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TONGUES AS THE EVIDENCE/SIGN

Some naysayers might try to say that the “upper room” experience was a one-time experience to usher in the “church age.” However, this scenario was repeated regularly in the early church and it still continues to this day. Let’s take a look at scripture to confirm it.

We obviously saw it in acts 2. Also, in acts 4:31 we see that as they prayed together, “the place was shaken where they assembled together, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost.” It is clearly the same type of outpouring as happened previously.

We see it again in Acts 8:5-25 with “Simon the sorcerer” as a witness. The evangelist Philip went to Samaria to preach the gospel. Many Samaritans believed on Jesus. They got saved and were baptized in water. When word got back to Jerusalem, Peter and John were sent to confirm the work. Peter and John laid hands on these new converts and they were baptized in the Holy Ghost. This had to have been a spectacular outpouring because Simon (the sorcerer) wanted the power to also do this “Holy Ghost” thing and offered to purchase that power from the apostles. It is obvious that “speaking in tongues” was the sign he witnessed. The apostles rebuked him as he was not a believer, but a sorcerer seeking the power for profit.

Another example is in Acts 19 relating to Saul’s conversion (a/k/a Paul) on the road to Damascus. Being blinded, Saul went into Damascus and fasted for three days. Ananias was sent to minister to him. Saul received his sight and was **“filled with the Holy Ghost.”** (Acts 9:17)

Another remarkable account is given in Acts 10:44-48 when God sent Peter to Caesarea to the house of the Roman Centurion Cornelius. Cornelius had called together all of his relatives and close friends to hear Peter’s message. While Peter was still preaching, the Holy Ghost fell upon all of them and they spoke in tongues, (v. 46) and afterward were also water baptized. Peter reported back to those at Jerusalem (acts 11:15-18) how these gentiles had been baptized with the Holy Ghost (v. 16). He told them (v. 15), **“as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning.”**

We see it again in Acts 19:10-7, this time at Ephesus with Paul who encountered certain disciples (a dozen) who already were baptized believers but did not know of the Holy Spirit’s outpouring. Verse 6 says **“and when Paul had laid hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them, and they spake with tongues and prophesied.”**

There surely were too many accounts to record them all. It is clear from other scriptures (which we shall see next time) that this was a frequent and very normal experience for the early Church. Tomorrow we shall delve into the deeper teachings of tongues from Paul’s writings. Stay tuned.