbyterians, not too many in the Presbyterians, but still some. In the Reformed Church, in the Episcopal Church, in the Methodist Church, in fact, almost all of the denominations that we know have groups within them that speak in tongues.

About eight years ago, Mrs. Jean Stone came to Dallas. I’m looking at a clipping which is entitle “Trinity Movement Told by Speaker in Dallas.” You will notice,

throughout the tongues movement, of course, and almost everyone has noticed this, that women are prominent in the movement. Now, I think this is a fact that all would agree is true, even those who are involved in the movement. It is not, of course, true to say that they are only women or, necessarily, that women control the movement. But, they are very prominent in it. Mrs. Stone, who was a wife of an executive in California, came. She was here in Dallas as a representative of the Blessed Trinity Society. She was, then, the editor of *Trinity* magazine, and a magazine designed to influence Episcopalians about the Pentecostal Movement in a “sensible, intellectual manner.” She attempted, while she was here in Dallas, to stir up interest in it and, with the reporter, when he asked her to speak in tongues, she responded by speaking in tongues for him. The paragraph, which records that, is, “After the meeting, in another room, Mrs. Stone honored an individual request to speak in tongues. She prayed quietly in English then spoke softly for a moment a melodic combination of sounds.”

Now, Mrs. Stone became a leader in the Episcopalian Church and in its movement. And, the magazine for some time, I have not looked at it in recent years so I don’t know the status of it, had some influence. She claimed that as a result of speaking in tongues, people began tithing almost automatically, they began reading the Bible with new understanding, they have more love and charity, heavy drinkers stopped drinking, and we have seen dramatic healings. These are quotations from what she said when she was here.

Now, this movement not only became entrenched in some of the major denominations, but it affected some of the more Evangelical groups. For example, in the InterVarsity Christian Fellowship Chapter at the University of Yale, there broke out the movement there, and a number of the students were involved in speaking in tongues. This was true of not only that InterVarsity Christian Fellowship Chapter but others over the country. It also broke out in Campus Crusade and about five or six or seven years ago, Bill Bright, personally, put his foot down, and said that no staff member of Campus

Crusade would be retained as a staff member if he continued to speak in tongues or push the movement or speak in tongues publicly. I had a conversation with him, when he was reaching that decision. I just happened to be there and he told me about what had happened in the movement.

But, not only did it break out in InterVarsity Christian Fellowship and in Campus Crusade for Christ, but also in some of the strong Christian colleges, there were groups that spoke in tongues. And, in fact, still are groups that speak in tongues. When I was on the campus of Wheaton College, just a few years ago, as speaker at their religious emphasis or spiritual life week, there was a group of students that were speaking in tongues then. There have been groups that have been involved in speaking in tongues at Westmont College at Santa Barbara, on the Pacific Coast. Usually, these are small groups. As far as I can tell, with one or two exceptions, the faculty members at these two leading Christian Colleges have not been in sympathy with the movements. One man, who was in the music department at one of the schools, became involved. But, so far as I know, no faculty member of stature in the academic side of the work was involved. But there were groups that were involved in it.

Now, I think, we should begin by pointing out this; and I hope we don’t have to stress this, but still, I believe that we should say it over and over because, amazingly, though we say this over and over again, many do not seem to really allow it to sink in. It is of the utmost importance that we test this question from the word of God and not from human experience. Experience must be, always, secondary to the word of God, for the simple reason that our experiences are capable of different interpretations. We may think our experience teaches us one thing, but in reality our experiences are often very delusive. And, because they are delusive, it is possible for us to be deceived. And, therefore, we must always test everything that we are interested in by the word of God. And this is of the greatest importance in the matter of tongues.

As you know, you’ve heard me refer to several conversations that I’ve had with different people in which, as we have sat down to discuss the things from the word of God, when I open the word of God, now, this is not true of everybody, I’m not trying to suggest that everybody who believes in tongues is not willing to look at the Bible. That is not true. There are books set forth by people who believe in tongues attempting to show from the Bible that this is the teaching of the New Testament. But, I’ve had this experience a number of times of sitting down with average persons who have become involved in the tongues movement and, frequently, after I open the Bible and begin to talk about it, they will say things to me like this. “Well, Dr. Johnson, I didn’t come, or I don’t intend to argue the question with you from the Bible. I’ve had the experience of speaking in tongues. And, consequently, anything that you say would really be beside the point, because I have already spoken in tongues.” And that, of course, for them has settled the question. It is, of course, an interpretation of their experience. They do not realize this. It is an attempt to interpret an experience that they had.

Now, I always try to say at this point, “I don’t question that you have had an experience. But the thing I am questioning is, is this the experience of speaking in tongues as set forth in the Bible? That is the important thing.” And, if you in this audience, have spoken in tongues; there may be some here who have, I want to urge you to have your mind open to what the Bible says. And, also, to realize that you are a human being; and because you are, your whole nature is corrupt, it is blind, it is hardened, and it is possible for us as long as we are in the flesh to be deceived. It is possible for me to be deceived. It is possible I am deceived in what I am saying. I don’t think so, but it is possible. And we should realize that. The thing that we should always do is to go to the Bible. What does the Bible have to say about this? And so, I stress this again, because I think this is really the heart of the problem. People are not willing to go to the Bible.

Some want to go to the Bible. They think that, perhaps, they could not understand the Bible. And so, from that standpoint, they don’t go to the Bible. But others, and these are the ones I am particularly speaking to, do not it appears to me want to go to the Bible to see what the Bible itself has to say on this question.

Now, to show you how deceptive experiences can be, let me remind you of an experience that men and women shall have during the time of the great tribulation. We are told in the 13<sup>th</sup> chapter of the Book of Revelation that when the Beast, the anti-Christ, through his lieutenant the false prophet, has an image of himself set up in the temple in Jerusalem, that the second beast is going to do great wonders upon the earth. In Revelation chapter 13 and verse 13, we read or verse 12:

“And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men.”

Now, I think this is one of the most amazing things in all of the Bible; that the false prophet during the time of the great tribulation period, is going to be able to call down fire from heaven. Now, it is obvious that this is going to be one of the lying signs, as Paul calls them, that the beast is going to be able to perform. And, if you will just remember for a moment, that in the Old Testament when Elijah had his conflict with Baal, the thing that determined that Jehovah was the true God, was the fact that fire came down from heaven and consumed the sacrifice that Elijah had prepared. That was the evidence that Jehovah, the God of Elijah, was the true God. You can see how deceptive it is going to be during the time of the great tribulation when the false prophet turns to heaven and calls down fire from heaven, perhaps even accompanying it with a little scriptural exposition of 1 Kings chapter 18, and how in that passage in the Old Testament that was

the indication that Elijah’s God was the true God. And so, I can just imagine him saying, for I feel sure that they will be acquainted with the scriptural records, I can just hear him saying that just as the fire came down from heaven demonstrated that Elijah’s God, Jehovah, was the true God, so the fire that I’ve caused to come down from heaven demonstrates that the beast whose image that we have set up is truly god.

Now, everyone who sees that is going to have the experience of seeing the fire come from heaven, but they’re not going to be able to interpret that experience unless they go to the Bible, the word of God. So, please remember and bear this in mind in every doctrine, experience is no guide or standard for Bible doctrine. Now, our experiences should confirm, illustrate, the teaching of the word of God, but first of all is the teaching of the word of God; second, our experience.

Now, this is particularly a warning addressed to you who are somewhat emotional in character. Now, we are made up of intellect, will, and emotion. Some of us are more intellectual than others. Now, that does not necessarily mean that you are, thereby, in the sight of God more meritorious before him. Some of us are more emotional than others. That, the same way, is no indication that this is meritorious before God. Now, I’m particularly speaking to those who are emotional in nature. I’ve always felt that the truths of the Bible should have an emotional response. As far as I can tell, the only body that should not have an emotional, as well as an intellectual response, to the word of God is that body over which a sheet has been pulled. So, it seems to me, that sometimes in our attempt to be intellectual in the truths of Scripture, we have neglected the emotional side. But, at the same time, it is possible for us to be so emotional that we do not listen wisely to the teaching of Scripture. So, if you are emotionally inclined, if your nature is along that line, you are in a special danger because this, the appeal of movements such as this, in my opinion, is strongly to the emotional side of men.

Oswald Chambers said something, which I’ve quoted more than once. I didn’t like all of his doctrine, but he was a Christian man and he said some very, very good



things. And he said “There is no authentic impulse of the Holy Spirit that is not wedded to the words of the Bible.” I thought that was a very good statement and I’ve quoted it over and over for about twenty years. “There is no authentic impulse of the Holy Spirit that is not wedded to the words of the Bible.” In other words, for all of our experiences in connection with the Holy Spirit, we should have the text of Scripture that supports them. He goes on to say “To recognize this is the only way to be safe from dangerous delusions.” So if you have had some experience; a dream, you think, a vision, you think, or speaking in tongues, you think. You should have some text of Scripture properly interpreted, properly interpreted, which supports that which you have. And you should be required to have that. And that should be true for every experience that we have.

Now, we’re taking the position that the principle of temporary gifts is a biblical principle. And for those of you who are here tonight and you were not here as we discussed permanent gifts and temporary gifts, you may feel that I’m taking a position that is not justified, and the question is settled if we take this position. Now, I don’t think it is settled if we take this position, but for you let me just suggest this to you. In the introduction to the last message that I gave on temporary spiritual gifts, I argued this point for about fifteen or twenty minutes, giving a number of reasons why I thought the biblical principle of temporary gifts is established in the word of God. You remember, we talked about prophets, we talked about apostles, we talked about history, we talked about the purpose of gifts, and so on and sought to show that it is a biblical principle that some of the spiritual gifts that were given were given for a temporary experience, for a time, and others were given for the whole church age.

Now, some people balk at that and they think that that is a weakness of the position that I have. I do not think so. I do not know of anything *a priori* that requires God to give only permanent gifts. It seems to me, philosophically unsound to say that God can only give permanent gifts. It is also philosophically unsound, it seems to me, to say that God can only give temporary gifts. The only way we can settle a question like

that is to look, again, at the Bible. And we saw that there have been no apostles in the biblical sense, since the time of Paul. And that establishes the principle of temporary gifts. We took up the question of apostles, the use of that term in connection with Barnabas and others, and proved, I hope to the satisfaction of all who listened, that the term apostle had two senses: one, the sense of simply a messenger of the local church, and in that sense, we might have an apostle today. But an apostle in the sense of an authoritative person who had seen our Lord in his resurrection, that gift concluded with the apostolic age and we have had no apostles since then.

Now, we had a student at seminary, who was a very close friend of mine, and tell it not in Gath, publish it not in Ashkelon, lest the uncircumcised Philistines of other churches hear, but he used to attend Believers Chapel. And, he wrote a master’s thesis on the subject of apostleship. And, I’ve always felt and I’m going to say this with a smile because I don’t really believe this in the ultimate, but I always think that the greatest mistake he made was not coming to me to give him a little advice before he wrote it. [Laughter] But, anyway, he wrote this master’s thesis and his position was that there were apostles today.

Now, he paid me a great complement when he finished writing it and I quizzed him a little bit about it. He told me that he thought I was an apostle. Well, I appreciated him for designating me one of his apostles [more laughter] but I gave him back the complement and told him I didn’t want to be that kind of an apostle, because as far as I can tell in the Bible, there is no such gift. So anyway, if you are here in the audience tonight and you have questions about temporary gifts, I urge you to get the tape, the last tape, and listen to what I had to say there. And if after listening to it, you’re still unconvinced, I’ll be glad to sit down and discuss it further with you.

Now, I’m saying this because, you see, one of the basic tenets of the tongues movement is everything that happened in the early days of the Christian church ought to happen today. Now, as we’ve been going through the Book of Acts, on Sunday, I have taken

time out here and there to point out the various things as we have gone along that are not happening today and have not happened since the days of the Book of Acts. And there are so many in the Book of Acts that it’s amazing that people would say that everything that happened in the early days of the church ought to be happening today.

But, Kathryn Kuhlman who, she is a woman, Kathryn Kuhlman, in a Time Magazine article last September, September the 14<sup>th</sup>, made this statement to the reporter who wrote about her and her healing work. He said this. And I must say I have been in Kathryn Kuhlman’s meetings some year ago and I am happy to report that she has become more conservative through the years. And I hope that as the Lord gives her further time, so that she can become even more conservative and abandon some of the things that she still believes in. But I want to read the paragraph before the one I am particularly interested in because it indicates that she is having a spiritual pilgrimage.

And as the years go by she is becoming more and more biblical. Beyond her repeated assertion that it is all the work of the Holy Spirit operating through Jesus Christ, Kathryn preaches no theology of healing. She no longer believes that faith necessarily earns healing. She used to. Or that lack of faith necessarily forbids it. She used to. She has seen too many non-believers cured; too many believers go away still lame or sick. Now, you’ll notice again, she is still basing her doctrine on experience not on what the Bible teaches. She refuses to promise individual healings. “I can’t” she explains [Laughter] “That’s the sovereign act of God.” Now, I must confess, that’s the only time I’m ever embarrassed, as a Southerner, when I have to pronounce “I can’t” by itself. I still sound like a countryman when I do it. So I like to have two three other words with it. [More laughter] Anyway, she says “That’s the sovereign act of God.” And, you know, that is precisely what I believe about healings; that they occur as the sovereign act of God.

Now, she goes on to say “She does see her ministry as a return to the supernatural element in the ancient Church. Now, this is what I am interested in, particularly. “Every thing that happened in the early Church” she insists “we have a right to expect today.

This is exactly what we are going to get back to again.” Now, notice that statement.

That, I think, is the cornerstone of the views of those who believe in healing and speaking in tongues and the miraculous. “Every thing that happened in the early Church, we have a right to expect today. This is exactly what we are going to get back to again.”

Now, if Miss Kuhlman were here, I would ask her this one question. “Are we going to get back to resurrections again? Or, further, are we going to get back to the resurrection of Jesus Christ, again? That occurred in the experience of the early first century Christians. Are we going to get back to that? Is it not obvious to us, as we study the Bible, that there were things that happened in the early Church that happened only once?” Why, I think that should be obvious to us. But, nevertheless, that is of the greatest importance to the movement.

Now, Professor Warfield, who in many ways was the greatest theologian of the twentieth century, to this point, although in certain fields his theology is not to be recommended too highly, but he was a tremendous, tremendous theologian. He was a professor of theology at Princeton Theological Seminary, after having been professor at Western Theological Seminary. He is one of those rare theologians who was first of all a New Testament professor and then became a professor of Systematic Theology. And, consequently, his theology is based upon the exegesis of the text, the Greek text of Scripture. Today, we have lots of theologians who don’t even know how to read a Greek New Testament. If you put it in their hands, they couldn’t even read it. They might be able to look up a few words in it, but as far as really handling the text is concerned, they could not do it at all.

When I was at Basel, Switzerland, studying and sitting at the table with Professor Karl Barth, there were about forty Americans there, most of them, young men, some older men who were already professors in American universities and seminaries, such as I was. And I think one of the most amazing things to me was the fact that, of this forty or fifty men who were sitting around discussing the theology of Professor Barth, there were the

night I was there, so far as I remember, there were three people who had a Greek New Testament with them. One was Professor Barth, who was able to read the New Testament. And when he discussed something, he would pull out a battered Greek Testament and open it up and look at the Greek text to support what he was saying. I had my Greek New Testament and the fellow with me, who was a graduate of a Baptist Seminary on the coast in California, an independent Baptist seminary, who is now a professor at Westmont College, also had his Greek New Testament. And we were the three, out of about forty or fifty men who were there.

Now, Professor Warfield, I think, was a very wise man and he had this to say about this idea that because it happened in the early Church, it must happen today. He said “The fundamental error underlying the whole miracle thirist, is the failure to distinguish between the epoch of the creation of salvation, that is, the great saving works of death, burial, resurrection, the ascension of the Son of God, the gift of the Holy Spirit, where when in which our salvation was created through the work of God the Son and God the Holy Spirit and that of its appropriation.” Let me read it again. “The fundamental error underlying the whole miracle thirist, is the failure to distinguish between the epoch, or the age, of the creation of salvation and that of its appropriation.” In other words, we fail to realize that those things that happened in the early days of the Church were involved with the creation of the saving work of God. Through the work of Jesus Christ, the work of our Lord, the work of the Holy Spirit, and the authenticating miracles designed to authenticate those great saving facts to place in the early days of the Christian Church.

Now, we are living in the age of the Christian Church in which these great events, which have taken place by the work of God and have been authenticated by the Holy Spirit, are being appropriated. And if we do not distinguish these two aspects of the age of the church, we shall fall into error.

Now, coming to our outline, Roman I - The evidence of the Book of Acts. Now, remember, Acts is the factual history book of the early church, and so when we want to see what happened historically in the early Church, we turn first of all to the Book of Acts. It contains three definite occurrences of speaking in tongues, chapter 2, verse 4; chapter 10, verse 46; chapter 19, verse 6. Now, I think it is of the greatest importance that we look at these passages, and so I am going to ask you to turn to chapter 10 of the Book of Acts, in which Peter is in the house of Cornelius, preaching the Gospel there, Gentiles were there, Jews were there, and we read, in Acts chapter 10 in verse 44.

“While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God.”

Now, we need not read on. He doesn’t say anything more about that. Chapter 19 in verse 6, remember that strange incident in which the Apostle Paul met the disciples of John the Baptist, twelve of them, who had been wandering about in the background of the Christian movement, had not come into contact with anything that had happened, apparently, since the preaching of John, and finally they met Paul, there were twelve of them, in the city of Ephesus. Paul came in touch with them. He recognized that there was something missing in their experience and he said to them, verse 2. “Did you receive the Holy Ghost when you believed?” Now, I’ve translated the Greek text as it should be rendered, “Did you receive the Holy Ghost when you believed?” Because you see, that’s the normal thing in the Christian age in which Paul is. They said unto him “We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost.”

Now, of course, they did not mean they had never heard of his existence, for John the Baptist that was one of his great doctrines, the doctrine of the fact that he would

baptize them with water, there would come one who would baptize them with the Holy Spirit. They mean “We have no so much as heard whether he has come,” that is, in fulfillment of the promise that John made. “There be any Holy Ghost now.”

“And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism. Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.”

In other words, in the Old Testament, men believed in the coming one. Now, we look back to the one who has come.

“When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.”

Now, you have read all of the occurrences in which the speaking in tongues is specifically mentioned in the Book of Acts, chapter 2, verse 4, on the day of Pentecost; chapter 10 in the house of Cornelius; chapter 19 at Ephesus when Paul spoke to these disciples of John the Baptist. These are the three specific references to speaking in tongues in the Book of Acts. There are no other specific references to speaking in tongues in the Book of Acts. Three of them, that is all.

Now, there is one passage in which we may have a “speaking in tongues,” but it is not explicitly said to be speaking in tongues. It may, however, have taken place then. And that is in chapter 8, when Philip came down to Samaria and preached the word there and many received the Lord, Jesus, believed in him. The apostles heard about it and they went down in order to authenticate this movement. And so, two of them were sent: one

by the name of Peter, the other by the name of John. And when they came, well, let’s read the story, beginning with verse 15.

“Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost: For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost.”

Now, it does not say that they spoke in tongues. However, the next verse says.

“And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money, Saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost.”

So, it is possible since it states that when Simon saw that through the laying on of hands the Holy Ghost was given, it’s possible that that means that he saw the evidences of the coming of the Spirit, which might have been speaking in tongues. It is, of course, not necessarily so, they could have just been happy enough to have convinced him that a tremendous change had taken place. But it may be an instance of speaking in tongues.

It will not affect our doctrine, one way or the other. In fact, it fits in very neatly with what I am going to say. But, still, I want you to know.

Now, here we, then, to sum up what we have in the Book of Acts, we have three specific cases in which speaking in tongues is mentioned: Pentecost, Caesarea, in Cornelius’ house, Ephesus, and the disciples of John the Baptist, one possible place in Samaria when Peter and John came down and laid hands on Philip’s converts. Now, that’s all that the Book of Acts has to say about speaking in tongues.



Now, let’s go to capital A - The biblical terminology. The New Testament makes it clear, and this is particularly true of the Book of Acts, that speaking in tongues was a speaking in known languages. Now, let’s stop here and I want to point out a few things. The first place, the New Testament speaks about, our English text speaks about “speaking in unknown tongues.” Turn over to 1 Corinthians chapter 14 and let me show you an occurrence of this term. 1 Corinthians chapter 14, verses 1 and 2, page 1224, 1 Corinthians, Paul writes.

“Follow after love, and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesize. For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue.”

Now notice “He that speaketh in an unknown tongue.” Now, if you’re a careful reader of the Authorized Version, you will notice immediately that the word “unknown” is in italics. That means that the translators have supplied it. It is not in the Greek text. The Greek text reads simply “speaking in tongues” not “unknown tongues” but speaking in tongues. So that’s the first thing we need to know about the terminology of the New Testament. When we read “speaking in unknown tongues” we are to forget about the word unknown. It’s simply “speaking in tongues.” Whatever tongues may be, it is not “unknown” tongues.

Now, secondly, in the Book of Acts, we are told that they spoke in “other tongues.” In Acts chapter 2 in verse 4, we have that expression.

“And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost and began to speak with other tongues.”

Now, the Greek word that is used here is *heteros*. Now, *heteros* is a word that means “other” in the sense of different. For example, I have a pen in my hand. Now, I might go

into a drug store or a place where they have educational materials and ask for some pens that I may use with an overhead projector. And they may bring them out to me and I may buy them. And, I may go to my teaching assignment and I pull out these pens, and someone takes a look at them and they say to me “How do you like them?” And I say “Well, I like them very much.” And this person would say “Well, I’d like some of them.” And I’ll say “Well I’m going back there today, let’s go together and we’ll get some.” And so I walk in and I put this down on the counter and I say “I want another set of these pens.” Now, there is a Greek word for “another” which means another of the same kind. That’s the word *allos*. For example, when Jesus said “I am praying the Father that he may send you another Comforter when I’m gone.” It’s another of the same kind; the Holy Spirit and the Son are alike in their attributes and in other features.

But now, if I did not like these and I went back to the store and I put them on the counter and said “I want another set of pens.” And I wanted to indicate that I didn’t like these, I wanted a different kind of pen, I would use in Greek, the Greek word *heteros* from which we get the word “heterodoxy.” Now, that would mean another of a different kind. Now, that is the word that is used here. “They were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with ‘different’ tongues.” Well, what does he mean? Well, he means that there were some that were speaking Parthian. There were some that were speaking Persian. There were some that were speaking the language of the Phrygians. There were some that were speaking the language of the Mesopotamians. They were speaking with “different” tongues; so “other” tongues.

Now, again, the reference is not to “unknown” tongues but to known tongues. But now, there’s another term here in Acts chapter 2 in verse 6, we read

“Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language.”

“In his own language.” Now, that is a different word from the word usually rendered “tongue.” The word rendered tongue, ordinarily, is the term *glossos*. But this word is the word *dialektos* from which we get the English word “dialect.” Now that term in the Book of Acts always refers to a known language, not an unknown language, a known language. “Each heard them speaking in his own language.” Verse 8, we have.

“And how hear we every man in our own tongue .” It’s translated tongue, but it’s really this same word. “Our own language.” And then in verse 11, the other term is used. “Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues (our *glossos*) in our tongues the wonderful works of God.”

Now, it becomes evident then that *glossos* as *dialektos* both of these terms refer to known languages. So, what they spoke on the Day of Pentecost was not some ecstatic gibberish. They spoke known languages; languages that you could have understood if you had been a native of that particular place. What happened then was this; this great crowd of people were gathered on the Day of Pentecost and when the Holy Spirit came upon them to baptize them into one body, to fill them and permanently indwell them, they were given the gift of speaking in a language, which they did not understand. And, here was Peter, over here, speaking the language of the Parthians. And one of his Jewish friends standing by in the temple area where they were said, “Well, listen to that old fisherman. Why he’s never been outside the land of Palestine and here he is preaching.” And people over here from that part of the land are coming up and saying “I’m understanding him. He’s speaking my language.” And this was going on all over the place. Consequently, it’s no wonder that people were startled and amazed and confounded, because God was, obviously, performing a mighty miracle in the midst of these Jewish people by enabling them to speak languages that they had never studied.

Now, then that raises some interesting questions about the modern tongues movement. Originally, the modern tongues movement did not claim to speak in known languages. They were convinced that the New Testament taught that it was simply ecstatic speech. And so they spoke a form of gibberish, ecstatic speech. Well, they might call it heavenly language, but it was the kind of language that no one understood. Now, the New Testament then from the Book of Acts seems to plainly teach that what we have here is a known language.

Now, Eugene Nida, who probably knows more about languages than any other man alive, for Dr. Nida has been head of the American Bible Society’s division of publication of the languages and the Bibles, which the Wycliffe Bible translators have put out through the years. I don’t know how many languages this man knows. He knows every language there is to know, practically. Not in the sense that he can speak them all, but he is a master. You can put a language, an absolutely new language, in front of Eugene Nida, and it isn’t but just a relatively short time before he has broken that language down into its component parts. He is an amazing character. Everybody knows that about him. He is just an astounding man; this has been his life time study. He’s a brilliant man and no matter where Wycliffe translators translate, they send in their work to him to be sure that they are on the right track. And they’re the ones speaking the language. But, he has that ability to take a language and just break it down and come to completely understand it.

Now, it’s an interesting thing, I think, that Eugene Nida has tested scores of “tongues” tapes, scores, as he puts it or as it has been put concerning him. He has analyzed scores of “tongues” tapes and has concluded that it is nonsense. Nonsense! None of the speaking in tongues that he has listened to can be classified as a language. Now, that’s an amazing thing. That is really an amazing thing.

Now, that’s very interesting because, you see, remarkable claims are made by the modern “glossalalics,” which is the technical term for people who speak in tongues,

claims have been made that they speak French, German, Latin. Ah, Latin that reminds me of Pat’s book “A New Song.” [Laughter] Now, Pat Pat Boone, Tom. Now, Pat in his book says that one time, I’ve forgotten exactly the situation, whether he and his wife were lying on the bed and she suddenly began to utter a few phrases. But she began to speak in what he called Latin; she was making sounds like “ouway de oum.”

Now, I happen to know a little Latin. I took eight years of Latin. And this was here prayer. Now, that was a great piece of Latin, two words, which she had probably heard chanted somewhere, but anyway, the interesting thing was that in one place he makes reference to the fact that he suddenly heard her saying, I think, the precise Latin that as he put it was *te amo dominus, te amo dominus*.

Now, the striking thing about that, of course, is that while it means obviously, “I love you Lord,” I love you, Lord. It’s really incorrect Latin because, you see, it should be the “vocative” case rather than the “nominative” case of *dominus*. It should be *Te amo domine* not *dominus*. So, are we to assume that the Holy Spirit has committed a common error in Latin. And that is not the only thing but in the next page or so he makes reference again to the fact that they were saying a certain thing in Latin and again, this time, the Latin was all right but his translation was wrong.

So I don’t know. It’s so pitiful, so pitiful that I hardly know how to comment upon it without seeming very hard and crass and sour, which I don’t intend to be. But I want to tell you, it does not create a great deal of assurance in me about the rest of the things that I have seen in that book.

Well now, I’m going to read you, at this point, a letter that was written to *Christianity Today* by William Welmers, Professor of African languages at the University of California at Los Angeles, UCLA. And, I think, this is a very interesting letter because it bears on what we see here in the Book of Acts. He says in comment on an article that appeared in a preceding issue “Comment can be little more than supplementary, but a little seems appropriate. The citation of 1 Corinthians 14:14-19 from the Authorized

Version without indicating italics is deceptive. Nowhere does the Greek speak of an “unknown tongue.” The word “unknown” is an interpretative addition by the translators. It may or may not be a valid interpretation. Thayer, in his Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, is very sure that Paul uses *glossos* here with reference to the physical organ and that the activity consists of speech-like noises rather than using a language known or unknown.

Yet Paul’s words in 1 Corinthians 13:1 “Though I speak with the tongues of men and angels” seem to imply that language as a system of communication is involved and not merely ecstatic babbling. The possibility of interpretation reinforces the idea that something definable as language, a secondary meaning of *glossos* is indeed intended. Not all of the references in Acts to “being filled with” or “full of the Spirit” can be taken to describe a special outpouring of the Spirit. Certainly, Acts 13:52 is one of Luke’s typical summary sentences. The outpouring of the Holy Spirit is never once described with reference to an individual but always in connection with the church of Christ. First the Jews, then the Samaritans, then the Gentiles and finally, the strange group at Ephesus with one foot in each dispensation, in each of these cases, the gift of speaking in tongues was clearly given to every person, even the numbers mentioned in some cases.

The baptism of the Holy Spirit belongs to the church as a body, the Body of Christ, with absolutely no individual selectivity and with the ability to speak in new languages as an initial evidence of the supernatural character of this universal church. This was communication. In Corinth, it must potentially have been if interpretation was possible. At worst, it was a highly specialized type of ecstatic glossalalia. Thayer refers to a minister who claims to have witnessed to foreigners in their own languages, Polish is mentioned. Fine. I hope he did. Also mentioned is Coptic Egyptian. The latter must have been in a spiritualist séance because there have been no native speakers of Coptic Egyptian for a good many years. I fear this is typical of the mistake, though perhaps sincere, claims of modern glossalalics.

I am the more concerned about the statement that a group of government linguistics experts sought to analyze for *Christianity Today* a tape of his glossalalia, but found it unrecognizable, though one said it sounded like a language structurally. The fact that there are some three thousand languages in the world, many of them unknown to most of us that is, is not entirely relevant. We do know something about representative languages of every known language family in the world. I am, by no means, unique among descriptive linguists and having had direct personal contact with well over a hundred languages representing a majority of the world’s language families and in having studied the Scripture of languages of virtually every reported type, if a glossalalic were speaking in any of the thousand languages of Africa, there is about a 90% chance that I would know it in a minute.” That’s an interesting statement from another linguist.

“Now, I have also had the opportunity of making a sympathetic study of an alleged instance of speaking in tongues. And I must report with out reservation that my sample does not sound like a language structurally. There can be no more than two contrasting vowel sounds and a most peculiarly restrictive set of consonant sounds. These combine into a very few syllable clusters, which recur many times in various orders. The consonants and vowels do not all sound like English, the glossalalic’s native language, but the intonation patterns are so completely American English that the total affect is ludicrous. My sample includes an interpretation. At the most generous estimate, the glossalalic utterance includes ten or eleven sentences or stretches of possibly meaningful speech. But, the interpretation involves no less than fourteen distinct and independent ideas. There simply can be no match between the tongue and the interpretation.

I am told that Dr. E. A. Nida of the American Bible Society has reported similar impressions of glossalalic recordings. Our evidence is still admittedly limited. But from the viewpoint of a Christian linguist, the modern phenomenon of glossalalia would appear to be a linguist fraud and monstrosity given even the most generous interpretation of 1 Corinthians 12 through 14.”

In connection with this, Pat Boone said in his book that, and I could only find this in the book, that the only thing that was ever said in tongues was really a few little scattered statements like “Hail God” and “I love you, Lord.” That was all. And when he set forth the reasons why he thought this was a good thing to speak in tongues, he said it was just “good to speak to God and tell him that you loved him in different languages.” Well, you didn’t need to speak in tongues to do that? You could use Latin. You could use Hebrew. You could use Greek. You could use French. And you could tell God that you love him in different languages, if you wished, but I don’t really think that God would especially be blessed if we tell him *Je t’aime* or “I love you,” in English. It would seem to me that he is just as happy over the English as he is with the French. And, I must say that as far as I’m concerned, it seems nonsense.

But now, capital B and, I think, we can, with what we’ve said, hasten through the remainder of our subject for tonight. The context and teaching of Acts 2. The messages in known languages then were evidently given for two purposes. First, they were given as a sign for authentication of the reception of the Holy Spirit. That is evident in each case in Acts. They received the Holy Spirit; they spoke in tongues. This was a sign to authenticate the reception of the Holy Spirit and, thus, the new Christian movement.

You must remember, that up until this time, God had been speaking through the Jewish people, from the days of Abraham on down. He had confined himself to speaking in and within the theocratic movement. But now, he is going to begin to speak to the whole of the world. And, in order to authenticate the change that was taking place, he gave the gift of the Holy Spirit and as the sign of it, speaking in tongues. Now, it was a sign, primarily then, to the Jews. And, as we shall see in 1 Corinthians, when we come to that, Paul says that “It is a sign not to them that believe, but to them that believe not, who belong to this people.” That is, the Jews.

Now, because of its semi-official character, apostles were present in every case in the Book of Acts. In Acts 2, in Acts 10, in Acts 8 if we call that an experience of



speaking in tongues, in Acts 10, in Acts 19, in every case, apostles were there. In every case, it affected the whole of the group that was there. In every case, the reception of the Spirit was indicated by the coming of the Holy Spirit and the speaking in tongues was designed to authenticate that coming of the Holy Spirit and, thus, the Christian movement that that involved.

The second reason that tongues were given, apparently, and I think this is an incidental reason; not as important as that, is that it was also a sign, indirectly, of judgment on the Jews. Now, that would be evidence because God was now speaking in, as the Old Testament prophesy prophesized, he is now speaking to this people in their disobedience by blessing others who were not of that people. We shall see more of that later on.

Now, from the Acts 2 occurrence then we would know that Jews are in the Body of Christ. The Holy Spirit has come, the church is being formed, the Holy Spirit is given to all who believed, they are formed into one body by the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and God has attested to what is happening on the day of Pentecost.

Capital C - The context and teaching of Acts 10. We can sum this up, I think, in just a sentence or two. Jews are present again, as the apostolic message is authenticated by the Holy Spirit and tongues. Judgment perhaps inferred. From Acts chapter 10, we learn that not only are Jews in this new Christian movement, but Gentiles also are in the Body of Christ. Cornelius and his group were baptized by the Holy Spirit, and they were given the gift of tongues in authentication of the message and in authentication of what God was doing in this new movement. Gentiles are included.

Capital D - The context of Acts 19. Again Jews are present, as the apostolic message, again, is authenticated by the Spirit and the gift of tongues, and from this instance we learn that the Old Testament’s saints, who are still living at the time of the new movement, are incorporated by the Holy Spirit into the Body of Christ.

So, what we have learned by these three occurrences is that God is now speaking in this new movement, in this new age, authenticating the message of the apostles, Jews, Gentiles, Samaritans if that is a genuine instance, and even Old Testament saints like John the Baptist’s disciples who had not heard of the movement are formed into one body. And the gift of tongues is designed to authenticate the coming of the Spirit, which has bound them together in unity.

To sum up then, the evidence of Acts is that tongues were known languages, not ecstatic gibberish. Second, the gift of tongues was given primarily for authentication of the reception of the Holy Spirit and incorporation into the Body of Christ.

It was designed to be a testimony to Jews, primarily, as the Old Testament prophesied. Now, that we shall get into when we discuss 1 Corinthians chapter 14. Well, this is the beginning of our study. Now, next week, I’m going to bring you on tape an illustration of speaking in tongues, incase you have never heard anyone speaking in tongues, you’re going to hear someone speak in tongues next Monday night. And then we’re going to talk about the evidence of 1 Corinthians chapter 14.

Now, let’s bow together in prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we thank Thee for Thy word. We pray that we may be subject to it. As we study this important subject, may, O God, we find Thy mind and thy word. For Jesus’ sake. Amen.