ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

NT225  G. JORGE MEDINA

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STATISTICS & SPEAKING IN TONGUES

Speaking in Tongues: Jesus and the Apostolic Church as Models for the Church Today. – Robert P. Menzies
In an important essay, historian Vinson Synan highlights the significant role that speaking in tongues played in the development of the modern Pentecostal movement. He notes that, ‘for Pentecostals glossolalia [speaking in tongues] was not only proof of the baptism in the Holy Spirit, but also was a repeatable evidence of the Holy Spirit’s continued presence’. Additionally, the expectation of this experience encouraged ‘all Pentecostals to seek a spiritual breakthrough’.

Synan makes an interesting observation: ‘the Pentecostal churches that have held strongly to this teaching [initial evidence] have surpassed all others in church growth and missionary success in the period since World War II’. He compares the Church of God in Christ (COGIC) and the Church of Christ (Holiness). These two groups separated in 1908 over the issue of tongues, with the former affirming the experience and the latter rejecting the Pentecostal emphasis. At that time, both groups were roughly equal in size. Synan states, ‘By 1990 the church that rejected tongues as initial evidence numbered only 15,000 members in the USA while the COGIC had grown to number 3.7 million members’.

Synan also compares the Assemblies of God (AG) and the Christian Missionary Alliance (CMA). While the AG affirmed the Pentecostal perspective on tongues, the CMA rejected it. The CMA adopted the ‘seek not, forbid not’ policy and this ‘effectively ended the Pentecostal renewal in the CMA church’. The results are instructive. ‘By 1992 the CMA had grown to 265,863 members in the USA and an estimated 1.9 million members around the world. On the other hand, the Assemblies of God … had grown by 1992 to 2,170,890 members in the USA with an estimated worldwide constituency of 25 million members’. The Assemblies of God now numbers 67 million adherents worldwide, with 3.1 million located in the U.S.

Synan concludes with these stirring words: In the end, the teaching of tongues as initial evidence has played a major role in recent church history. The Pentecostal experience and the doctrine explaining it has galvanized the most explosive movement among Christians since the days of the Reformation. It is unthinkable that the Pentecostal movement could have developed as it did without the initial evidence position. The fact is that this teaching led millions of Christians to receive dramatic and life-changing experiences of baptism in the Holy Spirit, which has led to an explosion of all the other charismata in the lives of Spirit-filled believers.
GENTILES

THE MOSAIC LAW AND THE GENTILES

THE PROBLEM

“But some men came down from Judea and were teaching the brothers, “Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved.” And after Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and debate with them, Paul and Barnabas and some of the others were appointed to go up to Jerusalem to the apostles and the elders about this question.” (Acts 15:1-2)

PETER’S OPINION

“Now, therefore, why are you putting God to the test by placing a yoke on the neck of the disciples that neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear? But we believe that we will be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, just as they will.” (Acts 15:10-11)

WHAT DOES THAT “GRACE” INCLUDE?

“And God, who knows the heart, bore witness to them, by giving them the Holy Spirit just as he did to us, and he made no distinction between us and them, having cleansed their hearts by faith.” (Acts 15:8-9)
JAMES’ OPINION

“After they finished speaking, James replied, “Brothers, listen to me. Simeon has related how God first visited the Gentiles, to take from them a people for his Name.” (Acts 15:13–14)

JAMES APPEALS TO SCRIPTURE

“That the remnant of mankind may seek the Lord, and all the Gentiles who are called by my Name, says the Lord, who makes these things” (Acts 15:17)

“That they may possess the remnant of Edom and all the nations who are called by my Name,” declares the LORD [YHWH] who does this.” (Amos 9:12)

THE NAME OF YHWH CALLED OVER THE GENTILES

“Simeon has related how God first visited the Gentiles, to take from them a people for his Name.” (Acts 15:13-14)

“And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.” (Acts 10:48)

JAMES’ CONCLUSION

“Therefore my judgment is that we should not trouble those of the Gentiles who turn to God, but should write to them to… [keep the Sabbath?]”

“…abstain from the things polluted by idols, and from sexual immorality, and from what has been strangled, and from blood.” (Acts 15:19-20)
THINGS THAT WOULD IMPEDE JEW-GENTILE COMMUNION

1. Idols
2. Sexual immorality
3. Unclean animals (strangled—with blood?)
4. Blood (blood sausage?)

LEVITICUS 17:11

“For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul.”

1 PETER 1:18-19

“Knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.”

PAUL’S OPINION ABOUT “GOSPEL + LAW = SALVATION”

“But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed.”

(Galatians 1:8-9 NKJV)
SHOULD WE KEEP THE LAW?

“Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage. Indeed I, Paul, say to you that if you become circumcised, Christ will profit you nothing. And I testify again to every man who becomes circumcised that he is a debtor to keep the whole law. You have become estranged from Christ, you who attempt to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace.” (Galatians 5:1-4)

THE FUTILITY OF ATTEMPTING TO KEEP THE LAW

“For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all.” (James 2:10)

If you try but fail, you cannot be saved.

Remember: “You have become estranged from Christ, you who attempt to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace.” (Galatians 5:4)

WE’LL BE RIGHT BACK!

TIME FOR OUR LAST QUIZ
“So they said, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household.” (Acts 16:31)

Is this the Plan of Salvation?
Why or why not?
How should we investigate the text?

If you were the jailer and heard those words, what would you need to know in order to be saved?

Is the promise of salvation for all his “household” also for us and ours?
WHAT DOES “BELIEVE” MEAN? (WHAT DID THEY UNDERSTAND?)

▸ Greek: πιστεύω = Trust, believe

▸ “But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, “Lord, who has believed our report?” (Romans 10:16)

▸ “And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him.” (Hebrews 5:9)

▸ “When the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (2 Thessalonians 1:7-8)

WHAT DOES THE CONTEXT SHOW?

▸ “So they said, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household...” (Acts 16:31)

▸ “And they spoke the Word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their wounds; and he was baptized at once, he and all his family.” (Acts 16:32-33)

HOW DID THE JAILER SHOW HIS FAITH?

▸ “Then he brought them up into his house and set food before them. And he rejoiced along with his entire household that he had believed [πιστεύω] in God.” (Acts 16:34 cf. 16:31)

▸ The jailer’s faith was demonstrated in his baptism
DID THE JAILER RECEIVE THE HOLY SPIRIT?

“Rejoicing is a common response for those who believe the gospel... and a sign of the presence of the Holy Spirit.”
—Clinton E. Arnold, Acts, p. 161

DID THE JAILER RECEIVE THE HOLY SPIRIT?

“Luke does not tell everything every time. We can be sure that part of the reason for that great joy was the fact they were also baptized in the Holy Spirit and spoke in other tongues as the early believers did on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2: 4) and at the house of Cornelius (10: 46). After all, would God do any less for these Gentile believers than He did for Cornelius?” —Stanley M. Horton, Acts, Kindle Locations 6540-6542.

THE SALVATION OF CORNELIUS

CORNELIUS, MAN OF FAITH (ACTS 10)

He believed in God and was pious (v.2)
Feared God (with all his household)
Gave alms (v. 2)
Prayed to God always (v. 2)
SPIRITUALITY IS NOT SUFFICIENT

▸ He saw an angel (v. 3)

▸ “God knows you” (v. 4) But…

▸ “Now send men to Joppa, and send for Simon whose surname is Peter. He is lodging with Simon, a tanner, whose house is by the sea. He will tell you what you must do.” (Acts 10:5–6)

READING LUKE-ACTS IN THE PENTECOSTAL TRADITION


“READING LUKE-ACTS IN THE PENTECOSTAL TRADITION,” MARTIN MITTELSTADT

▸ In what may have been the first book-length exposition of a Pentecostal theology, Pentecostal preacher and an eventual superintendent of the Pentecostal Holiness Church, George Floyd Taylor vigorously defends the new teaching according to the pattern in Acts: Look up all the accounts given in Scripture of any receiving the Baptism, and you will not find any other manifestation mentioned on that occasion without the manifestation of tongues - Show us any other Scriptural manifestation and we will accept it. Show us one account of an apostolic service of which the Book says, ‘They were filled with the Holy Ghost, but did not speak with tongues’. (p. 27)
Similarly, Joseph H. King, founder of the Pentecostal Holiness Church, explains:

*The Book of Acts is the only one in the Bible that presents to us the Pentecostal baptism from an historic standpoint; and it gives the standard by which to determine the reality and fullness of the Spirit’s outpouring, since in every instance where the Spirit was poured out for the first time this miraculous utterance accompanied the same, so we infer that its connection with the baptism is to be regarded as an evidence of its reception.* (p.27)

For Haywood (and Ewart) [two early Oneness Pentecostal leaders], an accurate interpretation of Acts returns the church to its original standard; there is no difference between the birth of the Spirit and Spirit baptism.

Oneness Pentecostalism materializes at least in part as a rejection of the philosophical language of human creeds that do not express Lukan understanding and language. (p.33)

[Verna Linzey] assembles a lengthy catalogue of non-Pentecostal commentators, who agree that the Samaritans experienced a post-regeneration, visible, outward, and miraculous manifestation of the Spirit; she notes further that nearly all of these same commentators mention ‘speaking in tongues as almost certainly the manifestation or one of the manifestations’ (p.71)

**Endnote:** Linzey collects the views of more than twenty-five commentators, including such popular commentators as Matthew Henry, Adam Clarke, William Burkitt, Philip Schaff, Albert Barnes, Alexander Mclaren, Arthur S. Peake, and John Wesley).
ASSIGNMENTS
THE BOOK OF ACTS

MEMORIZE

- Memorize this list of references:

READ

- Read textbook, pages 192-273.
- No reflection paper necessary.