

# Tongues in History

The Church Must Be A Church Empowered By The Holy Spirit

### **Acts 2:1–13 CSB**

When the day of Pentecost had arrived, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like that of a violent rushing wind came from heaven, and it filled the whole house where they were staying. They saw tongues like flames of fire that separated and rested on each one of them. Then they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in different tongues, as the Spirit enabled them. Now there were Jews staying in Jerusalem, devout people from every nation under heaven. When this sound occurred, a crowd came together and was confused because each one heard them speaking in his own language. They were astounded and amazed, saying, “Look, aren’t all these who are speaking Galileans? How is it that each of us can hear them in our own native language? Parthians, Medes, Elamites; those who live in Mesopotamia, in Judea and

Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome (both Jews and converts), Cretans and Arabs—we hear them declaring the magnificent acts of God in our own tongues.” They were all astounded and perplexed, saying to one another, “What does this mean?” But some sneered and said, “They’re drunk on new wine.”

### **Acts 2:14–21 CSB**

Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice, and proclaimed to them, “Fellow Jews and all you residents of Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and pay attention to my words. For these people are not drunk, as you suppose, since it’s only nine in the morning. On the contrary, this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel: **And it will be** in the last days, says God, that **I will pour out my Spirit on all people; then your sons and your daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, and your old men will dream dreams. I will even pour out my Spirit on my servants in those days, both men and women** and they will prophesy. **I will display wonders in the heaven above and signs on the earth below: blood and fire and a cloud of smoke. The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the great and glorious day of the Lord comes. Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.**

### **Acts 2:38–39 CSB**

Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, each of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and for your children, and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call.”

# Evidence of Speaking in Tongues in the Early Church

<http://www.cai.org/files/theme-sheets/en/c/sc0121au.pdf>

Printable PDF Version

Historical evidence of speaking in tongues in the early church from the writings of Eusebius, Irenaeus, Chrysostom of Constantinople, and Augustine of Hippo...

## **A.D. 33 - The day of Pentecost:**

“And when the day of Pentecost was fully come they were all with one accord in one place... And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues,

as the Spirit gave them utterance."” *ACTS 2:1-4*

### **A.D. 41 - At Caesarea:**

“"While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word... For they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God."” *ACTS 10:44-46*

### **A.D. 54 - At Ephesus:**

“"And it came to pass that while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost... And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came upon them: and they spoke with tongues and prophesied."” *ACTS 19:1-6*

### **A.D. - At Corinth:**

“"Even so ye, forasmuch as ye are zealous of Spiritual gifts, see that ye may excel to the edifying of the church... Wherefore let him that speaketh in an unknown tongue pray that he may interpret... I thank my God that I (Paul) speak with tongues more than ye all."” *1 CORINTHIANS 14:12-18*

### **A.D. 100 - Eusebius (Church Historian):**

Writing to the preaching evangelists who were yet living, Eusebius says: "Of those that flourished in these times, Quadratus is said to have been distinguished for his prophetic gifts. There were many others, also, noted in these times who held rank in the apostolic succession... the Holy Spirit also wrought many wonders as yet through them, so that as the Gospel was heard, men in crowds voluntarily and eagerly embraced the true faith with their whole minds."

### **150 AD - Justin Martyr**

(EARLY CHRISTIAN APOLOGIST) refers to tongues-speaking as practiced in his day in his Dialogue with Trypho, "If you want proof that the Spirit of God who was with your people and left you to come to us, come into our assemblies and there you will see Him cast out demons, heal the sick and hear Him speak in tongues and prophecy."

### **A.D. 115-202 - Irenaeus:**

Irenaeus was a pupil of Polycarp, who was a disciple of the apostle John. He wrote in his book "Against Heresies", Book V, vi.: "In like manner do we also hear many brethren in the church who possess prophetic gifts, and who through the Spirit speak all kinds of languages, and bring to light, for the general benefit, the hidden things of men and declare the mysteries of God, who also the apostles term spiritual."

circa 200 AD - Tertullian:

(c. 160 – c. 220 AD),<sup>[1]</sup> was a prolific early Christian author from Carthage in the Roman province of Africa.<sup>[2]</sup> He is the first Christian author to produce an extensive corpus of Latin Christian literature. He also was a notable early Christian apologist and a polemicist against heresy. Tertullian has been called "the father of Latin Christianity"<sup>[3]</sup> and "the founder of Western theology."<sup>[4]</sup> Though conservative, he did originate and advance new theology to the early Church. He is perhaps most famous for being the oldest extant Latin writer to use the term **Trinity** (Latin **trinitas**),<sup>[5]</sup> and giving the oldest extant formal exposition of a Trinitarian theology.<sup>[6]</sup> Other Latin formulations that first appear in his work are "three Persons, one Substance".

**Tertulian referred to the "interpretation of tongues" as a "sign", examples of which could be produced in his day "without any difficulty".** "Tertullian in an anti-heretical apologetic alludes to instances of the 'interpretation of tongues' as one among several examples of 'spiritual gifts' common enough in his day to be easily encountered and provide evidence that God was at work in the church:

"Let Marcion then exhibit, as gifts of his god, some prophets, such as have not spoken by human sense, but with the

Spirit of God, such as have both predicted things to come, and have made manifest the secrets of the heart; let him produce a psalm, a vision, a prayer -- only let it be by the Spirit, in an ecstasy, that is, in a rapture, whenever an interpretation of tongues has occurred to him; let him show to me also, that any woman of boastful tongue in his community has ever prophesied from amongst those specially holy sisters of his. Now all these signs (of spiritual gifts) are forthcoming from my side without any difficulty, and they agree, too, with the rules, and the dispensations, and the instructions of the Creator; therefore without doubt the Christ, and the Spirit, and the apostle, belong severally to my God. Here, then, is my frank avowal for any one who cares to require it."

### **A.D. 200 Novatian**

(*circa* 200–58) was a scholar, priest, theologian and antipope who held the title between 251 and 258.

"This is He who places prophets in the Church, instructs teachers, directs tongues, gives powers and healings, does wonderful works, often discrimination of spirits, affords powers of government, suggests counsels, and orders and arranges whatever other gifts there are of charismata; and thus make the Lord's Church everywhere, and in all, perfected and completed."

## **A.D. 300 Hilary of Poitiers**

(c. 300 – c. 368[1]) was Bishop of Poitiers and is a Doctor of the Church.

"For God hath set same in the Church, first apostles... secondly prophets...thirdly teachers...next mighty works, among which are the healing of diseases... and gifts of either speaking or interpreting divers kinds of tongues. Clearly these are the Church's agents of ministry and work of whom the body of Christ consists; and God has ordained them."

## **A.D. 300 - The Early Martyrs:**

The early martyrs enjoyed these gifts. Dean Ferrar, in his book "Darkness to Dawn" states: "Even for the minutest allusions and particulars I have contemporary authority." He refers to the persecuted Christians in Rome singing and speaking in unknown tongues.

## **A.D. 390 - Chrysostom of Constantinople:**

Chrysostom, Bishop of Constantinople, writes: "Whoever was baptised in apostolic days, he straightway spoke with tongues, for since on their coming over from idols, without any clear knowledge or training in the Scriptures, they at

once received the Spirit, not that they saw the Spirit, for He is invisible, but God's grace bestowed some sensible proof of His energy, and one straightway spoke in the Persian language, another in the Roman, another in the Indian, another in some other tongues, and this made manifest to them that were without that it was the Spirit in the very person speaking. Wherefore the apostle calls it the manifestation of the Spirit which is given to every man to profit withal."

"This whole phenomenon [of speaking in tongues] is very obscure, but the obscurity is produced by our ignorance of the facts referred to and by their cessation, being such then as used to occur but now no longer take place. And why do they not happen now? Why look now, the cause too of the obscurity hath produced us again another question: namely, why did they then happen, and now do so no more?"  
(Chrysostom, 344-407)[

### **A.D. 400 St. Patrick of Ireland**

(c. 387–493) in his "Confessio" called "The Confession of St. Patrick," records hearing a strange language being prayed by the Holy Spirit in a dream"

St. Patrick says in his book: "And another night— God knows, I do not, whether within me or beside me— most words which I heard and could not understand, except at the end of the speech it was represented thus: 'He who gave his life for you, he it is who speaks within you.' And thus I awoke, joyful." [47] (Compare this to what Saint Paul says in 1 Cor. 14:4.). [27]

'And on a second occasion I saw Him praying within me, and I was as it were, inside my own body, and I heard Him above me—that is, above my inner self. He was praying powerfully with sighs. And in the course of this I was astonished and wondering, and I pondered who it could be who was praying within me. But at the end of the prayer it was revealed to me that it was the Spirit. And so I awoke and remembered the Apostle's words: "Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we know not how to pray as we ought. But the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with sighs too deep for utterance [Romans 8:26]." And again: "The Lord our advocate intercedes for us [Romans 8:27]." [47]

### **A.D. 400 - Augustine of Hippo:**

Augustine, Bishop of Hippo, one of the four great fathers of the Latin Church and considered the greatest of them all: "We still do what the apostles did when they laid hands on the Samaritans and called down the Holy Spirit on them in the laying-on of hands. It is expected that converts should

speak with new tongues." Augustine of Hippo, in an exposition on Psalm 32, discusses a phenomenon contemporary to his time of those who "sing in jubilation", singing the praises of God not in their own language, but in a manner that "may not be confined by the limits of syllables".

- 1100s - Hildegard of Bingen** spoke and sang in tongues. Her spiritual songs were referred to by contemporaries as "concerts in the Spirit."

12th century– Hildegard of Bingen is reputed to have spoken and sung in tongues. Her spiritual songs were referred to by contemporaries as "concerts in the Spirit."

- 1300s - The Moravians**

**(Early Protestant Church, influencers of the Nicene Creed)** are referred to by detractors as having spoken in tongues. John Roche, a contemporary critic, claimed that the Moravians "commonly broke into some disconnected Jargon, which they often passed upon the vulgar, 'as the exuberant and resistless Evacuations of the Spirit'".

- 1600s - The French Prophets:**

The Camisards also spoke sometimes in languages that

were unknown: "Several persons of both Sexes," James Du Bois of Montpellier recalled, "I have heard in their Extasies pronounce certain words, which seem'd to the Standers-by, to be some Foreign Language." These utterances were sometimes accompanied by the gift of interpretation exercised, in Du Bois' experience, by the same person who had spoken in tongues.

### •1600s - Early Quakers

, such as Edward Burrough, make mention of tongues speaking in their meetings: "We spoke with new tongues, as the Lord gave us utterance, and His Spirit led us".

### •1800s - Edward Irving

and the Catholic Apostolic Church. Edward Irving, a minister in the Church of Scotland, writes of a woman who would "speak at great length, and with superhuman strength, in an unknown tongue, to the great astonishment of all who heard, and to her own great edification and enjoyment in God". Irving further stated that "tongues are a great instrument for personal edification, however mysterious it may seem to us."

## 1901 to 1906

### Azusa Street Revival

**The modern Pentecostal Christian** practice of glossolalia is often said to have originated around the beginning of the 20th century in the United States. The city of Topeka, Kansas is often cited as the center of the Pentecostal movement and the resurgence of glossolalia in the Church. Charles Fox Parham, a holiness preacher and founder of Bethel Bible College in 1900, is given credit for being the one who influenced modern Pentecostalism. During what has been called a sermon by Parham, a bold student named Agnes Ozman asked him for prayer and the laying on of hands to specifically ask God to fill her with the Holy Spirit. This was the night of New Year's Eve, 1900. She became the first of many students to experience glossolalia, coincidentally in the first hours of the 20th century. Parham followed within the next few days, and before the end of January 1901, glossolalia was being discussed in newspapers as a sign of the second advent of Pentecost.

Word of the outpouring of the Spirit spread to other Holiness congregations. Parham wrote, studied, traveled, preached, and taught about glossolalia for the next few years. Parham and others who believed in or manifested tongues were persecuted from both inside and outside of the church. In 1905, he opened a Bible school in Houston. It was there that William J. Seymour became indoctrinated. It is notable that Seymour was black, and Parham was white. It is further notable that Seymour did not speak in tongues

while in Houston.

When Seymour was invited to speak in Los Angeles about the baptism of the Holy Spirit in February 1906, he accepted. His first speaking engagement was met with dispute, primarily because he preached about "tongues" being a primary indication of the baptism of the Spirit, yet he did not himself speak in tongues. It was not until April that his preaching and teaching about glossolalia paid dividends, first to a man named Edward Lee, and later to Seymour. Similar to the experience of Parham in 1901, Seymour's students received the ability to speak in tongues a few days before he did.

Headline about the **"Weird babel of tongues" and other behavior at Azusa Street, from a 1906 Los Angeles Times** newspaper.

By May 1906, indeed only one month after the Great San Francisco Earthquake which was seen as an "act of God", Seymour was leading a major movement of the Spirit known as the Azusa Street Revival in Los Angeles. It has been characterized as an inter-denominational, inter-racial, inter-sex Pentecostal revival during a time in the United States in which women and non-whites were not afforded the same civil rights as white men. People from many

denominations and races gathered daily to see and hear, to preach and pray, to sing and shout, and to speak in new tongues. Newspapers, clearly biased against the movement, reported the happenings as a wild and weird group of mostly "colored" people acting as if they were pretty disturbed, exhibiting behavior unheard of in most Protestant churches of the time: intense shouting, vigorous jerking, dancing, passing out, crying, howling, emotional outbursts, and speaking gibberish.

Pentecostalism started as a movement that erased color lines and barriers.

**The SHEERER SCHOOLHOUSE REVIVAL (1896)** Launched the organization that would become the Church of God

**MY Great Grandparents, my grandparents, my parents, myself, my wife, one day our children and their children and as many as the LORD OUR GOD SHALL CALL BECAUSE THIS IS THAT ...**

## **"THIS IS THAT..." The Promise Is Still Promised**

"But Peter... lifted up his voice and said: This is that which

was spoken by the prophet Joel; and it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh." *ACTS 2:16-17*

**What is ""this""?** This is what happened in the upper room on that first Pentecostal Sunday:

- The fire of God appeared.
- The sound of God's Spirit was heard.
- They were all filled.
- They all spoke in tongues.

**What is ""that""?** That, said Peter, is what has caused this - namely, the Spirit of God poured out as promised.

Not a word from the Old or New Testaments suggests that this outpouring would be limited to one day. Bible teaching is to the contrary:

- The experience was for all ().  
*JOEL 2:28*

- Tongues was to be the sign

(See ; ; ).

*MARK 16:17 ISAIAH 28:11-121 CORINTHIANS 14:21*

- The experience was seen and heard (). *ACTS 2:33*
- It was continued throughout all generations ().  
*ACTS 2:39*

**Why “this” is “that”?** This is that simply because the Holy Spirit was identified with the experience of tongues. Take this scriptural confirmation away and we indulge in guesswork of the most dangerous nature. Whether in the house of Cornelius (*ACTS 10:44*), or at Ephesus (*ACTS 19*), the lack of THIS would have frustrated the receiving of THAT - namely the wonderful and satisfying gift of the Holy Spirit, with tongues.

# **The Baptism in the Holy Spirit**

## **God Promises Us Power**

Jesus Said we would be clothed with power.

Power is an issue that relates not only to the physical world, but to the spiritual realm as well. While the purpose and use of spiritual power is much different than physical power, it is

nonetheless crucial to accomplishing God's kingdom purposes in this world.

Before Jesus left earth to return to the Father in heaven, He commissioned His followers to “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.” Then He added, “And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age” (Matthew 28:19,20). Making disciples of all nations would be a monumental task, and Jesus knew that His followers would face many challenges and many obstacles in fulfilling this commission. Therefore, they would need a measure of power far beyond their own ability. Provision was made for that power; and it is still available today to every believer who is willing to receive it.

## **1. Jesus Promised to Send His Power.**

### **A. Jesus said He would send the Holy Spirit to help His followers. (John 14:15-17;**

## **16:7-11)**

While on earth, Jesus taught the principles of the kingdom of God, healed the sick, cast out demons, and poured His life and teachings into His followers. A day would come, however, when He would no longer be with them physically. Yet His followers still would have the monumental task of carrying on His work throughout the world (Matthew 28:19,20). He would have to go away, returning to the Father, so He could send the Holy Spirit, who would convict the world of sin and guide all who would follow Christ into the great truth of His teachings.

## **B. Jesus told His disciples to wait for the promised gift of the Holy Spirit. (Luke 24:46-49; Acts 1:4,5)**

Following His resurrection, Jesus helped His disciples' understand what had taken place and why. The task before them would be large, so they were to wait for the promised Holy Spirit until they had been "clothed with power from on high" (Luke 24:49). Just before returning to the Father, Jesus told His disciples to wait in Jerusalem for the gift that God

had promised. This gift continues today, and consists of real and essential spiritual power from God. We refer to that gift as the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

Outline courtesy of: National Prayer Center

## **2. This Power Is for Everyone**

### **A. Pentecost was promised long before New Testament times.**

**(Joel 2:28,29; Acts 2:16-21)**

More than 800 years before Christ was born, the prophet Joel announced that in the last days God would send the Holy Spirit to be poured out on all people: sons, daughters, men, and women. No one would be excluded from the offer of receiving this power. In Acts 2, Peter quoted Joel's prophecy, explaining that the out-pouring of the Holy Spirit had happened just as it was promised by the prophet.

### **B. The “last days” are a time when the Holy Spirit is**

# **intensely active in our world. (Mark 1:15; Luke 4:18-21; Hebrews 1:1,2)**

The last days began with Christ's first coming, as He was born into this world, and will extend until He returns. This will be an ongoing period of an intense work of the Spirit through God's people to bring the lost into a relationship with Christ. Believers everywhere will do spiritual battle against the forces of wickedness in this world and be powerful witnesses of Christ's love, salvation, and redeeming grace. Therefore, intense spiritual power is needed among God's people throughout the Church.

## **C. The promised power of the Holy Spirit is for every believer of every generation. (Acts 2:39)**

Peter explained to the crowd that the promised gift of power from the Holy Spirit was for them, their children, and for everyone who believes in Jesus Christ in every era and

generation until Jesus returns.

### **3. How is Holy Spirit Baptism Related to Our Salvation?**

#### **A. Holy Spirit baptism is not required for salvation. (John 3:16; Romans 10:9)**

Salvation is received through confession of sin and faith in Jesus' sacrifice on the cross for our sins. According to Scripture there is no further requirement for salvation beyond this.

#### **B. The Holy Spirit convinces people of their need for salvation. (John 16:8-11)**

When people who do not know Christ hear the truth of the gospel and sense an urgency to align with its teachings, they are experiencing the work of the Holy Spirit. He draws

people to Christ's love and salvation as truth is shared with them by Christians or revealed to them as they read Scripture.

## **C. Salvation is a prerequisite to receiving the baptism in the Holy Spirit. (Acts 2:38)**

Peter challenged those listening to Him to “repent and be baptized.” Water baptism is a commonly understood sign that someone has recently become a follower of Christ. To receive Holy Spirit baptism, we must first seek forgiveness of sins and establish a relationship with Christ.

## **D. The Holy Spirit resides within us following salvation. (John 14:17)**

When we begin a relationship with Christ, the Holy Spirit takes residence in our lives, guiding us into truth, warning us when we do wrong, and helping us grow in our walk with Him. We can sense His presence because, as John states, “he lives with you and will be in you.” Yet there is an even

greater dimension of life in the Spirit through the gift of baptism in the Holy Spirit.

Outline courtesy of: National Prayer Center

## **4. How Do We Receive the Baptism in the Holy Spirit?**

### **A. It begins with sincere desire. (Acts 8:18-24)**

The baptism in the Holy Spirit must not be regarded as some sort of “achievement” that allows us acceptance into a particular group of Christians or a church.

It also should not be viewed as a spiritual option that can either be pursued or ignored.

Neither should it be viewed as a spiritual enhancement, making us superior to others.

Simon the sorcerer discovered the fallacy of wanting to

receive the gift in order to impress others. Sincere desire for spiritual power to follow God’s plan for our lives and ministries forms the proper motivation for this gift.

## **B. The recurring biblical sign of the baptism in the Holy Spirit is speaking in languages that you have not learned. (Acts 2:1-4; 10:45,46; 19:6)**

While Acts 2 reveals two other signs—wind and tongues (or flames) of fire—speaking in tongues (foreign languages you have not learned) is the only sign of Holy Spirit baptism that is repeated in Scripture. Additionally, in 1 Corinthians 14:18, the apostle Paul testified to speaking in tongues frequently. Thus, speaking in tongues is described as the “initial physical evidence” of the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

## **C. Speaking in tongues indicates submission to the Holy Spirit, often arising**

## **during times of sincere prayer and praise. (Acts 1:12-14)**

After Jesus ascended into heaven, His followers gathered in a place called the Upper Room in Jerusalem. There they came together for constant, faithful prayer. Their example is important to us. As we fill our hearts with praise and adoration toward God, and sincerely desire the gift of the Holy Spirit, God will pour this gift into our lives in this dynamic way. Through it we are able to express praise to God and intercede for needs more fully and powerfully than what is possible in our own language.

## **5. What Is the Purpose of Holy Spirit Baptism?**

### **A. Through this gift we receive power to witness. (Acts 1:8)**

Speaking in tongues must not be regarded as the end purpose of the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

It is only the initial, physical sign that a person has received the gift. Through this experience, believers are empowered to be more effective witnesses of Jesus Christ to others. Our witness is to be local, regional, national, and global—wherever we live or travel, we are called to tell others about Jesus. And the Holy Spirit empowers us to do just that.

**B. Through this gift we receive supernatural boldness and enablement to witness for Christ through word and action. (Compare John 18:15-17, 25-27 with Acts 2:14-16,36-39; see Acts 6:3; 7:55; 11:22-24)**

During Jesus' trial prior to His crucifixion, Peter denied that he even knew Christ. On the Day of Pentecost, Peter boldly preached to a large audience, and 3,000 believers were added to the Church. In other passages in Acts, leaders are

described as being “full of the Spirit and wisdom,” “full of the Holy Spirit,” “full of the Holy Spirit and faith.”

## **C. The baptism in the Holy Spirit is about winning the spiritually lost for Christ. (Luke 24:46-49; Acts 1:8; 2:42-47)**

As Jesus met with His followers after His resurrection He emphasized that “repentance and forgiveness of sins” would be preached to all nations. Before that could happen, however, they were to wait for the promise of the Father and be “clothed with power from on high.” After Pentecost, Christ’s followers were uniquely empowered to fulfill His mandate to reach the lost and multitudes began coming to Christ. This mandate remains to this day, as does the availability of the Holy Spirit’s power to fulfill it.

If you have not yet done so, begin seeking the promised power of the Holy Spirit in your life. You will never be the same as you’re empowered to make a powerful difference in peoples’ lives wherever you are.