

Revivals And Church History :: William J. Seymour and the Azusa Street Revival by Gary B. McGee

William J. Seymour and the Azusa Street Revival by Gary B. McGee - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2004/9/21 15:41

William J. Seymour and the Azusa Street Revival

by Gary B. McGee

To read the newspapers in 1906, one might have wondered about all the excitement in an old building on Azusa Street in the industrial part of the city. According to the Los Angeles Times, a bizarre new religious sect had started with people "breathing strange utterances and mouthing a creed which it would seem no sane mortal could understand." Further more, "Devotees of the weird doctrine practice the most fanatical rites, preach the wildest theories, and work themselves into a state of mad excitement."

If that didn't grab the reader's attention, the article continued by saying that, "Colored people and a sprinkling of whites compose the congregation, and night is made hideous in the neighborhood by the howlings of the worshippers who spend hours swaying forth and back in a nerve-racking attitude of prayer and supplication." To top it all off, they claimed to have received the "gift of tongues," and what's more, "comprehend the babel."

[Image: <https://www.sermonindex.net/images/forum/2004/september/asuza01.gif>]

Nonetheless, for the spiritually hungry who came from far and wide to receive their Pentecost, "the very atmosphere of heaven" had descended, according to one.

A visiting Baptist pastor said, "The Holy Spirit fell upon me and filled me literally, as it seemed to lift me up, for indeed, I was in the air in an instant, shouting, 'Praise God,' and instantly I began to speak in another language. I could not have been more surprised if at the same moment someone had handed me a million dollars."

Little could the subscribers of the Times have guessed that in years to come, historians would say that the Azusa Street revival played a major role in the development of modern Pentecostalism—a Movement that changed the religious landscape and became the most vibrant force for world evangelization in the 20th century. Azusa Street became the most significant revival of the century in terms of global perspective.

[Image: <https://www.sermonindex.net/images/forum/2004/september/asuza02.gif>]

The Apostolic Faith Mission at 312 Azusa Street, ca. 1906.

While comparable in many ways to other Pentecostal revivals at the time, several dynamics at the Apostolic Faith Mission on Azusa Street set it apart. To understand what happened and why it still has relevance for believers after nearly a century, one must look at the events leading up to the revival in Los Angeles, the leadership of William J. Seymour, and its unique features and legacy.

The Welsh Revival

Expectancy of revival intensified in Los Angeles, California, when believers there heard about the remarkable revival in Wales, where from September 1904 to June 1905, 100,000 people were converted to Christ. For the evangelicals around the world who had been praying for the outpouring of the latter rain of the Spirit as promised by the Old Testament prophet Joel (2:23–29), the spectacular results in Wales suggested that the great end-times revival had begun. The world could now be evangelized in the power of the Spirit before the imminent return of Christ and the impending judgment on the wicked.

The news of the Wales revival piqued the interest of Joseph Smale, pastor of First Baptist Church in Los Angeles. He traveled to Wales to see the revival firsthand. After returning home and telling his congregation about the revival, he wrote t

hat “fully two hundred of them came out of their seats and wept in penitence before the Lord.” Smale began holding daily services both in the afternoons and evenings, and continued to hammer away at the need for revival in Los Angeles and America. Church members then sought earnestly for the power of the Holy Spirit and His gifts. But after a 15-week diet of this preaching, the church board complained and Smale left to found First New Testament Church.

Another congregation, Second Baptist Church, also experienced division when Julia W. Hutchinson—an African-American—and several other members embraced the holiness belief that a second work of grace following conversion would purify the soul of its sinful nature. These new groups of believers, however, continued to pray for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

cont...

Re: William J. Seymour and the Azusa Street Revival by Gary B. McGee - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2004/9/21 15:44

William J. Seymour

William J. Seymour, an African-American, was born May 2, 1870, in Centerville, Louisiana, to former slaves Simon and Phillis Seymour, who raised him as a Baptist. Later, while living in Cincinnati, Ohio, he came into contact with holiness teachings through Martin Wells Knapp’s God’s Revivalist movement and Daniel S. Warner’s Church of God Reformatory movement, otherwise known as the Evening Light Saints. Believing that they were living in the twilight of human history, these Christians believed that the Spirit’s outpouring would precede the rapture of the Church. They deeply impressed the young Seymour.

After moving to Houston, Seymour attended a local African-American holiness congregation pastored by Lucy F. Farrow, a former governess in the household of Charles F. Parham. Parham led the midwestern Apostolic Faith movement, the original name of the Pentecostal movement, that had begun in his Bethel Bible School in Topeka, Kansas, in January 1901. By 1905, he had relocated his base of operations to the Houston area where he conducted revivals and started another Bible school. Farrow arranged for Seymour to attend classes. However, because of the “Jim Crow” segregation laws of the time, Seymour had to listen to Parham’s lectures while sitting apart from the other students. Seymour accepted Parham’s view of baptism in the Holy Spirit—the belief that in every instance, God would give intelligible language—speaking in tongues to believers for missionary evangelism.

Neeley Terry, an African-American and member of the new congregation led by Hutchinson in Los Angeles, visited Houston in 1905 and was impressed when she heard Seymour preach. Returning home, she recommended him to Hutchinson, since the church was seeking a pastor. As a result, Seymour accepted the invitation to shepherd the small flock. With some financial assistance from Parham, he traveled by train westward and arrived in Los Angeles in February 1906.

[Image: <https://www.sermonindex.net/images/forum/2004/september/asuza03.gif>]

William J. Seymour was one of the most respected early Pentecostal leaders. He played an important role in the Azusa Street revival.

Azusa Street Revival

Seymour immediately encountered resistance when, just 2 days after arriving, he began preaching to his new congregation that speaking in tongues was the Bible evidence of the baptism in the Holy Spirit. On the following Sunday, March 4, he returned to the mission and found that Hutchinson had padlocked the door. Condemnation also came from the Holiness Church Association of Southern California with which the church had affiliation. Not everyone in the congregation, however, was troubled by Seymour’s teaching. Undaunted, Seymour, staying at the home of church member Edward S. Lee, accepted Lee’s invitation to hold Bible studies and prayer meetings there. After this, he went to the home of Richard and Ruth Asberry at 214 North Bonnie Brae Street. Five weeks later, Lee became the first to speak in tongues. Seymour then shared Lee’s testimony at a gathering on North Bonnie Brae and soon many began to speak in tongues.

[Image: <https://www.sermonindex.net/images/forum/2004/september/asuza04.gif>]

214 North Bonnie Brae Street, Los Angeles, ca. 1906.

Word of these events traveled quickly in both the African-American and white communities. For several nights, speakers preached on the porch to the crowds on the street below. Believers from Hutchinson's mission, First New Testament Church, and various holiness congregations began to pray for the Pentecostal baptism. (Hutchinson herself was eventually baptized in the Spirit as was Seymour himself.) Finally, after the front porch collapsed, the group rented the former Stevens African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church at 312 Azusa Street in early April. A Los Angeles newspaper referred to it as a "tumble down shack." It had recently been used as a livery stable and tenement house. Discarded lumber and plaster littered the large, barn-like room on the ground floor.

The meetings at the Apostolic Faith Mission quickly caught the attention of the press due to the unusual nature of the worship. Between 300 and 350 people could get into the whitewashed 40- by 60-foot wood frame structure, with many others occasionally forced to stand outside. Church services were held on the first floor where the benches were placed in a rectangular pattern. Some of the benches were simply planks put on top of empty nail kegs. There was no elevated platform. There was no pulpit at the beginning of the revival.

Although several people could be considered leaders, the best known was the unassuming William J. Seymour. Frank Bartleman, an early participant, recalled that "Brother Seymour generally sat behind two empty shoe boxes, one on top of the other. He usually kept his head inside the top one during the meeting, in prayer. There was no pride there.... In that old building, with its low rafters and bare floors, God took strong men and women to pieces, and put them together again, for His glory.... The religious ego preached its own funeral sermon quickly."

cont...

Re: - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2004/9/21 15:50

The second floor housed the office of the mission and rooms for several residents including Seymour and his wife Jenny. It also had a large prayer room to handle the overflow from the altar services below. One seeker described it as follows: "Upstairs is a long room furnished with chairs and three California redwood planks, laid end to end on backless chairs. This is the Pentecostal upper room where sanctified souls seek Pentecostal fullness and go out speaking in new tongues."

[Image: <https://www.sermonindex.net/images/forum/2004/september/asuza05.gif>]

William J. Seymour and his wife, Jenny Moore.

Still, the revival advanced slowly during the summer months with only 150 people receiving "the gift of the Holy Ghost and the Bible evidence." But this changed in the fall as the revival gained momentum and people from far and wide began to attend. Missionary Bernt Bernsten traveled all the way from North China to investigate the happenings after hearing that the promised latter rain was falling.

Stories of the revival spread quickly across North America to Europe and other parts of the world as participants traveled, testified, and published articles in sympathetic holiness publications. Particularly influential was the Apostolic Faith (Los Angeles), issued occasionally between September 1906 and May 1908 through the labors of Seymour and Clara Lum, editors. Distributed without charge, thousands of ministers and laypersons received copies at home and overseas: 5,000 copies of the first edition (September 1906) were printed, and by 1907 the press run reached 40,000.

[Image: <https://www.sermonindex.net/images/forum/2004/september/asuza06.gif>]

The first issue of The Apostolic Faith, Los Angeles, September 1906, carried the above news story on the Azusa Street revival.

Most who visited the mission came to receive the empowerment of Spirit baptism and be equipped with intelligible new languages for gospel preaching overseas. This would enable them to bypass the nuisance of formal language study. The Apostolic Faith reported: "God is solving the missionary problem, sending out new-tongued missionaries on the apostolic faith line, without purse or scrip, and the Lord is going before them preparing the way." Missionaries home on furloughs also attended and spoke in tongues and in a few instances identified the languages being spoken. The recipients, however, usually depended on the Lord to identify the languages they had received.

African-Americans, Latinos, whites, and others prayed and sang together, creating a dimension of spiritual unity and equality, almost unprecedented for the time. It allowed men, women, and children to celebrate their unity in Christ and participate as led by the Spirit. Indeed, so unusual was the mixture of blacks and whites, that Bartleman enthusiastically exclaimed, "The color line was washed away in the blood."⁵ He meant that in the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit, the sin of racial prejudice had been removed by the cleansing blood of Jesus Christ.

[Image: <https://www.sermonindex.net/images/forum/2004/september/asuza07.gif>]

Charles F. Parham

Meanwhile, in late summer 1906, Charles Parham had begun leading another Pentecostal revival in Zion City, Illinois, among the followers of the nationally known faith healer John Alexander Dowie. Not until October did Parham leave for California, hoping to consolidate the faithful in Los Angeles within the wider network of Apostolic Faith believers, and second, to harness what he considered to be an unbridled religious enthusiasm. As it happened, the emotional worship and particularly the mingling of whites and blacks together deeply offended him. Parham laid the blame at Seymour's feet.

The majority of the Azusa faithful remained loyal to Seymour after Parham left with some of the people to establish a rival mission. Within just a few years of its beginning, the Apostolic Faith Mission had become predominantly black with Seymour remaining as pastor. Years later prejudice surfaced there as well, however, when Seymour himself excluded whites from leadership posts at the mission, reserving those for people of color.

Seymour's Legacy

On a worldwide scale, the Azusa Street revival contributed to a new diaspora of missionaries who anticipated that global evangelization would be achieved by gospel preaching accompanied by miraculous signs and wonders (Acts 5:12). While only a small number of missionaries traveled from Azusa Street to minister overseas, it impacted many more who started other Pentecostal revival centers that surfaced as a result of hearing the news of the outpouring of the Spirit in Los Angeles. For many, the Azusa Street revival had inaugurated at long last the great end-times revival.

Much more could be said about the long-term influence of the revival and that of "Bishop" William J. Seymour (an honorary title that he later received, probably from his congregation). The limitations of this article, however, preclude such a lengthy discussion. We will look specifically at the legacy of Seymour.

To begin with, it must be noted that he modeled a genuine humility that many acclaimed. He desired to foster unity among the seekers of the Holy Spirit at Azusa and encouraged them to be sensitive to the Spirit's direction of the services there. Photographs depict him as a warm, friendly, and smiling person of average physical stature. Seymour's bout with smallpox had left him blind in his left eye.

[Image: <https://www.sermonindex.net/images/forum/2004/september/asuza08.gif>]

Frank Bartleman, 1906

Nevertheless, Seymour's ministry did not come without a price. He personally endured the biting criticisms of his opponents—holiness leaders not sympathetic to Pentecostalism, as well as the contempt of Parham and later that of Frank Bartleman. As white Pentecostal denominations formed and told their stories, Seymour was forgotten, partly because he did not contribute to their founding, partly due to their seeing Topeka as the fountainhead of the Movement, and partly due to prioritizing evangelism above preserving the historical record. Seymour also departed from the teaching that speaking in tongues was the initial physical evidence of the baptism in the Holy Spirit. These all contributed to Seymour becoming an almost-forgotten figure in Pentecostal history.

Seymour's greatness today can be found in his concern for spiritual empowerment and unity. The attention at Topeka and other Pentecostal revivals centered on the need for Christians to receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit to win souls to Christ. The unique interracial and intercultural dynamics at Azusa, however, accented both holiness of character and power to witness in an unusual demonstration of love and equality in the body of Christ. In this respect, it powerfully reminds us that the fullness of Pentecostal power will elude those who seek for power in their ministry above that of Christlike character.

The missionary expansion of the Early Church as recorded in the Book of Acts highlights the fact the Pentecostal outpouring led to the embrace of people who were normally considered impure by Jewish standards. The outpourings of the Spirit at Samaria (Acts 8) and among the Gentiles (Acts 10) taught early Christians that God's redemptive work transcends racial and cultural lines. Fallen humanity always accords such differences more important than what God designed and by so doing tyrannizes His creative handiwork. Because they had now been "baptized into Christ" and "put on Christ," Paul alerted the Galatian Christians, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28).

[Image: <https://www.sermonindex.net/images/forum/2004/september/asuza09.gif>]

Early leaders of the Azusa Street Mission, 1907. William J. Seymour, front, second from right. Mrs. Jenny Seymour, back, third from left.

On the Day of Pentecost, Jewish visitors from many countries stood bewildered as they heard the praises of God in their native languages (Acts 2:5-13). Some seriously asked, "What does this mean?" Others poked fun and failed to consider the significance of the occasion. Nonetheless, Peter, placing things in divine perspective, referred them to the words of Joel: "In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people" (Acts 2:17, NIV).

In September 1906, the first issue of the Apostolic Faith reported: "In a short time God began to manifest His power and soon the building could not contain the people. Proud, well-dressed preachers come in to 'investigate.' Soon their high looks are replaced with wonder, then conviction comes, and very often you will find them in a short time wallowing on the dirty floor, asking God to forgive them and make them as little children."

The Azusa Street revival illustrated the fundamental truth about the acquisition of spiritual power: The desire to love others and win the world for Christ begins with brokenness, repentance, and humility.

end..

Re: William J. Seymour and the Azusa Street Revival by Gary B. McGee - posted by lwpray (), on: 2004/9/22 3:09

End note:

The Azusa Street revival illustrated the fundamental truth about the acquisition of spiritual power: The desire to love others and win the world for Christ begins with brokenness, repentance, and humility.

Re: - posted by philologos (), on: 2004/9/22 4:42

Quote:
-----Nevertheless, Seymour's ministry did not come without a price. He personally endured the biting criticisms of his opponents—holiness leaders not sympathetic to Pentecostalism, as well as the contempt of Parham and later that of Frank Bartleman.

I knew of Parham's racial notions. There was an apartheid (separate development) notion in the New Testament Church of God which was operating in the UK well into the 60's.

However I was saddened to hear of Bartleman's opposition to Seymour. I have always regarded Bartleman as one of the 'good guys'. Can you document this comment further?

Re: - posted by jeremyhulsey (), on: 2004/9/22 11:57

Quote:

-----However I was saddened to hear of Bartleman's opposition to Seymour.

Saddly, Frank Bartleman later became heavily involved in the Oneness heresy. To my best recollections, he never repented of it.

Re: William J. Seymour and the Azusa Street Revival by Gary B. McGee - posted by Yodi (), on: 2004/9/22 13:26

Thoughts on the Azusa Street Revival

"Seymour accepted Parham's view of baptism in the Holy Spirit - belief that in every instance, God would give intelligible languages - speaking in tongues to believers for missionary evangelism."

#1 The gift of tongues being the proof of the baptism of the Holy Spirit is unbiblical. **#2** The gift of tongues is not for the use of man to man, but for the use of man to God, according to 1 Corinthians 14:2, *"For if your gift is the ability to speak in tongues, you will be talking to God but not to people, since they won't be able to understand you. You will be speaking by the power of the Spirit, but it will all be mysterious."* It's not an earthly language, but a heavenly one.

On the day of Pentecost in Acts 2, the believers were filled with the Holy Spirit, and He gave them the ability to speak in different foreign languages, but it doesn't say they were given the gift of tongues. It was a moving of the Holy Spirit. *"On the day of Pentecost, seven weeks after Jesus' resurrection, the believers were meeting together in one place. Suddenly, there was a sound from heaven like the roaring of a mighty windstorm in the skies above them, and it filled the house where they were meeting. Then what looked like flames or tongues of fire appeared and settled on each of them. And everyone present was filled with the Holy Spirit and began speaking in other languages, as the Holy Spirit gave them this ability" (Acts 2:1-4).* Each moving of the Holy Spirit is as unique as a thumb print, and can't be copied exactly. I think there's a difference between copying past movings of the Spirit, and desiring the Holy Spirit to come upon you and fill you in any way He wills.

"Seymour immediately encountered resistance when, just 2 days after arriving, he began preaching to his new congregation that speaking in tongues was the Bible evidence of the baptism in the Holy Spirit."

Good for them! You should resist any message that's not God's Word. Be like the Bereans, open-minded, yet testing EVERYTHING against God's Word (Acts 17:10-12).

"The Azusa Street revival illustrated the fundamental truth about the acquisition of spiritual power: The desire to love others and win the world for Christ begins with brokenness, repentance, and humility."

It did? This would've been a happy little conclusion if I hadn't read about the division and racism practiced by Parham and Seymour - *"... the mingling of whites and blacks together deeply offended him ... The majority of the Azusa faithful remained loyal to Seymour after Parham left with some of the people to establish a rival mission... Years later prejudice surfaced there as well, however, when Seymour himself excluded whites from leadership posts at the mission, reserving those for people of color."*

I think the real happy ending is where the article states, *"Seymour also departed from the teaching that speaking in tongues was the initial physical evidence of the baptism in the Holy Spirit. These all contributed to Seymour becoming an almost-forgotten figure in Pentecostal history."* Such a small point maybe, but he made this false message a big focus in his life, which reflected in his teachings, according to the article. I thank God that Seymour eventually left this false teaching for the Truth. If him standing up for the Word of God was one of the big reasons he lost the world-wide attention and popularity, then praise God!

Concerning this revival of the gift of tongues, I think it wise to read through 1 Corinthians chapter 12 (gifts of the Holy Spirit), 13 (gifts of the Holy Spirit vs. love), and 14 (gift of tongues vs. gift of prophecy). I would be cautious with ANY movement, revival, teaching, etc. that's main focus was on receiving gifts from the Holy Spirit.

In summation, I believe our main focus as Bible believing Christians should be on the Giver of the gifts and taking care t

hat all our motivations stem from His love for us and for others.

Re: - posted by jeremyhulsey (), on: 2004/9/22 13:43

The passage you spoke of in ICor has absolutely nothing to do with the baptism in/of/with(whatever word you wish to use here) the Holy Spirit, but of the proper use and operations of the gifts of the Spirit during a service.

I believe that we penetecostals are on good grounds when we teach the "initial" evidence. This is neither final proof of the baptism, nor is it the only one to be referred to in giving proof. It is only what it is described to be: the *initial physical* evidence.

It is to be followed by a life that is empowered for service in the kingdom of God. The baptism can be faked and it can be false, but this does not prove that it is so in every incedent.

I challenge you Yodi to show me in scripture where the Pentecostal message is false. I'm sure you can show where it's abused, misunderstood, and taught wrongly in ignorance. But you can't show where it is not Biblical.

In Christ,
Jeremy Hulsey

Edit:

Pentecostal ministers listed on this site:

Dave Wilkerson
Carter Conlon
Keith Green
Jim Cymbala
Corrie Ten Boom

Two ministers who worked closely with Pentecosals:

A.W. Tozer
Leonard Ravenhill

Re: - posted by philologos (), on: 2004/9/22 14:14

Quote:
-----I believe that we penetecostals are on good grounds when we teach the "initial" evidence. This is neither final proof of the baptism, nor is it the only one to be referred to in giving proof. It is only what it is described to be: the initial physical evidence.

Hi Jeremy

I'm not sure that I understand you here. Are you saying that baptism in the Spirit can occur without this 'initial physical evidence'? Pentecostals (and I was one once) in the AoG in the UK have the following statement:

We Believe in the baptism in the Holy Spirit, the initial evidence of which is the speaking with other tongues as the Spirit gives utterance. (Acts 2:4, 10:44-46, 11:14-16, 19:6; Isa.8:18)

This has always been understood to mean that without this initial evidence the baptism has not occurred; consequently 'tongues' became the physical proof of the baptism.

The USA AoG has a slightly different form of the same doctrine;
8. The Initial Physical Evidence of the Baptism in the Holy Ghost

The baptism of believers in the Holy Ghost is witnessed by the initial physical sign of speaking with other tongues as the Spirit of God gives them utterance.

* Acts 2:4

The speaking in tongues in this instance is the same in essence as the gift of tongues, but is different in purpose and use.

* 1 Corinthians 12:4-10

* 1 Corinthians 12:28

The UK Elim church taught that 'tongues' was 'an' evidence, but the AoG maintained 'tongues' was 'the' evidence.

I am left wondering quite what your reply signifies.

Re: - posted by KingJimmy (), on: 2004/9/22 14:37

Quote:

However I was saddened to hear of Bartleman's opposition to Seymour. I have always regarded Bartleman as one of the 'good guys'. Can you document this comment further?

Bartleman in his book 'Azusa Street' pretty much says that Seymour and the others essentially became power/authority hungry, and he seems to have deeply loathed the organization of the movement into formal denominationalism... which he likened to Israel "wanting to be like all the other nations" in having a king.

Re: - posted by KingJimmy (), on: 2004/9/22 14:41

Quote:

Jim Cymbala

It should be noted that Cymbala does not believe that tongues is always the initial physical evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Re: - posted by Yodi (), on: 2004/9/22 14:55

Hulsey,

I was in NO WAY meaning to "bash" on Pentecostals. I'm sorry I offended you. I was merely sharing my thoughts on this Azusa Street Revival, from what I read in the article. My comments were on this revival and its leader, not the Pentecostal church.

My focus/intent/motive was to share my convictions on focusing more on the Giver of the gifts rather than on the gifts themselves, and when praying for gifts and exercising them, love being the motivation, as Paul said over and over again in 1 Corinthians. The church of Corinth had abused the gifts, and Paul had to go correct them. I like the Word of God to be the standard for Christian living rather than a denomination, a movement, a revival, a person, etc. God isn't a denomination and neither is His Word.

Re: - posted by jeremyhulsey (), on: 2004/9/22 15:29

Jimmy,

You are correct. And I believe that Carter has made similar statements, but I'm not sure which sermon it is in which he makes those statements. And you were also correct about Bartleman. He was pretty quick to judge the others at Azusa. According to him the main thrust of the revival, if I remember correctly, took place at a mission called the Burning Bush instead of the Azusa mission.

Philo,

What I am convinced of is that it is a post salvific event. Whether there will be tongues spoken or not I'm not absolutely

sure of myself, but I know that something happens. It's not something that's just "taken by faith". Something noticeable will take place in the Believers life inward and outward. People won't just have to take your word on it.

Initial physical evidence implies further evidences that will take place. Namely empowerment for service. What I was saying was that it's taught that it's the first evidence, but not the final one, and if it's the only evidence a person sees in their life then it was probably a false subjective experience. Thus it is called the *initial* evidence.

Yodi,

I didn't mean to come across as crass. I was in a hurry so I typed out something really quick. Sorry about that. I'm not that good at expressing my emotions in typed words.

In Christ,
Jeremy Hulse

Re: - posted by KingJimmy (), on: 2004/9/22 16:00

Quote:

Jimmy,

You are correct.

Wow, what a great statement :) I like that!

And btw, I don't believe tongues to be the initial physical evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit... though it might be, and normally probably is. Like Seymour would eventually believe, and as Cymbala believes, I'm primarily concerned with the subsequent power than the subsequent manifestation. Such was the focus of Christ, for He said "you shall receive power..." not "you shall receive tongues..."

Re: - posted by jeremyhulse (), on: 2004/9/22 16:12

Quote:

-----Wow, what a great statement :) I like that!

Everyone gets it right sometimes...lol

Quote:

-----Such was the focus of Christ, for He said "you shall receive power..." not "you shall receive tongues..."

Wow Jimmy, you're doing good today... :-P I don't like it when I'm in a church that stresses tongues to the detriment of the purpose of the baptism of the Spirit. I think we're both in agreement on this.

Re: - posted by philologos (), on: 2004/9/22 17:30

Quote:
-----Initial physical evidence implies further evidences that will take place. Namely empowerment for service. What I was saying was that it's taught that it's the first evidence, but not the final one, and if it's the only evidence a person sees in their life then it was probably a false subjective experience. Thus it is called the initial evidence.

Jeremy

I think this is special pleading. This is not the sense in which the doctrine was formulated. Initial evidence was used in the sense of first and absolute proof of the experience. This is the way in which most would use it; not in the sense that it is an evidence that must be later substantiated by other pieces of evidence, but that it was sufficient evidence to 'prove' the validity of the experience. Without this absolutely essential evidence the experience was regarded as invalid.

Re: - posted by philologos (), on: 2004/9/23 6:00

BTW we did have quite a full discussion on this topic some time ago. For any who want to revisit the thread it can be found as Initial Evidence Paper.

Re: - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2004/9/23 6:46

Quote:
-----The Azusa Street revival illustrated the fundamental truth about the acquisition of spiritual power: The desire to love others and win the world for Christ begins with brokenness, repentance, and humility.

Yes brother Lars this is very true, even though there were many unscriptural extremes that were emphasized during this movement the foundational fuel was the life of Christ being shown to the world, the fruit is evident with 10000's of pentecostal churches across the world bearing fruit for God.

Quote:
-----#1 The gift of tongues being the proof of the baptism of the Holy Spirit is unbiblical.

Well its very scriptural to say it was a proof at one time (for at least the initial pouring out of the Holy Spirit on Jews then on Gentiles). Also I am quite convinced it still does happen from time to time. It could be said its **one** of the proofs. The true proof is a Holy life. As Leonard Ravenhill pointed out "the devil cant fake a holy life."

1 Peter 1:15-16 - But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.

Hebrews 12:14 - Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord:

Quote:
-----#2 The gift of tongues is not for the use of man to man, but for the use of man to God, according to 1 Corinthians 14:2,

Sorry miss Yolanda but you are wrong. :(In those passages in Corinthians and in all the scriptures there are clearly laid out 2 different types of tongues. One that is of mens languages and one that is a heavenly language. In Acts 2 the 'mens language' was used and everyone could hear the praises of God in their own tongue (thats man to man) God using it for evangelistic purposes. From Azusa street **some** were given the gift of understanding an entire language, I heard of some early pentecostal missionaries just leaving for the country God led them too believing he will enable them to understand the language, and guess what it happened! The gift of tongues which is a heavenly gift is for man to God. But it **can** be for (man to man) if someone interprets the tongue.

Quote:
-----I think there's a difference between copying past movings of the Spirit, and desiring the Holy Spirit to come upon you and fill you in any way He wills.

That's unbiblical and will open the church up to many delusions which sadly have been occurring in the church in our day. I want a filling of the Spirit that is biblical and that is exactly the same one the apostles had, tongues or no tongues.

Quote:
-----I would be cautious with ANY movement, revival, teaching, etc. that's main focus was on receiving gifts from the Holy Spirit.

Yes some movements have turned into this.. which is a sad extreme and really doesn't glorify God but is selfishness. I watched a video of Keith Daniel last night where he exceeds Holiness and Love as earmarks of a Christian that God can use.

"The mightiest weapon God could ever have at His disposal is a **Holy** man that is governed by **Love**." - Keith Daniel

Quote:
-----In summation, I believe our main focus as Bible believing Christians should be on the Giver of the gifts and taking care that all our motivations stem from His love for us and for others.

Yes very true sister, but the reason why I posted the article on Asuza was for you to read it :-P but also for us as Christians to see people getting out of nominal Christianity and allowing God to work in their lives. The zeal, determination, fire that was started at Asuza street literally went around the world like a blaze bringing much fruit to God. We can argue all the small extremes and problems but it **cannot** be argued that as many pentecostal streams matured they became very effective for kingdom of God. Lord send another Asuza street revival!

Re: - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2004/9/23 6:50

Quote:
-----The UK Elim church taught that 'tongues' was 'an' evidence, but the AoG maintained 'tongues' was 'the' evidence.

Ahhh the Elim pentecostal movement. I have heard so much good from this move of God, J. Glyn Owen when I met with him told me of some stories of these meetings what a blessing indeed.

Quote:
-----I don't like it when I'm in a church that stresses tongues to the detriment of the purpose of the baptism of the Spirit. I think we're both in agreement on this.

Can we take it a step further and say that this is the **real** filling of the spirit, 'a baptism of love?'

Ephesians 3:19 - And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.

Re: - posted by philologos (), on: 2004/9/23 8:32

Quote:
-----Well it's very scriptural to say it was a proof at one time (for at least the initial pouring out of the Holy Spirit on Jews then on Gentiles). Also I am quite convinced it still does happen from time to time. It could be said it's one of the proofs. The true proof is a Holy life. As Leonard Ravenhill pointed out "the devil can't fake a holy life."

The rules of evidence differ in different realms. The mathematician seeks the proof by a theorem that will prove that not only is 'a' true but that only 'a' can be true. For example, in Pythagoras there is no possible scenario where in a right-angled triangle the square on the hypotenuse is not equal to the sum of the squares on the other two sides. This is absolute mathematical proof. There is no way that tongues as the initial physical evidence could be regarded as a mathematical proof. The pure mathematician pities 'scientific proof'.

The scientist's proof begins with a hypothesis which cannot be disproved. He then codifies his findings into a law and provides a laboratory experiment which 'proves' the truth of his law. But, in the nature of scientific experiment, it is impossible to prove that something is 'not true'. So he proves that 'a' can be the truth. Until it is possible to use laboratory conditions upon random subjects and to guarantee identical results we cannot say that 'tongues as the initial physical evidence of the baptism' has been scientifically proved. The scientist pities 'legal proof'.

The lawyer deals with forensic truth. Circumstantial evidence is allowable and will often accumulate to such an extent that it is difficult to ignore. His best hope is to convince the jury of the probability of 'a' and the improbability of 'b-z'. If he can get the verdict he wanted the accused becomes a 'proven criminal'.

When we talk about the 'initial evidence' for genuine baptism in the Spirit we are in the realm of 'legal evidence'. We have sets of probabilities and improbabilities and base our 'verdict' on the evidence we are given. There may well be missing evidence that would have altered our verdict, and short of a verse of scripture which says 'the initial physical evidence of the Baptism in the Spirit is speaking with tongues' we should be cautious in our use of the word 'proof'. The best, honest, comment we can make is that on the small amount of evidence available to us, and understanding that the theory can never be properly tested, there is a strong probability that 'tongues may be one of the initial physical evidences of the baptism'. Any denomination wanting to use this clause in their doctrinal statement is welcome to do so. :-D

Re: - posted by crsschk (), on: 2004/9/23 9:05

Hmmm,

Quote:
-----From Asuza street some were given the gift of understanding an entire language, I heard of some early pentecostal missionaries just leaving for the country God led them too believing he will enable them to understand the language, and guess what it happened!

My recollection is fuzzy, but wasn't just the opposite true with one of these leaders? That he went to China or somewhere believing that he would be able to speak the language and it did not happen?

Two key words; "The" and "May", think Ron got it right and I have serious reservations even on the latter...but put down the stones, rather would come alongside Paul here;

1Co 13:1 If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am become sounding brass, or a clanging cymbal.

1Co 13:2 And if I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.

All the 'evidence' we need.

Re: - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2004/9/23 9:07

Quote:
-----My recollection is fuzzy, but wasn't just the opposite true with one of these leaders? That he went to China or somewhere believing that he would be able to speak the language and it did not happen?

Yes I believe that did happen also, but the fact that many of the ones that went out in faith actually received that blessing validates its genuinity. Its a remarkable thing.

Re: - posted by todd, on: 2004/9/23 9:13

Yodi wrote:

think there's a difference between copying past movings of the Spirit, and desiring the Holy Spirit to come upon you and fill you in any way He wills."

Greg responded:

"Thats unbiblical and will open the church up to many delusions which sadly have been occouring in the church in our day. I want a filling of the Spirit that is biblical and that is exactly the same one the apostles had, tongues or no tongues."

How is letting the Spirit come upon and fill you however He wills unbiblical?

Re: - posted by crsschk (), on: 2004/9/23 9:19

Was just thinking..

"My recollection is fuzzy"

The understatement of the year! :-P

Re: - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2004/9/23 9:19

sorry Todd I didnt quote the entire thought from sister yolanda.

Quote:

-----Each moving of the Holy Spirit is as unique as a thumb print, and can't be copied exactly. I think there's a difference between copying past movings of the Spirit, and desiring the Holy Spirit to come upon you and fill you in any way He wills.

My remark was towards the fact that its unbiblical to say that God doesnt do things the same. He does.. there are characteristics and signs of genuine revival in through all scripture. If we dont base our experience of the filling of the Holy Ghost on Scripture then what do we base it on? what is to say we arent being filled with **another** spirit etc. I hope that clarifies my intention to that statement.

Re: - posted by philologos (), on: 2004/9/23 9:29

Quote:

-----Two key words; "The" and "May", think Ron got it right and I have serious reservations even on the latter...but put down the stones, rather would come alongside Paul here;

Hi Mike

I was trying to be a good statician here...

tongues are clearly evidenced in in 3 out 5 accounts of the Spirit's initial reception in Acts; that's 60%

Added to that we should note that in Samaria there was some kind of evidence that persuaded Simon the reality of the experience, and Paul who received at the hands of Ananias later. although the event itself is not recorded, said he 'spoke with tongues more than all'; it is very possible/probable that this began when he received the Spirit. So, from the limited information in Acts, the final score is better than 60% but that is far too low a number, in my mind, to formulate a 'proof'.

Acts 2, 10, 19 are all special events in one sense. Acts 2 is the inauguration. Acts 10 is the Gentile 'pentecost' and Acts 19 is a decisive move from disciples of John to full orbbed Christian experience. There are so many unique features that I err on the side of caution when formulating doctrine from their experiences. The Cornelius Household comment... And the hey 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... (Act 10:45-46 KJV) Has been used as the definitive statement but this was the sign for 'unbelieving' Jewish Christians that God had granted 'repentance to life to the Gentiles'.

Lest any should misunderstand my position, I would say similar to the word of Paul; I thank my God, I speak with tongue

s... (I won't compete with his final words ;-))

Re: - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2004/9/23 9:34

Quote:

-----tongues are clearly evidenced in in 3 out 5 accounts of the Spirit's initial reception in Acts; that's 60%

Thats pretty good odds.. ok my money is on 'tongues' opps man sorry thats not too funny or is it. :-P

Re: - posted by jeremyhulsey (), on: 2004/9/23 10:43

Quote:

-----I think this is special pleading. This is not the sense in which the doctrine was formulated. Initial evidence was used in the sense of first and absolute proof of the experience. This is the way in which most would use it; not in the sense that it is an evidence that must be later substantiated by other pieces of evidence, but that it was sufficient evidence to 'prove' the validity of the experience. Without this absolutely essential evidence the experience was regarded as invalid.

I'm kind of scratching my head here right now. Yes it is considered absolutely essential. I haven't denied that. But I also know that it's not considered a finality. This is where I disagree with you respectfully. We also consider as essential a life that is empowered by the Spirit to follow the initial physical evidence. It's taught at CBC (The A/G's main bible college in the USA) as the outward evidence of an inward experience. Speaking in tongues in other words is not as much proof to the one in which it is taking place as it is to those present. (I am not denying here that it is also proof to the one being baptized. But ideally, what is taking place in the heart should be convincing the subject as much as their speaking in tongues.)

As far as it being the only needed proof; you're going to have to argue with my professors on that one, because I was taught very differently at a Pentecostal college. Yes it can be looked back upon as the initial baptism. But the Assemblies don't teach that there is only one but multiple baptisms in the sense that the scriptures say be filled and keep on being filled.

In Christ,
Jeremy Hulsey

Re: - posted by philologos (), on: 2004/9/23 10:58

Quote:

-----As far as it being the only needed proof; you're going to have to argue with my professors on that one, because I was taught very differently at a Pentecostal college. Yes it can be looked back upon as the initial baptism. But the Assemblies don't teach that there is only one but multiple baptisms in the sense that the scriptures say be filled and keep on being filled.

Hi Jeremy

I would be very surprized if it is the case that the assemblies teach multiple baptisms in Spirit. They may well teach multiple or continuous fillings but I would be very surprized if you are right. This is a mischievous question... if tongues are the initial evidence of the initial baptism what are the initial evidences for the subsequent baptisms? :-D

The old formula of Campbell Morgan was:

One Baptism
Many Fillings
Abiding Anointing.

Re: - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2004/9/23 10:58

Quote:
-----It's taught at CBC (The A/G's main bible college in the USA) as the outward evidence of an inward experience. Speaking in tongues in other words is not as much proof to the one in which it is taking place as it is to those present.(I am not denying here that it is also proof to the one being baptized. But ideally, what is taking place in the heart should be convincing the subject as much as their speaking in tongues.)

Mark 16:15-18 - And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.

Here Jesus Christ himself tells us the "signs" or "proofs" of those who would believe on Him. Is one more important than the other? Was the "serpent poison" one fulfilled in the apostle Paul as Matthew Henry suggests? Given also that "signs" are for those who don't believe.

Re: - posted by jeremyhulsey (), on: 2004/9/23 11:01

Quote:
-----I would be very surprised if it is the case that the assemblies teach multiple baptisms in Spirit. They may well teach multiple or continuous fillings but I would be very surprised if you are right. This is a mischievous question... if tongues are the initial evidence of the initial baptism what are the initial evidences for the subsequent baptisms?

Oops, I knew I wasn't completely clear on that one. Multiple fillings is what I meant. :-)

Re: - posted by philologos (), on: 2004/9/23 11:22

Quote:
-----Speaking in tongues in other words is not as much proof to the one in which it is taking place as it is to those present.

In the law it is written, With men of other tongues and other lips will I speak unto this people; and yet for all that will they not hear me, saith the Lord. Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not: but prophesying serveth not for them that believe not, but for them which believe. (1Co 14:21-22 KJV)

Comments?

Re: - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2004/9/23 11:36

Quote:
-----Comments?

The Tongues that he is referring to here is possibly the 'unknown tongue' he refers to in v14 of the same chapter.

1 Corinthians 14:14 - For if I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful.

So if his understanding is unfruitful it could refer to him speaking in a language not of this earth something that is not understandable by the mere carnal mind.

1 Corinthians 13:1 - Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.

Tongues is a gift of other languages of men and also of angels. The gift of tongues of men has been used directly without interpretation to edify the lost as an evangelistic sign. The tongues of angels will not edify unbelievers and will cause them to be confused. So I believe the 'tongues' you are referring to in that passage is the tongues of angels and is for the body of Christ to edify itself and glorify God.

perhaps I have no idea what I am talking about but I'm throwing this out there.

Re: - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2004/9/23 11:39

Quote:
-----In the law it is written, With men of other tongues and other lips will I speak unto this people; and yet for all that will they not hear me, saith the Lord. Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not: but prophesying serveth not for them that believe not, but for them which believe. (1Co 14:21-22 KJV)

Judgement passage from Isaiah.. nice Ron! I fell for it.. hmm back to the drawing board on this one. Isaiah 28:11-12

Re: - posted by philologos (), on: 2004/9/23 11:56

Quote:
-----perhaps I have no idea what I am talking about but I'm throwing this out there.

Is this what the scripture means by good and honest ground?

Re: - posted by jeremyhulsey (), on: 2004/9/23 12:23

Quote:
-----In the law it is written, With men of other tongues and other lips will I speak unto this people; and yet for all that will they not hear me, saith the Lord. Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not: but prophesying serveth not for them that believe not, but for them which believe. (1Co 14:21-22 KJV)

Comments?

We're getting off the subject of initial evidence, which is not the subject of this passage of scripture. Rather we're going into the realm of the proper use of the gifts of the Spirit in a meeting of believers.

"Paul is still challenging the Corinthians' use of *uninterpreted* tongues in the assembly. Not only are they incapable of edifying the church, but, he now goes on to explain, they have disastrous effects on unbelievers as well. Despite some notorious difficulties involving v22 the structure of the present argument makes it plain that the single issue being taken up is the effect of tongues on unbelievers:

Exhortation: Redirect your thinking(about the function of tongues)

OT text: Tongues do not lead people to obedience

Application: So the-

Assertion 1 Tongues a sign not for believers
but for unbelievers

Assertion 2 Prophecy a sign not for unbelievers
but for believers

V21:

Paul begins the redirecting of their thinking by adapting a passage from Isa 28:11-12, which he introduces as a citation from "the Law." The citation itself is not precise; it seems to have been chosen for two reasons: the occurrence of the language "other tongues" and the fact that in the OT context this "speaking in tongues" by foreigners served as judgment against those who would not hear straight talk(from the prophet). To underscore his concerns Paul adapts the Isaiah passage in four ways. (1) He inverts the order of "stammering lips" and "other tongues" to put his interest, "other tongues," in first position. (2) He changes "stammering lips" to "the lips of others"; the "others" now being the Corinthian believers, whose speaking in tongues would have a deleterious effect on unbelievers. (3) In keeping with the MT, but against the LXX, Paul alters "the Lord will speak" to "I will speak" and concludes with the formula, "says the Lord," probably to increase its

impact on the Corinthians. (4) Most significantly, he skips a considerable section in the Isaiah passage, picking up at the end of v.12, where he modifies "and they would not hear," referring to the intelligible words of the Lord, to "and even so t he will not obey me." In Paul's context this refers to the outsiders of v. 23, who on hearing the Corinthians' speaking in tongues would declare them mad. For Paul such a reaction by unbelievers would thus "fulfill" this "word of the Lord"; tongues will not lead them to obedience. To the contrary, unintelligibility leads to their judgment--in a time of grace when they need to hear a clear word about Christ.

V.22

With the strong inferential conjunction, "so then," Paul deduces two antithetical assertions from the Isaiah passage just quoted. But what he says has become a notorious crux. The problem is twofold: (1) the meaning of "sign," including whether he intended it to be repeated for the second assertion, and if so, what it also meant there; and (2) how to square what is said here with the illustration. As noted above, the solution to this lies chiefly in the recognition that Paul's point in the paragraph is made in vv. 23-25 and especially in the way v. 23 "fulfills" the Isaiah passage. This means that, contrary to many interpretations, this text (v.22) needs to be understood in light of what follows, not the other way around.

The first assertion flows directly out of the quote: "Tongues are for a sign not for believers but for unbelievers." Although it cannot be finally proven, the flow of the argument from v. 20, including the strong "so then" of this sentence, suggests that Paul is setting up this antithesis with the Corinthians' own point of view in mind. That is, "In contrast to what you think, this word of the Lord from Isaiah indicates that tongues are not meant as a sign for believers. They are not, as you make them, the divine evidence of being, or of the presence of God in your assembly. To the contrary, in the public gathering, uninterpreted tongues function as a sign for unbelievers." The question for us is, what kind of sign? In light of v. 21, for which this is the inferential deduction, "sign" in this first sentence can function only in a negative way. That is, it is a "sign" that functions to the disadvantage of unbelievers, not to their advantage.

Paul is using the word in a way that is quite in keeping with his Judaic background, where "sign" functions as an expression of God's attitude; something "signifies" to Israel either God's disapproval or pleasure. In this case, his disapproval is in view; but not in the sense that God intends unbelievers during this time of grace to receive his judgment. To the contrary, tongues function that way as the result of their effect on the unbeliever, as the illustration in v. 23 will clarify. Because tongues are unintelligible, unbelievers receive no revelation from God; they cannot thereby be brought to faith. Thus by regarding the work of the Spirit--tongue--as madness, they are destined for divine judgment--just as in the OT passage Paul has quoted. This, of course is not the divine intent for such people; hence, Paul's urgency is for the Corinthians to cease thinking like children, to stop the public use of tongues without interpretation, since it only drives the unbeliever away rather than leading him or her to faith.

With a balancing antithetical clause Paul adds that "prophecy, however," also functions as a sign, but "not for unbelievers, but for believers." With this sentence he resumes the contrast between tongues and prophecy that was last expressed in vv.1-6 (although it is alluded to in v. 19 in anticipation of this argument). This is also the clause where all the difficulties have arisen, because in the illustration that corresponds to this assertion (vv.24-25) he does not so much as mention believers, but indicates only how prophecy affects unbelievers. Further he does so in a way that makes one think that it is really a sign for *them*, that is to *their* advantage.

The solution again lies first of all in the nature of the conflict between Paul and the Corinthians. Contrary to their preference for tongues, he is asserting that it is prophecy, with its intelligibility and revelatory character, that functions as the sign of God's approval, of God's presence in their midst. The evidence of this is to be found in the very way that it affects unbelievers. By revelatory word of prophecy unbelievers are convinced of their sins, and falling on their faces before God they will exclaim that "God is really among you!" That exclamation as response to prophecy is a "sign" for believers, the indication of God's favor resting upon them.

Thus tongues and prophecy function as "signs" in two different ways, precisely in accord with the effect each will have on unbelievers who happen into the Christian assembly."

-Gordon Fee, God's Empowering Presence-

That's my story and I'm stickin' to it. 8-)

In Christ,
Jeremy Hulsey

P.S. Now I have to go run some errands :-o .

Re: - posted by philologos (), on: 2004/9/23 13:32

Quote:

-----Gordon Fee, God's Empowering Presence-----

I'm going to have to read this again; he seems to be heading in two different directions at the same time.

It is interesting that Fee, in his 'How to Read the Bible for all it is worth' has a section on the hermeneutics of Acts in which he asks whether the descriptions of the primitive church are intended to present the 'norm' to the church at all times. He asks 'just what role does historical precedent play in Christian doctrine or in the understanding of Christian experience?' His subsequent reasoning p105-112 specifically raises the issue of 'some movements and denominations (which) were founded partly on the premise that virtually all New Testament patterns should be restored as fully as possible in modern times... for example, for the reception of the Spirit to be evidenced by the accompanying gift of tongues...'

Although Fee is AoG it doesn't sound as if he is convinced about official AoG doctrine on tongues?

Did you get your errands done?

Re: - posted by KingJimmy (), on: 2004/9/23 17:05

Quote:

Although Fee is AoG it doesn't sound as if he is convinced about official AoG doctrine on tongues?

Fee is not classical Pentecostal, even though he is a/g. It is my understanding that he does not subscribe to the doctrine of a second work of grace subsequent to conversion.

Re: - posted by jeremyhulsey (), on: 2004/9/23 17:57

I disagree with Gordon Fee's view on Acts in that he believes that it can't be used to develop theology. He is at odds with a large majority of pentecostal theologians on this point. His exegesis of ICor 12-14 however is excellent.

The basic thrust of this passage according to Fee is that tongues are not to be a sign to believers as they are to unbelievers *in that it is perceived to be a proof of God's favor and presence*. That is, in the mystery religions that were developing and other pagan religions surrounding the Corinthian Christians an ecstatic speech was a sign that their god was present. Apparently the Corinthian Christians, possessing the true gift of tongues, assumed that this gift also was proof to them that God was present. However, this was a cause for discord in the assemblies of believers that would cause unbelievers not to believe the message of the cross, thinking that the Christians were mad just like those involved in the pagan religions.

The sign that God was among them was to be **prophecy**. This is also the true sign to unbelievers. vv. 24-25 "But if all prophesy, and an unbeliever or an uninformed person comes in, he is convinced by all, he is convicted by all. And thus the secrets of his heart are revealed; and so, falling down on his face, he will worship God and report *God is truly among you*."

In other words, tongues were what unbelievers thought proved their god was among them but prophesying is the sign to believers that God was truly among them and would also prove that to unbelievers.

In Christ,
Jeremy Hulsey

P.S. I finished my errands for the day...lol.

Re: - posted by philologos (), on: 2004/9/23 19:05

Hi Jeremy

Quote:

-----I disagree with Gordon Fee's view on Acts in that he believes that it can't be used to develop theology. He is at odds with a large majority of pentecostal theologians on this point. His exegesis of ICor 12-14 however is excellent.

I don't think that is quite what Fee is saying. (BTW I have problems with quite a few of his conclusions in this particular book) I think he is saying that although we can identify principles we need to be cautious about setting things in stone and making them absolutes. I'm with you, in that I believe all scripture.. is profitable for doctrine; including the Acts.

Quote:

-----The basic thrust of this passage according to Fee is that tongues are not to be a sign to believers as they are to unbelievers in that it is perceived to be a proof of God's favor and presence.

This is an ingenious solution except for the fact that Paul is quoting a Hebrew prophet who was speaking quite specifically about unbelieving Israelites; Nay, but by men of strange lips and with another tongue will he speak to this people; to whom he said, This is the rest, give ye rest to him that is weary; and this is the refreshing: yet they would not hear. (Isa 28:11-12 ASV) It seems to me that the events at the home of Cornelius were a classic illustration of this point. The 'unbelieving believers' ie the Jewish converts who still thought salvation was only available to the Jew, were utterly convinced by the sign of tongues. The effect on the folks back in Jerusalem is consistent; Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost. Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; what was I, that I could withstand God? When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life. (Act 11:16-18 KJV) The tongues had convinced them that God had included them in His plans for salvation. So more unbelieving-believers were convinced because of the tongues.

Fee's thought of the influence of mystery religions is 'creative'. (you need to understand that when we call a book-keeper over here 'creative' we mean he is a crook.;-)) It is 100% speculation with no contributing evidence or precedence.

I think what we have in 1 Cor 14 is tongues as a sign to unbelieving-Jews, although that is not their only purpose; and prophecy is a sign to believers irrespective of their background. While unbelieving Jews might be convinced by tongues, unbelieving non-Jews would think they were crazy if the whole church be come together and all speak with tongues. However, if these same unbelieving non-Jews were convicted in their hearts, due to a stream of prophecy which revealed the secrets of their hearts, they would acknowledge that God was in the midst.

Re: - posted by todd, on: 2004/9/23 21:17

Greg,
Thanks for clarifying.

Quote:

"My remark was towards the fact that its unbiblical to say that God doesnt do things the same."

For one thing, Yodi didn't say that. She said that each moving of the Holy Spirit is unique, and can't be copied *exactly*. There may be similarities, but it's not exactly the same.

In a technical sense it may be wrong to say that God *never* does things the same. Or that God always does a totally new thing every time He does something.

But it depends on what you mean by *same*. If you mean "exactly the same," then I don't think it's wrong. God never does things (in relation to mankind in time) "exactly the same."

There may be similarities, but it can never be exactly the same. Every time it's unique because factors are different. If nothing else, the time has changed.

It seems that life, at least in time, is constantly in flux. Not even one detail of life on earth is exactly the same from one moment to the next, for it is now a moment older.

Quote:

"there are characteristics and signs of genuine revival in through all scripture."

Even if this were true and we could ascertain from Scripture some characteristics and signs of genuine revival (which I question), Scripture doesn't declare that a revival is not genuine if it lacks the same characteristics and signs (as far as I've seen).

Because, as it's been evidenced recently on this site, "revival" is a very controversial term and it seems there is no (Scriptural) example for what a "Church-Age Revival" would look like. But even if there was an example, and we discovered and analyzed some characteristics of it, that would not prove that a later revival was not genuine because it didn't have the same ones. All it would prove is that there were differences in the expressions of revival.

Like I don't think there's any weight behind a statement like "a revival is not genuine unless there's deep repentance (first)." Even if every example of revival we have from the past had this characteristic, that's not conclusive evidence that it must be present in the next revival.

Quote:

"If we don't base our experience of the filling of the Holy Ghost on Scripture then what do we base it on?"

Why would we consider ourselves so wise as to make boundaries in experience where God doesn't? If our experience directly contradicts Scripture that's one thing. But if there are just differences, that's another.

Quote:

"what is to say we aren't being filled with another spirit etc."

I think the more important question to ask is who do we think we are to limit God where He hasn't limited Himself?

With all the Scriptural warnings against deception including false teachings, deceiving spirits, false miracles, and false messiahs, is there even one warning to be careful about things like false manifestations? I haven't found one.

I guess we have to trust God.