

CHAPTER 3

TONGUES FULFILLED AT CAESAREA

Acts 10

The Church, God's called-out assembly, had its beginning at Pentecost (Acts 2). For the first time believers were immersed into a living organism, the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:13; Acts 1:5; Acts 11:15-16). Tongues at Pentecost indicated that God was doing something new and unique.

God's purpose and program shifted from a *nation* (Israel) to *nations* (from which He would take out a people for His name—Acts 15:14), and from a *tongue* (Hebrew—the language of the Jews and the language of the Old Testament) to *tongues* (the tongues of every nation under Heaven—Acts 2:5,9-11). God's witness would no longer be *a nation* (Isaiah 43:10,12; 44:8), but God's witnesses would be *among all nations and peoples and tongues* (Acts 1:8).

Another momentous day in the history of the Church is described in Acts 8. For the first time the

door of faith was opened to the people of Samaria (a mixed race—half Jew and half Gentile). They also received the Spirit and became full-fledged members of the body of Christ (Acts 8:14-17). God's new program, as outlined in Acts 1:8, was being wondrously outworked in history.

Although not specifically stated it is almost certain that the Samaritan believers also spoke in tongues when they received the gift of the Spirit. Probably it was this manifestation of tongues that so impressed Simon (Acts 8:18-19). God once again used tongues to *signal* an important turning point in the forward progress of the gospel. The Jews could not help but be impressed by this drastic change in God's dealing with men (compare Matthew 10:5; John 4:9; 8:48). The hated Samaritans were now fellow members of the same body! The enmity had been abolished at the cross (cf. Ephesians 2:13-22)!

The next great milestone in church history occurred in Acts 10. For the first time Gentiles were united into the body of Christ, having received the gift of the Spirit *just as* the Jews did in Acts 2 (see Acts 10:45-47; 11:15-17). The Gentiles became fellow members of the same body (Ephesians 3:6), joined together under the glorious Headship of Christ. Again the gift of tongues would be expected to mark this crucial phase in God's new program, as the door of faith was opened to the *nations* (Acts 14:27—the word "Gentiles" (*ethnesin*) is the word for "nations"). It was beginning to become evident that God was moving from *a nation* to *the na-*

tions!! Israel must decrease; the Gentiles must increase (Romans 11:12)!! .

While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word (Acts 10:44).

The Holy Spirit fell on Cornelius and his household. According to Acts 11:15-17, this means that these Gentiles were immersed (baptized) into the body of Christ. For the first time the Church had Gentile membership.

When the Church first began on the day of Pentecost its membership was entirely Jewish. Today the Church is *almost* totally composed of Gentile members (thank God for the Jewish exceptions!). The book of Acts tells how this amazing ethnic shift took place.

And they 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 (Acts 10:45).

Jewish believers were present to witness what God was doing. They were amazed that the same gift which the Jews received at Pentecost was now given to these Gentiles. How did these Jews know that these Gentiles received the Spirit? Verse 46 gives the explanation.

For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God (Acts 10:46).

They knew the same gift was given because it was accompanied by the *same sign*—namely, tongues. The gift of tongues was the outward evidence that these Gentiles had been the recipients of God's full salvation, which included membership in God's unique program, the Church. So it is evident that the tongues in Acts 10 were just like the tongues in Acts 2.

As they were speaking in tongues they were magnifying God. The word translated "magnifying" (*megalunontōn*) is similar to the expression found in Acts 2:11: "the wonderful works of God" (*megaleia*). With their tongues they were making God *great* (Acts 10:46) by speaking forth the *great things of God* (Acts 2:11). So every indication is that the content of the tongues-speaking was the same both in Acts 2 and in Acts 10. In both places they were praising God for His greatness and magnifying Him.

Then answered Peter, Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? (Acts 10:46-47)

Again and again it is affirmed that what happened here at Caesarea is the *very same thing* that happened on the day of Pentecost at Jerusalem. Note carefully the emphasis:

Acts 10:45—"on the Gentiles *also*"

Acts 10:47—"who have received the Holy Spirit *as well as we*"

Acts 11:1—"the Gentiles *also* [in addition to us]"

Acts 11:15—"the Holy Spirit fell on them, *as on us at the beginning*"

Acts 11:17—"God gave the *like [same] gift as He did unto us*"

Acts 11:18—"God *also* to the Gentiles"

The Jews could no longer claim spiritual superiority over the Gentiles. From this point forward they could only claim spiritual equality (Ephesians 3:6)! In the body of Christ there is neither Jew nor Gentile (Colossians 3:11).

SUMMARY

In Acts 10 Gentiles spoke with tongues and saved Jews were present as witnesses. To these Jews the gift of tongues served as an outward evidence that the Gentiles had been Spirit-baptized into the body of Christ just as the Jews were in Acts 2. Thus, tongues served to indicate that the Gentiles had become members of God's called-out assembly (the Church) and that God's program was reaching out unto the nations. Tongues served no evangelistic purpose in Acts 10. The evangelism was already done by Peter *prior* to the tongues-speaking.

Since tongues in Acts 10 was considered by these Jews as a repeat performance of Acts 2, the following conclusions about the nature of tongues in Acts 10 can be made:

Tongues in Acts 10 involved speaking in foreign languages—languages that were “unknown” and “new” to the speaker. See Acts 2:6,8.

Tongues in Acts 10 was a supernatural sign-gift, and thus the Gentiles could speak in tongues only as the Spirit enabled them and gave them utterance. See Acts 2:4.

Tongues in Acts 10 was not unintelligible gibberish, but it involved praising God and magnifying Him for His greatness by speaking forth the wonderful works of God (Acts 10:46). See Acts 2:11.