

---

## The Need for Meaning | 1 Corinthians 14:13-19

---

- Verse 13 - Because tongues is not a gift for today, this instruction is not necessary for those who speak in tongues, because their "gift" is fabricated. However, those who think they are speaking in tongues should at least acknowledge that there is a misuse of their "gift."
- Verses 14-17 –
  - The need for understanding both in prayer and in singing is emphasized in these verses.
  - If a **unlearned** person cannot hear and say **Amen at thy giving of thanks**, then he cannot be **edified**, which Paul has already stressed as the importance of Spiritual gifts.
  - Note: There is a false sense of spirituality that focuses on mystical experiences and downgrades "mental" experiences. Paul seems to communicate that prayer **with the spirit** is defined as **prayer with...understanding** (and the same with music).
- Verses 18-19 –
  - Paul testifies that he speaks **with tongues more than ye all**.
    - This, in itself, is not reason to support speaking in tongues today (especially when those using the verse as support fail to emphasize the fact that Paul de-emphasized his gift).
  - His prayer was that the *sound of his words* would affect the thinking of his hearers.
    - He uses the word *κατηχέω* [katecheo], translated **I might teach**.
    - The word is the ultimate result (the kata prefix) of *echos* (sound). If someone *adopts the sound of my mouth as their own thinking* then I have been something more than a **sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal** (1 Cor. 13:1).

---

## The Biblical Purpose of Tongues | 1 Corinthians 14:20-25

---

- Verse 20 –
  - Children do not have a depth of understanding, so the Corinthians were to **be not children in understanding**. A shallow understanding of theology is possibly the number one problem in the church today. The Corinthians were, however, to **be ye children** in the area of **malice** (things which are evil).
  - What does it take to fulfill the instruction to **be men in understanding**? It takes knowledge and the use of cognitive skills.
- Verses 21-22 –
  - Understanding these verses will help if you understand this concept: *the purpose of the gift of tongues was to convince the Jewish nation to repent because the day of judgment was nigh*.
  - Paul gives a very interesting argument that **tongues** is not a *worship language for believers* (as is commonly taught today) but a **sign** of impending judgment **to them that** of the Jewish nation that **believe not**. If *any* unbeliever is included, then Paul's argument is inconsistent (see below).
  - The quote of v. 21 appears to come from Isaiah 28:11-12, though it is not a verbatim quote.
    - Note that the phrase **in the law it is written** does not require that the phrase be found in the Torah.
    - From "Judaism 101" website: "...the word "torah" can also be used to refer to the entire Jewish bible (the body of scripture known to non-Jews as the Old Testament and to Jews as the Tanakh or Written Torah), or in its broadest sense, to the whole body of Jewish law and teachings." (<http://www.jewfaq.org/torah.htm>)

- This is a perfect case to display the truth that *a later revelation defines the previous revelation*.
  - In Isaiah 28:11-12, the **other tongues** was the Assyrians. Yet (as is the Jewish interpretation of Scripture), this was a *type* of that which was yet to come.
  - In the Isaiah context, no prophecy outside the immediate context could be seen.
  - In Paul's usage, we can see that speaking in tongues was actually a *sign of judgment* for the unbelieving Jewish nation.
  - Joel 2:28-29 is fulfilled at the day of Pentecost, and also was shown in Joel to be the *last display of mercy* before the judgment of the nation, for Joel 2:30-31 shows the terror of **the great and terrible day of the Lord**. What is unforeseen in Joel is the insertion of the *mystery age* between vv. 29 and 30 (and the advancement of v. 32a to a point prior to the day of the Lord).
- When Paul speaks of **them that believe** and **them that believe not** in v. 22, he is referencing *belief in Jesus as the coming Messianic King*, not the belief that results in salvation by grace through faith. Otherwise, his argument is inconsistent. A Jew who did not believe Jesus was the Messiah *should*, upon hearing tongues, recognize this **for a sign** and should repent and prepare for the Kingdom. Tongues was a sign to a Jew who did not believe Jesus was Messiah.
- Verse 23 –
  - How does this verse not contradict with verse 22? If **tongues are for a sign...to them that believe not** then why would Paul argue that **unbelievers** will say **ye are mad** if this practice is seen? In v. 22 he argues that tongues are for unbelievers, in v. 23 that tongues should not be used around unbelievers.
  - I believe that the point is that *only those knowledgeable in prophecy* yet still unbelieving in Jesus as Messiah would recognize any sign within tongues. Therefore, the use of tongues outside the confines of those knowledgeable of Hebrew prophecies and yet still unbelieving that Jesus is Messiah is a misuse of the gift of tongues.
  - The use of tongues in any modern worship setting (personal or corporate) is a complete misunderstanding of this phenomenon.
- Verse 24 - Once again, if **prophesying serveth...for them which believe** (v. 22) why is Paul encouraging prophesy for **one that believeth not**? I believe that prophesy **serveth** the believer for the purpose of *convincing* and *judging* the unbeliever. That is, the KJV insertion of **serveth** is valid and explanatory for that which the Greek assumes. Thus, **tongues are for a sign** (v. 22) and *prophecy is a servant working for the believer to convince the unbeliever of the sign*.
- Verse 25 –
  - This verse is fundamental to the argument that the KJV insertion of **serveth** is valid.
  - Prophesy is a servant (i.e.: a tool) of believers because, when they use it, the **secrets of** [the unbeliever's] **heart** are **made manifest**, leading the unbeliever to **worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth** (rather than calling you **mad** (v. 23)).

### Paul's Instruction about Public Speaking in Tongues | 1 Corinthians 14:26-33

- Verse 26 – Paul always advocated for clear order within the local church. Every member may have something to say, but there is a proper time and place for it to be said. Worship services should be planned and organized, with each element placed into the service **unto edifying**.
- Verses 27-31 - This instruction was for the time in which these gifts were still operative. There is no benefit in trying to make application where application doesn't belong.
- Verse 32 - That is, no prophecy may contradict the prophecy recorded in Scripture.
- Verse 33 - The best practice is to apply this verse only to revelation, not to any confusion that comes into our lives or society. God's Word is a unified whole, and therefore confusion of any doctrine is solved by study of the Word.