

Acts 2:1 *'And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. ² And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. ³ And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. ⁴ And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.'*

There was no wind, only the sound as of wind; there was no fire, only split tongues, like as of fire which rested upon each of them. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, real languages of which they, previously, had no knowledge. The gift of tongues, Paul later tells us, is a gift meant to bring unbelievers to Christ... not believers.

'Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not: but prophesying serveth not for them that believe not, but for them which believe. ²³ If therefore the whole church be come together into one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in those that are unlearned, or unbelievers, will they not say that ye are mad?' 1 Cor 14:22

In some churches, you have everyone, all together, speaking or singing in 'supposed' other tongues which, in fact, no one understands and on one can interpret.

It is, also, given by God as only one of several gifts He gives in order to accomplish His will. It was never meant for everyone; no one can make it happen or require it as proof of having been filled with the Holy Spirit.

In fact, he tells us that it would cease when they finally had the full Word of God, the Bible:

'Charity (love) never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge (the gift of special knowledge), it shall vanish away. ⁹ For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. ¹⁰ But when that which is perfect (the full Bible, all the letters together) is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. ¹¹ When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things.' 1Cor 13:8

Relying upon and demanding specific Spiritual gifts, is childish, not mature. Reading, studying, believing and relying upon God's Word is the only avenue to spiritual maturity.

The Day of Pentecost is 50 days beyond Passover. Jews from all over the World had been gathered in Jerusalem for Passover, staying until Pentecost. The Disciples were there; just like every other Jew, they had no idea that they were anything other than Jews but who now knew the truth of Who the Messiah really is; they had no concept of the reality of the Church. They believed that all the trappings of Judaism still applied to Jews who believed in the Lord Jesus Christ as Messiah. In fact, they believed that any Gentiles who might trust in the Lord Jesus Christ would be required to convert to Judaism and be circumcised and they didn't even understand, yet, that the Gospel would go out to Gentiles. Their full understanding would wait until Paul was taught, by Jesus Christ, when He brought Paul up into Heaven to teach him, Himself. Of that time, Paul wrote:

'It is not expedient for me doubtless to glory. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord. ² I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) (here is an important realization regarding those who are now up in Heaven: they seem, to themselves and each other, as normal, regular people; Paul couldn't tell the difference and neither can they!) Paul goes on: 'such an one caught up to the third heaven. ³ And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;)' ⁴ How that he was caught up into paradise, (another important point: rather than Jesus emptying Paradise, perhaps God actually took Paradise up into Heaven.) Paul continues: 'and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter. ⁵ Of such an one will I glory: yet of myself I will not glory, but in mine infirmities. ⁶ For though I would desire to glory, I shall not be a fool; for I will say the truth: but now I forbear, lest any man should think of me above that which he seeth me to be, or that he heareth of me. ⁷ And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, (see ... it really was of himself he was speaking) there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of

Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. ⁸ For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. ⁹ And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. ¹⁰ Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.' 2Cor 12:1

As a matter of fact, this proves two very important truths: Paul's 'thorn in the flesh' was a physical malady of some sort, given by God and not removed, even though Paul prayed 3 times for it to be removed: health is never promised to the believer. Other Scripture implies that it was, perhaps, a problem with Paul's eyes, the result of his conversion when he was blind for a time, with scales on his eyes:

*'Ye know how through infirmity of the flesh I preached the gospel unto you at the first. ¹⁴ And my temptation **which was in my flesh** ye despised not, nor rejected; but received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus. ¹⁵ Where is then the blessedness ye spake of? for I bear you record, that, if it had been possible, ye would have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me.'* Gal 4:13

The other important truth is that our trials come from the hand of God Who is in absolute control of all things; here was a serious trial which was never removed in this life. Trials are given by God to form in us patience, that we might become more fully conformed to the image and likeness of the Lord Jesus Christ.'

Paul's 'thorn in the flesh' was given to him by God; the messenger of Satan, buffeting him would be an evil spirit which would constantly lie to him, saying: 'God doesn't love you; if He did, He would heal this!'

*'My brethren, count it all joy **when** (not if) ye fall into divers temptations (trials); ³ Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. ⁴ But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing. ⁵ If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.'* James 1:2

God will always give us wisdom, every time we ask, but He will not always remove trials, no matter how many times we ask.

Verse 5: *'And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven.'*

Here, then, I believe, is the ultimate reason God gave Israel the 'Feast of Weeks,' Pentecost: Jews who lived out in the Gentile world were gathered here in Jerusalem when the Holy Spirit came to all of the nascent Church. They would come to faith and then carry this new Christianity back to every nation; this is how God miraculously spread His Truth around the World, very quickly. Then, these pockets of new believers would be ready and waiting for the time when the Disciples or their converts would venture out to all these places.

When it says that they were dwelling in Jerusalem, it simply means that they were staying there between Passover and Pentecost but that they would then go back home to 'every nation under Heaven.'

Verse 6: *'Now when this was noised (reported all around) abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language.'*

When those near heard this miraculous thing, they called out to others until a very large group had gathered. Everyone who came, heard them all speaking in the languages native to where they lived. Most of them would, surely, have understood Hebrew but what they heard were these many, varied, native languages and, obviously, they were quite confounded to be sure.

Verse 7: *'And they were all amazed and marveled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galileans?'*

Confounded, amazed and marveled! Behold, aren't these all Galileans? Aren't these all just country bumpkins from Galilee? This declaration is only assumption on the part of those hearing the many languages; like today, and always, it is assumed, by those who are sophisticated, that only the nonsophisticated are Christians. However, we know that the believers were not only from Galilee, wherein lies Nazareth, but also from Judaea: Mary, Martha, Lazarus and Joseph of Arimathea and also from Samaria: the Woman at the Well and all her townsfolk who might not have come down to Jerusalem since they faced such discrimination.

Verse 8: *'And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born? ⁹ Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judaea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia, ¹⁰ Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes, Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God. ¹² And they were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another, What meaneth this?'*

This is a crucial point in any discussion of the Biblical gift of 'tongues.' Jews from all over the World heard these 120 newly born again members of the brand new Church, the Body and Bride of the Lord Jesus Christ, speaking the specific national languages from 100's or even 1000's of miles away... something absolutely impossible, in the natural. Most, or all, of these Apostles and disciples had never traveled more than a few miles from their towns of birth and they certainly had not studied the languages of far away. This was a miraculous 'sign-gift,' used by God, to greatly multiply the Church's numbers and to then spread it out, far away, in every direction, throughout the entire World.

Very simply: the Biblical gift of tongues is a sign to unbelievers and it involves the miraculous speaking in a language which the speaker has not previously known and, it also requires that there be someone present who can interpret what is said. Biblically, it never involves a non-human language, a so-called 'heavenly language'... Never! And it absolutely, Biblically, never involves an entire congregation speaking or singing all together in a 'heavenly language' ... Never! People do embrace these kinds of things but they do not have a Biblical foundation. This is not a 'salvation' issue, even though many do claim that without the evidence of speaking in tongues, a person hasn't been 'baptized with the Holy Spirit.' The truth is, every Believer is filled with God's Holy Spirit at the very moment that he puts his full trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, and Him alone, for salvation.

Why do I say that these were 'newly born again?' This is the time when the Holy Spirit came in fullness to lead, guide, sanctify, comfort... all the works of the Holy Spirit. Remember, Jesus said, *'Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. ⁸ And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: ⁹ Of sin, because they believe not on me; ¹⁰ Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; ¹¹ Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.'* John 16:7

'Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God... Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. ⁶ That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, ye must be born again. ⁸ The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.' John 3:5

Notice that Jesus hinted at what was to come: *'...the wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof...'* (the sound as of a mighty rushing wind.) This is the time when these 120 were born again, born of the Spirit, when the True Church was born. Jesus returned to the Father and sent the Holy Spirit to come alongside every believer to comfort, guide and give us the wisdom to understand His Word. They had all been born of the flesh but now they were born of the Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is the reason and cause of the World's hatred and rejection of the Lord Jesus Christ and all True Believers. Jesus said, the Holy Spirit's first work is to *'reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.'* To reprove means to convince, to criticize, to express disapproval. Every sinner has been convinced of his own sin and his own coming judgment as well as every believer's innate righteousness and acceptance from God; therefore they hate God and they hate all True Believers because their own rebellious hearts will not submit to God or come to Him in humble repentance; they cannot come to Him because they are held captive, terrified of death, knowing that their judgment is coming and sure:

'... that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; ¹⁵ And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.' Heb 2:14

Verse 13: *'Others mocking said, these men are full of new wine.'*

The ones mocking and saying this are not among those who are hearing their own languages miraculously spoken. Just as their hearts and minds are closed to the truth of the Gospel, so, too, are their ears closed to hearing, miraculously, the wondrous words of God being spoken. These are not among those whom God had chosen and elected from the foundation of the World.

'According as **he hath chosen us** in him **before the foundation of the world**, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: ⁵ **Having predestinated us** unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, **according to the good pleasure of his will...**' Eph 1:4

Jesus said, '**... All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out...**' ³⁹ *And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that **of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing**, but should raise it up again at the last day.'* John 6:37

*'And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and **as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.***' Acts 13:48

Verse 14: *'But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judaea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words: ¹⁵ For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day.'*

Here we see Peter, no longer the coward, trembling before unbelievers, to the point of denying the Lord Jesus Christ three times. Now he is standing up as a leader in the power and courage of the Holy Spirit. It's never easy to stand up before a large group of strangers and tell the truth of the Gospel but now he has been baptized and filled with the Holy Spirit; the last thing Jesus said to them, before returning up to Heaven was:

'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.' Acts 1:8

What did Jesus say that their power from the Holy Spirit was for... to be effective, powerful witnesses unto Him. The same ones who misunderstand the Biblical gift of tongues are those who claim that this power is for the mighty, miraculous works done in the Holy Spirit. The problem lies in the fact that none of them are doing these mighty and miraculous works... they're just talking about it and predicting it but never doing it.

Again... these miraculous 'sign gifts' were primarily intended, by God, for the purpose of confirming the truth of the Gospel being preached before they had the written Words of the New Testament. After that generation, or two, the miraculous sign gifts were no longer necessary because now they had the Truth of the Written Word, the letters from Paul, James, Peter, Jude and John along with the 4 Gospels. Nothing else is needed for salvation beyond what God has preserved in His Written Word, the Bible.

Peter says they aren't drunk; it's only 9 in the morning! Wake up! Pay attention! Listen and be saved!

Verse 16: *'But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; ¹⁷ And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: ¹⁸ And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy: ¹⁹ And I will shew wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke: ²⁰ The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and notable day of the Lord come: ²¹ And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.'*