

Tongues: A Curse omen to Israel in unbelief

The Holy Spirit
By Bob Vincent

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Bible Text: 1 Corinthians 14; Deuteronomy 28
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Let me ask you to turn with me in your Bibles to Isaiah 28. If you're using the Bibles in the pews, you'll find this on page 813. I'm going to begin reading at verse 9. Isaiah 28:9,

9 "Whom will he teach knowledge? And whom will he make to understand the message? Those just weaned from milk? Those just drawn from the breasts? 10 For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept, Line upon line, line upon line, Here a little, there a little." 11 For with stammering lips and another tongue He will speak to this people, 12 To whom He said, "This is the rest with which You may cause the weary to rest," And, "This is the refreshing"; Yet they would not hear. 13 But the word of the LORD was to them, "Precept upon precept, precept upon precept, Line upon line, line upon line, Here a little, there a little," That they might go and fall backward, and be broken And snared and caught.

I'm going to do something a little unusual. I'm going to read two of those verses to you in Hebrew without interpretation and I want you to listen to the sound of these words because this really brings out what Isaiah is saying. If you'll listen to it, it sounds like a nursery rhyme, that part there in verse 10 and also in verse 13 which begins with that expression "precept upon precept." It kind of makes sense when you hear it in English, precept upon precept, but listen to verse 10 and then verse 13 in Hebrew.

10 kitsav lasav sav lasav, kav lakav kav lakav, zeer sham zaer sham.

And then verse 13,

13 sav lasav sav lasav, kav lakav kav lakav, zeer sham zeer sham.

If you hear it, I want you to think about what you've just heard for a moment. It sounds like kids with a silly kind of rhyme and that's how it's meant to sound to Isaiah's audience. He wants them to hear it as a rhyme of sorts, he wants them to hear it as baby talk.

Notice the context makes that very very plain. He says, where he says there, for example in verse 9, "Whom will he teach knowledge? And whom will he make to understand the message? Those just weaned from milk?" It's baby talk. "Those just drawn from the breasts?" And then he says that singsong kind of thing in Hebrew. Then he goes down in verse 11, "For with stammering lips and another tongue He will speak to this people." Then he goes on in verse 13, "But the word of the LORD was to them, "Precept upon precept, precept upon precept," and so on and it's a word of judgment with the last statement, "That they might go and fall backward, and be broken And snared and caught."

Let's pray.

Lord, as we attempt to continue our study on the gifts of the Holy Spirit, as we attempt to follow precept upon precept and line upon line, here a little, there a little, as we work our way through this interesting book of 1 Corinthians, Lord, I pray in the name and the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ, the King of kings and Lord of lords, that You would give me to be concise but not so concise that I am not clear, Lord, to be repetitious where I need to be repetitious, Lord, because truth is caught often rather than taught. Come, Holy Spirit, and grant that this word may come to us today which is Your inerrant, infallible word but fallibly delivered by fallible lips but, Lord, we pray that we would hear the written word through the spoken word, and as we listen to that spoken word, we would be able to discern the voice of the Good Shepherd speaking to us through the Holy Spirit saying, "Come to Me and rest. Come to Me and intercede. Come to Me and plead for a world that's lost and broken." In Jesus' name. Amen.

We'll come back to Isaiah 28 in a little bit but I want us to look at 1 Corinthians 14 and you'll see why we did go to Isaiah 28 and that singsong section there in Hebrew. I want you to consider with me today as we continue this study in the gifts of the Holy Spirit, we looked last time at prophecy and the importance of prophecy, today we want to focus on the gift of tongues and this is a two-part sermon, actually it's a four-part sermon, I'm giving you two parts of it today and, God willing, two parts next week. I want you to see that the gift of tongues as we find it described here in 1 Corinthians is similar but not absolutely identical, nor is it absolutely not identical with what we find in Acts. Let's look at Acts 2 and the gift of tongues there for a moment and then we'll compare and contrast what we find in 1 Corinthians.

Turn with me, then, to Acts 2 and listen to how it's described here in verse 4. Acts 2:4, page 1,253. "And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit," I want you to notice one thing there, they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, he says, "and began to speak with other tongues." That isn't the case in 1 Corinthians, is it? In 1 Corinthians not everyone speaks in tongues but here everyone speaks in tongues. The entire group of people that were waiting for the promise of the Holy Spirit that Jesus had promised, the 120 that were in the Upper Room, are all there, men and women, old folks and young folks alike are there and they are waiting for the Holy Spirit to come. The Holy Spirit comes with power and they have an experience that makes unbelievers look at them and say, "These guys are drunk. These women are drunk. What in the world is going on?" Because they are in

ecstasy, they are extremely happy, they are explosive in their happiness and they begin to speak in other tongues, and so we notice they're all filled with the Holy Spirit in Acts 2:4 and they all begin to speak in tongues.

Now notice something else here. The miracle of the gift of tongues on the day of Pentecost is not done in the ears of the listeners, it's done entirely in the mouths of the speakers. That's pretty plain, isn't it? They're surrounded by people who don't yet know the power of the Holy Spirit. They're surrounded by people who are unbelievers but who are waiting for the fulfillment of prophecy, and they're there in the temple and as the group of 120 people come from the Upper Room and go into the temple, they begin to listen to these people who are exuberant, shouting and praising God, and listen to how it's described here. Verse 5, Acts 2:5, "there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven. And when this sound occurred, the multitude came together, and were confused, because," notice, "everyone heard them speak in his own language." So what we have here is this, we have a large group of people who have come to Jerusalem, as the text opens up later you'll see that some are proselytes, some are natural born descendants of Abraham, Jewish by ethnicity, and some are not yet converted at all but they are kind of stragglers, they want to learn about these things. So they've come to Jerusalem during the feast of Pentecost and this group of people who does not yet know the power of God is listening to what's happening and they are hearing in their own native tongues, they're own learned from birth languages, they're hearing these people shout, yell, holler, sing, all these words in their own native languages.

Listen to how it's expressed further, verse 7, "Then they were all amazed and marveled, saying to one another, 'Look, are not all these who speak Galileans?'" That's kind of an insult. We need to understand that in those days the Galilee is a pagan part of the country. There are godly Jewish people who live in the Galilee but there are also other races that are there, people are not as observant as a general rule of strict forms of Judaism, and in that part of Israel is what is called the Via Maris, the Via Maris, the way of the sea. It's a highway that came from up in the area of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers on down to Egypt and what that meant was with a commercial route there is a lot of money to be made, there are a lot of people that settled there to make money, and so it's not a great place in the minds of many people to be a good, pious, observant Jew. And as a general rule, the Galileans are not well-educated compared to the people who are in Jerusalem. After all, if you are a devout Jew and you want to study with the cream of the crop of the rabbis, it's Jerusalem where you want to go.

So notice, again, there's a kind of contempt there. They said, "Aren't these people Galileans? These are not learned people. These are not people who've sat at the feet of the great rabbis or even studied Greek philosophy. These are ignorami." So then verse 7, "Then they were all amazed," there's a true miracle going on here, "Then they were all amazed and marveled, saying to one another, 'Look, are not all these who speak Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each in our own language in which we were born?'" Each in our own language in which we were born. So the miracle is not performed inside the heads of the listeners, the miracle is performed in the mouths of the speakers.

So here is the miracle and it's a true miracle of God: uneducated people, the 120 by and large were uneducated people, uneducated people who have never studied these languages begin to speak in foreign languages the wonderful works of God. They're praising the Lord and this is how we read, notice they elaborate on it in verse 9, "Parthians and Medes and Elamites, those dwelling in Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya adjoining Cyrene, visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs--we hear them speaking in our own tongues the wonderful works of God. So they were all amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, 'Whatever could this mean?'" So we have a real miracle here. It is a bona fide miracle. It's clearly the work of the Holy Spirit. Is it a direct work of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit himself is directly working not simply in the thinking or in the spirits of these people but he has overpowered their speech so that as they open their mouths in ecstatic, joyful, happy exuberance and begin to shout unto the Lord, they're speaking in all of these languages that have just been enumerated.

Now turn with me, if you will, to 1 Corinthians 14 and let's see the similarities and the dissimilarities, rather let's turn to chapter 12. Remember that this whole section begins in chapter 11 of 1 Corinthians and then the issue of tongues begins to be explicitly addressed beginning in chapter 12. So let's look there, page 1,320. Notice here that tongues in the Corinthian church are the work of the Holy Spirit. It's important that we not forget that. Tongues as they were practiced in the Corinthian church, just as tongues in the book of Acts, were the work of the Holy Spirit.

Look at verse 3, "Therefore I make known to you that no one speaking by the Spirit of God calls Jesus accursed, and no one can say that Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit. There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit" So he goes on and he talks about the diversity. Verse 7, "But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all," and he goes through and starts enumerating these gifts and notice what he says in verse 10 and this is by the same Holy Spirit, so this is the Spirit's work, "to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another different kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. But one and the same Spirit," again that's the Holy Spirit, "works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He," that is, the Holy Spirit "wills."

So what's the similarity in Acts' tongues and 1 Corinthians' tongues? The similarity is that both are the work of the Holy Spirit but there are some striking differences. Let's look at the striking differences. The first difference that we notice is that there is absolute approval to what happens in Acts and there is qualified approval, or we might say qualified disapproval to what is happening in the Corinthian church. And let's see that for a moment. After all, isn't that the very thrust of these three chapters? The very thrust of these chapters is to correct something that is not being done the way that it ought to be and that's important.

So why does the Holy Spirit inspire the Apostle Paul to take scores of verses to write to the Corinthian Christians and to say, "Wait a minute, brothers and sisters, this thing is not

being done the way it's supposed to be done." Let's look for some examples here over in chapter 14. Notice, turning over there, he says turning to page 1,322, he says, verse 10, "There are, it may be, so many kinds of languages in the world, and none of them is without significance. Therefore, if I do not know the meaning of the language, I shall be a foreigner to him who speaks, and he who speaks will be a foreigner to me. Even so you, since you are zealous for spiritual gifts, let it be for the edification of the church that you seek to excel. Therefore let him who speaks in a tongue pray that he may interpret." And he goes on here and notice someone speaking in tongues out loud in church, the person who is ignorant hears it, verse 16, and he doesn't know what's going on. Verse 16, "Otherwise, if you bless with the spirit, how will he who occupies the place of the uninformed say 'Amen' at your giving of thanks, since he does not understand what you say?" Now listen to what he says here further, he says in verse 23, "Therefore if the whole church comes together in one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in those who are uninformed or unbelievers, will they not say that you are out of your mind?"

So notice here there are ways that the gift of tongues was being practiced in the church in Corinth that resulted in great confusion, people not being built up and edified when they came to church. Remember that sermons teaching is why you're here. We're here to worship the Lord but the central part of our worship of God is to pay attention, to listen as the word of God is taught. That takes time. But a sound church is a church that devotes a sufficient amount of time week by week for people to look at the Bible, check references, compare things that are said in one place with things that are said in another place and have application, and that takes time. In the healthiest days of the church, much time is spent in teaching and worship. The praise and the celebration of the Lord's Supper flows out of the teaching. So again, church is not for lazy people. But Americans are lazy. Church is not for people who are not going to discipline their minds and pay attention because that's why we come together. That's what we saw last week, it's vital that we pay attention, that when we come to church we realize that we have to pay attention, we have to study, it's good to take notes, it's good to write down comments, it's good to write questions down and check those things out on my own.

Now if that's not happening, and here's the point, sometimes in the church in Corinth it was not happening, sometimes in the church of Corinth what was happening was there was a mass of confusion. Look over here at verse 27, 1 Corinthians 14:27, "If anyone speaks in a tongue, let there be two or at the most three, each in turn, and let one interpret. But if there is no interpreter, let him keep silent in church, and let him speak to himself and to God." So isn't it obvious as you compare Acts with 1 Corinthians 14, Acts is utterly under the approval of God, Acts 2, the day of Pentecost, but in 1 Corinthians this letter is written to say, "Folks, what you're doing is by the Holy Spirit but it's not just by the Holy Spirit. What you're doing has some flesh mixed up in it. What you're doing has some carnality mixed up in it. What you're doing here is not simply a direct work of the Holy Spirit," as in Acts 2, "but a work that goes into your spirit and then as your spirit manifests the work of the Holy Spirit, what comes out is not exactly the way it ought to be."

Now let me draw an analogy with preaching for a moment. I have never entered your pulpit to preach in the almost 36 years that I've preached for you that I didn't have a word from God. I'm serious. Some of you who've been here a while may recall one Sunday morning I sat there and then I stood there and then I came up in the pulpit and then I prayed and then I said, "I don't have a word." Do you remember that? Peter, you remember me calling on you? Remember that? And you had a word for us. That's the only time I haven't had a word. I always get a word from God. What do I mean by getting a word? I mean that in my study of the word of God, I have the sense of a text that the Holy Spirit has nailed that to me and the Holy Spirit has impressed me, "This is the message for these people this Sunday."

Now I like to get that message well ahead of time because as the week shortens and I get nearer Sunday, I get more and more in panic. By the way, I'm preaching this afternoon at First Presbyterian in Baton Rouge for the dedication of their new sanctuary or their sanctuary and for them to be welcomed into our presbytery, and I pondered that much and it came to me finally a little over a week ago what I'm to preach on and I was grateful that that happened on the day that I take off because I was able to work on my sermon on my day off as I mowed the almost three acres of land we live on. It takes a while to mow. But I want to multitask and so I was able to take that passage, study it in Greek, study it in English, commit it to my mind and then work on it, outline it. And so I've been working on that passage and I took the better part of the time that I was mowing to perfect that sermon.

I often do that in driving which is why my wife likes to drive. She can always tell when I'm working on a sermon when I drive because the car goes slower and slower unless we are on cruise control in which case other things happen. By the way, back in 2004 we had one of our children move back home to go back to school and they needed money, so I sold the greatest marital aid that I had and I got \$8,000 for this marital aid, and that marital aid was our motorcycle because it had intercom in it, we could listen in the helmet. And so anyhow, why was that a marital aid? Well, my wife has told me this repeatedly, she said, "Whenever I was a passenger on the back of that motorcycle, I felt absolutely secure because I knew that you only were doing one thing when you were driving that motorcycle, you were paying complete attention." And that's true. My attention was riveted. Anytime I saw a car coming up, I always got eye contact with that other car before I got to that place. If I didn't get eye contact, I slowed down and was prepared to stop. She said, "I felt totally secure but I don't feel secure when you drive." We have a solution for that. We're getting ready for our 43rd anniversary in July. The solution is I let her drive, the problem with that is just as she has the impulse to say things, I have the impulse to say things, and so what I do is I study or I read. And so I'm grateful that I can read a text as she's driving and if I'm reading in a foreign language, that's even better because I go into another zone and I'm not paying attention at all, I don't know what lane she's in or her various routes to get places. I might choose a different route but the point I'm making is this, felt very secure.

Here's the bottom line: I work on sermons even when I drive and I work on sermons even when I'm mowing the lawn and I never am going to enter into your pulpit and open my

mouth unless I have a sense, "Thus saith the Lord." I'm serious. I would not profane this sacred desk by opening my yap up here to say something to you that I did not believe God was speaking through Holy Scripture. Now again, I want to make something plain: I am very fallible; the Bible is God's infallible word. God speaks to us fundamentally through the Scriptures but it's the Spirit, the Holy Spirit speaking in the Scriptures that we need to hear. And so if I don't have a "Thus saith the Lord," I'm not going to preach to you but I have a "Thus saith the Lord" this morning and it's this passage of Scripture.

Now here's the bottom line: over the years I have said things I shouldn't have said. Agree with that? And I'll say this: whenever I've said something I shouldn't have said, I will always let you know. Now there are dozens of things that I've said over the years that you probably think, "I missed the apology." And you did because there was none. But I've got to say something, I'm going to preach what I believe I'm supposed to preach as long as I'm supposed to preach it, and if I'm wrong, that's between God and me and no one else, not the elders, not the deacons, between God and me. On the day of judgment, I will learn that a number of things I've said over the years that I've thought were right were wrong, but when I learn they're wrong, I'm going to tell you. What is my point? My point is that the Holy Spirit works in preaching but because there is a lump of clay here, an earthen vessel, a clay pot who is fallible and who doesn't always hear from God and who thinks he hears from God sometimes when he doesn't hear from God, and sometimes doesn't think he hears from God when he does hear from God, I can never say of any sermon that I have ever preached, "Well, that sermon pleased God 100%." That's why it's important for you to look with me in the word of God and test everything you hear by the written word.

Now if that's true of preaching, and that's true of all preaching, even when the apostles preached they weren't infallible. Is that a new thought for you? Even when the apostles preached they weren't infallible. When were they infallible? When they were writing Scripture. How do we know that? All you've got to do is look at things in the book of Acts like Acts 15, or look in places like Galatians 2, you find, for example, the Apostle Paul interrupts a meeting and he confronts Peter, the Apostle Peter, and says, "Peter, you're out of line." Whoa, really? So infallibility did not rest in the apostles, it rested in the Scriptures that the Holy Spirit gave us through the apostles.

So here's the important truth, then, if I can go from that analogy to what we're on. In Acts 2 there is a direct work of the Holy Spirit in the speaking in tongues that's there, but in 1 Corinthians 14 it is the influence of the Holy Spirit on the human spirit that produces results that are of mixed value. Let me say that again. In Acts 2 the speaking in tongues that is there is the direct result of the direct work of the Holy Spirit supernaturally, sovereignly speaking through these uneducated Galileans in languages they'd never studied, but in 1 Corinthians 14 what we have is the work of the Holy Spirit that is indirect working on the human spirit, filtered through the human spirit, filtered through the human mind, and then what comes out is of mixed value.

Notice that he explicitly tells us that it is not valuable, verse 27 of 1 Corinthians 14:27, it is not valuable for everybody to be speaking in tongues all at once in the assembly, and

yet that's exactly what was happening in the Corinthian church. There was a cacophony of confusion as men and women alike open their mouths and began to speak ecstatically in other tongues or other languages and when people walked in they said, "What a mass of confusion." And you see they're going contrary to biblical standards.

Notice the end here, he says in verse 10, 1 Corinthians 14:40, "Let all things be done decently and in order." The reason why 1 Corinthians was written, the reason why chapter 11, chapter 12, chapter 13, and chapter 14 were written is that things were not being done in a decent and orderly way. They were responding to the work and ministry of the Holy Spirit but that response was filtered through their own frail, fallible human spirits.

Notice again here, look at verse 32, he said, "And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets. For God is not the author of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints." What's that saying? What he's saying is you can't say, "Well, I couldn't help myself." I get the feeling when I read Acts 2 that Peter and James and John and Mary the mother of Jesus, and Mary Magdalene and the other members of the 120 that were gathered in the Upper Room could not help themselves. They were so full of the Holy Spirit in Acts 2 on the day of Pentecost they couldn't help themselves. They just spoke out and what they spoke out was in foreign languages that other people could recognize.

But in 1 Corinthians 14 notice he says something, he's saying that God's not the author of confusion but of peace as in all the churches of the saints. And going back to verse 32 he's saying the human spirit is subject to the will of man. In other words, God holds you and me responsible even when his Spirit is impelling us, even when his Spirit is filling us to make a judgment call is it time to speak. God has a word but is now the time to say it. So in other words, the human mind must exercise control over the human spirit even when the human spirit is exercised to speak, to say is this the right time, is this the right way to say it.

So there is this interaction of the human and the divine, if you will, in 1 Corinthians 14 and it's analogous to preaching. Preaching is rooted in the infallible word of God and in the sovereign ministry of the Holy Spirit but it comes through a human vessel and therefore is to be tested. Anyone have a question about that before I leave that point and go forward? 1 Corinthians, genuine work of the Holy Spirit, speaking in tongues, a genuine work in 1 Corinthians 14:12, 13, but somewhat different than in Acts because in Acts it's a direct sovereign work of the Spirit that is very plain, and in 1 Corinthians human flesh gets into it, human personality gets into it, so there is some confusion.

Now I want us to look at the most controversial and obscure part of speaking in tongues. The most controversial and obscure part. And we have two more things to go but that's next week. Look with me, if you will, now at verse 20. 1 Corinthians 14:20, page 1,322. "Brethren, do not be children in understanding; however, in malice be babes, but in understanding be mature." I wonder why he's saying that? Notice he's about to quote from the Old Testament. Do you remember the context of the place he's quoting? The context is about babies and babbling and it's that weird way, shall I read it again?

Probably not. But anyhow it's that weird way that it's expressed in Isaiah 28. I'll just read one of the verses again. Here is Isaiah 28:10 in Hebrew, "kitsav lasav, sav lasav, kav lakav, kav lakav, zeer sham, zeer sham." Baby talk. Baby talk. And notice that he introduces this by saying, "Well, don't be babies. Okay, don't be babies. We want you to hear mature language because you're mature people. Use your mind."

And then he goes on and he says in the law it is written. Well, it's not in the law. Well, it is in the law. There are two ways to understand this. One is that sometimes the word "law" is a reference to the whole Old Testament from Genesis to what we would call Malachi but in the Hebrew Bible, which has identically the same books that you have in the English Bible in the pews but they're in a different order, and 2 Chronicles is the last book in the Hebrew Bible. But it normally has a twofold or threefold division. The Torah which was of supreme importance to all Jews, for example, the Sadducee party believed that the Torah was the inerrant word of God but not the rest, and then the Pharisees who believed the rest along with the Torah was the inerrant word of God. So we have the Torah, which is the law, then we have the prophets or the Nevi'im, and then we have the writings or the Ketuvim, and the first book in the writings is the book of Psalms. So that's why in Luke when Jesus is talking to his disciples and explaining the Old Testament to them, Luke says that he opened the Scriptures to understand all the things written in the law and the prophets and the Psalms. Jewish people don't call this the Old Testament, by the way. That's an insult to a Jewish person to say, "Y'all have the Old Testament." No, no, this is the Bible of the Jews and a Jewish person will often call his Bible the Tanak because the three first letters of the three major divisions, Torah, Nevi'im, Ketuvim, Tanak. But notice that St. Paul says here, "In the law it says," so I say it could be that he's just saying the law for the whole but I don't think so. Now that is a substantially direct quote from Isaiah but what we want to see in a few moments is it's not just from Isaiah.

Let's turn back to Isaiah 28 for a moment, but before you do notice this conclusion in verse 22. He quotes Isaiah 28:11 and 12 and says the Lord, and then in verse 22 listen to what he says. This is very interesting and I believe if you will pay attention to this, God will give you a burden for Israel, and I believe if you will pay attention to this, you will understand the great need of the hour, and if you pay attention to this, I think you will understand a function of the gift of tongues that nobody ever talks about. We're going to talk about some other functions of tongues next week, God willing.

"Therefore," he says, "tongues are for a sign, not to those who believe but to unbelievers; but prophesying is not for unbelievers but for those who believe." Notice what he tells us here. Paul has looked at the Old Testament, he's looked at the Tanak as we'll see in a moment and not just at Isaiah, and he says the function of tongues is to be a sign or an omen or a signpost or a warning to unbelievers. Now what unbelievers? Well, let's go to Isaiah 28 for a moment. Let's turn back there and I promise not to read it from Hebrew again, and my eyes are so bad, they're getting worse and worse and I put off cataract surgery. I can no longer discern easily the difference in the vav and the zayin but I read, I look carefully. Anyhow and so it was pronounced correctly.

But in Isaiah 28 what he says is this, verse 9, page 813, he's saying, "Whom will he teach knowledge?" He said, "Am I talking to little kids? You know, if I'm talking to little kids then here's the nursery rhyme," in verse 10. Then he goes on in verse 11 and he said, "Because you people don't want to hear me because you don't like these long sermons, because you don't want to give me your mind and the reason you don't want to give me your mind is you don't want to give me your heart. Therefore," he says, a paraphrase, of course it's a paraphrase but it's actually the intent if you read the whole chapter. He says, "Therefore since you don't like to pay attention, you don't want to study, you don't want to reflect and you don't want to deal with your heart, this is what's going to happen." Verse 11, therefore he says, "For with stammering lips and another tongue He will speak to this people." Now that's what is quoted in 1 Corinthians 11 and he says they're going to get this message that's going to sound childish like gibberish and won't be understood, and he says but when they hear it, they're not going to respond to that either. Look on down, verse 12, "To whom He said, 'This is the rest with which You may cause the weary to rest,' And, 'This is the refreshing'; Yet they would not hear." And because they would not hear, he speaks in tongues to them again with a childish rhyme.

Now you say, "Well, I don't yet see all this." I know you don't. That's okay. Bear with me. You will see it. So in Isaiah 28, Isaiah's warning the Jewish people that judgment is coming and he's saying you're not paying attention to the message and the reason that you're not paying attention with your mind is, you don't want to deal with what's in your heart. Never forget that. The reason you're not paying attention with your mind is because you don't want to deal with what's in your heart. Therefore since you're tired of this, I'm going to speak to you in baby talk and it's going to sound like total gibberish to you, it's going to sound meaningless to you like a little child's rhyme, but even though I'm speaking to you that way, in an unintelligible way, you're still not going to pay attention.

Now why is Isaiah saying this? Turn with me to Jeremiah 5 for a moment over to the right. Jeremiah 5. You see a very similar prophecy. Jeremiah 5. What does he say? Listen to these words. Verse 14, page 872, "Therefore thus says the LORD God of hosts: 'Because you speak this word, Behold, I will make My words in your mouth fire, And this people wood, And it shall devour them. Behold, I will bring a nation against you from afar, O house of Israel,' says the LORD. 'It is a mighty nation, It is an ancient nation, A nation whose language you do not know, Nor can you understand what they say.'" And then notice what he says about these people who are speaking in tongues to them. What does he say about this group of people who are speaking in tongues to them? He says in the next verse, 16, "Their quiver is like an open tomb; They are all mighty men. And they shall eat up your harvest and your bread, Which your sons and daughters should eat," and so on, "and they're going to destroy your fortified cities." Jeremiah has the same basic message as Isaiah, it's the same message that Paul picks up to talk about in 1 Corinthians 14 about a function of tongues, but we still haven't gotten to the heart of the matter, have we? If you're confused, it's okay.

Let's turn now to Deuteronomy 28 because what Jeremiah prophesies and what Isaiah prophesies and what Paul quotes isn't simply from Isaiah 28 or Jeremiah 5, it is a combination of prophesies that hit the curse sections of Leviticus 26 and the curse

sections of Deuteronomy 28. So let's turn to the curse section of Deuteronomy 28 and now in the name of Jesus you will understand this. It will come together and it will be very clear. Deuteronomy 28. Listen to this curse. Let's start it at verse 47, page 235. Let's get the context of this verse. This is the origin of the words of Paul in 1 Corinthians 14 about the function of tongues as an omen to unbelievers, and the origin is in Leviticus 26, the wilderness wanderings of Israel, but just before they cross over into the Promised Land on the plains of Moab before Moses ascends Mount Pisgah and Sandy and I have ascended Mount Pisgah and looked across the Jordan Valley and could see the Jordan River and could look beyond it to the hills to where Jerusalem was. Moses is not allowed to go in and Moses gives the people the law the second time, this is why it's called Deuteronomy, it means the second law. And so he's reminding them of everything they've been taught in the Torah up to this point and he said, "Now folks, because you made me lose my temper, it's your fault. Here I am 120 years old, I'm getting to see this land but I'm not getting to cross over and that ticks me off. And you're going to cross over to that land but, hey, wait a minute here, why are you feeling all fat and sassy? Let me tell you something, you're going to cross over the Jordan and you're going to possess that land and once you get there you're going to get that fat and sassiness in you is going to get worse and worse, and you're going to rebel against God and when you rebel against God to a certain point, He's going to kick you out. But before He kicks you out, you're going to hear some tongue speaking. Before He kicks you out, you're going to hear people speaking in tongues."

Now let's see. Let's see. All right, now verse 47, Deuteronomy 28:47, page 235, "Because you did not serve the LORD your God with joy and gladness," you mean God expects you to be happy in church? Absolutely. I mean, really, seriously. "Because you did not serve the LORD your God with joy and gladness of heart, for the abundance of everything," I mean you're going into this land with milk and honey, cities you didn't even build, you're getting to take over all the stuff, all this incredible wealth is going to come to you, you'd better be happy. Shut up or I'll give you something to cry about. You'd better be happy. Be happy. I'm going to load you with so many blessings you're not going to believe. He said, "But I tell you what," Moses said, "Listen, I know you. I lived with your mommas and daddys for 40 years, I know you." And he said, "You're going to start grumbling and griping just like your mommas and daddys did in the wilderness." And he said, "When you don't serve the Lord with joy and gladness, this is what's going to happen."

Verse 48, "therefore you shall serve your enemies, whom the LORD will send against you, in hunger, in thirst, in nakedness, and in need of everything; and He will put a yoke of iron on your neck until He has destroyed you." But before I destroy you, I'm going to let you hear the gift of tongues. Hold on now. Hold on. Verse 49, "The LORD will bring a nation against you from afar, from the end of the earth, as swift as the eagle flies, a nation whose language you will not understand." In other words, they're speaking in an unknown tongue.

Let me give you an example of that. Isaiah the prophet writes of this very thing, in fact, it's one of the few incidents in the Old Testament that is recorded in three places, it's

recorded in 2 Kings, 2 Chronicles and in Isaiah. Samaria, the northern kingdom, has fallen to the Assyrian Empire and old Sennacherib has sent the Rabshakeh to negotiate with King Hezekiah for King Hezekiah to surrender and King Hezekiah won't surrender. He's already conquered 46 cities in Judea. He wants to take the whole thing but Jerusalem is standing in the way and so he sends the Rabshakeh and the language of the Babylonian Empire is Aramaic, a form of Aramaic and not Hebrew, but the Rabshakeh is a clever man and he's able to speak in Hebrew and so he starts speaking in Hebrew to the people up on the walls. Well, the negotiators go down and, you know, white flag, they want to talk, they have a truce to talk and say, "Look, you don't need to speak in Hebrew. We understand Aramaic." And so the Rabshakeh then bypasses them and starts yelling to the guys on the walls and says, "Hey," he said, "I'm not speaking in Aramaic just to you." He said, "Do you think I'm interested in talking to you? I'm talking to those guys on the wall and I'm talking to them in Hebrew because they're going to eat their own dung and drink their own urine." That's in the Bible? Yeah, it's in the Bible. You ought to read it. Three different places, 2 Chronicles, 2 Kings and Isaiah. But what did it sound like when the Rabshakeh wasn't talking? What did it sound like to the soldiers on the wall as they listened? They're speaking in tongues down there. They've got a big tongues meeting going on down there at the foot of the wall. And what is it? All those Assyrian soldiers they're from Iraq and other places in the Assyrian Empire and they're speaking in all these tongues and we don't understand them. But listen, Moses says that's a warning sign to you. Trouble is coming. You're listening to the unknown tongue.

So what happens? Before Samaria fell in 722 BC, the northern kingdom of Israel had the gift of tongues come to it in a manifestation of tongues. It was real foreign languages but it's languages they didn't understand and they sounded like gibberish, they sounded like baby talk as in Isaiah 28. Then in the year 586 BC, the Neo-Babylonian Empire conquered the city of Jerusalem but before the city of Jerusalem fell, there were numerous encounters with tongue speakers, people who spoke Babylonian and so, again, a form of Aramaic. And so they're hearing this tongue speaking going on. They don't understand it. It sounds like gibberish to them. It sounds like nonsense to them but it's a curse on them. It's a warning that the curses of Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28 are about to occur and Isaiah picks that theme up.

Now let's go back to 1 Corinthians 14. No, let's don't leave there yet. Verse 49 warns us that when the Jewish people would hear tongue speaking, that is, these foreign languages, it was an omen, "Baby, it's about over. You'd better repent and seek God with all your heart and brokenness or it's too late." You know, Jeremiah was still telling him that. He's saying to King Zedekiah, "Zedekiah, it's not too late. If you will repent and seek the Lord, it's not too late. They're having these big tongues meetings right outside the walls of Jerusalem but it's not too late." But Zedekiah wouldn't listen and so finally they destroyed Jerusalem in 586.

So the omen that destruction is about to happen is verse 49. Now here's the destruction, verse 50. Boy, this is something, "a nation," he says, "whose language you will not understand," verse 50, "a nation of fierce countenance, which does not respect the elderly nor show favor to the young. And they shall eat the increase of your livestock and the

produce of your land, until you are destroyed; they shall not leave you grain or new wine or oil, or the increase of your cattle or the offspring of your flocks, until they have destroyed you." Verse 52, "They shall besiege you at all your gates until your high and fortified walls, in which you trust, come down throughout all your land; and they shall besiege you at all your gates throughout all your land which the LORD your God has given you." Now look at this, I've read this before, I'm only going to read one of the verses but this is the most ghastly curse that God ever visits on a people. This is a ghastly curse. It is the ghastliest curse that God ever visits and it's preceded by an outbreak of tongue speaking. Here's the ghastly curse, verse 53, ""You shall eat the fruit of your own body, the flesh of your sons and your daughters whom the LORD your God has given you, in the siege and desperate straits in which your enemy shall distress you." All that is preceded by God's final warning, speaking in tongues, Assyrian or a form of Aramaic, Neo-Babylonian, a form of Aramaic.

Then we turn back to 1 Corinthians 14 and I find it striking that Paul in the middle of talking about the pros and cons of speaking in tongues in public, which is a different matter from speaking in tongues in private, says in verse 20, page 1,322, "Brethren, do not be children in understanding; however, in malice be babes, but in understanding be mature." Verse 21, page 1,322, this is when it's all going to come together for you in Jesus' name. In verse 21, "In the law it is written: 'With men of other tongues and other lips I will speak to this people; And yet, for all that, they will not hear Me,' says the Lord. Therefore tongues are for a sign, not to those who believe but to unbelievers." What's he saying? Let's put it in redemptive time. In redemptive time this is midway in the first century of the Christian era. The Lord Jesus Christ gave a prophesy in the year 30 AD. In the year 30 AD his disciples asked him about the beautiful temple in Jerusalem and Jesus said, "Do you see this? Not one stone will be left standing on another." And they ask him, "When will this be?" And he begins to tell them and he tells them these words, he said, "Heaven and earth will pass away but My words will not pass away." And he said, "All these things will come upon this generation. This generation will not pass away." Well, in the Bible a generation is 40 years and rather than trying to do all kind of linguistic tricks and not see the obvious import and meaning of Jesus' plain words, people try to dance around it this way or that, Jesus prophesied that within 40 years, or within a generation, Jerusalem, as they had known it, would cease to exist, and in the year 66 AD, the Jewish people revolted against the tyranny of Rome and they were defeated again and again until finally the city of Jerusalem is under siege, and once again they hear tongues. The tongues this time are things like Latin but there are also people that are speaking Aramaic, which they understood, and some of these other languages of the Roman Empire, Germanic languages. And they're hearing these languages and they're holding on and finally the city is destroyed and on the 9th day of Av, the same day of the same month that the first temple was destroyed and according to the Talmud of the same day of the same month that the spies returned with a negative report from spying out the land, the temple is destroyed.

And in my meager coin collection, I have a Roman silver coin that is minted with silver from the Jewish temple in 70 AD. How do we know that? Because on the backside of that coin, that Roman coin, is a picture of a woman underneath a menorah, the seven branched

candlestick, and in Latin it says, "Judea weeping." The Romans were happy that the Jews were weeping. The Romans were cruel to the Jewish people. Here is the point, the point is that between Jesus' prophecy and the destruction of the city of Jerusalem and the temple came the gift of tongues, and the gift of tongues in Acts 2 is both a sign of blessing, turn back there with me, if you will, is both a sign of blessing and a warning of judgment to come. Let's look at Acts 2 in closing. Acts 2. He quotes in verse 16 from Joel's prophecy, page 1,253. St. Peter is talking and he says, "but this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel," and he goes through and he prophesies beautiful blessings. The gift of tongues is a sign of blessing to believers. But then turn the page, page 1,254, verse 19, it's also a sign of things to come that are not good. Verse 19, "I will show wonders in heaven above, signs in the earth beneath, blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, the moon into blood before the coming of the great and awesome day of the Lord."

Do you know that all of those signs that are mentioned there in Joel and quoted by Peter according to an eyewitness account of what happened in the first century happened in the first century AD? Josephus, who was a Jewish General who went over to the side of the Romans when he realized the fight was pointless, wrote of these phenomena. They occurred. But these phenomena are also in time phenomena, they point to the return of the Lord, they point to the judgment of God. Now here is the heart of the whole matter: whenever the manifestation of tongue speaking has occurred en masse, it's part of the curse sign of Leviticus 26, Deuteronomy 28 quoted in Jeremiah, quoted in Isaiah, and quoted by St. Paul. So here's what happens: the supernatural spiritual gift of the gift of tongues manifested in Acts 2 and also, to a degree, manifested in 1 Corinthians 13, 12 and 14, is connected to the omen of the warning of things to come.

Now I have an observation that I will share with you in closing that you need to take home and think about. There are many things that I say that I want you to just take home and think about it. I'm not going to say it dogmatically. As a student of history and especially of church history, I can tell you that the gift of tongues has continued throughout the history of the Christian church but it was not widespread. It occurred here and there, pockets here, pockets there. For example, in the 17th century the Presbyterians in France practiced speaking in tongues very similarly to what you might find in modern situations, but massive manifestation of the gift of tongues has only happened occasionally in church history. Here is something I want you to think about. I was born in the 1940s. Sometime after I was born, the modern state of Israel was formed, 1948. Something else happened. As I say, tongue speaking has occurred throughout history here and there. In the early days of the 20th century as in other times in the 19th century and other times, there were manifestations of tongues. For example, the Azusa Street thing that happened in California, but that was with a very limited group of people. But something happened that seems to parallel the rise of the state of Israel and it is what we call the Charismatic movement which is taking something that was kind of in the backroom and that was not widely known and bringing it into the mainstream, and so that in the '50s and in the '60s this comes into the mainstream American church oftentimes with great controversy because people did not practice it according to the commandments of Scripture.

So I'm standing here and I'm reflecting on this. Is there a connection between the recreation of the state of Israel in the last half of the 20th century and the proliferation of a phenomenon that purports to be the same phenomenon of Acts 2 and 1 Corinthians 12, 13 and 14? If there is, then here is the point. Israel is back in the land but not with the protection of the blood of the covenant because, remember that Jesus prophesied that the temple would be destroyed, that not one stone would be left standing on another, and never forget what the covenant tells us, what the Torah itself tells us – without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins. In other words, Israel is in the land and God is doing all kinds of good things for Israel but Israel is not under the benign protection of the blood of the covenant because the blood has ceased to be shed, the temple has been destroyed, Israel is naked without the blood of the covenant. If that's true, then tongue speaking serves as it served in Leviticus 26, Deuteronomy 28, Isaiah 28, Jeremiah 5, and as St. Paul said in the first century, as an omen of the judgment of God. When tongue speaking is heard whether it's people naturally speaking in foreign languages or whether it's a supernatural event as in Acts 2 and 1 Corinthians 12, 13 and 14, it is a signpost that says the covenant that God made with Israel at Mount Sinai and renewed on the plains of Moab is still in effect, and that covenant is not only good and pregnant with blessing but it also has evil within it and is pregnant with a curse, and the warning that the curse is about to be executed is speaking in tongues. If that's true, and I say I want you to just think about it, if that's true, it ought to give you a heart for the Jewish people.

How sad that the very people that God chose to bring the Redeemer of the world into the world, the very people that God chose to give us the Holy Scripture, not only the Tanak but the new covenant came through the Jewish people. How sad it would be that if the mass of the people hearing speaking in tongues going on worldwide, North America, South America and all around, should fail to understand that it's an omen that it's time to repent and seek the Lord with all our heart. Pray for the peace of Jerusalem. May they prosper who love you. Do you pray for the peace of Jerusalem? When you pray for the peace of Jerusalem, you're praying that the Jewish people hearing the unknown tongue of the people around them, and sometimes the supernatural phenomenon, would be quickened to remember Deuteronomy 28, Leviticus 26, and the words of the prophets and to seek the Lord because the prophet says, Zechariah says, "One day they will look on Him whom they have pierced and they will mourn as someone mourns for an only child."

Pray for Jerusalem. Pray for peace. Pray that they will know along with their Arab brothers the Prince of Peace. And pray for your country, my country, because without the blood of the covenant washing away our sins, the curse is still on us. The only way to get out from under the curse is to accept that Jesus became a curse for us. Have you come to Jesus? Have you been to Jesus for the cleansing power? Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb? There's no other protection. Dear ones, when the judgment of God finally is released on the world, as it is about to be again but this time in an unprecedented way, there's only one place where you can call on the name of the Lord with the confidence that he will protect you and deliver you and it's the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Won't you come to him if you don't know him? And, oh, what a treasure to know the Lord Jesus

Christ. To know him is to have all of the promises of the Tanak sealed to us by the blood of the seed of Abraham, the Lord Jesus Christ, and all of the negative consequences of it washed away by the blood of the Lamb.

May we pray.

Lord, we pray for the Jewish people. We pray for Arab people. We pray for the Gentile nations of which we are a part here in the United States and the Western world, that before this last great coming day of God comes, the great and final day of the Lord when the Lord Jesus comes, when the trumpet sounds and the archangels shout and the dead in Christ rise, Lord, when the great gulf is finally fixed when no one can pass from one side to the other, we pray, Lord, that we would look at the phenomena in the world both natural and supernatural and see in these things a call to repent of our sins, our stiffneckedness, our unbelief, our hardness of heart, and to come to You as You are offered to us in the gospel of Jesus. Lord, we thank You that there is refuge there that is sure and absolute. In Jesus' name. Amen.