

The Phenomenon of Speaking in Tongues
By Harold Camping

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In the Bible, God repeatedly describes the nature of the sin of the church. Much that is unbiblical goes on in congregations and denominations today. This is not apostasy in sects and cults, which obviously are under the power of Satan; rather, it is in evangelical, Bible-related churches. To our utter consternation, these sins apply to a high degree to many of the most conservative contemporary churches and denominations.

In the Bible, we can learn how God planned to eventually destroy the New Testament church as it became increasingly sinful. It was not by political action. It was not by an ideology like Communism. It was by satanic activity working through false gospels that looked so much like the true Gospel that even the elect would be deceived, if that were possible.

God Uses Satan to Destroy

The Bible discloses that right near the end of time, Satan will become the dominant ruler within the congregations. In II Thessalonians 2, God speaks of the man of sin taking his seat in the temple. It will be seen that the man of sin can be only Satan. Matthew 24:24: “For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.”

In Revelation 13:7, God informs us: “And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations.” Revelation 13 speaks of the beast that comes out of the earth. This can be only Satan and his dominion, as he rules through false gospels. By this means, he is able to destroy the churches that are under the judgment of God. Thus, he is able to overcome the saints, the true believers, within the congregations.

Destruction of the New Testament church was not through political action but through the action of the church itself as it became apostate. Clues and guidance as to how this happened can be learned from God's dealings with ancient Israel, because Israel is a type, figure, or representation of the New Testament church. What happened in the nation of Israel gives insight as to what happened to the congregations of our day.

Do you recall that after the death of Solomon, God divided the twelve tribes of Israel into two nations? Ten of the tribes became a nation called Israel which had its capital in Samaria. Two of the tribes, Judah and Benjamin, became the nation of Judah which had its capital in Jerusalem. God had set up a testing program for both of these nations. The testing program involved contemporary nations. During the days of the demise of the ten tribes, the testing program involved the nation of Assyria. The nation of Israel looked with longing at the beautiful horses and the beautiful apparel of the Assyrians and decided that their gods must be victorious gods. They began to play spiritual harlotry with Assyria. They began to run after the gods of the Assyrians, a nation whose language they did not understand, and God used the Assyrians to destroy Israel.

Then the nation of Judah began to play spiritual harlotry with the gods of the Babylonians and the Assyrians. They looked at the success of these nations (the beautiful horses and the beautiful apparel), and all that went along with it, and Judah began to lust after their gods. Babylon, too, was a nation whose language they did not understand. It was this nation that destroyed Judah in 587 B.C. This is the scenario that God gives to guide us into truth concerning the destruction of the New Testament church.

God's Long-Term Testing Program for the Church

The principle of a testing program is found repeatedly in the Bible. Israel, for example, was tested by God when Moses left them for forty days to receive the tables of the law on Mt. Sinai. Israel failed the test by making and worshipping the golden calf. As a result, God's wrath came upon them and about 3,000 men were killed (Exodus 32).

The number 40 in the Bible, or a multiple of ten of the number 40 such as 400, may be a clue that a testing program is in progress. Israel was in the wilderness forty years after coming out of Egypt. They failed the test; few of them trusted in God. The Bible records in Joshua 5:6:

For the children of Israel walked forty years in the wilder-

ness, till all the people that were men of war, which came out of Egypt, were consumed, because they obeyed not the voice of the LORD: unto whom the LORD sware that he would not shew them the land, which the LORD sware unto their fathers that he would give us, a land that floweth with milk and honey.

Significantly, it can be shown that there were exactly 400 years from the time when Israel came out of Egypt (1447 B.C.), and Saul became king over Israel (1047 B.C.). The latter occurred in the days of Samuel, who was the last of God's prophets to judge Israel. When Samuel was old, Israel came to him and asked for a king to rule over them. I Samuel 8:4-7:

Then all the elders of Israel gathered themselves together, and came to Samuel unto Ramah, And said unto him, Behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways: now make us a king to judge us like all the nations. But the thing displeased Samuel, when they said, Give us a king to judge us. And Samuel prayed unto the LORD. And the LORD said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them.

Saul became king exactly 400 years after Israel, under the direct rule of God, came out of Egypt. They failed the test in that they did not want God to rule over them directly.

Another interesting testing program in relation to the number 40 is in the Book of Jonah. Jonah was instructed to cry against Nineveh because of their wickedness (Jonah 1:2). Jonah 3:4: "And Jonah began to enter into the city a day's journey, and he cried, and said, Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown."

Wonderfully, the people of Nineveh were victorious in their test. Jonah 3:5 and 10 report: "So the people of Nineveh believed God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them. . . . And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did it not."

Perhaps the greatest testing program of all occurred in the New Testament, when the Lord Jesus Christ took on a human nature and was tested.

Luke 4:1-2:

And Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness. Being forty days tempted of the devil. And in those days he did eat nothing: and when they were ended, he afterward hungered.

The first Adam was tested in the Garden of Eden, and the second Adam, Christ, was also tested. The first Adam failed the test by disobeying God and thus plunged the human race into sin, but our Lord was victorious in the test. He remained entirely obedient to God. His perfect obedience has made the incomprehensible Kingdom of God a reality for all who believe on Him. Obviously, the principle that God tests the human race is firmly established in the Bible.

The church faced a testing program. Unfortunately, the Bible reveals that the church in large measure will fail its testing program, just as Adam and Eve failed in their day and as ancient Israel repeatedly did. The church will fail the test and will come under God's wrath, just as God's judgment came when Adam and Eve failed the test.

One of God's Final Testing Program

One of the testing program that identifies with the church will be focused on a nation whose language the congregation did not understand. God gives at least two prominent clues in the Old Testament as to the nature of this final testing program. The first clue is in Deuteronomy 13:1-3:

If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder, And the sign or the wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them; Thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: for the LORD your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul.

God clearly says that He is proving, that is, testing the congregation through the activity of a false prophet within their midst. We should know about the character of this prophet and the nature of his teaching.

The introduction to Chapter 13 of Deuteronomy is the last verse of Deuteronomy 12, where God admonishes the congregation: “What thing soever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it.” God says that man shall not add to nor take away from the Word of God. To recognize the Word of God as His Word and have an intense desire to be obedient to it, is, in fact, worshipping God. On the other hand, to believe that there is an additional source of divine information (to believe that a dream, vision, or tongue is from God when, indeed, it is not), that effectively is worshipping a god other than the God of the Bible.

God gives the same warning in the New Testament, in Revelation 22:18-19:

For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.

“This book” can be only the Bible. The Bible alone and in its entirety is the Word of God. Any additional articulated, verbalized message supposedly from God which is delivered through a dream, vision, or by any other means, is an addition to the Bible. Because God is not adding anything to the divine revelation which is the Bible, if anyone listens to these messages and believes they are of God, he effectively is worshipping a god other than the God of the Bible. God warns in verse 18 that anyone who commits this sin is subject to the plagues written in the Bible; that is, he is subject to eternal damnation.

Deuteronomy 13 says the false prophet is a dreamer of dreams, that is, he is convinced that what he hears in his dreams is of God. The sign or the wonder, the prophetic statement of his dream or vision, comes to pass; therefore, he believes he has received a supernatural visitation, but because the message he received was not from God, it had to be from Satan. When he teaches that the message he received in a dream or vision was from God and, therefore, is the Word of God, he is encouraging people to go after a god other than the God of the Bible. This is a deadly serious sin within the congregation. Deuteronomy 13 says that this prophet is to be put to death even if he is a loved one of someone in the congregation.

The key phrases in these verses in Deuteronomy 13 are, “for the Lord your God proveth you” (or tests you) and “to know whether ye love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul.” These phrases teach something about one of God’s final testing program for the church. God clearly says that He will test the congregation by allowing those who say they declare the Word of God but who are false prophets (because their source is other than the Bible), to be within the congregation.

I Corinthians 14 Gives a Clue Concerning This Testing Program

The second Old Testament clue to this testing program that will come against the church is that which came against ancient Israel. The signpost to this clue is in the New Testament, I Corinthians 14:21: “In the law it is written, With men of other tongues and other lips will I speak unto this people; and yet for all that will they not hear me, saith the Lord.”

To understand this clue, one must know the setting in which it is found. I Corinthians 14 discusses the phenomenon of tongues, which was present in the church at Corinth. Certain individuals there received from God, as a gift of the Holy Spirit, messages in a language (a tongue), which neither they nor anyone else in the congregation could understand. In I Corinthians 14:2 God speaks of these as “in the spirit he speaketh mysteries.”

Additionally, within that congregation God gave certain individuals the gift of interpretation. By means of this God-given gift, the message received in the tongue was made understandable to the congregation. I Corinthians 14:5 informs us that when the tongues message was interpreted, it edified the congregation.

This was a valid spiritual event in the church at Corinth. They had only that part of the Bible which is now called the Old Testament. God was still breaking the silence between the supernatural and the natural when He gave messages to Paul, John, Peter, and Agabus (Acts 11:28). Because these messages were from God, they were an addition to the Word of God. The New Testament had not yet been completed; even with these additions, the churches of that day had an incomplete Word of God.

During the same time when it was possible for the apostles to receive direct messages from God, there were individuals in the church of Corinth who received messages from God in a tongue. The messages could have been in the form of a prayer, praise, or a revelation. Howbeit,

it was a message from God, therefore, it was an addition to the written Word of that time.

In the center of the discourse on the phenomenon of tongues (I Corinthians 14:21), is a reference to the Old Testament law wherein God had written that through tongues He would speak to the people and they would not listen. God speaks about tongues in Deuteronomy 28. Moses addressed Israel when they were about to enter the promised land. He warned them that they would not be content with the Gospel he brought them, “Because thou servedst not the LORD thy God with joyfulness, and with gladness of heart, for the abundance of all things” (Deuteronomy 28:47). The result of their rebellion against God was punishment. This is declared in the remaining verses of Deuteronomy 28. Verses 48 and 49 summarize the warning:

Therefore shalt thou serve thine enemies which the LORD shall send against thee, in hunger, and in thirst, and in nakedness, and in want of all things: and he shall put a yoke of iron upon thy neck, until he have destroyed thee. The LORD shall bring a nation against thee from far, from the end of the earth, as swift as the eagle flieth; a nation whose tongue thou shalt not understand.

This is the passage of law referred to in I Corinthians 14 in regards to the tongues phenomenon. The ten tribes of Israel were destroyed by their enemy the nation of Assyria after Israel had engaged in spiritual harlotry with the Assyrians. As a result of their spiritual rebellion, God caused the nation of Assyria, a nation whose language Israel did not understand, to destroy them. God gave a final warning of this a few years before it happened. The warning is found in Isaiah 28:11-12.

For with stammering lips and another tongue will he speak to this people. To whom he said, This is the rest wherewith ye may cause the weary to rest; and this is the refreshing: yet they would not hear.

The sequel to God’s judgment on Israel occurred 122 years later. The nation of Judah ran like a harlot after Babylon, a heathen nation whose language they did not understand, and Babylon is the nation that destroyed Judah in the year 587 B.C. A few years earlier they had been warned by the prophet Jeremiah. Jeremiah 5:15-17:

Lo, I will bring a nation upon you from far, O house of Israel, saith the LORD; it is a mighty nation, it is an ancient nation, a nation whose language thou knowest not, neither understandest what they say. Their quiver is as an open sepulchre, they are all mighty men. And they shall eat up thine harvest, and thy bread, which thy sons and thy daughters should eat: they shall eat up thy flocks and thine herds: they shall eat up thy vines and thy fig trees: they shall impoverish thy fenced cities, wherein thou trustedst, with the sword.

God is focusing on a nation “whose language thou knowest not.” This passage, too, is referred to in the ominous language of I Corinthians 14:21.

Two Important Principles

Deuteronomy 13, Deuteronomy 28, I Corinthians 14, and God’s judgment are obviously tied to the church when two important principles are considered.

The first principle is that ancient Israel was a picture or type of the New Testament church. God’s judgment on Israel for their spiritual adultery sheds light on the nature of God’s judgment on the New Testament church for its spiritual rebellion.

The second principle is that God sets up testing programs for mankind. In Deuteronomy 13 it is seen that within the church a testing program will involve false prophets who receive supernatural messages. These false prophets will encourage the congregations to go after other gods by revealing their supernatural experiences, which come from a source other than God. These two Biblical principles give understanding as to how God judges the end-time church.

Tongues: One of the Final Testing Program

The question might be raised: Why does God write extensively in I Corinthians 12, 13, and 14 about the phenomenon of tongues? One might be surprised to read in the Bible about this temporary phenomenon. A few decades after this phenomenon occurred in the church in Corinth, the visions of the Book of Revelation were received by the Apostle John on the Island of Patmos. The Book of Revelation closes with the warning that anyone who adds to its words will be subject to plagues; therefore,

there can be no further revelation from God by visions, voices, tongues, or anything else. Thus, the phenomenon of tongues that occurred in the church at Corinth would also have come to an end. From that time to the present day, do not expect God to bring a message by these means or by any means other than what He has given us in the Bible.

It appears that the phenomenon of tongues from God was short-lived and confined only to the church at Corinth. It was an incidental matter even in that day; thus, the question persists: Why did God write extensively about it?

The answer lies in the realization that one of these three chapters of I Corinthians discuss the matter of tongues as one of God's final testing arena for the church. God planted the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in the Garden of Eden, and it was the testing arena of our first parents. Satan saw his opportunity in that testing program to tempt and enslave man in sin. In the warning and testing program of Deuteronomy 13, God allows a false prophet to deceive some people within the congregation. God sets up the testing programs, but it is Satan who uses the tests as opportunities to lead people astray.

God has established the phenomenon of tongues, recorded in I Corinthians 12, 13, and 14, as a testing arena for the church. God gave the true gift of tongues briefly in the church at Corinth so that the churches' fidelity or infidelity to the Word of God could be discovered.

Adam and Eve were permitted to eat of every tree of the garden except one. God provided lavish blessings of fragrant and delicious fruits of the trees to satisfy the physical needs of man. Lucifer wanted man to serve Satan rather than God, and he tempted Adam and Eve into thinking they were missing something important if they did not taste the fruit of the one tree that had been placed off-limits.

Throughout the Bible, the church is reminded of the lavish blessings that attend salvation. The blessings are far more than anyone deserves; they are so wonderful that our hearts should continuously praise God. One minor, incidental blessing, briefly enjoyed by a few people in the church at Corinth (that is, being able to receive an additional message from God in an unknown language), was given before the magnificent blessings of the whole Word of God were available. God maximized His communicative blessings to mankind by giving us the entire record of His will (the New Testament and the Old Testament), and He placed off-limits the minor blessing enjoyed by the church at Corinth.

God, in His wisdom, retained the record; indeed He prominently displays the record of the phenomenon of tongues in the Bible. Its placement there makes it a testing arena for the church, just as the tree

of the knowledge of good and evil was the testing arena for the beginning of the human race.

Satan Uses Tongues to Destroy

Satan uses this testing arena as one of his final opportunities to win a decisive victory over Christ by defeating the external church. He defeated Adam and Eve by encouraging them to eat of the forbidden tree in the Garden of Eden. Likewise, he encourages the churches to enjoy the forbidden gift of tongues.

When God set up the testing arena in the Garden of Eden, He used language that made it easy, or at least paved the way, for Lucifer to tempt Eve. God did not give the forbidden tree a foreboding name like “forbidden” tree. God gave this tree the intriguing name “the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.” Certainly, such a title would cause Adam and Eve to wonder what mysterious power the fruit of this tree possessed. This is evidenced by Eve’s reaction to Satan’s enticements, in Genesis 3:6:

And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.

Satan stimulated Eve’s lustful thinking by making reference to the name God had given the tree. In Genesis 3:5 Satan declared to Eve: “For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.” Surely in giving this tree the name “the knowledge of good and evil,” God gave Satan a theme that he could use to tempt our first parents into sin.

God, of course, is not the author of sin, nor is He in any way guilty of sin. God did, however, design an insistent and valid testing program, in that the fruit appeared to be especially luscious (“the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes,” verse 6), and in the name that the tree was given.

God also made the testing arena for ancient Israel quite intensive. The ten tribes of the northern kingdom, called Israel, were destroyed by the Assyrians, a nation whose language they did not understand. While Israel was failing the test, God blessed the nation of Assyria: they conquered Syria (II Kings 16:9), and appeared to be the

nation with all the answers. Ezekiel 23:5-6:

And Aholah played the harlot when she was mine; and she doted on her lovers, on the Assyrians her neighbours, Which were clothed with blue, captains and rulers, all of them desirable young men, horsemen riding upon horses.

“Aholah” is another name for the capital of Israel, which was in Samaria. Assyria and its political successes and worldly achievements appeared to be the nation to emulate. Similarly, Judah, the southern kingdom with its capital in Jerusalem, was enamored by the beauty, power, and successes of both the Assyrians and the Babylonians.

The beauty, power, and political successes of Assyria and Babylon were the results of God’s blessings. These wicked nations were in total rebellion against God, yet God brought them to power and made them attractive to serve as testing programs for Israel and Judah.

Israel Goes to Assyria for Help

The Bible gives a vivid illustration of how God allowed a wicked nation like Assyria to appear to Israel to be a success story. During the days of Isaiah, Jerusalem was threatened by Israel and Syria. The situation was grave. II Chronicles 28 discloses the wickedness of Judah’s King Ahaz, and the resultant punishment God brought upon Judah by Israel and Syria. II Chronicles 28:5-6:

Wherefore the LORD his God delivered him into the hand of the king of Syria; and they smote him, and carried away a great multitude of them captives, and brought them to Damascus. And he was also delivered into the hand of the king of Israel, who smote him with a great slaughter. For Pekah the son of Remaliah slew in Judah an hundred and twenty thousand in one day, which were all valiant men; because they had forsaken the LORD God of their fathers.

The king of Judah, a wicked man named Ahaz, and all of Judah should have cried to God for help. They should have repented in sackcloth like Nineveh did when Jonah preached to them. They should have cried out to God as King Jehoshaphat did when the Moabites and the Ammonites came to destroy Judah (II Chronicles 20). Instead the Bible records that Judah went to Assyria for help. II Kings 16:7:

So Ahaz sent messengers to Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria, saying, I am thy servant and thy son: come up, and save me out of the hand of the king of Syria, and out of the hand of the king of Israel, which rise up against me.

They could not have more dramatically displayed their complete lack of trust in God. God rescued sinful Judah by wicked Assyria, as II Kings 16:9 declares: “And the king of Assyria hearkened unto him: for the king of Assyria went up against Damascus, and took it, and carried the people of it captive to Kir, and slew Rezin.”

Assyria conquered Syria. Until recent times, Syria had not been an independent nation. God used Assyria to destroy the ten tribes; they no longer existed as an independent kingdom. These two nations, Syria and the northern kingdom of Israel, therefore, were removed as a threat to Judah by the strength of the heathen nation Assyria.

The point of this information is that God brought successes to Assyria to intensify the testing program that was coming against Judah. The successes of Assyria in its flower, and Babylon in its flower, suggested that their gods were more powerful and more trustworthy than Jehovah God. God, for His divine purposes, gave Assyria the victory, but Judah was convinced that the superiority of the Assyrian gods made them victorious. This spiritual mentality is seen in the citation of II Chronicles 25:14 where another king of Judah, Amaziah, worshipped the gods of an enemy called Edom or Seir. This verse declares:

Now it came to pass, after that Amaziah was come from the slaughter of the Edomites, that he brought the gods of the children of Seir, and set them up to be his gods, and bowed down himself before them, and burned incense unto them.

II Chronicles 28:22-23 records similar action by the wicked King Ahaz:

And in the time of his distress did he trespass yet more against the LORD: this is that king Ahaz. For he sacrificed unto the gods of Damascus, which smote him: and he said, Because the gods of the kings of Syria help them, therefore will I sacrifice to them, that they may help me. But they were the ruin of him, and of all Israel.

God Intensifies the Testing Program

When God sets up a testing program, He strengthens the test by His choice of words or by allowing the enemies of God to appear to be successful. The same principles applied to one of God's final testing program for the church in relation to God's Word and in relation to the successes that God allowed the enemies of the Gospel to enjoy.

Three examples of words that God uses to indicate the severity of the test of tongues for the church are offered. First, God says that those who spoke in tongues in the Corinthian church were edified as they spoke these mysteries in the Spirit (I Corinthians 14:2-4). Surely anything that serves to edify or build up the faith of the individual believer is to be sought after but the context in which these words are found warns the reader to be careful.

Second, God declares in I Corinthians 14:39, "forbid not to speak with tongues." Does this teach that speaking in tongues is sinful? (See pages 29-31.)

The third example requires more explanation. In three of the four gospel accounts, Matthew, Mark, and John, the sin called blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is mentioned. It is also referred to in I John 5 as a "sin unto death." This sin is unusual in that those who commit it can never have forgiveness; that is, they can never become saved. Moreover, this sin is unusual in that God protects mankind from it to the point that it is virtually impossible to find anyone who has ever committed this sin.

However, the scribes of Jesus' day committed this sin. Mark 3:22 says of them: "And the scribes which came down from Jerusalem said, He hath Beelzebub, and by the prince of the devils casteth he out devils." In response to this grievous sin Jesus declares in Mark 3:28-29,

Verily I say unto you, All sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme: But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation.

In verse 30 He explains that the sin of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is to believe that Christ was under the power of Satan rather than under the power of the Holy Spirit. The scribes who hated Jesus and desired His death had committed this dreadful sin; they were convinced that He was of Satan. They had no desire to look upon Him as their Messiah.

The Bible mentions only that the scribes in Mark 3 and Matthew 12 have committed this sin. The most hardened sinner today ordinarily would not become convicted that Jesus received His power from Satan. There may be those in the world who have committed this sin, but if they have, they will never worry about Christ being their Savior. Anyone who has the slightest interest in Jesus as Savior could not have committed this dreadful sin.

Why did God put an extensive record of this sin in the Bible? Its presence in the Bible has produced much sorrow for true believers who have been incorrectly taught that the sin of blasphemy of the Holy Spirit is to reject Christ. Many true believers when young repeatedly rejected Christ. They have become saved in their later years, but are haunted by the question: Can I be saved? One reason for recording this sin in the Bible was to increase the severity of the testing program concerning tongues of the church in its final days.

A simple extension of the incorrect idea of what blasphemy of the Holy Spirit means could be the wrong conclusion that anyone who believed that a church was under the power of Satan had committed this terrible sin. In other words, it might be said that if someone examined a particular gospel or church and decided that it was of Satan, by that judgment he was in danger of having committed blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. This conclusion is erroneous but widely taught by those who believe in tongues. Few dare to make the judgment that a “tongues gospel” is of Satan. Almost no one dares to conclude that a gospel can be a product of Satan when it claims that Christ is the Savior. As a result, the “tongues gospel” was protected from criticism even by those who wanted to remain true to the Bible. In fear of blaspheming the Holy Spirit, they are forced to acknowledge that even though they disagreed with many doctrines of the “tongues gospel,” it must be considered an aspect of the true Gospel. This, in turn, encouraged many people to follow the “tongues gospel.” Thus, God has built characteristics into the tongues testing program that make it appear safe in its identification with the true Gospel.

The correct understanding of the sin of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is to believe that Jesus, when He came as the Savior, was under the power of Satan.

The Success of the Tongues Movement

An ever-increasing number of individuals and congregations all over the world fail this testing program. The tongues movement, also called the “charismatic movement,” is sweeping through churches like

wildfire. Virtually every denomination has churches that have welcomed it with open arms.

For generations, attempts have been made to unify various faiths and denominations; however, no attempt has made progress like the charismatic movement. Roman Catholics, Lutherans, Presbyterians, Methodists, Baptists, all gospels that identify with the Christian ethic, find brotherhood under the charismatic banner. To those who embrace the tongues phenomenon, it appears to be a wonderful demonstration of the power of the Holy Spirit.

The Bible guides us into truth; we can know the facts. The local church is apostate. Consequently, God is blinding people so that they believed this movement is of the Holy Spirit. They do not realize that it is of Satan. By means of this phenomenon, Satan appears to be defeating the true Gospel to a degree never before realized.

Indeed, God brought judgment on the Old Testament church (Israel and Judah), by nations whose language Israel did not understand, nations with whom Israel had engaged in spiritual harlotry. God used these nations to destroy Israel and Judah. Likewise, churches and denominations of today are engaging in grievous spiritual harlotry by blindly running after gospels that feature an unknown language called "tongues." These false gospels are being used of God as a judgment on the church.

Congregations will continue to exist. They may appear to be more vibrant and spiritually successful than ever. It may appear that the cause of Christ is advancing all over the world: Crusades attended in ever-increasing numbers, churches filled to capacity, seminaries with more prospective preachers. Nevertheless, it must be realized that the church is under God's judgment. The abomination of desolation stands in the holy place. The man of sin has taken his seat in the temple.

Two important characteristics always appear to be present in the tongues movement: First, acceptance of the principle that God is still speaking today. Additional revelation, it is believed, may be revealed through an unknown language called tongues, a vision, a dream, or by hearing a voice. Invariably where there is an interest in dreams and visions, there is an interest in tongues. Likewise, wherever there is an interest in tongues, there is an interest in dreams and visions. The true Gospel is circumscribed by the authority of the Bible alone and in its entirety. The "tongues gospel" has as its authority the Bible plus the messages that supposedly come from God in a tongue, dream, vision, or voice. It is easy to know that it is not the true Gospel, and if it is not the true Gospel, it is a false gospel.

Signs and Wonders

The second characteristic of the tongues movement is an interest in signs and wonders. There is a conviction that God is performing miracles today, as our Lord and the twelve apostles did signs and wonders. Miraculous healing is most commonly expected. The sign of people falling backward (being “slain in the spirit” as some call it), is evidence of a supernatural event. While so-called miraculous healing can be explained in earthly, physical terms, falling backwards appears to be unexplainable from an earthly, physical vantage point.

The phenomenon of someone appearing to receive a message from God in a tongue or vision, etc., may actually have a physical explanation. It could be an hallucination or it could be related to the individual’s subconscious mind. Also, it could be supernatural activity induced by Satan; he captivates the hearts of those who are not content with the true Gospel. When it is a supernatural activity, it should be called a sign or a wonder because God calls the activity of speaking in tongues a sign in I Corinthians 14:22.

Significantly, the Bible makes reference to “signs and wonders” in connection with the end of time. The fact that these references have nothing to do with the true eternal church is of great importance. Every reference relates to satanic activity. For example, in Matthew 24:24: “For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.” This verse indicates that false prophets will come with a gospel that is so much like the true Gospel that even the elect would be deceived, if that were possible. The elect are the true believers; they were chosen by God to salvation. They cannot be deceived because God will hold them fast. False prophets can be recognized by their signs and wonders. In II Thessalonians 2:9 God warns of the man of sin who will take his seat in the temple: “Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders.”

In Revelation 13, in reference to Satan coming as a false prophet, God warns in verses 13-14:

And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live.

In Revelation 16:14, God speaks of satanic activity just before Judgment Day:

For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.

God shows in these references that He brought His judgment on the local churches through false gospels that feature miracles. Therefore, signs and wonders are prominent in churches with false gospels. When Christ came with the true Gospel, He attested to its genuineness by performing miracles. John 20:30-31:

And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.

As Satan came to the local churches with his false gospels that feature tongues, he, too, attempted to attest to their genuineness with signs and wonders. Only two miracles are credited to him in the Bible: First, his ability to break the silence between the supernatural and the natural with messages in tongues and visions; and second, he can supernaturally cause people to fall backward. To add further credence to these gospels, Satan came with lying signs and wonders; that is, his adherents claimed to do miracles and believed miracles had been done, when there was no miracle.

Modern means of communication such as television enhanced the spread of these false gospels. People who worshiped in churches became familiar with the blandishments and enticements of false gospels in the privacy of their homes. With no one knowing, they drank deeply of the poisoned water, and as the plague entered their churches, they were prepared to accept it as an aspect of the true Gospel.

The destruction of the church, to a high degree, was accomplished through the testing program of tongues. In blindness, a church failed the test as Satan deceived the congregation into accepting the false gospels of tongues and signs and wonders. Thus, congregations will continue to exist during the final tribulation period. Those who remain within the congregations in reality will be serving Satan even though they think they are serving Christ.

Fire from Heaven

In Numbers 16 we read of the rebellion against Moses lead by three men, Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. We read in Numbers 16:2-3:

And they rose up before Moses, with certain of the children of Israel, two hundred and fifty princes of the assembly, famous in the congregation, men of renown: And they gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron, and said unto them, Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the LORD is among them: wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the LORD?

The consequences of this rebellion were that the earth opened up and swallowed the families of the three men and the destruction by fire of the 250 men who rebelled. Numbers 16:35: "And there came out a fire from the LORD, and consumed the two hundred and fifty men that offered incense." The next day the Israelites complained. Numbers 16:41: "But on the morrow all the congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron, saying, Ye have killed the people of the LORD." As a result of this added rebellion on the part of Israel, God sent a plague into Israel that began to kill the Israelites in great numbers. Only the timely intervention of Aaron in making an atonement for Israel kept God from killing all of Israel. We read of this terrible judgment and its remedy in Numbers 16:45-48:

Get you up from among this congregation, that I may consume them as in a moment. And they fell upon their faces. And Moses said unto Aaron, Take a censer, and put fire therein from off the altar, and put on incense, and go quickly unto the congregation, and make an atonement for them: for there is wrath gone out from the LORD; the plague is begun. And Aaron took as Moses commanded, and ran into the midst of the congregation; and, behold, the plague was begun among the people: and he put on incense, and made an atonement for the people. And he stood between the dead and the living; and the plague was stayed.

In this account, rebellious Israel is representative of mankind, who have rebelled against God. The plague that killed a great many of the Israelites and the fire that came down and destroyed the 250 men

point to the judgment of God that will destroy all of the unsaved. The atonement offered by Aaron as well as Aaron himself, as he stood between the dead and the living, represent Christ who stopped the wrath of God from falling on all those for whom He made atonement. Thus, we see much of the Gospel of salvation in this account.

Does Satan Make Fire Come from Heaven?

In Revelation 13:13, the Bible discloses that the beast “maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men.” Does this mean that at some point in time, Satan will be able to literally make fire come down from heaven? Allow me to suggest that this phenomenon is presently happening in many places in the world, but it is not a literal fire, it is an activity that is the equivalent of calling down fire from heaven. Let us search the Bible to see how this can be.

In two outstanding examples in which Satan, through his emissaries, threatened believers, fire came down from heaven to destroy the wicked ones.

In II Kings 1, we read of the wicked king of Israel sending a captain with 50 men to take Elijah. In the face of Satan’s open assault on believers, Elijah, who represents believers, called down fire from heaven and the captain and 50 men were destroyed.

In Revelation 20, we read of Satan assaulting the camp of the saints by means of the nations from the four corners of the earth, and fire came down from heaven to destroy these nations.

There was another time when Satan assaulted the kingdom of God and fire should have been called down from heaven to destroy him. Instead, a different action was taken to show that Satan could have been destroyed by fire. That action, therefore, became the equivalent of calling down fire from heaven.

The event was when Jesus was in the Garden of Gethsemane, and Judas and the temple soldiers came to take Jesus. Satan himself was there, because a bit earlier, he had entered into Judas (Luke 22:3). Satan was so much a part of what followed that Christ called Judas a “devil” (John 6:70-71). Jesus asked Judas and the temple soldiers, “Whom seek ye? And they said, Jesus of Nazareth.” Jesus then answered, “I am” (John 18:4-5).

At that moment, following the action of Elijah as recorded in II Kings 1, and the action against the forces of evil as recorded in Revelation 20, Jesus should have called down fire from heaven to destroy the enemies who would bind Him, but Jesus could not take this action. He declared to the temple soldiers, “this is your hour, and the power of

darkness" (Luke 22:53). Christ could not destroy these enemies because it was necessary that He be bound and go to the cross to pay for our sins. Only then could He be our Savior.

Jesus showed that He was willingly being bound and that it was God's will that He be taken, but Christ could have destroyed these enemies. Instead of bringing fire from heaven, when Jesus said, "I am," He caused them to reel backward and fall to the ground (John 18:6). This was a substitute action to show that He had the power to destroy them.

We learned from Revelation 13:13 that Satan will cause fire to come down from heaven, but the Bible also instructs us that Satan cannot make fire come down from heaven. Do you recall the contest between Elijah and the prophets of Baal (I Kings 18)? The 450 prophets of Baal, whose head is Satan, tried all day to cause fire to come down to the altar they had made. But they failed totally to accomplish this. Elijah, on the other hand, prayed that God would send fire on the altar that Elijah had built, and fire came down and consumed the offering, the wood, and even the stones of the altar.

Therefore, Satan cannot literally call down fire from heaven. Satan was present when Jesus caused those who came to take Him to fall backward as a substitute for calling down fire from heaven (John 18). This is the solution to the prophecy that Satan would call down fire from heaven: He causes people to fall backward to the ground under some supernatural power as the equivalent of calling fire from heaven. Thus, this could be the manner through which Revelation 13:13 finds its fulfillment. Among the false gospels of our day, there is an extensive phenomenon going on in which many people fall backward by some supernatural power. Among some, this is called "being slain in the spirit." Since Satan himself cannot literally call down fire from heaven, he follows the lead of Jesus and causes people to fall backward, which is a substitute for calling down fire from heaven.

Zechariah 13:8-9 records:

And it shall come to pass, that in all the land, saith the LORD, two parts therein shall be cut off and die; but the third shall be left therein. And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people: and they shall say, The LORD is my God.

The one-third refers to those who have become saved; they have passed through the fire in the sense that Christ, as their substitute,

has endured the wrath of God on their behalf. The wrath of God is identified with the eternal fires of hell. In Christ the full penalty of our sins has been paid; we can now stand blameless before God. We are His people, and the Lord is our God.

Another historical example is found in II Kings 1, where we read that on three occasions captains with 50 men came to take Elijah. The first two bands of men were destroyed by fire from heaven. The third captain and his men pleaded for mercy and were spared. Those who were spared represent the saved; the saved are safe in the arms of Christ.

When God is ready to destroy this earth by fire and create new heavens and a new earth, He already has started His judgment on the local churches. God utilized Satan for this dreadful task even as He used the wicked nations of Assyria and Babylon to destroy ancient Israel. Satan will not be the final victor. When Satan thinks he has won, God will bring him into judgment. Revelation 20:9 discloses: "And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them."

Fire from heaven signifies the judgment of God that is to come on the unsaved at the end of the world. This verse emphasizes God's final judgment on the enemies of God (the unsaved) as they are cast into hellfire on the last day. In Revelation 22:18 God warns of judgment utilizing the word "plagues":

For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book.

Ezekiel 38 speaks of the same conclusion to the fortunes of Satan and the wicked of the world in verses 18-23:

And it shall come to pass at the same time when Gog shall come against the land of Israel, saith the Lord GOD, that my fury shall come up in my face. For in my jealousy and in the fire of my wrath have I spoken, Surely in that day there shall be a great shaking in the land of Israel; So that the fishes of the sea, and the fowls of the heaven, and the beasts of the field, and all creeping things that creep upon the earth, and all the men that are upon the face of the earth, shall shake at my presence, and the mountains shall

be thrown down, and the steep places shall fall, and every wall shall fall to the ground. And I will call for a sword against him throughout all my mountains, saith the Lord GOD: every man's sword shall be against his brother. And I will plead against him with pestilence and with blood; and I will rain upon him, and upon his bands, and upon the many people that are with him, an overflowing rain, and great hailstones, fire, and brimstone. Thus will I magnify myself, and sanctify myself; and I will be known in the eyes of many nations, and they shall know that I am the LORD.

This is the language of Judgment Day; it gives us assurance that Satan will not be the final victor. As we approach the end of time, it will appear that Satan is winning. False gospels, particularly those that feature signs and wonders, prosper. The Bible is becoming less and less their ultimate authority. The salvation program being preached may be logical and seem loving and reasonable in the eyes of men, but it is not the salvation plan of the Bible in which the whole counsel of God is presented. The true believers will become increasingly lonely. They will wonder how it can be that the cause of Christ will have become so ineffective.

Then Judgment Day will come. Satan will not win. The believers headed up by Christ will be vindicated. O glorious salvation! O glorious and loving God who is faithful to all of His commitments!

Open Forum Excerpts with Harold Camping:

“Speaking in Tongues”

HC: Good evening. Welcome to the Open Forum.

Caller: I'd like to ask a question about baptism in the Holy Spirit insofar as speaking in tongues is concerned. I understand that the Holy Spirit is a gift of God, so why would a person have to be specially baptized in the Holy Spirit? What is the relationship between baptism in the Holy Spirit and speaking in tongues?

HC: There is no relationship. Let's first talk about baptism in the Holy Spirit. Let's start in the Old Testament, where four signs pointed to salvation.

First, there was circumcision, to indicate that we must have the foreskin of our hearts cut off. We must be cut away from our flesh and its sinful lusts. Jeremiah 4:4: "Circumcise yourselves to the LORD, and take away the foreskins of your heart, ye men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem: lest my fury come forth like fire, and burn that none can quench it, because of the evil of your doings."

Second, there was the burnt offering. Meal offerings and animal sacrifices as burnt offerings pointed to Christ, who became our burnt offering. Hebrews 10:5-7: "Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me: In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God."

Third, there was the shedding of blood, for instance a lamb, or an ox, which pointed to the shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, who endured the wrath of God for our sins. Hebrews 9:22: "And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission."

The fourth sign used in the Old Testament was water ablution, which ceremonially indicated that a person had been cleansed of his sins. For example, Aaron and his sons were washed when they were consecrated as priests (Lev. 8:6). The sign or symbol of water ablution or washing in water is used also in the New Testament.

From the beginning, to be saved, a man, woman, or child must have his sins washed away, be born again, become a new creature in Christ. The Holy Spirit, who is eternal God, is given to the person who becomes saved.

Beginning with Pentecost, God began His work to evangelize the world through believers, who were qualified by God to be witnesses, to proclaim His Word and share the Gospel. God utilized different terminology in talking about salvation. Christ talked about being baptized in the Holy Spirit. Believers in the New Testament are saved the same way believers were saved in the Old Testament; the difference in the New Testament is that every believer is qualified to share the Gospel.

We read of this in the Gospels of Matthew, Luke, and John. Acts 1:5: "For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence," speaks of an Old Testament sign because John the Baptist was a prophet on the Old Testament side of the cross. They were told that before many days, they would be filled with

the Holy Spirit and become qualified to be witnesses in the New Testament program of evangelism.

When we are saved, we are baptized in the Holy Spirit. The word “baptize” means to wash, cleanse, or purify. Therefore, it denotes the fact that our sins have been washed away. Baptism of the Holy Spirit has nothing to do with miracles, signs, or wonders. Jesus says in Acts 1:8: “But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.”

In the Book of Acts we find illustrations in each of these places of a special miracle to indicate that the Word of God was to be sent out to evangelize the world. (See Acts 2, Acts 8, Acts 10, and Acts 19.) After these illustrations in Acts, no outward miracle is recorded in the Bible that occurred when a person was saved.

In the letter of Paul to the church at Corinth, Chapters 12, 13, and 14, however, we learn that in that church there was a phenomenon known as tongues or speaking in an unknown language. This was a gift that was given to a few individuals in that church, including Paul, whereby they received information from God in an unknown language. The phenomenon bears no relationship to baptism in the Holy Spirit; this gift was not bestowed upon them when they were saved.

The believers at Corinth who were given this gift were instructed to pray that they might interpret. The purpose of interpretation was to share with the congregation what God had revealed to them, for the edification of the congregation. This was possible because in that day, God had not completed the Bible.

Around A.D. 95, God completed the Bible with the writing of the Revelation of John. God is the author of the Bible, and in the last chapter of the Bible, He declares, in Revelation 22:18-19:

For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.

With this statement, God ended the possibility of any further information coming from God. From that point on, we cannot expect anyone to receive a vision, tongue, or voice from God because God will not violate His own rules. God said that He has given us His Word, the

revelation of His will. We are to study it, be obedient to it, and not expect any phenomena of tongues or visions such as occurred before the Bible was complete.

Since A.D. 95, various people in the New Testament period have claimed to have received a vision or speak in tongues, which might seem very glorious. Based on the Bible, however, these activities cannot be from God. It might be from their own minds. It might be from an evil source. It might be hallucinatory. Our minds are very tricky, as you may know.

When he is saved, that is, born again, he is baptized in the Holy Spirit. His sins are washed away, and the Holy Spirit takes up His abode with him.

Caller: What about I Corinthians 13:9-10, which say, “For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.” It seems to me that Paul is saying these gifts will pass away when we get to heaven, because there will be no need for them there. Also, Mark 16:17-18 says: “And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.”

HC: I Corinthians 13 simply indicates that tongues shall cease, not when they shall cease. God says that prophecy and knowledge will pass away, and in verses 9-12, He says that they will pass away when we see Him face to face, that is, when we get to heaven.

God teaches in Revelation 22:18 that if you look for divine truth from sources other than the Bible, it indicates that you are still subject to the plagues written herein, that is, you are unsaved and subject to hell.

It is true that the Bible speaks of signs and wonders that will still come to pass. The Bible speaks about signs and wonders in a number of places, and speaking in tongues is a sign. We read about this in I Corinthians 14. The Greek word for sign is *simeon*, which also can be translated “miracle.” The Bible speaks of signs and wonders, particularly in relation to the end-time church, ominously, and unfortunately, all references to signs and wonders near the end of time are satanically related. God declares in Matthew 24:24: “For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.” We read in II Thessalonians 2:3-4:

Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.

The man of sin taking his seat in the temple represents or is a picture of Satan ruling in the church. Satan will come with signs and wonders of falsehood. God will make the followers of Satan believe a lie, so they will be prepared for judgment.

Revelation 13 speaks about the beast that comes out of the earth and a second beast. The second beast makes an image, and he gives life to that image and brings signs. These are gospels that Satan has designed, so he can enslave the nations of the world to a higher degree than ever before. He will come as an angel of light and attest to the genuineness of his gospels with signs and wonders. Satan is the big deceiver. Revelation 16:13-14:

And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.

These verses speak of the beast and the false prophet coming with signs and miracles to deceive. Every reference to signs and wonders near the end of time relates to satanic activity. This is very ominous; it indicates that we have to be extremely careful today because we are so near the end of time. We must make absolutely certain that we look only to the Bible for divine truth. The Bible alone and in its entirety is the divine Word of God.

Satan can speak in a lot of ways; he comes with all kinds of occult activities. Apart from the church, he comes through witchcraft, Ouija boards, tarot cards, and so on. In the church, he also comes with occult activity. The Bible says he does. II Corinthians 11:14: "And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light." We must be on guard and make sure that the only place we look for divine truth is the Bible.

Caller: You said that speaking in tongues is adding to the Bible, but

couldn't it be used just to reiterate something for someone who is not as close to God as he should be? Could it not be used just to uplift him? It could be for emphasis, to reiterate; for example, God gave us four gospel books, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, instead of one.

HC: But you see, God will not violate His own program. His program is that He has given us all of the information that He wants us to have. If we want to grow stronger in the Word, we are to read the Bible. Psalm 119:11 tells us: "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee." God gave us four gospel accounts so that we have plenty of information concerning who the Lord Jesus Christ is. We are to go to the Word of God to seek the voice of God. If we say, "Well, the Word of God is not sufficient," then we are violating the Word of God.

Caller: But in the case of a person who may not be as deeply involved in searching through the Word as he should be, would it not be used as a means of exhorting that person to dig deeper into the Word? Does it not say, "Forbid not the speaking in tongues?"

HC: That is from I Corinthians 14:39, and in the church at Corinth, where tongues were somewhat of a problem (which we learn when we study this language carefully), they were mandated not to forbid speaking in tongues. But, you see, we have to look at these chapters of I Corinthians in the light of the whole Bible.

In the Old Testament, for example, the law was that males were to go to Jerusalem three times a year to offer sacrifices. Now, we don't go to Jerusalem any more to offer sacrifices. Why don't we? It's in the Bible! It's a command of God! Why don't we do that?

The reason we don't do that is because we read that command in the light of everything else the Bible offers, and we discover in the New Testament that God says these ceremonial laws have been completed in Christ. And so, we're not to be obedient to them any more. In fact, it would be wrong to offer sacrifices.

By the same token, in I Corinthians 12-14, God laid down rules insofar as tongues is concerned. But in Revelation 22:18, He has more to say about His Word. And we have to read I Corinthians 12-14 in the light of Revelation 22:18, and Deuteronomy 13:1-10, and Deuteronomy 28, and other passages that speak on this matter.

When we realize that the Bible alone is the Word of God and we know that Satan comes as an angel of light, then let's try to put ourselves in the shoes of Satan. And that's not too difficult because all of us have a sinful nature. Satan thinks, "I'm going to try to snare someone who is

a very religious person. I'm certainly not going to come to that person with horns and with a forked tail. I'm going to come as an angel of light. I'm going to look like a legitimate emissary of the Lord Jesus Christ. And the first thing I'm going to do is encourage that person to be drawn away from the Word of God, and convince him that the Bible is not the only authority. Then I can get him to begin to understand the Bible in the light of other authorities, and he will no longer attempt to get truth from the Bible only."

Satan is very careful to come with gospels that sound like the true Gospel. He quotes the Bible, but he is very deceitful. In this way, the person is completely disarmed. That person will become accustomed to listening for the Word of God from sources outside the Bible.

Satan is the father of lies. For a while, he might come with just the Word of God, then slowly, he adds a statement or a little something that is contrary to the Word of God. Satan is the great deceiver. The person listening might not know that he has begun to accept ideas that are contrary to the Word of God, ideas that are half-truths. That person might think only that he's had a happy experience, a good experience with a vision, and it seemed so holy, and he trusts that source of information. That person might not even know what happened to him.

It is so wonderful that we have the Word of God, the Bible, and we can be absolutely certain that it is the Word of God. It will always be the Word of God. We do not have to wonder or fear that perhaps Satan had something to do with this or that statement in the Bible.

Caller: I have two more questions. First, at the time of the completion of the Book of Revelation, the whole Bible, the Old and the New Testaments, was not compiled into one book form. Is that correct?

HC: I'm sure it was not. The Old Testament Scriptures were completed.

Caller: But everything wasn't in one form and under one cover, that is, both the Old and the New Testaments. OK. Revelation 22:18 indicates to me that we are not to add to the prophecy that is outlined in the Book of Revelation. I find no indication anywhere that the gift of tongues or the gift of healing or any of the other gifts of the Spirit have been outmoded as of any time. I believe it's for all time and for all men.

HC: Well, it's your privilege to believe that. But, you see, the Book of Revelation is an integral and cohesive part of the whole Bible. Now, if you add a chapter to the Book of Revelation, then you have added it to the whole Bible. And whether you tried to add it sometime during the first

five years after it was written or you tried to add it 1,500 years after it was written, you have still attempted to add to the whole Bible.

In other words, anything that was written after the Book of Revelation was completed could not possibly be part of the Holy Canon. The ending verses of the Book of Revelation set the limit as to the Word of God. And it doesn't take long to review all of the writings that came forth during the period prior to this date to see why this is the Bible that we have and not something else. There is an internal cohesiveness in the Bible.

One of the problems is (and I say this kindly but, nevertheless, I say it firmly), that if you read a verse like Revelation 22:18 from the vantage point of having accepted the premise that God does speak in visions and voices and tongues or whatever today, then you can be sure that you will not understand a verse like Revelation 22:18 in the same way that someone would understand who is determined to let the Bible alone be his guide and his authority. This is because you would have additional information that you are putting into the equation, and you are bound to come up with a different answer. And so it doesn't surprise me at all when you say that you believe tongues or visions, etc., are for today. This, of course, is the conclusion you come to when you allow information outside of the Bible to be used in your understanding of what the Bible says. As a matter of fact, you will reach conclusions in regards to many Biblical passages that are different from the conclusions reached by those who limit themselves to the Word of God.

The minute you try to add to the Bible, from this vision or that tongue, or whatever, and one person adds this, and another one adds that, and someone else adds something else, and then attempt to interpret the Bible in the light of all this new information, you end up with a gospel that will take you almost anywhere. This is exactly what is happening today. The false gospels are going off in all directions.

The true Gospel, the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, is circumscribed by the Bible alone. Only in the Bible, the whole Bible, can truth be found. ■

The "Open Forum" is a live, call-in program heard on Family Radio, Monday-Friday, 8:30-10:00 p.m. Eastern time, for listeners who have Bible-related questions. Call 1-800-322-5385.

