



GOOD NEWS

for the unsaved
WORLD!

(#126)

Holy Spirit baptism and speaking in tongues

We've already seen...

① The importance of SIGNS for the Jews.

It goes back to the beginning of their history.

(1) Though important, these signs had limits to their value.

- They were "secondary" in nature. Their purpose was to point to the "primary" issues – the message of the prophets. Once they had done this, they were no longer needed.
- They could deceive. Only by examining the "primary" issue – comparing it to God's Word – could they know if the prophet (the "sign-giver") was from God. [They needed the same attitude that the Bereans had in (Acts 17:11), who examined the Scriptures daily, to see if what Paul said was true!]

(2) Speaking in tongues (a foreign language) was one of the signs given by God in the Old Testament. It could signify a number of things – a warning of judgment being a common theme.

② The "baptism of the Holy Spirit" is for ALL who are saved.

In the Old Testament, it was called the "pouring" of the Holy Spirit.

(1) Under the New Covenant, God sends the Spirit to dwell in his people.

- ALL who belong to Christ have the Spirit within them. Romans 8:9; 1 John 4:13.
- This is also known as the "baptism of the Holy Spirit." 1 Corinthians 12:13.

(2) Three times in the book of Acts, this coming of the Holy Spirit was associated with the sign of "speaking in tongues."

- Peter defines it as language. Acts 2:5-11.
- Paul defines it as language. 1 Corinthians 14:21-22a. When explaining what "speaking in tongues" signifies, he quotes an Old Testament passage that refers to foreign language.

When Jesus left, he gave us a job.

Though initially addressed to the followers living in his day, the job is too vast to be accomplished by just them. It is for all of us, "to the end of the age."

"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."
Matthew 28:18b-20 (NIV)

This involves making disciples – "Jesus followers" – and it includes:

- Water baptism (which implies that they have repented and trusted Jesus).
- Teaching them to obey what Jesus has said (which ultimately implies all of Scripture).

Jesus has also given us the power to do this job!

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes to you. Then you will be my witnesses to testify about me in Jerusalem, throughout Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."
Acts 1:8 (GW)

There's no possible way that the first disciples could accomplish all this. Even now, the job isn't quite done!

But we can be grateful that we've been given the power to do our part!

But there is one thing we have NOT been given power to do:
Baptize with the Holy Spirit.

★ **That's because it's JESUS' job to do this!** ★
He's done it for ALL who are his followers... and that is why we have power to do our job!

As the Good News began to spread out across the world,
God sent "speaking in tongues" with the baptism of the Holy Spirit,
★ THREE TIMES. ★

"... in Jerusalem, throughout Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."
Acts 1:8b (GW)

ONE TIME HERE.

"... in Jerusalem, throughout Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."
Acts 1:8b (GW)

TWO TIMES HERE.

★ *Jews were present in each situation. Each time it happened, it communicated a specific message that they needed to know.* ★

WE WILL LOOK
AT THESE THREE INSTANCES. →

"in Jerusalem"

SIGN #1 – The Holy Spirit has come (as the prophets had promised)!

- **What happened?** The apostles (and perhaps more than 100 other believers) received the Spirit with tongues of fire and speaking different languages.

Suddenly a sound like a violent wind blowing came from heaven and filled the entire house where they were sitting. And tongues spreading out like a fire appeared to them and came to rest on each one of them. All of them were **filled with the Holy Spirit**, and they began to speak in other **languages** as the Spirit enabled them.

Acts 2:2-4 (NET)

- **Who did it happen to?** People who were already Jesus' followers. There is no mention of it happening to the approximately 3000 people who received the Spirit after Peter preached to them.

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- **What did the sign point to?** The words of the prophets were being fulfilled... *and it required a response from the people.*

Rather, this is what the prophet Joel spoke about:

'In the last days, God says,
I will pour my Spirit on everyone. ...

Acts 2:16-17a (GW)

[Here, the prophet Joel describes the signs and the judgment that will come, followed by:

'Then whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.'

Acts 2:21 (GW)

As Peter explained the significance of the sign, he frequently referred to Scripture, to show that *all this was just what the Old Testament said would happen.*

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- **A focus on the primary issue:** Peter reminded them of the *previous* signs they had seen, which had pointed to Jesus as the one who would make this possible.

Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and **signs**, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know.

Acts 2:22b (NIV)

- He directed their focus away from the sign, to the things the sign pointed to. He focused on Scripture facts that confirmed who Jesus was.

- **The facts (what they knew from Scripture and the events they had personally witnessed) could only lead to one conclusion:** Salvation and the Holy Spirit were now available through Jesus.

[People don't always accept the facts; but when they don't, it's not a fact problem, but a moral problem (Romans 1:18-20).]

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- **What response did they need to make?** They needed to repent (which included putting their trust in Jesus), and be baptized (= *water baptism*, a public expression of their repentance).

Peter replied, "Repent and be **baptized**, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the **gift of the Holy Spirit**. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call."

With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, "Save yourselves from this corrupt generation."

Acts 2:38-40 (NIV)

- **The End Result:** People became followers of Jesus.

So those who accepted his message were **baptized**, and that day about three thousand people were added to them.

Acts 2:41 (CSB)

(Verses 42-47 tell us about the changes in their lives – the result of the Holy Spirit being in them.)

10

The NEED for INTERPRETATION

Even when the tongues can be recognized, the reason for them needs explained!

"And we all hear these people speaking in our own **languages** ..." They stood there amazed and perplexed. "What can this mean?" they asked each other.

But others in the crowd ridiculed them, saying, "They're just drunk, that's all!"

Acts 2:11b, 12-13 (NLT)

(Paul said the same thing in 1 Corinthians 14:23.)

What if the whole Jewish nation had paid attention to this sign, and had repented and trusted Jesus?

- *Many* Jews became followers of Jesus. But (as later chapters in Acts show), the nation rejected him.
- Had Israel repented, perhaps the "last days" prophecy would have been *completely* fulfilled, and Jesus would have immediately returned.
- *But since the Jews, as a nation, rejected Jesus...*

The "last days" prophecy mentioned in Acts 2:16-21 has only been partly fulfilled. The events associated with God's terrifying judgment (v. 19-20) have not occurred. Some of the other things that did occur were limited in scope.

Yet the last verse is being fulfilled. People are calling on the name of the Lord and being saved (v. 21)!

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Opportunity and warning:

- ✓ If the nation repented... so that your sins may be wiped out, that they would receive → salvation, blessings and Jesus' return. → so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord, and that he may send the Messiah, who has been appointed for you—even Jesus.
- ✓ Jesus will return when the words of the prophets are fulfilled. → Heaven must receive him until the time comes for God to restore everything, as he promised long ago through his holy prophets.
- ✓ Jews who reject Jesus are no longer called "God's people" – also mentioned in Hosea 1:9 and Romans 2:28-29. → For Moses said, 'The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own people; you must listen to everything he tells you. *Anyone who does not listen to him will be completely cut off from their people.*'

Acts 3:19–23 (NIV)

What might have happened?

- The Jews were given the first opportunity to turn back to God. As Paul says, when describing the Good News ("gospel"):

... it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile.

Romans 1:16b (NIV)
- Had they done so, they could have been a blessing to all peoples – which was one of their original purposes for being God's people.

"You are the sons of the prophets and of the covenant that God made with your ancestors, saying to Abraham, And all the families of the earth will be blessed through your offspring. God raised up his servant [Jesus] and sent him first to you [Jews] to bless you by turning each of you from your evil ways."

Acts 3:25-26 (CSB)
- Since the Jewish nation rejected this opportunity, God used the apostles to bring this blessing to the nations.

"in all Judea and Samaria"

- Though the temple in Jerusalem remained the focal point, the Good News began spreading throughout the region of Judea. (God also did miracles through the apostles.)

More men and women than ever began to believe in the Lord. ... Crowds from the cities around Jerusalem would gather. They would bring their sick and those who were troubled by evil spirits, and each person was cured.

Acts 5:14, 16 (GW)
- Both Hebrew-speaking and Greek-speaking Jews were being saved (Acts 6:1+); and many religious leaders were turning to Jesus (v. 7).
- However, the majority of Jewish leaders continued to reject Jesus, and persecution increased... and that resulted in the next step...

... widespread persecution broke out against the church in Jerusalem. Most believers, except the apostles, were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria.

Acts 8:1b (GW)

The Holy Spirit in Samaria.

- The Samaritans were "half-Jews." Most "full Jews" avoided them. Could Samaritans be saved? According to God, the answer was "YES!"
- However, the apostles had to confirm this in the presence of the people. So there was a delay in their receiving the Holy Spirit, until Peter and John came and placed their hands on them.

Peter and John went to Samaria and prayed that the Samaritans would receive the Holy Spirit. (Before this the Holy Spirit had not come to any of the Samaritans. They had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.) Then Peter and John placed their hands on them, and the Samaritans received the Holy Spirit.

Acts 8:15-17 (GW)
- A number of miraculous signs were done in Samaria; but none are associated with the people receiving the Holy Spirit.

"to the ends of the earth"

Individual Jews in other nations began to turn to Jesus. But God had great plans for the Gentiles... and he used an apostle to confirm it.

SIGN #2 – The Holy Spirit was also available for the Gentiles (non-Jews)!

As a nation, the Jews rejected the Good News. So God gave the opportunity to the Gentiles. When it happened, Peter and his Jewish companions (and later, the other apostles) recognized it for what it was.

- **What happened? Who did it happen to?** Speaking in tongues (languages) and praising God. This happened to the Gentile converts (not the apostles).

For they [the Jewish believers] heard them [the Gentile listeners] speaking in tongues and declaring the greatness of God.

Acts 10:46a (CSB)

... the Holy Spirit fell on them [the Gentiles] just as on us [the Jewish believers] at the beginning.

Acts 11:15b (ESV)

- **What did the sign point to?** God is offering the Holy Spirit to Gentiles who accept the Good News message (and who repent).

While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came down on all those who heard the message. The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were amazed because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles.

Acts 10:44-45 (CSB)

"As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell on them just as on us at the beginning. And I remembered the word of the Lord, how he said, 'John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.' If then God gave the same gift to them as he gave to us when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could stand in God's way?"

When they [Jewish believers] heard these things they fell silent. And they glorified God, saying, "Then to the Gentiles also God has granted repentance that leads to life."

Acts 11:15-18 (ESV)

- **The End Result:** The Gentiles were recognized as having become followers of Jesus (because he baptized them with the Holy Spirit); and they were then baptized in water.

Then Peter responded, "Can anyone withhold water and prevent these people from being **baptized**, who have **received the Holy Spirit** just as we have?" He commanded them to be **baptized** in the name of Jesus Christ.

Acts 10:46b-48a (CSB)

★ **The NEW Covenant has arrived!** ★

- Under the **New** Covenant, not only was the kingdom of God open to non-Jews; but non-Jews did not have to submit to the Old Covenant Jewish regulations.
- Actually, the **Jews** no longer had to submit to the Old Covenant Jewish regulations – now it was optional. Under the New Covenant, Peter **could** eat with non-Jews – doing so was acceptable in God's sight. (It took a while for some of the other saved Jews to realize it – Acts 11:2-3, 18).

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**SIGN #3 – Jesus has finished the work that John (the Baptizer) began!
John's work was completed.**

- **Who did it happen to?** Some followers of John, who lived at Ephesus. They had never heard about the Holy Spirit.
- (They may have been followers of Jesus, in some way, since they were described as "disciples" – Acts 19:1.)
- **What happened?** The followers of John spoke in tongues (languages) and prophesied. This occurred **after** they were water-baptized into Jesus' name.

And when Paul had laid his hands on them, **the Holy Spirit came on them**, and they began to **speak in tongues** and to prophesy.

Acts 19:6 (CSB)

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- **What did the sign point to?**

- ✓ It affirmed the very thing that John himself had said: His water-baptism, though necessary, wasn't enough!
- ✓ It also confirmed what Paul said: Jesus (the source of the Holy Spirit) is the one we must trust. **He** is the one who brings us salvation.

[Paul] found some disciples and asked them, "Did you **receive the Holy Spirit** when you believed?"
"No," they told him, "we haven't even heard that there is a Holy Spirit."

"Into what then were you **baptized**?" he asked them.
"Into John's **baptism**," they replied.

Paul said, "John **baptized** with a **baptism** of repentance, telling the people that they should believe in the one who would come after him, that is, in Jesus."

Acts 19:1b-4 (CSB)

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- **The End Result:** Once Paul explained the Good News, they were baptized in water.
- The signs occurred **after** this was done. They reinforced what the people now believed. (They could also serve as pointers to others who witnessed the event, or who learned about it later.)

When they heard this, they were **baptized** into the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands on them, **the Holy Spirit came on them**, and they began to **speak in tongues** and to prophesy.

Acts 19:5-6 (CSB)

As we have seen, receiving the Spirit was often mentioned as coming after water baptism... and sometimes before.

Though there is a definite connection with the things **we** do in the "process of salvation," it is not like a step-by-step procedure. (The baptism of the Spirit belongs to the "God's sovereignty" dimension of salvation.)

22

A QUICK COMPARISON OF THESE THREE SIGN EVENTS.

PATTERNS:

- **Apostles** were always involved.
- **God** always initiated it. (It wasn't something that people asked for; it wasn't "self-generated.")
- It was **language**. [Acts 2: "language" / Acts 10: "just like in Acts 2" / Acts 19: no indication that it was any different.]

NO PATTERN:

- **Who** it happened to (the speaker vs. the hearer).
- **When** it happened (before or after water baptism).
- The **timing**, in relationship to salvation (at the time of salvation or later).
- The "**ethnic group**" that did it (Jews vs. Gentiles).

23

Did tongues-speaking happen any other time?

- (1) Mark 16:17 said it would happen – and other Scripture passages show us that it **did** happen. This verse gives us no further details.
- (2) Paul mentions tongues at Corinth – another city where there was a significant Jewish population (1 Corinthians 12-14).

(Some of the Corinthians had become more preoccupied with signs, than with the one the signs pointed to.)



24

Paul reminds us: The significance of "tongues" needs understood by those who hear them!

>> "Pointers" that point to "nothing" have no meaning! <<

The significance of the "pointer" (= the sign, such as "tongues") needs understood – "interpreted" – for the sign to have meaning. Paul had to correct this neglect by some at Corinth.

>> Who is "tongues" for? <<

- In 1 Corinthians 14, Paul refers to "tongues" as being for "unbelievers" (the unsaved). In Acts 2, it pointed to something that the unsaved needed to believe. In Acts 2, Peter told them what it meant; but in 1 Corinthians, this was apparently often neglected. [In both cases, it was something the saved would also need to believe – and they *did*.]
- In Acts 10, "tongues" pointed to something that saved people needed to believe – the *fact* that the Good News was available for the Gentiles. Later, this *fact* (not the "tongues") was often mentioned to unsaved Jews, after they had rejected the Good News.

25

Does "speaking in tongues" happen today?
Even without reaching a "yes-or-no" conclusion,
there is much we can say:

- "God can *do* what he wants..." – such a statement proves nothing, because he can also *NOT do* what he doesn't want!
- If it's something we have to create or "work up," it's not genuine!
- Are we Jews? Do we even have a legitimate need for them?
- We should remember the instructions that God gave Israel – test the sign and what it points to. (If it doesn't point to anything, something is wrong!) *FAKE "signs" are common!*
- If we're preoccupied with it, we've got the wrong focus. Scripture gives it "secondary" status – never higher.
- Even if we were to do it, if it isn't done according to the Bible's instructions, it must be stopped (or kept to ourselves).
- The presence of "tongues-speaking" isn't a guarantee that it's from God. *There are false religions that do the same thing!*

26

How should we respond to "speaking in tongues"?

Paul said... ... as for **tongues**, they will cease but he doesn't say "*when*."
1 Corinthians 13:8b (CSB)

- Since there may yet be a purpose for them (for Jews at the end of the age), perhaps we can't say the "*when*" has arrived.
- But if our pursuit is for the *primary things* God wants for us, tongues won't be very high on our priority list (if even on the list)!

The secondary things "happened"; the primary things "remain."

- "Tongues" happened **THREE** times in the book of Acts. Those three sign events have accomplished their purpose and don't need to be repeated. (Instead, we need to be willing to pay attention to what those three sign events pointed to!)
- We can be grateful that we have what the signs pointed to! We can prove our gratefulness by paying attention to those primary things!

27

Our **MISSION** for today:

LEARN from the signs,
and
FOCUS on what they point to!

**NOW I KNOW WHERE
MY ATTENTION
BELONGS!
THE SIGN POINTED
ME IN THE RIGHT
DIRECTION!**



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