

ACTS: ALIGNING WITH GOD'S SOVEREIGN WORK OF DISCIPLING

III. God's Sovereign Giving Of The Holy Spirit And Tongues

(Acts 2:1-11)

I. Introduction

- A. The book of Acts explains "the orderly and sovereignly directed progress of the kingdom message from Jews to Gentiles, and from Jerusalem to Rome," Bible Knowledge Commentary, New Testament, p. 351.
- B. Accordingly, we can learn much about aligning our ministry efforts with God's sovereign work from studying the Early Church era as presented in the book of Acts.
- C. Acts 2:1-11 records how the giving of the Holy Spirit and the gift of tongues was a sovereign act of God opposite much that is taught and believed in many evangelical circles today. We view the passage for insight:

II. God's Sovereign Giving Of The Holy Spirit And Tongues, Acts 2:1-11.

- A. When God gave the Holy Spirit to believers in Christ, He chose the Day of Pentecost that prefigured God's institution of the Church, Acts 2:1a; Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, fn. to Lev. 23:15-23: " . . . (T)wo loaves of bread were offered . . . made with leaven," typifying "the formation of the Church . . . the Body of Christ" as being "composed of sinners (leaven typifies sin . . .) . . . who are saved by the grace of God . . ." (Ibid.)
- B. The coming of the Spirit with the sound of a mighty wind from heaven that filled the house and the tongues of fire that separated and came to sit atop each believer, signifying their being baptized by the Holy Spirit accompanied by the speaking in tongues were all actions of God, not of man, Acts 2:2-4 NIV.
- C. The recipients of the Holy Spirit and the gift of tongues were "sitting" (*kathemai*, Arndt & Gingrich, A Grk.-Eng. Lex. of the N. T., 1967, p. 390), implying the recipients were not emotionally ecstatic! (Acts 2:2)
- D. The recipients of the Spirit and tongues spoke as the Spirit enabled them, Acts 2:4b. 1 Corinthians 12:11 with this report indicates that the language each believer used was the Spirit's sovereign choice for that believer.
- E. The Greek word for "tongues" in Acts 2:4, 11 is *glossa*, "tongue, language" (Ibid., p. 161), and it is clarified in Acts 2:6, 8 as *dialektos*, "language of a nation or a region," Ibid., p. 184. The tongues were human languages.
- F. The languages used in Acts 2 were all Gentile languages (Acts 2:8-11) in fulfillment of Deuteronomy 28:49-50 where God warned Israel of her need to repent upon hearing foreign languages used in her hearing! This was a sign to unbelieving Jews to repent or face national judgment, Acts 2:36-40 with 1 Corinthians 14:21-22a. [The "Jews" and "proselytes" in Acts 2:11a are not languages, but those who were hearing them spoken.]
- G. The content of what was being spoken by those gifted with these languages was knowable to the hearers present as comprising "the wonders of God," Acts 2:11b NIV.
- H. Those gifted with the gift of tongues were all Galileans (Acts 2:7) who knew Greek and Aramaic, not any of the languages listed in Acts 2:8-11a that were other Gentile languages! This was a miracle of God!
- I. The miracle did **not** involve the hearers **interpreting** what was unintelligible utterances, but the hearing of Galileans who did not normally understand these Gentile languages that they were actually "speaking" (*laleo*, U. B. S. Grk. N. T., 1966, p. 420; Ibid., Arndt & Gingrich, p. 464-465) understood content on the wonders of God in other Gentile languages, Acts 2:11. This was a miracle in the speakers, not in the hearers.
- J. Further evidence that the miracle was recognized to be a miracle by the witnesses was their testimony that they heard the Galileans speak in the languages in which they "were born, i. e., which we have spoken from infancy" (*egennethemen*, aorist passive of *gennaō*, "beget, bear," Ibid., U. B. S. Grk. N. T.; The Analyt. Grk. Lex. (Zon.), 1972, p. 112; Ibid., Arndt & Gingrich, p. 154-155), Acts 2:8. Native Galileans had no natural ability suddenly to speak fluently in other human languages that were native to the listeners – a miracle!

Lesson: *The coming of the Holy Spirit coupled with the arrival of the supernatural gift of speaking in tongues in every respect was the work of God and not of man: it came in supernatural fulfillment of the prophecy of the Day of Pentecost, the sound of the great wind from heaven and the dividing up and distribution of the tongues on each believer was entirely of God, the recipients were all sitting down, not evidently working themselves into an ecstatic state, the speakers spoke the language God sovereignly willed that they speak, they spoke in recognized human languages, they spoke in Gentile languages in fulfillment of the Old Testament, they spoke understood content, those who spoke were Galileans, a miracle, the miracle was in the speaking, not the hearing, and the miracle was evident as the languages used would not be normally used so perfectly by Galilean Hebrews of that era!*

Application: *Since the coming of the Holy Spirit and the gifting of tongues in Acts 2 was the work of God and not man, may we yield to the work of God and not try to concoct our own works in artificial spirituality and falsehood.*