

Lesson 15 – Speaking in Tongues and Healing

In the early 1900's a few people began speaking in tongues in a Holiness Bible College in Topeka, Kansas.

Holiness churches were churches that believed in salvation as the Bible teaches, but they believed in a "second work of grace" in a believer, in which God enabled them to begin living a sinlessly perfect life. This experience was sometimes called "The Second Blessing," or "Sanctification."



312 Azusa Street, Los Angeles – Where Pentecostalism Started

William Seymour, an uneducated Holiness preacher was called to pastor a Holiness church in Los Angeles in 1906 – shortly after he had begun speaking in tongues. When he arrived in Los Angeles, he announced that he had been "baptized in the Holy Spirit", and that he spoke in tongues. The church canned him before he could get started.

He began to hold meetings in a private home at 214 Bonnie Brae Street. He attracted a lot of poor people and people who were dissatisfied in their own churches. His meetings were

characterized by a log of emotionalism and speaking in tongues. The crowd soon outgrew the house, and they rented a dilapidated building at the corner of Azusa Street and San Pedro Street to start a new church,

Los Angeles Daily Times
 WEDNESDAY MORNING, APRIL 18, 1906.

WEIRD BABEL OF TONGUES.
 New Sect of Fanatics Is Breaking Loose.
 Wild Scene Last Night on Azusa Street.
 Gurgle of Wordless Talk by a Sister.

for his church, had seen, upon solemnly read on his closing sermon, "read" his book went flying one way, he has another, his two arms widely distended the empty air. With a furious effort, he thrust his hands about the great wall.
 From behind a neighboring ledge came very suspicious snickers.
 Mr. Gould brushed himself off as best he could and proceeded sorrowfully to church.
 He had just started to see the "street" when there came an ominous thumping and a startling jar-bang on the floor; everyone in the congregation jumped with a start, then settled and resumed attention to the sermon.
 Another thump, rattling like very stones getting busy! One of the deacons ran outside. "Sorts of laughter, but the thumping ceased.
 The first as the congregation was getting rapt in attention to the sermon, there came a most diabolical sound, sermonly from the regions under the earth. It was a most loudly, piercing and fearful howl!
 The sermon came to a dead stop. Out from under out of the pews

AMAZING SUIT FOR DIVORCE
 Pretty White Wife We of Black Husband.
 Friendless Girl's Story Sorry Match.
 Claims She Loved Ne When Married.

The wife a spunky little black woman livens this life.

Therefore if the whole church comes together in one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in those who are uninformed or unbelievers, will they not say that you are out of your mind? - 1 Cor. 14:23

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come by to have a look. Some stayed, and a number of others went elsewhere in the city to start the same kind of meetings. The church folded in 1931, but several new denominations had been founded by that time, and the Pentecostal movement had caught on around the world.

Although it's only half a block long, Azusa Street is one of the most famous streets – if not the most famous street – in Los Angeles.

In the old Pentecostal meetings, they might sing for 30 minutes to an hour. From time to time a person would stand up and loudly begin to utter unintelligible syllables for a minute or so. Everybody would be quiet down to listen. That was “speaking in tongues” – a direct message from God for the people – or maybe for one individual in the congregation. Then another person would stand up and loudly proclaim the “interpretation” of the “tongue” so the people would understand what God was saying. The “interpretation” was almost always given in King James English. Sometimes a person would just stand up and give a message in King James English, without an “unknown tongue” preceding it. That was called “prophesying.” These were supposed to be direct messages from God.

For many years, the Pentecostals were mostly poor people with little education. After World War II, many of them started moving up the socio-economic ladder. Many of their churches – particularly the larger Assemblies of God churches – became more subdued in their services. A lot of them stopped allowing these “tongues” and “prophecies” in their Sunday morning services.

Most of these people were sincere Christians who loved the Lord and wanted to please Him. They just got deceived into experiences that kept them from being everything God wanted them to be.

In 1960, groups of Catholics started speaking in tongues at Notre Dame and Duquesne Universities. Many of them testified the experience made them more devoted to the Catholic religion and to the “Mother of God.” Then, some groups of liberal Protestants began to speak in tongues. Some of these people didn't believe many of the teachings of the Bible, and many of them knew nothing about the New Birth, but they claimed to be filled with the Holy Spirit, because they were speaking in tongues.

Many of the people who speak in tongues today prefer to call themselves “Charismatic,” rather than “Pentecostal,” because they don't want to be identified with the ignorance and excessive emotionalism of the early Pentecostals.

Sometimes these people call themselves “Full Gospel,” because they believe their tongues experience gives them a fuller experience of with God than other Christians.

We are going to focus on two major teachings of the Charismatic Movement: Tongues and Healing.

Their distinctive teachings are:

1. Everyone is lost until they are born again by repenting and receiving the Lord Jesus Christ as their personal Savior. Salvation is by grace alone through faith alone. In this most important teaching, we are in total agreement.
2. A Christian can lose his or her salvation by persisting in a life of sin. (This teaching is contrary to Scripture. We'll cover that in another lesson). They disagree among

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themselves as to which sins (and how many sins) will send a believer to Hell and which sins won't.

3. Speaking in tongues is a sign that a person has been filled with the Holy Spirit.
4. Christians who have never spoken in tongues have never been filled with the Holy Spirit.
5. All nine of the miraculous spiritual gifts listed in 1 Corinthians 12:8-10 are for today.
6. Healing is part of the atonement. (Jesus died for our sicknesses as well as our sins).
7. When a Christian gets sick, it is always God's will to heal.
8. A Christian who doesn't get healed doesn't have enough faith.

1. Speaking in Tongues (*glossolalia*)- 3 purposes of tongues

- a. A Biblical understanding of tongues
 - i. Tongues is a minor teaching in the New Testament
 1. During a period of over 30 years, there were 3 instances of it in the Book of Acts:
 - a. Acts 2:4
 - b. Acts 10:46
 - c. Acts 19:6
 2. There is no mention of anyone "praying in tongues"
 3. In the entire New Testament, it is only mentioned a few times. In addition to the 3 instances in the Book of Acts, it is mentioned:
 - a. 1 Cor. 12:10, 28, 30
 - b. 1 Cor. 13:1 (does not necessarily refer to miraculous tongues)
 - c. 1 Cor. 14:5-6, 18, 21-23, 30
 4. Out of 1,189 chapters in the Bible – 260 chapters in the New Testament – only 5 or 6 (depending on how you interpret 1 Cor. 13:1) even mention tongues at all.
 5. When tongues are mentioned...
 - a. It always refers to legitimate foreign languages and not nonsense gibberish – Acts 2:7-11
 - b. Other people knew these were genuine languages because they understood what they were hearing.
 - c. That's why tongues worked as a sign. Other people knew what they were saying.
 - d. If the disciples were just speaking gibberish, as today's tongues-talkers do, it wouldn't be a sign to anyone. Gibberish isn't a miraculous sign. Even babies can do that. The sign lies in the fact that other people can understand in their own languages.
 - e. A lot of other religions have these trances and "unknown tongues"
 - i. The pagan religion of Corinth – some scholars believe the word translated "carried away" means to be in a trance with ecstatic utterances – 1 Cor. 12:2
 - ii. Mormonism – the dedication of their first temple in Kirtland, Ohio in 1836
 - iii. Hinduism
 - iv. Witch doctors in the Caribbean

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- v. Liberal Protestants who do not believe the Bible is the inerrant Word of God.
 - vi. Roman Catholics
6. Tongues served 2 functions
- a. A sign from God – a way to convince unbelievers that the message of the Gospel is from God.
 - i. God used signs to authenticate His message and messenger in the Old Testament
 - 1. Moses, Elijah, Elisha
 - 2. He wasn't giving miraculous signs all the time. Just at selected times during Old Testament history.
 - ii. Just as the Greeks loved wisdom, the Jews sought a sign (it was part of their history) – 1 Cor. 1:22
 - 1. When Paul went to the Jews, he performed signs.
 - 2. When he went to the Greeks he gave them wisdom – Acts 17
 - 3. When he performed a sign for the Gentiles, they thought he was a god and wanted to worship him – Acts 14:11-13
 - b. A means of communicating the Gospel with hearers in their own language – Acts 2:11; 1 Cor. 14:18
7. The interpretation of tongues allowed the believer to understand what was spoken to them in another language.
8. Does this happen today? I have personally known 2 people who have done it. Neither of them had anything to do with the Charismatic movement. Both of them were Baptists.
- a. “Brother Mike” of Portland, Oregon, had a ministry of witnessing to foreign sailors. He had a couple of times where God gave him the ability to witness in languages he had not learned.
 - b. When I was Associate Pastor of Calvary Baptist Church in Jennings, Louisiana, we supported a missionary to Japan who made contact with a people group who spoke another dialect he hadn't learned. The Holy Spirit gave him the ability to speak and preach in that dialect. He knew what he was saying, but he had never learned to speak the words that were coming out of his mouth.
 - c. Are these genuine instances of Biblical speaking in tongues? They meet the criteria:
 - i. Legitimate languages
 - ii. Understood by the hearers
 - iii. Reached unsaved people with the Gospel and people got saved.
 - iv. These men also understood what their hearers were saying to them – the Gift of the Interpretation of Languages (Tongues).

b. Tongues in the Charismatic Movement

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- i. The “initial evidence” of being filled with the Holy Spirit
 1. They cite
 - a. Acts 2:4
 - b. Acts 10:46
 - c. Acts 19:6
 2. They use these verses to claim, “Speaking in tongues is the initial evidence that a person has been filled with the Spirit, because every time a person was filled with the Spirit in the New Testament, they spoke in tongues.”
 3. They don’t cite the verses where a person was filled with the Holy Spirit and they didn’t speak in tongues.
 - a. Acts 4:31
 - b. Acts 11:24
 4. If you ask them about Acts 4:31 and 11:24, they will say that the disciples and Barnabas did speak in tongues, because that is the evidence of being filled with the Spirit. Circular reasoning. They have no choice, because their belief is not Scriptural.
 5. They believe that all believers can speak in tongues if they receive the fullness of the Holy Spirit.
- ii. The Gift of Tongues – to be used in public meetings to give a message from God.
 1. When a “tongue” is given an interpreter must be present.
 2. An “interpreter” is a person with the gift of the interpretation of tongues who can get a message directly from God to translate what the tongues speaker said to the congregation.
 3. When the “interpreter” speaks, he or she is quoting God without quoting the Scripture.
 - a. They generally fall short of claiming this to be Inspiration
 - b. However, since they believe the message was given directly from God, verbatim, they really believe the message is inspired.
 - c. They don’t want to think they are adding to the Word of God – Rev. 22:18
 4. They believe that some Spirit-filled believers have the “gift of tongues” and some Spirit-filled believers have other gifts instead.
- iii. They admit that their tongues are not necessarily any know earthly language, but they say it is still a language that communicates with God.
 1. Professor William J. Samarin of the University of Toronto's Department of Linguistics traveled to many Pentecostal meetings to investigate the phenomenon of tongues. He concluded:
 - a. glossolalia is an "unintelligible babbling speech that exhibits superficial phonological similarity to language, without having consistent syntagmatic structure and that is not systematically derived from or related to known language." (William J. Samarin, *Variation and Variables in Religious Glossolalia*)
 - b. "a meaningless but phonetically structured human utterance believed by the speaker to be a real language but bearing no systematic resemblance to any natural language, living or

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dead." (William J. Samarin, *Tongues of Men and Angels. The Religious Language of Pentecostalism* (New York, 1972).

- iv. The “Heavenly Prayer Language”
 1. They believe that any believer can pray in tongues
 2. The term “Heavenly Prayer Language” does not appear in Scripture.
 3. Their proof texts
 - a. Rom. 8:26
 - i. Note “groanings that cannot be uttered”
 - ii. This cannot refer to tongues, because tongues are utterances
 - b. 1 Cor. 14:14-15
 - i. The context shows that if a person were to pray in a language – if he could (remember tongues are languages, not unintelligible gibberish) – he would not know what he was praying – even though he wanted to communicate with God (praying with his spirit).
 - ii. Paul said he would pray with his spirit and his understanding – he would pray intelligibly. You need both to really pray.

2. Divine Healing

- a. The Biblical understanding – 2 types of miraculous healing
 - i. Gifts of healings – 1 Cor. 12:9
 1. This gift was a sign to unbelievers to authenticate the messenger and his message – Heb. 2:4
 2. The apostles and those with this gift...
 - a. We not commanded to “pray for the sick”
 - b. They were commanded to “Heal the sick” – Matt. 10:8
 - c. They didn’t have to pray for the sick to be healed...
 - i. They laid hands on the sick
 - ii. The shadow
 - iii. Cloths
 3. Characteristics of these healings
 - a. No “healing shows”
 - b. 100% success rate
 - c. Never accused a person of not having enough faith if they didn’t get healed.
 - d. People never “didn’t get healed”
 - e. Laying of on hands
 - f. Touching Peter’s shadow brought healing – Acts 5:15
 - g. Handkerchiefs from Paul’s body. – Acts 19:12
 - ii. Healing in answer to prayer
 1. James 5:14-15
 2. Is it always God’s will to heal?
 - a. If it was, no spiritual Christian would ever die of illness
 - b. Paul would have told Timothy to get healed instead of taking wine for his stomach – 1 Tim. 5:23

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- c. Paul would not have left Trophimus I have left in Miletus sick. – 2 Tim. 4:20
 3. What should we do when we get sick?
 - a. Pray and believe God for healing. – James 5:14-15
 - b. Call your pastor (elder) – James 5:14-15
 - c. Expect Him to answer this prayer just as you would expect Him to answer any other prayer.
 - d. Seek medical help.
 - e. Remember, God won't do for you what He expects you to do for yourself. He will take over when you have done what you can do.
 4. Legitimate healings I have seen as a Baptist
 - a. Young man healed overnight of spinal meningitis. Calvary Baptist Church, Romulus, MI
 - b. 5-year old girl healed of a hole in her eardrum – Calvary Baptist Church, Romulus, MI
 - c. 65-year old lawyer healed off his deathbed in the Intensive care Unit at UCLA Medical Center. He came to church and came forward to get saved during the invitation the next Sunday. Valley Baptist Church, Rowland Heights, CA
- b. The Charismatic teaching
 - i. Healing is in the Atonement – “with His strips we are healed” – Isa. 53:6
 - ii. Therefore, it is God's will for all Christians to be healed.
 - iii. Many claim to have the gifts of healings today
 1. None of them has 100% instant success rate as was the case in the New Testament.
 2. None of them heal the obvious
 - a. Car accident victims with broken bodies
 - b. People who are obviously crippled
 3. The screen the people they allow on stage before the show. They want to make sure they put on a good show.
 - iv. Excuses for failure to heal
 1. People rarely get healed in their meetings.
 2. After praying for a person to be healed, they often say, “Say, ‘Thank you Jesus, I'm healed.’ Don't let the devil lie to you, even if you still feel sick. You are healed.”
 3. They tell the people, “Sorry, but you didn't have enough faith. Come back when you have more faith, and you can be healed.
 - v. They always say that they are not doing the healing, but God is.
 1. This sounds good.
 2. However, what they are really telling you is that *they are God's official agent for the healing*, and you need to come to them to get God to heal you!
 - vi. Faith healers, phonies and crooks
 1. A.A. Allen, a popular faith healer of the 1950's and 60's was an alcoholic. He died drunk after one of his meetings.
 2. Jimmy Swaggart had his crusades in full swing when he was caught with pornography twice.

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3. Rev. Ike, a popular faith healer of the 1950's and 60's drove a Pink Rolls Royce.
4. Kathryn Kuhlman was a popular faith healer in the 1960's and 70's. She claimed that 1,000's of people were healed under her "ministry."
 - a. Dr. William Nolen, MD., believed her and wanted to investigate the healings.
 - b. He investigated a number of her healings.
 - c. He was not able to find evidence that a single "healing" was genuine.
 - d. He wrote about his investigation in a book – *Healing: a Doctor in Search of a Miracle* (Random House, 1974)
5. Peter Popoff was popular in the 1970's and 80's
 - a. He would be on stage and call out a person's name, state their illness and pronounce them healed.
 - b. He told the people he got this information by receiving a Word of Knowledge from God (supposedly one of the 9 Gifts in 1 Cor. 12).
 - c. It was discovered that his wife was reading cards filled out by individuals in the crusades to a secret radio receiver in his ear, and that this "Word of Knowledge" was phony.
6. One of the members of my church in London went to a faith healing crusade. She told me she had seen a man raised from the dead at the crusade.
 - a. A man in the aisle fell to the ground, motionless.
 - b. The healer went over to the man and told the audience that the man was dead.
 - c. The healer then prayed for the man, and he got up.
 - d. The healer told everybody in the crowd that the man was raised from the dead before their eyes.

Conclusion:

There are many differences in the Charismatic movement. The things I have explained here about their beliefs and practices are the things I observed and was taught during the time I was a Pentecostal preacher. The fundamental difference between their beliefs and ours:

They interpret the Bible by their personal experiences.

We interpret our experiences by a literal understanding of the Bible.

Most of the churches in the movement preach the Gospel and believe in being born again as the Bible teaches. There are many good sincere Christians in the Charismatic movement. We love them as our brothers and sisters in Christ. We do not endorse their peculiarities of doctrine and practice that are not in line with the Word of God.

Let us again be reminded of practice of the Bereans:

These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so.

– Acts 17:11