



# BULLEEN BAPTIST CHURCH

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Series : "The Person & Work of the Holy Spirit"

Sunday, March 19, 2006 : Study 8

"THE DAY OF PENTECOST : Part 2"

Notes by Rev. Gary Lockyer

**INTRODUCTION.** Our purpose today is to understand the role that "speaking in tongues" played in the formation of the Church. ("Tongues" is one of the phenomena that accompanied the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost as recorded in Acts 2) To help us we will be "interrupting" the Study with two scenes from "The Visual Bible" on DVD - The NIV translation of Acts - Chapters 10 and 15. Today's notes should be read with the notes from Study 7 to give continuity.

## A. PICKING UP THE THREAD from last week's Study

At Pentecost, the gift of tongues powerfully DEMONSTRATED that the Gospel was for all races.

Note the list of nations in Ac2:8-11 Everyone heard God praised in their own language.

In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Ac2:17 quoting Joel2:28

This gift constituted known languages and needed no interpretation. It could not be duplicated by human design or as a result of an intense emotional state. It was to become the "God-designed" OBEJECTIVE TEST to determine the presence of the Spirit.

## B. JESUS' PLAN OF ACTION

What were Jesus' last words? You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. Ac1:8b So ..... what happened?

## C. GOD AT WORK

The story in Acts is not of the first Christians DECISION to put Jesus' plan in action! God takes the initiative and DIRECTS the action himself. The followers of Jesus seemed content to enjoy the heady days of ministry and fellowship in Jerusalem. As a consequence of Stephen's death (Acts 7) :

### 1. SAMARITANS HEAR ABOUT JESUS .... and believe. (Acts 8)

... a great persecution broke out against the church at Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria ... those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went Ac8:1 and 4.

### 2. GENTILES HEAR ABOUT JESUS .... and believed (Acts 11:19-24)

... scattered by the persecution in connection with Stephen ... some ... went to Antioch and began to speak to Greeks ... about the Lord Jesus ... and a great number believed. News reached the church at Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas to Antioch. When he arrived and saw the evidence of the grace of God, he was glad and encouraged them all to remain true to the Lord with all their hearts ... Then Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul, and he brought him to Antioch. For a year Barnabas and Saul met with the church and taught great numbers of people. The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch. Ac11:19-24

At the same time, God also twists Peter's arm to get him, reluctantly, into a Gentile's home to tell the family about Jesus.

(ACTS 10 on DVD from "The Visual Bible.")

## D. JESUS' PLAN OF ACTION .... and its attendant problems.

We have seen how Jesus' plan was carried out. From our perspective we see nothing unusual in the Good News about Jesus being shared with everyone irrespective of race. In fact, what happened was extraordinary and defied centuries of "conditioning" in that a Jew would have nothing to do with Gentiles. Jesus' plan was that his disciples would be witnesses to him in 3 stages :

**1. IN JERUSALEM & JUDEA** (area around Jerusalem) No problems; the first Christians were Jews, so no BARRIERS of language, culture or religion. Acts 2 - 7 tell of the Church's growth : So the word of God spread & the number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly. Ac6:7

**2. IN SAMARIA** (north of Judea) A problem : Jews do not associate with Samaritans. Jn4:9. In 722 BC., Samaria, part of Israel, was captured by the Assyrians who deported most of the people. Some remaining Israelites intermarried with those brought into the area by the Assyrians. Jews regarded their descendants, the Samaritans, as traitors and defiled - religiously "UNCLEAN"

**3. IN THE UTTERMOST PARTS OF THE EARTH** (Gentiles - anyone who wasn't a Jew.) Definitely a problem! Note the REACTION to Peter's entering the home of Cornelius, a gentile. When Peter went up to Jerusalem, the circumcised believers criticised him and said, "You went into the house of uncircumcised men and ate with them?" Ac11:3

(NOTE : Attracted to the God of Israel, some gentiles became Jews - by swearing covenant loyalty to the "God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob", being baptised, and if male, by being circumcised. "God-fearers" were gentiles not willing to take that step. They heard Paul teach about Jesus in the Synagogues and often believed in him - see Ac17:1-4. (Sometimes "God-fearers" are called "worshippers of God." See Ac16:14 & 18:7))

Note also the EXPECTATIONS : If a gentile did follow Jesus, some Jewish disciples taught that the "conversion process" to Christ should be the same as if they were becoming Jews. From the Jewish perspective, that was exactly what was happening; Gentiles who believed that Jesus was the Messiah could only validly do so if they became Jews!

Some men came down from Judea to Antioch and were teaching the brothers: "Unless you are circumcised according to the custom taught by Moses, you cannot be saved." Ac15:1  
Then some of the believers who belonged to the party of the Pharisees stood up and said, "The Gentiles must be circumcised and required to obey the law of Moses." Ac15:5

What was at stake was the very NATURE of both the Gospel and of the Church.

## **E. CONVINCING PROOF that the Spirit is poured out on "all people?"**

How did God convince the Church that the promises and ceremonies of the Old Testament are fulfilled in Jesus? What were the implications of the Holy Spirit being poured out on "all people?"

**1. SAMARIA** : Peter and John go to Samaria, "lay hands" on the new followers of Jesus. They see the Holy Spirit is poured out on them also. (Ac8:5-18). How they "saw" is not specified, but we would be safe in assuming that the phenomena of the Pentecost was reproduced.

**2. GENTILES** : Peter in Cornelius' home hasn't even finished telling the story of Jesus, when *they heard them speaking in tongues and praising God. Can anyone keep these people from being baptised? They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have.* Ac10:47

Speaking in tongues was the objective EVIDENCE that the Spirit falls on all people - irrespective of race - and that God does not require anything except faith in his grace and mercy.

"For we were all baptised by (with) the one Spirit into one body ... whether Jew or Greek, slave or free." 1Cor12:13

## **F. THE ISSUE SETTLED ... the Jerusalem Church Meeting**

(ACTS 15:1-18 on DVD from "The Visual Bible.")

Peter (said) "You know that ... God made a choice ... that the Gentiles might hear from my lips the message of the gospel and believe. God showed that he accepted them by giving the Holy Spirit to them just as he did to us. He made no distinction between us and them, for he purified their hearts by FAITH. Why do you try to test God by putting on the necks of the disciples a yoke that neither we nor our fathers have been able to bear? No! We believe it is through the GRACE of our Lord Jesus that we are saved, just as they are." Ac15:7-11

Rather than an ongoing accompaniment of the outpouring of the Spirit, this particular gift of tongues should be seen as the objective evidence, in a one-of set of unrepeatable historical circumstances, that all races of people are brought into the Body of Christ by God's grace, through faith.

(Note : time constraints have not allowed us to consider Ac19:1-7, the only other occasion in Acts where it is recorded that people spoke in tongues when the Spirit fell on them. While out of the pattern indicated in this study, the issue is the same - the validity of the Gospel. In the light of the men's answer, Paul's question in v2 should be seen as diagnostic re a "first blessing" rather than proscriptive of a "second blessing.")

