**The Gift of Tongues, No. 3 – BD29-02**

This is segment number 3 of the gift of tongues. We have been looking at what the Bible has to say concerning the spiritual gift of being able to talk in foreign languages—what it connoted, what it evidenced. It is important that you understand something about the nature of the tongues movement around you. Some of the people that you know who are the most devoted Christians have edges of doubt that eat away at their souls concerning the reality of speaking in tongues. They have reservations of looking at a famous personality like Oral Roberts who is commended by Billy Graham’s association with him. Christians who have a hesitancy about looking at somebody who has that commendation and prestige and saying Oral Roberts is a fraud. He may be sincere. He may be true, but he is a fraud. Anything that he accomplishes in the reality of healing is a satanic accomplishment. Now you can’t know that from experience or feeling. You can only know this from what the Word of God teaches on these subject.

**Pentecostalism**

We want to remember that we have now moved in our day, beginning something like twelve years ago, into a contemporary tongues scene totally different than the tongues scene that began at the beginning of this century about 1906. The current tongues scene, you remember, began with the pastor of the St. Mark’s Episcopalian Church in Van Nuys, California, Dennis Bennett, who one Sunday morning stood up before his congregation and announced that he had had the gift, the experience, of speaking in tongues. He is now a very prominent proponent of the tongues movement, one of their very popular speakers. He’s no longer at his church. As always tongues splits the church. It causes a division. He resigned. He is a very prominent leader among Pentecostal groups now.

One group that I think you should be acquainted with to know about that you will read about, and maybe you have received from them, is the group that’s called the Full Gospel Business Men’s Fellowship International. We’ll just abbreviate it with these letters, FGBMFI. That’s how they refer to themselves, as the FGBMFI. I think maybe that’s an appropriate name because this is a group that promotes speaking in tongues. This is not a bad way to begin: “FGBMFI, FGBMFI, FGBMFI.” That’s a pretty good practice syllable right there for speaking in tongues.

Anyhow the Full Gospel Business Men’s Fellowship International is a prime promoter of tongues and the healing gifts. It was founded and led by a man name Demos Shakarian. Demos Shakarian’s family for 100 years has been associated with claims of prophetic revelations, healing miracles, visions, and tongues. Oral Roberts was one of the inspirations to Mr. Shakarian to begin this Pentecostal Business Men’s association. Mr. Shakarian is a wealthy California business man, and it is seemingly in order of course, and right, that out of California, the land of flowers, sunshine, fruits, and nuts, should come this organization for promoting tongues. It is a big organization. Mr. Shakarian’s family emigrated from Armenia and they participated at the turn of the century in the Azusa Street Mission in 1906 where the modern Pentecost and movement began.

There’s a related organization that you will also hear about. That is an organization called World Missionary Assistance Plan. It’s abbreviated as World MAP. If you hear about the World Missionary Assistance Plan, or if you hear about and organization called the Full Gospel Business Men’s Fellowship International, you are dealing with two prime Pentecostal groups who are devoted to promoting Pentecostalism in the established churches. These organizations publish certain magazines. One is called Vision. I know some of you have received that. Vision is a magazine that’s geared to youth. Their prime magazine for business men and adults is called Voice. This magazine is primarily a magazine of testimony of those who have received the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Then they have a quarterly that comes out called View which is devoted to promoting the charismatic revival.

The Full Gospel Business Men’s Fellowship International had devoted itself to a great and fantastic public relations program. It has a program of monthly banquets and conventions on a regional, national, and international level. These are held in modern hotels and in conventions centers around the country. To these banquets and conventions are invited guests—prominent guests from the old time denominations. They are brought in to hear Pentecostal preachers such as Dennis Bennett and Oral Roberts and so on. In these meetings, many of these people who come as guests hear the reports of the experiences of Pentecostalists and their claims to supernatural visitations by God, and many of them believer. They accept the Pentecostal point of view and they return to their churches as missionaries.

This is what happened to John Sherrill who wrote the little volume They Speak With other Tongues. John Sherrill was on the editorial staff of Norman Vincent Peale’s Guidepost magazine. He went through a series of associations with Pentecostal groups. It was at a convention in the East that he finally, as an Episcopalian and a total indifferent personality, found himself being drawn and attracted by these claims until finally he discovered himself speaking in tongues in a hotel as he was surrounded by these business men whooping and hollering and urging him on until finally (it happened). And if you read that description in his book, it’s a beautiful description of self-hypnosis which is so often characteristic of speaking in tongues, where just step-by-step you can just see how he lost control of his center up here in the brain, and his control center of the solar plexus took over and he even describes it in that way. And out (came) the flow of gibberish called tongues.

So much of the outbreak and popularity of tongues is due to this group here, and that’s why I want you to be acquainted with them. This is the moving force today among churches, among business people, among prominent people in order to promote the Pentecostal movement. So if you get a magazine called Voice, if you get an invitation to a banquet by the Full Gospel Business Men’s Fellowship International, if you’re asked to participate in World MAP missionary activity, understand that it’s a Pentecostal tongue-speaking operation.

Now usually, very frequently, these organizations will de-emphasize that because they want general public support, but they’re all in that same tradition. Pentecostal colleges today are also seeking status through accreditation in order to enhance their appeal. Oral Roberts University was begun in Tulsa in 1965, along with its graduate school of theology where Mr. Graham appeared to dedicate this school for Oral Roberts. This institution was begun specifically to give dignity now to the Pentecostal movement. It has moved out of the common masses, so to speak, and it has moved up into very cultured old-time denominational circles.

Christian Life Magazine, some of you may be taking this. It’s edited by Robert Walker. Christian Life Magazine is devoted to the charismatic revival. Almost any issue of Christian Life Magazine will promote some phase of Pentecostalism.

There are some very great personalities in the tongues movement. Some of you have read the book concerning Peter Marshall who was a chaplain in the United States Congress, A Man Called Peter. His wife has since remarried, Catherine Marshall Lesourd. She has now entered the Pentecostal movement. Colleen Townsend Evans, an ex-Hollywood actress who is the wife of the Presbyterian minister Louis Evans has entered the Pentecostal movement as have many show people like Pat Boone, for example, who is now a leading light in the promotion of the tongues movement.

Pentecostalism now appeals very much to the ecumenical groups as well as to conservatives. As a matter of fact it is now becoming seemingly evident that Pentecostalism and the tongues movement is going to provide the cohesive force, of all things, to the ecumenical movement, because liberals are drawn to the tongue speaking as are some conservatives. The result is that here the ecumenical movement is seemingly finally discovering something around which it can rally. This is very interesting because Satan has to bring churches together. Tongues is of Satan. Satan is providing perhaps this means of the rallying together for the ecumenical movement in order to prepare for the world church dominated by the antichrist and the false prophet.

It used to be that you could say when you spoke about people who were in the Pentecostal tradition that they were naïve, gullible, on the low IQ side, and low-income people. This can no longer be said because Pentecostalism now includes, on a wide scale, the wealthy, the cultured, the educated, the professors, the doctors, the lawyers, the writers, and the ministers. It has old-line denominations, and in these denominations Pentecostalism is more subdued. It doesn’t have the excesses, so it has brought a new dignity to the realm of the Holy Rollers. However, there is still certain phenomena even among these churches and among these elite, so to speak, areas of society, these upper-crust areas of society. (And you know what upper-crust is—it’s just a bunch of crumbs held together with their own dough very frequently.) But nevertheless, in this upper-crust area of society that Pentecostalism has moved into, there are still these certain phenomena that accompany the tongue-speaking.

As you read about these people’s experiences in Voice magazine, you will often read about this. “I’m lying in my bed. Suddenly there at the foot of my bed I see a glowing light, and there is a person with his hand extended to me and I recognize him as Jesus Christ. And I rise up in my bed and I touch him and a million volts of electricity jolts through my body and my hair stands on end. I lie in my room and suddenly I hear a mighty rushing wind, and I see flames of fire leaping around.” You almost think you’re in a séance. Do you think the same company creating these illusions—Satan, and Hades Illusions Incorporated?

One group talked about being in a meeting and suddenly smelling a fragrant perfume and incense permeating the room which they concluded was the odor of the beauty of the saints gathered there. There was shaking and convulsions, rigidness and falling on the ground. There is dancing, clapping, shouting, and running. There is seeing, hearing, and touching Christ. All of these still are the elements that have always accompanied Pentecostalism and the claims to the supernatural which are exactly what you find among demon-oriented societies and activities.

There are vast claims made for the current tongues movement and this is what’s confusing to Christians such as yourselves. You will meet people who will say something like this to you once they’ve gotten into tongues. They will claim greater spiritual fruitfulness. They are more fruitful for the Lord now that they are talking in tongues. They are more active and more involved. Their church members attend more regularly and they are nicer to one another. They are more active in witnessing and more zealous in giving. They claim that their emotion al problems have been stabilized. They have forsaken sins. They have conquered alcoholism. Marriages have been repaired. They read their Bible regularly. They experience mental and physical healings. Catholics who are in the Pentecostal movement find themselves to their religious practices. They pray to Mary more frequently. They admire the Pope. They honor the saints more. They go to Mass more regularly. They make confession of sin. They do their penance to work out of Purgatory.

Now these commendable results are all interpretations of what somebody says is happening to themselves. The question is, what caused these changes? Was it a movement of God or was it a movement of Satan in the realm of religion. It’s a question of whether God or Satan is moving, and Satan doesn’t mind a little bit of religion at all. The results don’t form the test whether a thing is of God and whether the experience is genuine. The interpretation of the cause and the meaning of an experience may be all wrong. You have to judge this by the doctrine of the Word. The end does not justify, or reveal, the means. So when people come to you with these great and wonderful experiences of how improved they are as Christians now that they are talking in tongues, recognize that all of this can be accomplished by Satan through religion, and he does it all the time.

Now the contemporary movement of tongues is not spontaneous by and large. In the New Testament church, as you saw last Sunday as we looked through the incidents in Acts, these people were not looking to speak in tongues. It was a sovereign movement of the spirit of God and suddenly they spoke in a foreign language. But the tongues movement of today is not like that. It is a deliberately planned training program for people to speak in tongues.

The Full Gospel Business Men’s Fellowship Incorporated is promoting that sort of training. Harald Bredesen who is one of the leaders in the contemporary Pentecostal movement gave instructions to a group of students at Yale University on how to speak in tongues. Here’s an example of the kind of training that people received who want to secure this gift.

He says: “1) To think visually and concretely rather than abstractly. For example, try to visualize Jesus as a person. 2) Consciously to yield their voices and organs of speech to the Holy Spirit. 3) To repeat certain elementary sounds which he told them such as “ba ba ba ba” or something similar. He then laid his hands of the head of each seeker, prayed for him, and the seeker did actually speak in tongues.” This is characteristic of the guidelines for seeking in tongues. To give you a syllable to repeat. To tell you to empty yourself consciously as much as possible. To just let yourself go so the control center back here at the back of your head is released and the control center in the solar plexus takes over and you have a complete reversal so that you are beyond yourself, outside of yourself, and you let go.

Now this is obviously not the thing that took place within the New Testament experience. People were not deliberately letting themselves go. People were not even praying for tongues. They were sitting there probably listening to someone explaining the Word of God. Usually when they prayed, they either knelt or they stood, and they were sitting when the spirit of God came upon them on the day of Pentecost.

John Miles gives five reasons why this contemporary movement is so popular. One is the rejection of teaching on the ministry of the Holy Spirit. The distinction of the work of the Holy Spirit from the Old Testament (with) what He does today. The understanding that all are baptized into the body of Christ. This is what happens at salvation. Therefore no preacher, and every Pentecostal preacher that does this is an ignorant fraud in the pulpit to stand up and ask people in the service, “How many of you want to be baptized with the Holy Spirit? Now will you raise your hand, come forward, or line up here. We’ll proceed to get you baptized with the Holy Spirit, the sign of which will be you’ll break out speaking in tongues.”

This dispensational understanding of what the Holy Spirit came to do in this age of grace relative to the church forming the body of Christ is one reason that Pentecostalism is on the contemporary scene in such force. People don’t understand what the Bible teaches about God the Holy Spirit—the rejection of the transitional nature of the book of Acts. The book of Acts is not a book that tells us how things are going to be all the way through the church age. It tells us certain things that are changing over. Understand that we began with the dispensation of the Old Testament, the dispensation of the Jews with all the legalistic orders and all the Mosaic Law. Now we come to the age of grace with all the freedoms and all the liberties and all that constitutes the body of Christ—two totally different things. In between here you have a gray area where you have Old Testament saints who were believers, like the people we looked at last week who were disciples of John. They were 100% Old Testament believers. They were 100% born again, but they were not in the body of Christ. They had not made the transition over into the new age.

Supposing they had died before Paul came to them and explained to them that God the Holy Spirit has come, the dispensational order has changed. What would have happened to them? Well they would have been saved but they would have been on Old Testament grounds. They would not have been in the privileged group of eternity of being part of the body of Christ. But when Paul explained that to them, these twelve men who were in this gray area moved out of this relationship of Old Testament saints and they moved over to the order of the church age and they became New Testament saints.

Now the book of Acts is constantly giving you this changeover, and gradually, as you come to the epistles, you have the normal course of the age. That’s why sometimes people spoke with tongues like they did in Cornelius’s household without a word. When Peter gets to the point where he tells them how to be saved, trusting in Christ as savior, you can just see Cornelius and everybody sitting there listening, the minute Peter says that, they say, “I believe it.” In that moment, when Peter hardly has the words out of his mouth, they believe and God the Holy Spirit moves in and baptizes them into the body of Christ and they start speaking in tongues.

Up in Samaria, it took the laying on of the hands for them to speak in tongues. It changes back and forth. There’s never a regular order until you come to the epistles. So because they don’t understand that the book of Acts is a transitional book, Pentecostalists go to ask and they say, “Do you see how this happened? Here’s how it happened here. This is what God intends to do.” On the day of Pentecost, they were baptized with the Holy Spirit and they spoke in tongues, and they put the two together. And they don’t understand that it’s a transitional book and gradually the epistles tell us how the thing is in its normal order.

Well, secondly, liberal churches are starves for the Word of God and yet they want the supernatural, so they’ve been promoting the social gospel and they’ve been neglecting the message of the cross. And when we say “social gospel” I think you understand that we are not simply saying improvement of society, but improvement of society as a means of salvation. Even Christians who emphasize the message of salvation through Jesus Christ are interested in improving society and always have. They’ve been in the forefront of works of mercy, and for social improvement. But the World Council of Churches which represents the liberal point of view has nothing supernatural about it. It has rejected the Word of God, so people who are in the World Council of Churches are desperate for something supernatural. Along comes the Pentecostal and they’re drawn to it. Fundamental churches on the other hand are often dead with the ministry of inspiration instead of instruction.

In the fourth place, many people seek a spiritual experience because they’ve got problems and they want to solve them, and they feel if they could just have this experience, everything would straighten out. And many people want a physical expression of the supernatural in order to confirm their beliefs.

Last week we looked at the nature of tongues as it was practiced in the book of Acts. Tongues in Acts, we found, was clearly in known languages of the day, but it was foreign to the speaker. It was never an ecstatic gibberish. It was a language which was understood by those who spoke that language as their native speech. The miracle was in the speaking, not in the hearing, because the disciples spoke in the foreign language before the multitude gathered to hear them. If you go back and read this in the book of Acts chapter 2, you’ll discover that the Bible says they were speaking in a foreign language before there was anybody around them. And this was the twelve apostles who were speaking in a foreign language. The men were speaking in a foreign language. The women did not speak in tongues which is another mark against the Pentecostalists today. But the miracle was in effect before the people gathered who did hear their languages spoken.

Now the key word, we told you, for tongues is the Greek word “glossa.” This word “glossa” is used 50 times in the New Testament of an act of speech. It is used of the physical organ, the tongue itself. It is used of the content of speech. It is used of language, foreign languages. It is used as the results of speaking. In the New Testament, this word “glossa” is always used only of a known language on earth. In Greek literature, this word is sometimes used of ecstatic babblings and gibberish such as the priest and priestesses in the pagan religions perform. But in the New Testament, it is never used except of known languages. We have it used interchangeably in Acts 2 of that other word “dialektos.” “Dialektos” means only a foreign language, either in Greek literature or in the New Testament usage. The fact that these two words are used interchangeably explains to us how God the Holy Spirit intends for us to interpret this word. It is never used in the sense of gibberish.

The Pentecostalists have to agree, if they know anything at all. They say, “Yes, in the book of Acts these were foreign languages. That’s what they taught. There is no doubt about it. But when you get to the book to the Corinthians church, there is a different kind of heavenly ecstatic language and that’s a different language than the book of Acts.” That’s what we’re going to look at because that’s not true. It’s the same words, and it’s the same operation, and Paul connects it with the same operation, and this is a delusion that Pentecostalism imposes upon the book of Corinthians. So here’s the key word, “glossa.” It is a foreign language and it never meant anything else in the New Testament.

Now (for) the conclusion of linguistic scholars who listen to the modern tongues practices. Many of them will take tapes. I have been trying to get a good tape that I could let you hear so that some of you who have never heard tongue speaking could hear it. But anyhow, the conclusion of linguistic scholars who do listen to the tapes. They listen to these tapes. These are men who know languages. This is supposedly a language which is being spoken. They listen to these and their conclusions are that there is no distinguishing vocabulary, there are no grammatical features, there is a simulated foreign sound to it, but it has no language characteristics whatsoever. One outstanding authority, William Welms of the University of California at Los Angeles made a study and this is his report:

“And I must report,” he says, “without 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 restricted set of consonant sounds. These combine into a very few syllable clusters which recur many times in various orders. The consonants and the vowels do not all sound like English, the glossolalic’s native language, but the intimation patterns are so completely American English that the total effect is a bit ludicrous.”

Another scholar, Eugene Nida, who is a linguist at the American Bible Society has also made a study of tapes of people speaking in tongues. Here is his conclusion: “The types of inventory and distributions would indicate clearly that this recording bears no resemblance to any actual languages which has ever been treated by linguistics. If then it is not a human language, what is it? One can only say that it is a form of ecstatic speech. On the basis of what I have learned about this type of phenomena of tongues in other parts of the world, apparently there is the same tendency to employ one’s own inventory of sounds in nonsense combinations but with simulated foreign features. At least in West Africa and Latin America, the types of glossolalia employed seem to fit into this description. So what the linguists tell us is that it is plain gibberish, it has no relationship to language, and it is a fraud even on an academic level.

Now tongues authenticated the reception of the Holy Spirit by the individual and by certain ethnic groups. Remember we showed how it began. They went to the Jews, and that Jews were part of the body of Christ was evidenced by speaking in tongues. They went to the Samaritans. They were part of the body of Christ. They spoke in tongues. They went to Cornelius and the Gentiles. They spoke in tongues, and it was evidenced that that ethnic group was also part of the body of Christ and that they had been baptized with the baptism of the Holy Spirit into that body. That’s why there was always an apostle present on each of those occasions in Acts to authenticate and verify and report back to the church at Jerusalem (that) this group was in.

Now the tongues as a miracle also authenticated God’s new Christian movement as a replacement for Judaism. From the time of Abraham to Pentecost, God had spoken through the Jewish theocracy. Now God is speaking and working apart from the Jewish nation. How is he going to prove that this is for real? He did it through the miracle of tongues. Tongues always affected the whole group. They all began speaking in tongues, that is, all of the men. Some were not left out to tarry and to seek such as we’re told in Pentecostal groups today to tarry and to seek for tongues. And the recipient of the tongues gift did not pray for the gift either. It came as a sovereign gift of God.

The purpose of the gift of tongues was to warn unbelieving Jews of the arrival of the fifth stage of the cycle of the national discipline. The warning was declared prophetically in Isaiah 28:9-11. It was declared historically in 1 Corinthians 14:21-22. Therefore tongues was exercised in the presence of unbelieving Jews because that was the purpose of tongues. It was to show a Jew that the fifth stage of the cycle of national discipline had arrived and the nation was going to go out into national dispersion among the nations of the world under a foreign dominating power who would control the territory of their nation. So these Jews were able to turn the cursing of their nation into personal blessing by receiving Christ as savior. That was the point of the day of Pentecost.

Now once the fifth stage of discipline began in 70 A.D. for the Jews, the purpose of tongues has ceased. That’s why there can’t be any tongue-speaking today because the purpose has come to an end, and with the New Testament completed. Revelations that may have been brought through tongues ceased and there was no further purpose through that. The New Testament tongues gift is not functioning today. What is practiced today is a fraud of Satan. Even if it were a known language, you want to remember Isaiah 8:19 and 29:4 speak about ventriloquist demons who were able to reproduce languages.

So our interest is in the practice of tongues now in the Corinthians church. In Acts it was a known language. The question is, what was taking place in the church at Corinth that necessitated the apostle Paul writing a letter to them and then spending three chapters of that letter giving them instruction about the practice of tongues.

First of all you have to know the condition of the Corinthian church. It was established by the apostle Paul on his second missionary tour (Acts 18:1-18). The apostle Paul spent 18 months there in Corinth teaching these people. He had a great deal of opposition. It was the center of a large Jewish population because Corinth was a metropolitan and economic center. Therefore it attracted many Jews. Again the practice of the gift of tongues was very apropos in the city of Corinth because the purpose of tongues was a testimony to unbelieving Jews, not to Gentiles. The purpose of it was to impress Jews that the time had come for national discipline and to get out and get into the body of Christ.

So Paul had lot of opposition from the Jewish population. However, the work did thrive, and it developed mostly Gentiles. Paul left after 18 months. In time he began hearing stories about the church at Corinth. He got this from one family, the household of Cloe who told him a great deal about what was taking place back at the church at Corinth. He got a letter of inquiry from the church concerning certain questions that had arisen, and he had visits from certain members of the church, and they would tell him what was going on back at the church at Corinth.

So when Paul, on his third missionary tour, arrived at the city of Ephesus, he had enough information about what was going on in the church at Corinth that he sat down and wrote the letter of 1 Corinthians. By this time he had discovered that there was division among the members. He discovered that there was a fantastic level of carnality. I once had a Pentecostal leader who told me, “Yes, I always say that you’ll find in our Pentecostal churches all of the things you find in the church of Corinth that are reflected in 1 Corinthians. Our churches are just another church at Corinth all over again.” He thought that was something cute to say which was a terrible thing to brand them with, because as you go through this list, this was not a very commendable church. The level of carnality was fantastic. In general, they were operating on human viewpoint and consequently they were proud, self-centered, and asserting their rights as a group. They were a push crowd and they were carnal as could be. And yet they were the richest church of all the New Testament churches in spiritual gifts.

So as you begin reading through the 12th chapter of the book of 1 Corinthians, which we’re just going to summarize today, verses 1 through 11 give a relationship of the Holy Spirit to the believer. The first three verses call the Corinthians away from their old idol worship to the spiritual realities to be found in God the Holy Spirit. They had been baptized into the body of Christ at salvation and He has given them spiritual gifts for services. In verses 4 through 6 of chapter, you have the source of spiritual gifts as the triune God. The Spirit gives the gift, the Son gives the particular kind of gift, the particular thrust of the gift, and then God the Father gives the fruitfulness, the returns on it. In verses 7 through 11, Paul tells them that every believer has a spiritual ability of some kind given by the sovereign decision of the Holy Spirit, and it is the relationship of the believers to Jesus Christ in verses 12 through 13 that enables them to have this spiritual gift. It is because every Christian is part of the body of Christ. Every Christian has been baptized into the body of Christ, and every Christian has a mission to perform within the body of Christ that nobody else can do. He is baptized into the body of Christ at the point of salvation.

Verses 14 through 31 lay out the relationship of believers to believers. Some parts of the body, he points out, have a more glamorous role, but all are essential to the well-being of the body. The nail on your little finger is not a very glamorous part of your body, but you lose that nail and you’ll discover how much you miss it every time you touch the sensitive end of your finger. One sick malfunctioning member will make the whole body feel bad.

Now there is no part of the body which is superior to another because of the role it plays. Some are more vital than others, but they are not superior in God’s sight within the local assembly because of the role we play. Some of the gifts are more spectacular, so some of the possessors of these spectacular gifts viewed themselves as superior. In the Corinthians church, tongues became the big thing. And yet you will notice that there is a list of gifts in verses 8 through 10 and another list in verses 28 through 30, and guess what is at the bottom of the list in both cases: The gift of tongues and the interpretation of tongues. When he gives the order of the value of the gifts, tongues is the last. And yet this was the big thing in the Corinthian church, partly because like today, the people said, “Oh, if I have the gift of tongues, it indicates a status of spirituality.” When all spiritual gifts, including tongues, are given for service. It is a travesty for you to go up to some Christian that has impressed you, or some Christian that has a great reputation and say, “Oh, great-reputation Christian, tell me your secret of spiritual success.”

Now that is the stupidest greatest travesty that any Christian can do. Why does that person have a spiritual success? Because God gave him the gift and God uses the gift, and he has nothing to do with it at all. It isn’t to his credit whatsoever. In verse 8 you have the statement, “for to one is given,” and “this is given” is in the Greek in instrumentality case. It is done by God the Holy Spirit and the individual has nothing to do with it. But the image makers love to relate glowingly their self-crucifixion. You go up to them and ask them what is the secret of their success, and they say, “Oh, I get up every morning and the first thing I do is drink a glass of warm water to remember how God has warmed my soul. Then I stand before the east window and I raise my hands and I start praying to God. Then I fall on my face and I turn over on my back and I pray that way. Then I cross my eyes and I pray that way. And I do all these things and things have made me a great spiritual success.” When they’re nothing but abnormal emotional cases.

Christianity has taken up the public relations image racket, the same as the unbelieving world plays. We tend to treat some prominent religious personality as having great pronouncement of authoritative insights. The secret of anybody’s spiritual success in the Lord’s work is the grace of God and our being willing to let him use our spiritual gifts. It’s not that we are so nice and so dedicated so that God rewards us. There isn’t a Christian in the room that has any reason for an inferiority complex relative to what you are doing for the Lord or what the Lord is enabling you to do. The only thing you have to be concerned with is to be positive toward doctrine, receptive to the Word, and open to His usefulness. He will use your gift in exactly He has designed for it to be used. When you get to heaven you will have fantastic rewards for that. What appears, I remind you, to be a huge success by some religious leaders is mostly old sin nature public relations cleverness. Many times I’ve notices that the Christians that are admired the most as being great successes are the biggest ignoramuses when it comes to spiritual insights. These religious leaders of our day who like to play the image of spirituality to the hilt are doing it to gullible church members. So people today are seeking the tongues gift because they think this is spiritual status, and it is nothing of the sort.

Now every Christian did not possess the gift of tongues, and I want you to notice in verse 30 of 1 Corinthians 12, the apostle Paul says, “Have all the gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues?” Now in the Greek language, the Greek asks a question and then it gives the answer. When the Greek asks a question and it uses this word “ou,” it means the answer is “yes.” But when it asks a question and uses this word “me,” the answer is “no.” And here when he asks this question, this is the negative word he uses it. We would ask it this way: “Everybody doesn’t speak in tongues, do they?” And the answer is “no.” Not everybody has the gift of tongues. Yet Pentecostalism today tells you that, “Everybody should have the gift of tongues. Everybody who has the baptism of the Holy Spirit will show it by speaking in tongues.” Now you tell this to Pentecostalists and what will he say? They’re not stupid. They know language. I’ll tell you what they’ll say. They take you back up to verse 28 and they say, “And God hath set some in the church apostles, etc.” And what they say is, “What Paul is saying is that does everybody in the local church when they gather for meetings speak in tongues? And the answer is “no.” Everybody doesn’t speak in tongues. Paul says only two or three. But everybody does speak privately in tongues,” they say.

Alright, let’s take that logic and go back to the verse. That means by the same token that we have apostles. Is everybody an apostle in the local assembly? No, but everybody is privately an apostle, right? Everybody has full apostolic authority when he’s in private. Is everybody a prophet in the local assembly? Publicly, no, but everybody in private has direct revelations from God as a prophet, right? Right down the line. Is everybody a teacher privately? Is everybody an interpreter in tongues privately but he’s not publicly? You see the ridiculousness of the argument. But the apostle Paul is saying that everybody does not have the gift of tongues. So people who are baptized with God the Holy Spirit, as 1 Corinthians 12:13 tells us that every Christian is, do not all speak with tongues.

The strange thing about Pentecostalism is that most of the Pentecostalists are seeking the gift of tongues. Yet the body of Christ, as you read through 1 Corinthians 12, is a balanced body with all the parts. Pentecostalism is all mouth, all tongue. Here you walk into a Pentecostal meeting and you’re supposed to see a body with all the parts, and all the gifts functioning, and all you see is a big mouth sitting there. That’s all that’s functioning is this big mouth pouring out this babbling. Now is that the kind of a body that God the Holy Spirit is going to create? Ridiculous. He’s a god of order and balance. Paul’s emphasis here is always on maximum edification for the believers.

Verse 28 says in the New Testament church the number one gift was apostle, the number two gift was prophet, and the number three gift is teacher, in order of value. Now we no longer have apostles today. They have died and passed off the scene. We no longer have prophets giving direct revelation and predicting the future from God. That has passed off the scene. We have the gift of teacher left, and in the local church the most valuable gift is the gift of teacher. This functions with the pastor as the pastor-teacher gift because everything of the local church member’s spiritual life is hung and dependent directly to what the local pastor-teacher cranks out. If he does not deliver an intelligible understanding knowledge of doctrine, people will be fools, they will be deceived, and they will be incapacitated in their spiritual lives. The Corinthian church was proud and abusive, and it pursued the gift of tongues and even imitated it because their human viewpoint thought that this was the most valuable thing.

Verse 31 says, “Covet earnestly the best gifts.” Pentecostalists will come up to you and say, “Now do you see that verse. Read it again. It says, ‘Covet earnestly the best gifts.’” And what they’re saying to you is, “You see, I do have a right to seek the gift of tongues. I do have a right to go to God and pray for a certain gift because right there Paul says, ‘Covet earnestly the best gifts.’” Now the best gifts are these that are at the top of the list. But I want to tell you something about the beautiful Greek grammar again. This word “covet” gives us a clue that preserves us from that mistake. It could be “you” singular. You as an individual covet. Or it could be “you” plural. You as a group. You all covet. And that’s what he uses. He is using “you all.” It means you as a church, you as a group. If you find yourself missing some administrative leaders in your church, then you look to God and say, “God, give us some men and women in this church who have the gift of administration for this area and this area.” If you find yourself lacking in teachers, then look to God and say, “Father, send us into this assembly people with the gift of teaching along this certain line, this certain age group.” And it is right for us to pray for these gifts. It is wrong for you as an individual to try to pray for it. So don’t get tripped up on that.

Today’s tongues crowd is not motivated by the Holy Spirit. It is motivated by Satan. It is seeking glamorous gifts. It is seeking things from human viewpoint, and Satan is coming right along and saying, “OK, friend, here it is.” And he feeds them the fraud. I hope you are horrified by the thought of lacking doctrine.

So I caution you. The fraud of tongues is the result of people who don’t know. God enables you to know.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1971