

'TONGUES'

The Initial Outward Sign of the Baptism of the Holy Ghost

I often am asked the question, "*Could you give me your strongest points as to why you believe it is impossible to be baptized in the Holy Ghost without speaking in tongues?*"

My response is as follows...

The theological foundation for the '*initial evidence*' doctrine is squarely based on the account of the *Apostle Peter*, preaching the Gospel to the *Gentiles* for the first time in *Acts 10:44-47*.

"While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter, Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?"

Peter and the Jews knew the Gentiles had the Holy Ghost because they heard them speak in tongues. This is where the idea of '*initial evidence*' originates from. I do concede that I wish the Scriptural foundation for 'tongues' as the initial evidence was stronger/more iron-clad, nonetheless, the very fact that all 120 of the original believers spoke with other tongues is, I believe, very compelling as this is God's original model for the church (*the Pentecostal view of 1 Cor 12:29-30 would be limited to only one of the three manifestations of the gift of tongues, namely, a message in tongues needing interpretation in the corporate setting*).

Moreover, though the primary Scriptural ground for tongues as the initial evidence of the Baptism of the Holy Ghost is found in *Acts 10:44-47*, there is the fact that 3 out of 4 times in the Book of Acts where the experience of the Baptism of the Holy Ghost is documented, tongues accompanied the experience (*4 out of 5 if you include Paul's infilling, 1 Cor 14:18*). This adds even more weight to the premise, especially when considering the forth (or fifth) incident does not deny tongues could have been spoken.

When considering this doctrine, it is vital that we understand that there are three different and unique manifestations of the gift of tongues presented in the N.T. (see 1 Cor. 12:10; notice the verse says, '*divers kinds of tongues*'), namely...

- a. Tongues, inspired by the Holy Ghost, communicating an earthly language that can be supernaturally heard and understood by other human beings (Acts 2:1-8).
- b. Tongues, inspired by the Holy Ghost, that are either an earthly or heavenly language, and are meant to be understood by men through the means of the supernatural gift of the interpretation of tongues (1 Cor. 12:10; 14:27-28).
- c. And finally, tongues, inspired by the Holy Ghost, that are heavenly languages, that are for the use of communion, intercession, praise, and worship to God and are not necessarily meant to be understood by men (1 Cor. 14:2).

So, remember...

Every Apostle was filled with the Holy Ghost with the evidence of speaking with other tongues. There were no exceptions.

Every single individual in the original church, when the church was birthed on the day of Pentecost, was Baptized in the Holy Ghost with the evidence of speaking in tongues. There were no exceptions.

Acts 10 strongly supports the idea that every Gentile, who originally were born of God and filled with the Holy Ghost, without exception, spoke with other tongues.

Three monumental and foundational facts we dare not overlook.

Moreover, in Acts 2, Peter points out that the promise (with accompanying experience) was for all believers of every generation.

Thus, (and this is an important application) any man in Acts 2, Acts 10, and throughout the Book of Acts, who would have claimed to be baptized with the Holy Ghost but did not speak with other tongues would be defying the testimony of the Book of Acts and the experiences of both the Apostles and the entire original church (Jew and Gentile alike). Consequently, if these observations are true, and they are (being documented, irrefutable Biblical facts), then we must conclude that something has changed since the earliest days of the primitive church if the modern church denies that 'tongues' is the initial evidence of the Baptism of the Holy Ghost. This fact has been recognized and comprehended by any serious student of the N.T. No doubt, this is why theologians, pandering to modernist views and seeking to explain their own incomplete and unscriptural experiences, concocted the false concept of *Cessationism*.

I must admit there are many abuses, extremes, and doctrinal errors associated with modern *Pentecostalism*. And, though I emphatically believe '*speaking in other tongues as the*

Spirit gives the utterance is the *initial evidence* of the Baptism, certainly, it is not the only evidence. Men who live unholy cannot be filled with a Holy Spirit. The key word for qualification is *'initial'*. The gift of tongues is the initial evidence, but it is obviously not the only evidence. Just like there are counterfeit believers, there are also counterfeit experiences that many call the "Baptism of the Holy Ghost" with accompanying counterfeit gifts. We should not allow the "counterfeit" to cast a shadow on the genuine. We certainly cannot dismiss the Scriptures based solely on misrepresentations of truth by infidels and charlatans. Would it not be irresponsible to deny the Biblical fact of living free from sin simply because someone who claimed to live holy is proven a liar? Of course not. I have enjoyed the Pentecostal experience for my entire born-again journey. To be frank, I cannot imagine what I would do or where I would be without the Baptism of the Holy Ghost and the accompanying gift of speaking with other tongues as the Spirit gives the utterance. No doubt, there is much to be grieved about in regards to the modern tongue-talking movement. But let us remember, the same excesses, abuses, and moral failures displayed in those who claim to be *'filled with the Holy Ghost'* also claim to be *'born-again'* as well. Yet, we do not throw the *doctrine of regeneration* to the curb because someone who claimed to be born-again was less than Biblical. The Baptism of the Holy Ghost is both Biblical and essential. To this, I believe we all agree. In regard to the evidence, I strongly believe the *initial evidence* is *tongues* and I assert this is verified by the above Scriptural proof.

–B.W.