

# The Gift of Languages

*Study Notes | by Matthew Janzen*

## Reason for Spiritual Gifts

Opening Text: **1 Corinthians 14:1-5**

Series: *The Gift of Languages - Pt. 1*

### I. Introduction

A. I've been wanting to tackle this issue for a very long time.

1. I've been asked about it multiple times.
2. It keeps coming up with many people, both here in the immediate congregation and with people on the phone ministry, and among those I chat with through email or social media.
3. So I've purposed in my heart to do my best to explain to you from the Bible, the gift of languages.

B. I want you to know at the outset, I'll be calling this gift: the gift of languages, because that's what I believe the gift to be, based upon my Bible study.

1. I believe it was a supernatural, spiritual gift whereby a person was endowed with the ability to speak a language (or languages) that he had never learned.
2. Quick example: It would be like me trying to witness to a group of Germans about the good news of Yeshua, and all of a sudden I begin to speak in German fluently even though I had never learned the language. That's how I believe the gift operates.
3. I do not have a problem calling this gift: the gift of tongues, but I am using the word languages as a clarifier.
4. The Greek word (translated tongues or languages in 1 Corinthians 14:1-5) is GLOSSA, carrying with it the meaning of "*the tongue, or by implication a language.*" (SEC) The TDNT defines it as "*tongue, language, speech.*" So the word can refer to the physical tongue on your body as when Yeshua touched a man's tongue (Mk. 7:33) to heal his speech, or when Revelation 5:9 speaks of every kindred and tongue (language) and people and nation.

5. I believe that in modern times the phrase "gift of tongues" has been used in a way that abuses the Biblical teaching of the gift. So as to clarify the truth from what I believe to be error, I've chosen to use the phrase "gift of languages" in my teaching. This is actually how the HCSB terms it as we've just read in 1 Cor. 14:1-5.

C. I will not be explaining our opening text in detail in this sermon. Instead I want to cover some preliminary points so that we can understand exactly what is going on in 1 Corinthians 14.

## II. Point #1: Paul is correcting the Corinthian Assembly. (EXTREMELY IMPORTANT)

A. What we have in this chapter is the Apostle Paul correcting a misuse of the gifts of the Spirit amidst the Corinthian Assembly.

1. We must understand this.
2. This doesn't mean we are unable to learn anything about the gift of languages here, but we must keep things in their proper context.
3. When you examine **1 Corinthians 7:1** you will see that Paul in this epistle is answering a series of questions or matters concerning which the Corinthians wrote to him. He talks to them in 7 about marriage and singleness, in **8:1** about meats offered to idols, in 11 about head coverings and the Lord's Supper, in **12:1** about spiritual gifts in general, and in 14 about specific spiritual gifts.
4. In all of these chapters, Paul is answering questions or concerns the Corinthians had about various doctrines.

B. No one should just open up to 1 Corinthians and attempt to teach on the Biblical gift of languages, without first understanding and expressing to those he is teaching, that the chapter concerns Paul's correcting the Corinthians concerning how they are doing it wrongly, not praising them for doing it rightly.

III. Point #2: The most important matter is the building up of the congregation. (We will cover this today)

A. While both the gift of languages and the gift of prophesy are focused upon in 1 Corinthians 14, the primary theme is the edification or building up of the body or congregation.

B. Look with me to several verses in **1 Corinthians 14** (I've underlined them in green in my Bible). (Also see 1 Peter 4:10; Romans 14:19; 15:2).

C. The Greek word translated as either edification or built up is:

#3618

οικοδομεω oikodomeo oy-kod-om-eh'-o

from the same as 3619; *to be a house-builder, i.e. construct or (figuratively) confirm*:--(be in) build(-er, -ing, up), edify, embolden.

#3619

οικοδομη oikodome oy-kod-om-ay'

feminine (abstract) of a compound of 3624 and the base of 1430; *architecture, i.e. (concretely) a structure; figuratively, confirmation*:--building, edify(-ication, -ing).

D. See, we are a spiritual house here (1 Corinthians 3:5-11; Ephesians 2:19-22), and our spiritual gifts (whatever they may be) are to be used to build up the house, not to puff up or build up our individual self in neglect of the house. We do what is best for the fellowship, not what we think is best for our self.

1. For example, this goes for what I am doing now. When I teach, I (as the teaching pastor in this congregation) have to make certain that I'm teaching in such a way that you are able to learn the Scriptures better.

2. I'm not to get up here and try to impress anyone, or just sound eloquent (like I'm some of kind of professor, which I'm certainly not). My goal is to make the Scriptures easy to understand. Why? This BUILDS UP the congregation.

E. Let's take a look at **1 Corinthians 12** verse-by-verse. (*The reader here will have to consult the audio recording for my explanation of both chapter 12 and chapter 13. I went through and taught these chapters in a quick manner from memory.*)

F. Then notice **1 Corinthians 13's** emphasis on love (go through chapter verse-by-verse). The reason Paul wrote the great LOVE CHAPTER was to show the Corinthians that they needed to exercise LOVE and seek the BUILD UP the congregation with their spiritual gifting, rather than seeking self edification and not looking out for what's best for the body.

#### IV. Concluding Points

**A. Point #1: Do I see the big picture of 1 Corinthians 14?** The smaller elements are tongues and prophesy, but the theme is the building up of the congregation. What best serves the congregation? How can I use my spiritual gift to build the body?

**B. Point #2: What is my spiritual gift?** There is no gift that is not important. Remember, in 1 Corinthians 12:28 even helping and managing are gifts (things we may consider to be so small) given by the Spirit. Seek Yahweh to show you

what your gift is, and then do your best to use your gift to strengthen this house of believers. We all need each other. The ear needs the nose, needs the brain, needs the hand, etc.

**C. Point #3: Remember the greatest concern is love for the body.** We want to see the body encouraged, built up, and remain strong. When we pursue spiritual gifts for this reason and then activate our gift in a way that is loving towards the entire congregation, the congregation of believers grows stronger and stronger. We should not seek to tear down each other. We should seek to build up the body.

## **What is the Gift of Languages?**

Opening Text: **1 Corinthians 14:1-5**

*The Gift of Languages - Pt. 2*

### I. Introduction

A. Last Sabbath we began looking at the gift known in Scripture as the gift of languages (commonly called "gift of tongues"), a gift which I believe is a supernatural ability given by Yahweh to a person that enables that person to speak in a language or languages that are foreign and unknown to them the speaker. (listen/study)

B. We did not get much into the gift itself, because I wanted to lay the ground work about the context of 1 Corinthians 12 and 13 before getting into 14.

1. The main point was that Paul's greatest concern in these 3 chapters is that the congregation (body of the Messiah) operate in the spiritual gifts in a spirit of love for the entire body, to build up (edify) the entire body.

2. If we speak in other languages, or have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and have the gift of faith to be able to move mountains, but we do not use these gifts to love and edify the entire congregation, we are nothing.

3. It is possible to use your spiritual gift wrongly. That is Paul's main concern in these chapters. The Corinthians were doing things the wrong way, and Paul is correcting them and showing them the main issue is the building up of the body.

C. In this lesson I had hoped to get into 1 Corinthians 14, but I have decided that it is best if we first understand some Biblical writings PRIOR TO first Corinthians 14 in order to understand exactly what the gift of languages is.

D. It is interesting that 1 Corinthians (14) is the only epistle in the entire New Testament that even mentions this gift. Other than this epistle we have *a possible* mentioning of the gift in the gospel of Mark, and *a definite* mentioning of the gift throughout the historical book of Acts (written by Luke). I'd like to go to this historical book (Acts) first, because I believe it greatly helps us define exactly what the gift is.

II. So, let's turn to Acts the second chapter (Acts 2). I've preached on Acts 2 in more detail in another sermon. Today, my focus is on the gift of languages.

A. **Acts 2:1-2** | This chapter is where an entire denomination within Christianity gets its name.

1. Pentecostal

2. The word stems from the word Pentecost, but the word Pentecost (50) really doesn't have anything to do with the gift of languages, but rather the 2nd of the 3 major feasts within the nation of Israel. (Leviticus 23:9-21; Deuteronomy 16:9-12).

3. It is because the gift of languages was poured out upon followers of Yeshua on the day of Pentecost, that the denomination which claims to heavily believe in this gift, calls themselves Pentecostal.

4. I remember growing up in church, and in my teenage years taking place in something called "Pentecost Sunday." I really didn't understand what Pentecost was at that time. I thought in my mind that it referred to what Pentecostals claim to practice, as they call it "the gift of tongues." This is what the word "Pentecost" has come to mean today, but it is incorrect.

5. The gift of languages was used on this particular day of Pentecost in a mighty way, but the word or meaning of Pentecost isn't specifically about the gift.

B. **Acts 2:3-4**

1. Now, some take **verse 3** metaphorically, others take it literally.

2. It seems that there was some kind of appearance (from the word "appeared") to the men there. Something they were able to see.

3. What appeared was something LIKE flames of fire. Not necessarily literal fire, but it looked like flames of fire. And the appearance of the flame was one that was divided or cloven (KJV).

a. The word "cloven" has to do with divided or partitioned.

b. It seems to me that the cloven image represents what is about to take place. There is about to be a speaking of more than one unknown language. There will be languages (plural) spoken and they will go out into different directions or towards different people.

4. So notice **verse 4** again. The people there were filled with a measure or portion of the Holy Spirit, and the gift that they received was the gift of languages for the text says they began to speak in different languages - **AS THE SPIRIT GAVE THEM ABILITY FOR SPEECH.**

a. They had been promised a baptism of the Holy Spirit in **Acts 1:1-5.**

b. Notice that the Holy Spirit was having to give them this ability. Remember, this is a spiritual gift, it is not something the speakers here naturally acquired. Someone who **learns** a foreign language or languages does not have the gift. (i.e. William Tyndale)

c. Notice also that the gift was upon the tongue or the speech. The gift was not upon the ear. Some people have wrongly interpreted part of this text to mean that the gift was upon the hearing rather than the speaking. Not true, it is the gift of languages not the gift of hearing.

### C. Acts 2:5

1. This verse is key.

2. Jews = Judahites = people from the house of Judah (as distinct from the house of Israel). People from either the tribe of Judah or Benjamin.

3. Notice that the author (Luke) makes the point that these Judahites dwelling in Jerusalem (for the feast) were from **EVERY NATION UNDER HEAVEN.**

a. We must not make the mistake of thinking that all Judahites at this time spoke the exact same language.

b. Some spoke Hebrew, others Aramaic, others Greek, others variations of other languages in the known world.

### D. Acts 2:6-8

1. The listeners were confused by what was happening, not because they could not understand what the speakers were saying, but because they speakers were all Galileans!!!
2. The listeners (who spoke a variety of different languages) heard the speakers speaking in their own native language. (both vss. 6 and 8)
3. Clearly here what we have is a gift of languages. A gift bestowed upon a person by the Holy Spirit of Yahweh that enables them to speak in a language or languages that were unknown to them (the speaker) but known to someone else.
4. This was not an unintelligible "language" that was completely unknown to every and all peoples living on the face of the earth!
  - a. It was not unintelligible utterances.
  - b. These were intelligible languages that the people at Jerusalem (who traveled there for the feast, and spoke a different language than the Galileans) were able to understand.

#### **E. Acts 2:9-11**

1. The mentioning of all the different areas further indicates that the languages spoken were known to the people listening.
2. Look at the end of **verse 11** again. They heard them speaking **IN THEIR OWN LANGUAGE** the magnificent acts of the Almighty.
3. This lets us know that if you are in a church (whatever they may claim denominationally) where many people just begin to utter something from the mouth that is unintelligible to anyone in the congregation, they are not experiencing what happened in Acts 2.
4. Acts 2 is a unique instance whereby you have a variety of people, from a variety of locations, who spoke a variety of languages. The apostles (and possibly others) who received the spiritual gift of languages were given the ability to speak to other people in a language unknown by them, but known by the listener. Why? In order for the proclamation of the good news of Yeshua to go forth in a quick manner. (3,000 souls were saved)

#### **F. Acts 2:12-15**

1. Some wondering "What is this all about?"
2. Others mocked claiming the men were drunk.

3. Peter clarifies that this is a fulfillment of the prophet Joel, specifically the part of the prophecy that spoke of the sons and daughters prophesying. The people who spoke in other languages were prophesying to those who understood them in their own native language. This form of languages functioned as prophecy because of the UNDERSTANDING.

### III. Let's move from there to **Acts 10**.

#### A. Background = **Acts 10:1-8**.

#### B. Then **Acts 10:34-48**.

1. Notice **verse 46**. "They heard them speaking in other languages" proves that the languages they were speaking were intelligible. (Either "understood" or knew they were foreign languages, but nonetheless known to someone.)

2. **Verse 47** corroborates this understanding. Peter said they received the Holy Spirit "just as we have." (same gift to EQUAL Acts 2)

3. Now look at **Acts 11:15-17** where Peter is recounting what happened to another group of people.

4. Cornelius and company received the same gift of languages that Peter and the others did in Acts 2 on the day of Pentecost.

C. The same thing happens again in Acts 19, and possibly (although not specifically mentioned) in Acts 8. I encourage you to study both of these chapters as well and ask yourself, "Is there any reason for me to think that the gift of languages in Acts 10, 19 (and where they are possibly mentioned in chapter 8) are any different from the gift of languages in Acts 2?"

### IV. Let's look finally to **Mark 16:14-18**

A. Now, I must first point out something that not many Bible teachers will tell you, but it is a factual point.

1. There is a major textual variant here from Mark 16:9 to verse 20. (THE longest)

2. This section of Mark does not exist in 2 very old manuscripts (300 to 400 A.D.) of the Greek NT. Codex Vaticanus and Codex Sinaiticus. It is also absent from the earliest known manuscript in Old Syriac, the earliest manuscript in the Latin Vulgate, and a large number of other manuscripts.

3. However, scholars debate whether it should be in the Bible or not, because there is some evidence that it was originally there at the end of Mark, but this evidence is just not as old as the evidence against the text.

4. I'm not saying one way or the other. I just feel I need to mention this to be as honest as possible. What if it's authentic?

B. **Verse 14** shows he is talking to the 11 disciples (minus Judas Iscariot).

C. **Verse 15** "he said to them" shows they are his original audience.

D. **Verse 15-16** are instructions about preaching the good news and also a statement about belief and baptism.

E. **Verse 17-18** is debated. Does "these signs shall follow them that believe" go back to the 11 disciples or all those that believe before being baptized?

1. I am of the belief that *if this is an authentic Biblical verse*, the part about the signs following only applies to the apostles he is talking to.

2. This does not mean that someone who was not of the original 11 could not possibly have one of these gifts in their life.

3. However, remember what we learned last week in **1 Corinthians 12:27-30**. Every single believer does not have all these gifts. However, all the 11 apostles **DID** have the specific miraculous gifts mentioned in Mark 16:17-18.

4. Now notice **Mark 16:19-20**. Verse 20's "they" is speaking of the 11 apostles. They preached, and there were signs that accompanied their preaching. It wasn't just a possibility, it was an actuality.

F. But what about the "new" languages in **verse 17**?

1. New is "kainos" in the Greek meaning "new, fresh, or different."

2. This is not contradictory to what we have learned. For an apostle to miraculously begin speaking in a language that he had never learned would be a "new" language to him. This verse does not teach unintelligible speech that is impossible for anyone to understand.

## V. Conclusion

**Point #1: Do you want to know what the Bible teaches about the gift of languages?** I was challenged by the Biblical model many years ago, and at first it was difficult for me to accept, it took me about 2 years to see the truth of this, but I desired to love Scripture

more than what I wanted or thought. Is that your desire? Do you cling more to an experience or an emotion than you do to the Scripture?

**Point #2: The Scriptures teach that the gift of languages poured out on Pentecost were known by someone.** It is true that the languages were unlearned and therefore unknown by the speaker, but they were known by someone else who spoke and understand that language. I believe that I will begin to show in the next lesson that the same gift of languages is being discussed by Paul in 1 Corinthians 14.

**Point #3: I love those brethren who disagree with me on this.** Just because we disagree on certain Biblical issues doesn't mean we throw each other into the lake of fire over it. The issue is important, and I do believe that many teach the gift of languages wrongly, and I do believe there is only one correct way to see this, but I do not believe that disagreement on this will send you to hell. However, at the same time, if you disagree with what I've shown from the Bible today, you need to ask yourself "Why?" Is it because you have clear Biblical teaching to contradict what you've heard, or is it because you do not want to let go of tradition?

## **Other Languages in Church**

Opening Text: **1 Corinthians 14:1-5**

*The Gift of Languages - Pt. 3*

I. Introduction: Today we'll begin walking through 1 Corinthians 14.

A. I need to stress this point, especially if your background is the same as mine (Pentecostal, Apostolic, Charismatic).

1. Do your best to read and study the text for itself rather than viewing it through the lens of what you may have been taught in the past.
2. I have a difficulty with that on this subject, because (especially in my youth years) the "gift of tongues" (the false teaching) was drilled into my head time after time after time.

B. It is pertinent that you also recognize the setting of 1 Corinthians 14. In this chapter Paul is dealing with the issue of the gift of languages as it relates to the local assembly in Corinth. He is talking about in the church meeting or service (the holy convocation). See vss. 5, 12, 16, 19, 23, 26, 28, 33-35. Each of these verses show clearly that the setting is the church service.

II. The Text: 1 Corinthians 14:1-5

A. **Verse 1**

1. Pursue love. Remember back with me to the first message in this series. If we do not use our spiritual gift in a loving way towards the entire body of Messiah, we are doing it wrong.

2. He then says to have the desire for spiritual gifts, and I believe Paul is talking here about the church as a whole. In speaking to individual members in 1 Cor. 12:11 Paul makes it known that Yahweh's Spirit distributes the gifts to particular members as HE WILLS, not as they will.

a. He makes the point that not all members have the same gift, and that they shouldn't feel bad if their gift is different from the next guy.

b. Paul never exhorts individuals to pursue or desire a specific gift, but he does exhort the church as a whole to desire the greater gifts be used among them (1 Cor. 12:31; 14:1).

3. Next Paul says that ABOVE ALL, the gift of prophecy should be desired. Notice that PROPHECY - AND NOT TONGUES - is the greater gift.

a. It is interesting to note here that many in the Pentecostal/Charismatic churches today believe that a person that does not "speak in tongues" doesn't have the Holy Spirit.

b. However, here we learn that prophecy is a greater gift in the church than tongues. This lets us know that tongues does not equal the Holy Spirit, else Paul would be saying that prophecy is greater than getting the Holy Spirit which would be nonsensical.

4. What is prophecy?

a. Some people limit prophecy to only the foretelling of future events (like the prophet Isaiah or Jeremiah), but that isn't the only definition of prophecy.

b. Strong's Concordance defines it as: "**προφητεω propheteuo** *prof-ate-yoo'-o* from 4396; to foretell events, divine, speak under inspiration, exercise the prophetic office:--prophesy."

c. This let's us know that another form of prophesy is to speak under inspiration, and I would argue that it also includes speaking about words that are inspired.

d. This means that if Paul was to be visiting Corinth, he could get up and speak in the church assembly, and speak revelation straight from Yahweh to the people.

e. It also means that I can come along 2,000 years later and expound upon the inspired words of apostle Paul, and thus I'm speaking under the inspiration of Yahweh because I'm expounding upon the inspired word.

f. When Paul speaks of prophecy in the church in 1 Cor. 14:1, he isn't talking about someone getting up every service and foretelling a future event. He is speaking of inspired speaking or preaching of the Word.

## B. Verse 2

1. Now we begin to see the contrast Paul is making. He wants the church to seek ABOVE ALL that they operate in prophesy. Why? Verse 2 tells us that it is because someone who uses the spiritual gift of languages - IN CHURCH - does not speak to men but to the Almighty.

a. Never forget that this entire chapter (and really the entire book of 1 Corinthians) is corrective. The Corinthians were zealous in spiritual gifts, but they were not using them properly.

b. Paul writes this entire chapter to correct their abuse of the gifts of the spirit, not to praise them in what they are doing.

2. I want to point out how that in verse 2 we have one of the reasons why people believe that the gift of tongues in 1 Cor. 14 is different from the gift of tongues in Acts 2.

a. They argue that in Acts 2, the disciples who spoke in tongues WERE SPEAKING TO MEN.

b. They then tell us that in 1 Cor. 14 the speaker in tongues WAS NOT SPEAKING TO MEN.

c. Do you see their point? I see the point. Let me ask you though, is that the proper way to interpret the text? Do we really think that a point like that means that there are 2 different gifts of tongues?

d. Paul certainly didn't mention 2 separate gifts of tongues when he listed the spiritual gifts in 1 Cor. 12:7-11. He only writes of 1 gift of languages.

e. There is another way to harmonize Acts 2 and 1 Cor. 14. Remember that in Acts 2 who have Israelite men from every nation in the known world that had traveled to Jerusalem for the feast. These men spoke various languages and had different dialects. When the apostles spoke in languages they had never learned, all the men from around the world heard them speaking in their own tongue.

f. The 1 Cor. 14 setting is different. It is not a feast. It is not at the appointed festival location of Jerusalem. There aren't people there from all around the known world. The setting is the city of Corinth and the local church service there. The common language of Corinth was Greek.

g. I propose that the difference then between Acts 2 and 1 Cor. 14 is not the gift, BUT THE AUDIENCE. The reason 1 Cor. 14:2 says that the speaker in tongues is not speaking to men, is because all the men in the church spoke the same language (Greek) therefore they didn't know the foreign tongue (the gift of tongues) that was being used in the assembly.

h. As we will see in later sermons, the gift of languages was not created or designed specifically for the church setting.

3. Why does verse 2 say that the speaker in tongues is speaking to Yahweh?

a. Because Yahweh is the creator and designer of all languages, the person who operated in the gift of tongues in the church setting was speaking to and about Almighty Yahweh.

b. It's as simple as that.

c. Someone says, "Well what about the mysteries in the Spirit?" Well, I challenge you to do a study, beginning with the book of 1 Corinthians, and then through the rest of the New Testament, on the word mystery or in Greek - musterion.

d. For example, 1 Cor. 15:51 uses the same word - musterion - to describe a truth that was revealed to Paul concerning the resurrection of the dead. Paul again uses the word in Romans 15:25 about a truth that kept silent for ages, but revealed to him.

e. Mysteries in the spirit is revelatory truth. In other words, if a person uses the gift of languages in the church setting where everyone already speaks the same common language, they aren't

speaking to men, but rather to Yahweh, and they are speaking revelatory truths about Yahweh in another (foreign) language.

### C. Verse 3

A. The person who prophesies is contrasted with the person who speaks in other languages here. (Remember, if you're reading the KJV the word UNKNOWN is italicized, reminding the reader that it does not appear in the Greek text of the New Testament, but was added by the translators of the English version.)

B. Notice that the person who prophesies speaks to people for edification or building up. They also (through prophecy) encourage everyone and console everyone. This is the key. Prophecy in the assembly is something that can be comprehended, understood, and applied by the listeners. Tongues in the assembly do not do that.

### D. Verse 4

1. The person who speaks in other languages builds himself up.
2. I've heard so many preachers preach this text in a positive way. One particular preacher proclaimed in a church service I was attending this: "You know, tongues may not edify the church, BUT THEY SURE DO EDIFY YOURSELF!!!" I use all caps here and exclamation points at the end because that is exactly how the minister spoke it that night.
3. The problem with this is that (as we've learned in the previous sermons), spiritual gifts ARE NOT FOR edifying or building yourself up. Paul is saying this in a negative way. Paul is telling the Corinthians that the person who uses the gift of tongues in the church is building their self up and this is a BAD thing, not a good thing.
4. I know this because the next part of verse 4 speaks of the positive. He who prophesies BUILDS UP THE CHURCH. That's the good thing.
  - a. Tongues Speaker - builds himself up = BAD
  - b. Prophecy Speaker - builds the church up = GOOD
5. Here again, the Corinthians must have been using the gift of languages during the church meeting, and so Paul corrects them and tells them that they should seek to build up the church.

1. Think about it, you may have the spiritual gift of languages, but if no one in the congregation can understand the foreign language what in world are you doing using your gift in this setting?
2. The person who used the gift of languages was puffing up their self. It was doing no good to anyone there, but their self. It was really kind of a "show off" thing.

#### E. Verse 5

1. Does Paul think here that it's possible for every single person to speak in tongues? The answer is no, because of what Paul wrote in 1 Cor. 12:27-30. He's already made it very clear that every member does not posses the gift of tongues, no more than every member possesses the gift of healing or miracles.
2. Paul is stressing himself to make a point. He is saying he WISHED they all spoke with tongues, BUT EVEN MORE that they all prophesied. But Paul also doesn't think it's possible for all of them to have the gift of prophecy either. He is just stressing to make a point.
3. He saying this: "Look guys, it would be great IF we all had the gift of tongues, but it would be even greater if we all had the gift of prophecy."
4. Then Paul goes on to tell them that the person who prophecies (and remember he is speaking in the context of the church assembly) is GREATER than the person who speaks in tongues, that is, UNLESS, there is interpretation - why? - so the CHURCH will be built up.
5. You know, in some cases I believe Tongues is the greater gift, like in Acts 2, but in the church setting where all believers are speaking the same language to begin with, prophecy is definitely the greater gift.
6. The only way tongues will benefit the church is if it is then interpreted into the common language of those present. But even then it is not as efficient as prophecy, because you only have to say something once in prophesy, with tongues you have to have (1) the foreign tongue, and then (2) the interpretation of that tongue.

#### III. Conclusion

**Point #1: The difference between Acts 2 and 1 Cor. 14 is the audience not the gift.**

**Point #2: In the church setting where everyone already speaks the same common language, prophecy is greater than speaking in other languages.** This doesn't mean that there aren't times when tongues is greater than prophecy. It all depends on the setting.

**Point #3: While some preachers may think that building up yourself is a positive thing, Paul speaks of it as something negative;** something we should not seek to do. We should use our gift to edify others, specifically the local church in the context of 1 Cor. 14.

## **Flutes, Harps, and Trumpets**

Opening Text: **1 Corinthians 14:1-12**

*The Gift of Languages - Pt. 4*

### I. Introduction

A. Last week we covered a lot of information about the gift of languages.

1. Sabbath - we covered Acts 2, Acts 10, and Mark 16
2. New Moon - we covered 1 Cor. 14:1-5

B. Today we are going to cover 1 Cor. 14:6-12, but I want to encourage you to go back over the previous 3 lessons on this subject.

1. There's been much information given so far, and I know that it's difficult to remember everything (even in a language you understand :). I'm the one who preaches the sermons, and I don't even remember everything! I have to go back and read my own notes sometimes. Sometimes I even have to listen my own sermon to remember what I believe about something!
2. So, you can go to the website and download or listen online to the sermons for review and your own personal study.

C. You know, it's amazing how that you think you have a handle on a Biblical subject or doctrine - and sometimes you do know some things - but until you actually dig deep into the text, spending months re-reading and studying, you don't really know what's going on.

1. I began this study with an already held belief (from previous study). At the same time I told myself that I wanted to start fresh and be honest with the text.
2. I pray that I'm doing that, because sometimes we don't even realize that we're reading something into the Biblical text that is just not there.

3. I have learned some new things in my recent studies on the gift of languages, and for that I'm thankful. Hopefully, you guys are learning as well.

## II. Review of 1 Corinthians 14:1-5

A. Remember we talked about the (1) pursuit of love, and (2) the desire for spiritual gifts last sermon.

B. We discussed that verse 2 is generally misunderstood as meaning a completely unknown tongue or language. The proper understanding is that it is unknown to the audience, but known to Yahweh the creator of all languages.

C. We talked about how mysteries in the Spirit, mean revelatory truths.

D. We discussed how that spiritual gifts are not given to build our self up, but to build up the church. Verse 4 is often read wrongly to say that it is a good thing if someone builds their self up.

E. We ended by noting that although the gift of languages usually gets the #1 position in 1 Cor. 14, it is actually in 2nd place to the gift of prophecy. Look at **verse 5** again. The key is the building up of the church.

## III. 1 Corinthians 14:6-12

### A. Verse 6a

1. Notice the key word is benefit. How will I benefit you guys today if I had the gift of languages and I began to use that gift in my preaching?
2. The answer is, I won't. You won't understand a word I'm saying.

### B. Verse 6b

1. That's why this verse says UNLESS I speak by these other means.
2. All of the means in verse 6b (contrasted with tongues) are gifts that can be used for the building up of the church, BECAUSE, they are able to be understood in the church.
3. Don't forget the setting here. The church (**vss. 4-5, 18-19, 23, 28, 34-35**).
4. So Paul is saying that to use the gift of languages in this setting will not benefit the people he is gathering with, in the setting of the church.

### C. Verse 7

1. He moves to inanimate objects. The word inanimate means lifeless. The KJV has "things without life."
2. Even these things are capable of producing distinct sounds or notes.
3. I'm more aware of this now than ever. I've been playing a song at a concert and I've hit the wrong chord on the guitar in the wrong place in the song! It's painfully obvious to my ear that it doesn't jive with the rest of the song!
4. If I tried to play Wonderful Savior or Let it Rain in strictly the key of G, it would be crazy. You wouldn't know that it was Wonderful Savior. You'd be like, "Um, ok... are you ever going to switch keys dude?"

### D. Verse 8

1. He brings up the trumpet. He recognizes that there is a unique way to play the trumpet for the purpose of a battle call.
2. So, you do not play the... funeral call on the trumpet if you want to call everyone to battle, and vice versa.
3. So even these lifeless objects must be used in an orderly fashion.

### E. Verse 9

1. In the same way or likewise goes back to verses 7 and 8.
2. Unless you use your tongue that Yahweh has given you for the purpose of speaking forth intelligible speech in the congregation, how will anyone know what you're saying?
3. The text then says that you are just speaking into the air. That's not a good thing.
4. This is why (as I've mentioned in the previous sermons) even with public speaking in an understandable language, care must be taken to do it properly. You don't want to speak too slowly or too fast. You don't want to speak monotone, you want to use cadence. You are speak to others in the church in such a way as to encourage, comfort, and build them up.
5. Paul's point though is first and foremost, use a language that they can understand.

6. I've heard many sermons in my upbringing where the preacher would be preaching in English and then all of a sudden break out in 10 to 20 seconds of what he called "tongues," and the people in the congregation get more excited than when he spoke English! But they didn't understand a word he said!

7. See, we have to go by what the Bible tells us. Paul is making it very plain that the goal is to speak in a language that is understandable, not in language that is not understandable.

#### **F. Verse 10**

1. Paul knows that in the world there are a multitude of languages, and that they all have meaning.

2. There is no such thing as a tongue or language that no one understands.

3. You'll notice if you're reading a KJV Bible, that the text often says "unknown tongue." Unknown however is italicized indicating (in the KJV) that it has been added by the translators for clarity.

4. Now, I don't necessarily have a problem with the word unknown, so long as we understand that the language being spoken was known by somebody in the world as this verse says!

5. The unknown part would factor in, in this way: the language was unknown in the church because no one there knew that particular language.

#### **G. Verse 11**

1. Do you see this? Paul says - IF I DO NOT KNOW.

2. If someone has the true gift of languages, and operates in it in the church where no one knows that language, it is meaningless.

3. You are a foreigner to the speaker, and the speaker is a foreigner to you.

4. It's as non-beneficial as trying to just talk with a person who speaks a different language.

5. It's like me doing a job for a Russian. It is going to be extremely difficult to communicate because I don't know Russian and he doesn't know English. We are foreigners to each other in this regard.

#### **H. Verse 12**

1. He doesn't correct them for their zeal, he just seeks to channel that zeal in the right direction.
2. You're zealous for matter of the Spirit (Holy Spirit) so do what?
  - a. Seek for tongues?
  - b. Pray that the Lord gives you tongues?
  - c. Not be satisfied until you get tongues?
3. No, no, no!!! Seek to excel in building up the church.
4. Seek to use your gift, not to build up yourself, but rather to build up the congregation as a whole.
5. If you have the gift of languages, and someone walks into the congregation that doesn't speak English, then by all means sit beside them and allow Yahweh to work through your gift to speak to them so that they can be edified and understand what is being taught.

#### IV. Conclusion

**Point #1: Are you learning from the text?** I'm doing my best to bring forth these lessons in a way that is easy to understand. If you're learning from the text, you're being built up, right? Imagine if I preached all these sermons in a language you didn't understand? It would be chaos wouldn't it?

**Point #2: Remember that Paul says all languages have meaning (vs. 10).** Now, he isn't speaking here in verse 10 about meaning between man and Yahweh (Of course Yahweh understands all languages vs. 2). The context is about meaning among people. Paul clearly says here that when it comes to a tongue or language, somebody, somewhere in the world understands that language. There is no such thing in the Bible as a completely unknown language or tongue.

**Point #3: Why would you want to operate in a spiritual gift** (which are for the common good) **when that gift does not build up, teach, encourage, comfort, or give knowledge to someone else?** I'll tell you why the Corinthians were doing it - to puff up their self.

**Point #4: Be zealous - but seek to channel that zeal properly.** Don't use the gift of languages when it's not needed, and don't use the gift of wisdom or knowledge to over talk someone. Channel your zeal in a way that is going to benefit the person you are in contact with. I'm not trying to sound "new agy" by saying that. I use the word channel in the sense of pull the reigns back. Make sure your motives are pure, and make sure you're seeking to help others and not make yourself look good.

## Should We Pray in Tongues?

Opening Text: **1 Corinthians 14:1-20**

*The Gift of Languages - Pt. 5*

### I. Introduction

A. No matter how "spiritual" I feel doing something that "seems right" to me, I cannot accept it as being genuinely spiritual unless I can find the practice inside of the Spirit inspired Scriptures.

1. So often people judge the Bible by what they feel. They allow their experiences and their emotions to dictate what is correct and what is incorrect.

2. Such is the case with the very popular "slain in the spirit" practice in Charismatic churches. It "feels right" to them, and even "seems spiritual" to them. The problem is, you will not find one single place in the entire Bible where someone was prayed for, fell backwards, and then laid there slain in the Spirit of Yahweh. Therefore I cannot accept it as a legitimate practice.

3. At best it's a work of the flesh, a carnal activity made up by the minds of men. At worst it's demonic activity. Satan masquerading himself as an angel of light.

4. I don't want to scare anyone, but sometimes I must speak plainly. In 2 Corinthians 11:13-15 Paul wrote this: "For such people are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Messiah. And no wonder! For Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. So it is no great thing if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness. Their destiny will be according to their works."

5. We need to also remember that Satan - the adversary - always attempts to counterfeit the true ways of the Almighty. Never forget this. A counterfeit looks like the original. People who attempt to counterfeit money or an expensive painting or whatever, make every effort to make the fake look like the true. This is the only way a counterfeit works. And the only way you will know the difference between the truth and a counterfeit is - NOT to the study the counterfeit - but rather, study the truth.

B. We cannot make an argument for what we believe by appealing to an experience. Different people have all types of various experiences. Jews, Muslims, Roman Catholics, Protestants, Hindus, etc. all claim experiences.

1. If we have an experience and we can verify it by the Scriptures, then by all means hold fast to that spiritual experience.

2. However, if we have an experience and we cannot verify it by the Scriptures then we must let go of the experience, admit that it was not of Yahweh, and cling to the Scriptures as our only source of truth.

C. I see this happen so often with the subject at hand - the gift of languages. People argue for their belief not by looking to the Scriptures, but rather by something that has happened to them. They then run to the Scriptures and look for a Scripture that they can use (and most often twist), in order to make their experience a legitimate one.

D. Now, I've said some very hard things so far in this sermon, and I'm just getting started. [It's okay to take a moment to smile.] I want you to know that I myself have had to let go of experiences and cling to the Scriptures. And... often times... it's not an easy thing to do.

1. I don't like change at all. I'm the type of person that if I find a dish at a restaurant that I like, I get it every single time.

2. I have a morning routine that I don't like to be broken.

3. I do not like it when Microsoft word comes out with an update that completely changes the interface of how it works.

4. I grumbled under my breath when iTunes recently launched a "newer, better" version because I had become accustomed to how it used to work.

5. And there have been things that I've been taught to be Biblical or have been familiar with, things that gave me warmth inside (made me feel good), that I found out later just were not to be found in the Bible. Letting go of these things for me was not easy because I don't like change.

6. But years ago, I made the decision that I was not going to allow anything to lead me but Almighty Yahweh. The way He leads me is not by speaking to me audibly and telling me what to do. He leads me and He talks to me everyday - when I read His word.

7. I don't claim to have everything figured out, but I will tell you this. I try my very best to be honest with the Biblical text. I make a strong effort to interpret it properly, and that means historically, linguistically, culturally, and contextually.

II. So... we come to the text at hand today (1 Cor. 14:13-20)...

A. The tendency that I have (maybe you don't because of a different upbringing) is to read it with Charismatic or Pentecostal glasses on.

1. For example, I read **1 Cor. 14:13**... and on the surface I see it as saying that if a person speaks in tongues they should then pray in their own language for the power to interpret. I grew up in some churches where someone would stand up in the middle of a church meeting and speak in what they called "tongues" (they believed it to be a completely unknown heavenly language) and then the preacher would say "Pray saints. Pray for an interpretation."

2. I want to suggest to you today that this is NOT the way to read verse 13.  
3. Instead of interpreting verse 13 through the lens of what I was accustomed to as a child and youth, I want to be careful to interpret it in context.

B. I want to make the suggestion to you today that if we carefully walk through these verses that Paul wrote the Corinthians, they will lead us in a direction of not having a desire to pray in tongues. The Gift of Languages was not designed to be used in prayer between us and the Father.

### III. 1 Corinthians 14:13

A. Remember, we just learned last week in **verse 9** that we should use our tongues for intelligible speech or else we're speaking into the air.

B. We also learned from **verse 11** that Paul says if he doesn't know the meaning of a language then he's a foreigner to the speaker and the speaker a foreigner to him.

C. So what is Paul saying here in **verse 13**?

D. I suggest that Paul is describing a tongues prayer in verse 13. The word "speaks" and the word "pray" are synonymous. They are talking about the same action.

1. Explained: "The person who speaks in another language - in the form of a prayer."

2. It's not describing a person speaking in other languages and then praying a prayer in their own language for the power to interpret.

3. Here are some reasons why.

a. #1 Verse 14 introduces itself with the word "for." Notice as **we read verses 13 and 14 together**. 14 is clearly a "tongues prayer" so this means verse 13 is a tongues prayer.

b. #2 The interpretation of tongues (which is a separate gift of the Spirit, **1 Cor. 12:10**) is in this chapter said to be someone other than the speaker.

i. Look at **1 Cor. 14:26-28**.

ii. The only way this makes sense is if before the prayer was even prayed, the speaker or the prayer (the one speaking in tongues) already knew there was someone in the church meeting who had the gift of interpretation. The interpreter was blessed to be able to understand the foreign language and interpret it into the common language of the people in the church meeting.

iii. Notice that it says if there is no interpreter, the tongues speaker should keep silent. Well, if we say that verse 13 is to be understood as pray for the power to interpret then **THERE WOULD NEVER** be a time to keep silent! You would just pray in tongues and then pray for an interpretation!

iv. See, it makes much better sense contextually, as well as harmonizes with the surrounding verses, to see verse 13 as a tongues prayer to begin with.

v. What I believe was happening is this: there were some people in the Corinthian church who were using their gift of other languages in the church in prayer and Paul was regulating this practice. He didn't forbid it outright (see **1 Cor. 14:39**) because there might be an instance where it was needed. He did regulate it though because the gift of languages was not designed by Yahweh to be something used in prayer.

c. Here's another interesting point about verse 13 that is often missed.

i. Do you see the words "that he can" in **verse 13**? It's "that he may" in the KJV.

ii. There is a single Greek word behind these three English words. That Greek word is *HINA*. It primarily means "in

order that" or "to the intent that." It's also used in the verse just before this (vs. 12) translated into English as "to."

iii. In verse 13 Paul is telling the tongues prayer that the only reason he should pray in tongues in the church is if he prays in order that, or to the intent that, or with an aim to that prayer being interpreted. Why? So all may be edified by what was said.

iv. Now. Does it seem a bit odd to you to pray in another language with an aim that the interpreter in the congregation would then interpret it in your own original language? It seems odd to me, and that's because this is not what the gift of languages was designed for in the first place.

v. But Paul regulates it just in case there is ever a need in the church assembly for the gift to be used.

E. So let's now read **verse 13 again with verse 14** attached.

1. The reason the tongues speaker should only pray if he is aiming for his foreign language to be interpreted is because if he prays in another language his spirit prays (spiritual gift) but his mind is unfruitful. This shows that even the person speaking in other languages did not comprehend fully what was being said.

2. Brothers and sisters, Paul is telling us that for a person to use the gift of languages in prayer is an unfruitful practice. Why? Even though you know something is going on that is a legitimate spiritual gift, your understanding or your mind is not benefiting from it.

3. Paul is telling the people in the church at Corinth that if they have the gift of other languages, the only legitimate use of it in the church is:

a. If they know that there is someone else in the church who has the gift of interpretation.

b. If they are praying with the intent that the foreign language will be interpreted so everyone can understand and be blessed by the message.

#### IV. 1 Corinthians 14:15-16

A. Now, my interpretation of verse 15 is going to be completely against the Charismatic movement, but I want you to bear with me for a moment.

B. At the beginning of verse 15 Paul asks a question: "What then?" meaning "What then will I do?" I believe his answer is NOT that he will just pray in tongues. His answer is that he will pray in the spirit (pray a spiritual prayer) but in doing this he will also pray with his understanding. The same thing goes for singing. When I sing here at Sabbath, I'm singing in the spirit (singing spiritual songs) but I'm singing also with my understanding, why? So that it will be a fruitful experience for me.

C. One of my main reasons for interpreting verse 15 this way is because of verse 16 which begins with "otherwise."

1. Paul is saying in verse 16 that if he doesn't pray and sing spiritual songs and prayers with his understanding then how will the uninformed person be able to say "Amen" when you give thanks because he does not know what you are saying. And, I might add, neither did the tongues speaker according to verse 14!

2. This is why **verse 17 says (let's read it)**. It's saying that when you use the gift of languages to pray or sing or give thanks you might be speaking beautiful things about Yahweh in a foreign language but the other person (the church as a whole) is not being built up. No one is being edified because they are not able to understand what you are saying.

#### V. **1 Corinthians 14:18-19** (also continues to validate this understanding)

A. Clearly here Paul had the gift of other languages, and he thanks the Almighty for this gift. But was Paul using this gift in the church? NO!

B. Paul says he'd rather say 5 words ("Yahweh, I bless Your name") than speak 10,000 words in another language. Why? Because no one in the church that speaks Greek or in our case English can understand and be edified by the speaking in foreign languages.

C. Now, someone might say this: "Well, Paul did not use the gift of languages in the church assembly, but maybe he used them in his private prayer closet?" My thoughts on that are: If Paul spoke in other languages more than all of the Corinthians, we must ask where did he do this? I submit to you that the answer is not in private prayer.

D. I'm not going to get into this much today, but the answer is in **verses 21-22**. Let's read it... Other languages are then a sign NOT FOR BELIEVERS, but rather FOR UNBELIEVERS. Just like on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2), where you had Judahites who had yet to accept Yeshua of Nazareth as the promised Messiah and therefore they were counted as unbelievers.

#### VI. **1 Corinthians 14:20**

A. Why does Paul write this here?

B. It must have been because the Corinthians were using the gift of languages INCORRECTLY. They were using it when it was not needed, and in a setting for which it was not designed, and in order to puff up their self.

C. Paul says this is childish. Paul says we are to be childish in committing evil, but in our thinking we are to be mature adults.

D. Paul is simply telling them, "Look guys, use the brain that Yahweh has given you. Be mature enough to know when the proper times and settings are for the gift of languages. Right now you are acting like a bunch of un-mature children who have need of growth."

VII. So, in conclusion... I'm now going to pass out a quiz on all of this and give you about 5 minutes to finish it and turn it in. -- Not really :). I know that this sermon covered a lot of technicalities and specifics. Don't let that discourage you. If you didn't grasp it all today, I'll have it up on the website soon, and you can go back over it again and again and test it by the Scriptures.

## **Tongues: a Sign of Judgment**

Text: **1 Corinthians 14:18-25**

*The Gift of Languages - Pt. 6*

### I. Introduction

A. It is always interesting to actually find out what the Bible teaches on any given subject.

1. What I mean is this: what people *think* the Bible teaches and what the Bible actually does teach is many times - not always - but many times two different things.

2. I say this only because I've ran into so many people that will tell you what they think they believe, but then not be able to explain it to you from the Scriptures. When I say explain, I'm not even talking about detail, only about a simple and clear explanation. This is true of myself in past experiences.

3. So, what I've learned to always do is examine the beliefs of people, and my held beliefs, by going to the Scriptures and seeing what the Scriptures say about an issue.

4. We can't assume that just because we've heard something from a preacher or a person we value that it has to be correct.

5. We can't assume that just because we've learned something from childhood that it must be correct.

B. I'm going to be honest with you here. As a youth in church (a teenager), I thought I knew about the gift of tongues. If you were to come up to me at this time last year (June 2012), I would have told you I knew about the gift of tongues. But I have to humbly admit now, that I only THOUGHT I knew about the gift. I had a basic knowledge of the gift, but I have learned so much about it that I never knew. The reason I never really knew was because I never REALLY took the time to diligently study the issue.

1. I don't claim to know it all now, but I will tell you that I have a MUCH better handle on understanding the gift of languages now than I've ever had in my life.

2. I hope I've helped you to understand it better as well.

3. Isn't it great when the spiritual light bulb turns on? Isn't it so beautiful when the pieces of the puzzle just start coming together in your mind? It's a good feeling.

4. Let me give you a word of advice as well as encouragement here though. Don't always expect the light bulb to turn on every time you read the Scriptures. Some things take years to understand. Some things decades. The key is to keep asking, searching, knocking, studying... and Yahweh will reward your efforts in His time. He knows when it's best for you to understand.

## II. 1 Corinthians 14:21-22

A. The last time we studied this text before us, we walked through verses 13-20.

1. In verses 13-20 I believe I showed that while some people in the church at Corinth were using their gift of languages for prayer, Paul was not encouraging this practice because this is not what the gift of languages was created and designed for.

2. Remember verse 14. If you pray in another language, your spirit prays (you are using the spiritual gift of other languages given to you) but your mind is unfruitful (you aren't understanding what you are saying). Paul writes this as a negative thing. He is telling his readers that in prayer both your spirit and mind should be engaged.

3. Also remember **verses 18-19** which were really a summation of verses 13-17. Paul thanked the Almighty that he spoke in tongues more than all of the Corinthians. But where did Paul use the gift?

a. We know he didn't use it in the church setting because of **verse 19**.

b. I don't believe Paul used it in his private prayer life either because of (1) what we dealt with last time, and because of (2) what we are going to cover today, and because of (3) what I've been hammering home in all of these lessons. Spiritual gifts aren't for the purpose of making yourself feel good. Spiritual gifts are for the purpose of edifying the entire congregation or someone besides yourself. They are for the common good, not your own personal good.

## B. Verse 21

1. Here Paul introduces an OT passage into his letter. He begins by saying "It is written in the law," (remember no NT) and the passage he then quotes comes from the book of Isaiah.

2. It is interesting to note here that while we generally think of the law as the first 5 books of Scripture (Torah = law) Paul included the prophetic book of Isaiah as "the law" in some way. Yeshua, in his ministry, actually says he is quoting from the law in both John 10 and John 15 and both times we see quotations from the book of Psalms. This let's us know that in one manner of speaking "the law" is a reference to the Hebrew Scriptures as a whole.

3. Now, what we need to do is turn to Isaiah 28 to see the context of the passage that Paul is quoting. (He quotes portions of **Isaiah 28:11-12**)

a. **Verses 1-4** : This is definitely not a good text for Ephraim. Recognize that Ephraim is the primary tribe of the northern kingdom of Israel. Here we see that the prophet speaks of the crown of Ephraim being trampled on because of their drunkenness. The text speaks of a devastating hail storm and strong flooding waters coming across the land of Ephraim. Whether literal or symbolic the meaning is obviously destruction.

b. **Verses 5-6** : There will exist a remnant that Yahweh will be the Almighty of. Now you must recognize that a remnant is a small portion when compared to the ones who will be destroyed. The Hebrew word is "*sheh-ar*" literally means "the remainder, or what is left over."

c. **Verses 7-8** : Now we go back to the drunkards of Ephraim. Here we have prophets and priests staggering from too much alcohol, and giving bad visions and bad judgments because they cannot think straight. The picture is a drunken stupor, tables covered with vomit (vs. 8), and a rotten stench. Definitely negative here for the majority of this northern kingdom.

d. **Verses 9-10** : Now I believe what we have here is these drunkards of Ephraim speaking sarcastically about the prophet giving the word of Yahweh. They are looking at the prophet and saying: "Who are you trying teach? A baby or infant?! You just go line after line, law after law, giving us a little bit at a time." They are mocking or insulting the word of Yahweh that is coming from the true prophet of Yahweh.

e. **Verses 11-12** : Since the drunkards of the northern kingdom would not listen to the plain words of the prophet, Yahweh would instead speak to them by means of a foreign language. The word stammering (Hebrew = *le'eg*) is defined in Strong's as "a buffoon or a foreigner." Yahweh did exactly this when he allowed His people Israel to be overtaken by foreign nations like Assyria and Babylon who spoke different languages and dialects than they. Since they would NOT listen to the simple words of Yahweh through the prophet (which would have brought them rest) Yahweh was going to judge them through people who spoke a foreign tongue.

f. That is the context of Isaiah 28. Foreign languages was a sign of judgment upon the rebellious people within the nation of Israel.

### C. 1 Corinthians 14:21with22

1. Notice that verse 22 begins with "it follows" or KJV "wherefore." Verse 22 is showing the outcome of verse 21.
2. Other languages (foreign tongues) are intended as a sign, NOT TO BELIEVERS, but rather to UNBELIEVERS. A sign of what though? A sign of judgment. Please get this: **tongues are a sign to unbelievers**, and in the context of Isaiah 28, rebellious unbelievers.
3. When we read Acts 2 and we read about many Israelites understanding the apostles who are speaking in tongues they'd never learned, and we see 3,000 souls saved - **we FORGET about all the thousands and thousands of other Israelites at the feast that did not receive salvation.** If they knew the prophecy of Isaiah 28, they would have realized that this

was a sign of judgment to the majority of the nation, and only the remnant or a small portion was saved.

4. So I believe what Paul is saying in 1 Cor. 14:18-22 is this: "I don't use the gift of other languages in the church setting. I'd rather just speak 5 words with my understanding to teach others, than a myriad of words in a foreign tongue. After all, Isaiah writes that by people of other languages and by the lips of foreigners that the Almighty would speak to His people, but they wouldn't listen. This shows that speaking in foreign languages is a sign of judgment to unbelievers. It is a sign that Yahweh is judging them because they would not take heed to the simple, plain teaching of the word."

5. However... PROPHECY on the other hand (and notice it's not called a sign here; the NASB calls it a sign in italics) is not for unbelievers but believers. What he means here is that prophecy is intended for the purpose of teaching the believers the truth. Prophecy is a gift that builds up the church and causes people to understand the truth.

### III. 1 Corinthians 14:23-25 (This is where it gets tricky/difficult to understand.)

#### A. Verse 23

1. Begins with "therefore" meaning that the conclusion he is about to share is based upon what he has just said.

2. This is strange on the surface because verse 23 says that if the uninformed or unbelievers walk into a church service and everyone is speaking in other languages will they not say that you are all mad men? Well, yes that is true, BUT he just got through saying that tongues are a sign to unbelievers. What in the world is going on?

3. I think what he is saying is this. Tongues aren't for the church setting. While tongues are a sign of judgment to unbelieving, rebellious Israel (in cases like Acts 2 or even Acts 10) they are not designed to work in this way in the church with the unbelievers. The unbelievers that come into the church need to be taught in such a way that they are able to understand truth. This will be done by you speaking in a language that they can understand, or perhaps sometimes using the gift of languages to speak to them who may speak a different language than the rest of the church.

#### B. Verses 24-25

1. But (on the other hand) if unbelievers walk in and hear prophecy (the key here is something intelligible) he is able to be convicted and moved to repentance.

2. The unbeliever that walks into the church isn't in the same boat as the drunkards of Ephraim (Isaiah 28) or the rebellious Israelites (Acts 2) who would were rejecting Yeshua as the Messiah, Son of Yahweh.
3. The whole point is that the gift of languages (which Paul had and used more than the people of Corinth) were to be used strategically, at the times when needed, and in the way that Yahweh designed them for.
4. To just chaotically use the gift during the church service totally dismisses the original intent of the gift of languages.

#### IV. Concluding Points (2)

**Point #1: The gift of languages was a sign of judgment to the unbelieving, rebellious nation of Israel.** Now, I've just shown that from the Scriptural text, but you tell people that today and they look at you like you're crazy. They believe all sorts of things about the gift of tongues, except what the Bible actually says.

**Point #2: In the setting of the church, tongues are rarely to be used.** Only in cases where they may be useful for the purpose of edifying someone who needs to hear the word in their own language. In such cases, the gift of languages would come in handy, but for the purpose of edification.

#### **If Tongues Are Used in Church**

*The Gift of Languages - Pt. 7*

**Text: 1 Corinthians 14:26-28, 37-40**

I. We've been learning for the past month or so about the scriptural gift of languages. We have learned that:

- A. The gift was one in which a person was given the supernatural ability to speak in a language he had never learned, but nevertheless a known language to someone.
- B. The difference between Acts 2 and 1 Corinthians 14 was not the gift, but the audience. The reason the speaker in tongues was not speaking to men in 1 Corinthians 14 is not because he was speaking in a heavenly prayer language, but because no one in the local church could understand the language. Only Yahweh could understand because he created and knows all languages.
- C. The gift was to be used at strategic times as (1) a sign of judgment to unbelievers, and (2) a means of communication with people who needed to hear the gospel in their own language.

D. Spiritual gifts are given to individual believers for the purpose of building up the body of Messiah, and never for building up our own personal self.

E. The Gift of Languages was not designed or intended primarily for the church setting, where believers in a single locality all spoke the same language to start with.

1. However, in 1 Corinthians 14, Paul never says that tongues should never be used in the church, but he does regulate the practice. (Look at **1 Corinthians 14:39**)

2. I'm not trying to just be critical with this next statement, but I have to say it for the sake of teaching and illustration. It amazes me that the churches which claim they still operate in the gift of tongues today (which I do not believe is the true gift), it amazes me that they do not follow the specific regulations for "tongues in church" that Paul outlined in this chapter.

3. And here we see THE MAJOR PROBLEM manifesting itself again. VERY FEW pastors today actually teach all of the Bible. The reason that churches which claim they speak in tongues do not follow Paul's regulations is because they never teach verse-by-verse, but only pick out certain portions of texts to ever talk about.

4. I think that we should rather study the Bible as a whole, and in a text like 1 Corinthians 14, we should slowly and diligently look at everything Paul said, and not just at the parts of the chapter that we want to look at.

II. And so we come today to **1 Corinthians 14:26-28** where Paul regulates how the gift of languages, if used in the church setting, is supposed to take place.

#### A. Verse 26

1. Basically Paul is asking: How are we to do all this then brothers? You are coming together in the church setting and different ones have a song to sing, some have a revelation to share, a teaching to bring, the gift of languages, or the gift to interpret the other languages.

2. All of these are legitimate practices and/or gifts of the Holy Spirit. But there must be order, and thus they must all be regulated.

3. We can't just start singing, preaching, praying, and speaking in languages all at the same time! That would be chaotic, and no one would receive any benefit from that.

4. What should be sought? EDIFICATION. Notice in ALL THINGS. The various gifts that are present in the church setting should be used in such a way that teaches and edifies and thus builds up the entire body of the Messiah.

5. So, we take time to sing songs to Yahweh, and we get edified by the words and the various notes and cadences of the music. Then we take time and turns sharing testimonies and prayer requests with one another, and we are edified again by something someone says, or moved upon because we want to pray for someone hurting. We then hear the public reading of the Word, and we are built up yet again because of what Yahweh has to tell us through His inspired Scripture. Then we have the teaching and preaching of the Word (a form of prophecy) where we walk through a text and understand the text and are edified again. See, ALL THESE THINGS are done in decency, order, and for the purpose of edification.

#### B. Verse 27 - regulating the gift of languages

1. Even though the gift of languages was not designed to be used inside of an assembly where everyone speaks the same language, Paul does not totally dismiss the possibility for its use in the church setting. He recognizes that there could come a time when it could be used in the church, so he gives orders on how to use it, and I believe his instructions here are inspired and from the Holy Spirit.

2. He says that if it is going to happen let it be only two people or at the most 3 people, and they should do it each in turn, and then someone (Greek = heis = the #1 in Greek) must interpret. ***Yet growing up in Charismatic churches I have in almost every single service seen much more than 3 people speaking in what they believe to be tongues, doing it all at the same time, and there is no interpretation.***

3. And you know, it is most likely that some of this was going on in the church at Corinth, and that's why Paul is regulating it here.

4. This verse also lets us know that the tongues speaker would have already known that someone else in the church had the gift of interpretation before he spoke in tongues. They would not just start using the gift and then hope or pray that someone would interpret. They already knew the interpreter was there. This is seen clearly by verse 28.

#### C. Verse 28

1. This verse further proves this point, because it says that if there is no interpreter then the tongues speaker is to keep silent. Now that makes no sense if you just speak in tongues and then have everyone pray for an

interpretation. If that's the case, THERE WOULD NEVER BE A TIME TO KEEP SILENT!

2. The picture is this. Let's say I had the gift of languages (and I'm talking about a language, not just unintelligible babbling), and I knew that Brother Leon had the gift of interpretation.

3. Well, I \*might then use my gift with the aim (**1 Cor. 14:13** = *hina*) that Brother Leon would then interpret what I said in the known language of everyone here so all can be edified.

4. Of course, as I've pointed out, that's really not the primary use of the gift of languages, because I could just speak in the known language to start with, but my point is that Paul permits this so long as it's done according to the proper regulations, which is decently and orderly.

5. However, let's say we've got the same scenario, but Brother Leon (who I know has the gift of interpretation) is out sick, and not able to make it to the church meeting. I then am instructed to keep silent and speak to myself and to Yahweh. Speaking to myself and to Yahweh doesn't mean I quietly use my gift in a whisper. No, it means I keep silent and meditate in my mind and because Yahweh understands all languages, it is a speaking to Yahweh in my meditation.

III. I know we haven't made it all the way down there, but let's close this lesson out with 1 Corinthians 14:37-40.

#### A. Verse 37

1. Paul was being led by the Holy Spirit in giving these instructions here.
2. Paul sometimes gave his personal view on certain matters (like in 1 Corinthians 7), but here that's not what he is doing. He is giving the Lord's command. I take the Lord here to be Yahweh the Father.
3. To reject the regulations that Paul writes of is to reject the commandments of Yahweh in relation to speaking in other languages.

#### B. Verse 38

1. To ignore the instructions of the Spirit means you will be ignored by Yahweh.
2. This further shows just how important it is to make sure that the regulations are followed. To be ignored by Yahweh surely isn't a good

thing, but that's what will happen if we ignore the Lord's command through the apostle here.

### C. Verse 39

1. Recognize that this statement is made in reference to the church setting.
2. Notice that prophesy is to be eagerly sought for. Why? It is more beneficial to the congregation. Remember **1 Corinthians 14:4-5**.
3. Paul doesn't say be eager to speak in other languages (like many churches today tell you), but he does say do not forbid it. This doesn't mean that you can ignore the regulations he just gave, but it means that so long as the regulations of verses 27-28 (as well as the rest of the chapter) are followed diligently, we shouldn't forbid speaking in other languages.

### D. Verse 40

1. In all of this there must be decency and order. Chaos is not to be tolerated in the church assembly.
2. It seems that there was a lot of chaos at Corinth, but Paul was instructing them on how to get rid of the chaos. Following Paul's instructions is what they needed to do, instead of following what they wanted, or thought, or what built them up personally and made them look or feel good in the flesh.

## IV. In conclusion...

#1: I grew up in churches, especially in my youth/teenage years that believed the gift of tongues was a private prayer language that the devil could not understand. The regulations Paul gave were not followed, and the truth about the gift was never taught on, yet good things happened in my life during this time. What do I make of this? Yahweh, sometimes blesses His children, not to validate that they are walking in total truth, but because of the position of the heart. My motive was to please the Father, I had just been wrongly led. Never let things like this keep you from walking into the truth of Scripture. Yahweh deals with His children slowly, in the state they are at, and for His purposes and glory.

#2: Why are there so many churches today that do not see this issue in the way that I have taught over these past 7 lessons?

- The primary reason is because of lack of genuine Bible reading and teaching.

- Another reason may be because people are after what makes them feel good rather than what glorifies the Father.
- Sometimes it can be that some people are genuinely mistaken and are just going by what they have heard or seen, like I did myself in my teenage years.
- But there is the possibility that it could be a demonic spirit in some instances. Satan attempts to counterfeit the true gift with something else that brings excitement, good feelings, etc. for the purpose of deceiving people.

#3: Let's always be very careful to study things out before walking into believing them. We may still not get everything right, but at least we aren't just jumping onto every bandwagon that comes along. We honor Yahweh when we slowly, diligently, and prayerfully study His word to come to the conclusions about what we are going to believe.

V. Next week, I'll cover 1 Corinthians 14:29-36. This section isn't about tongues, but it is part of the chapter, so I want to finish out the chapter before moving on to another Bible subject.