COGMA

Church of God Mission Academy

STUDY GUIDE 86

Pentecostalism Unmasked

STUDY GUIDE 2 OF 3:

Acts 2 & the Holy Spirit

An overview of Pentecost, new birth and Christ's indwelling.



Equipping and empowering for effective service

2 Timothy 2:2

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE STUDENT

My Study Plan

Preparing a Study Plan before starting this Study Guide will assist you in completing it within a designated timeframe. It also helps in developing the discipline required for studying God's Word effectively.

Proverbs 16:3:

> *Commit thy works unto the LORD, and thy thoughts shall be established.*

My Study Guide Journal

Keep a record as you progress through your Study Guide, including the Personal Responses for each section, for future reference and goal setting.

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Important Points

- COGMA does not claim to be infallible or the authority.
- Infallibility and authority belong only to God and His Word.

COGMA therefore strongly advises that you prayerfully study the content of each Study Guide with the heart of a Berean (**Acts 17:10–12**).

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PREFACE

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This Study Guide addresses the central doctrinal claim of Pentecostalism: that receiving the Holy Spirit is a second experience after salvation, proven by speaking in tongues. This claim rests heavily upon Acts chapter 2, where the disciples received the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. We must examine that account carefully and honestly, without reading later Pentecostal teaching into the Scriptures.

The aim of this Study Guide is to let Scripture speak for itself. It does not begin with Pentecostal theology and then read it into Acts. Instead, it begins with the Scriptures and asks what God has actually written.

The Bible teaches one salvation, one new birth and one Spirit received by every person who is truly born again. Any teaching that divides salvation into separate spiritual stages must be examined against the life Jesus Christ gives at the new birth.

Acts 2 is not a chapter for slogans. It is the opening of the New Covenant in power, and it must be understood in its true setting. If Acts 2 is forced to support a modern system, then the chapter is twisted, and the gospel is weakened.

This Study Guide is written to help the reader understand Acts 2 in its true biblical setting and to remove doctrines that have been added later. It is written so the reader can see plainly what Pentecost was, who it was for, and what it teaches about salvation.

For this reason, the reader must be willing to lay aside experience as proof. Experience must bow to Scripture. If something cannot be clearly shown in the Word of God, then it must not be taught as doctrine. Truth is not established by voices, feelings, or claims. Truth is established by what God has written.

Personal Response

Key Truth

Why must Acts 2 be read in its biblical setting before it is used to support a later Spirit baptism?

Personal Reflection

Have your own experiences influenced how you read Acts 2, even where the chapter describes something different?

Action Step

Identify one assumption about receiving the Spirit you have accepted. What will you reconsider as you compare it with Acts 2?

INTRODUCTION

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Acts chapter 2 records one of the most important events in Scripture: the opening of the New Covenant and the beginning of the Gospel Day. On that day Jesus Christ returned as the Holy Spirit to dwell within His people, fulfilling His promise to the disciples.

The day of Pentecost was the sixth of Sivan in A.D. 31, as established in the COGMA module Daniel: 70 Weeks. This was the beginning of the Gospel Day and of Christ's spiritual Church, not the establishment of a denomination called Pentecostal.

Pentecostal teaching claims that the disciples were already born again before Pentecost and then received another Spirit baptism. This Study Guide examines that claim against the words of Jesus, the account in Acts and the teaching of Paul.

The claim cannot stand if the disciples received the indwelling Spirit and entered the New Covenant through that very event. We must therefore establish when they were born again, rather than assuming their conversion had already occurred.

By comparing Acts 2 with the teaching of Jesus and the writings of Paul, it becomes clear that the disciples were not yet converted before Pentecost. They were converted on that day, when they received the Holy Spirit and were baptised into one body.

Acts 2 does not establish a pattern in which people are first born again and later receive a second saving Spirit experience. It records the fulfilment of Jesus Christ's promise that He would come to dwell within His disciples as the Holy Spirit. Before Pentecost, He was with them; from Pentecost onward, He dwelt within them.

This Study Guide explains the difference between Old Testament faith and New Testament salvation, and between imputed righteousness and imparted life. It also explains why **Romans 8:9** is decisive for understanding conversion and belonging to Christ. If a man does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His. Therefore, the disciples could not belong to Christ in full New Covenant salvation before they received the Spirit.

Acts 2 records the new birth of the disciples and the beginning of the New Testament Church, not a second stage of their salvation. We must understand this clearly so that the believer can rest in the completed work of Jesus Christ, whose own Spirit is received at the new birth.

There is one true God, revealed through the genuine humanity of Jesus Christ. The Father is the eternal Spirit, and the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Jesus Christ, not another divine Person beside Him. When the disciples received the Spirit at Pentecost, Jesus Christ Himself came to dwell within them, and every person who is now truly born again receives that same indwelling life. The disciples understood the meaningful languages they spoke at Pentecost, and everyone hearing them understood the words in their native tongue.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How does **Romans 8:9** *connect receiving the Spirit of Christ with belonging to Him?*

Personal Reflection

Does the difference between faith before Pentecost and New Covenant life challenge how you understand your own new birth?

Action Step

Explain one belief about the indwelling Spirit that needs correction or strengthening. How will **Romans 8:9** *guide your response?*

1. THE PENTECOSTAL FOUNDATION

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Pentecostal teaching distinguishes the new birth from a later experience called baptism in the Holy Spirit. It describes that baptism as an additional experience to be sought after salvation, although the New Testament identifies the Spirit of God as the Spirit of Christ received when a person is born again.

The Claimed Proof Of Tongues

Pentecostals also teach that this second experience has one clear sign. They say the first physical sign of being baptised in the Holy Spirit is speaking with other tongues. They use **Acts 2:4** to claim that the Pentecostal experience today is the same as, and identical to, what happened on the day of Pentecost.

Luke recorded in **Acts 2:4**:

> *"And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."*

The Pentecostal Practice Today

In the Pentecostal practice being examined, those who come forward to seek what is called a later baptism in the Holy Spirit may be urged to make unfamiliar sounds. Such sounds are then identified as tongues even when the speaker cannot explain what is being said and the people listening cannot understand it. This is very different from Acts 2, where the disciples spoke meaningful languages and the people heard them in their own tongues.

Some seekers have been told to 'loose your tongue in Jesus' name' or to continue speaking until the sounds become clearer. Others have been encouraged to go home and practise the supposed tongue, as though repeated effort would turn sounds into a gift from God. **The disciples at Pentecost did not need to practise or manufacture the words: they understood what they spoke, and the people who heard them understood their own languages.**

Three Key Scripture References

Pentecostal writers connect Acts 2, which records the disciples speaking with other tongues, with the gifts in 1 Corinthians 12 and Paul's instructions for congregational order in 1 Corinthians 14. These three chapters must be understood according to their different purposes rather than combined to support an experience that none of them commands believers to seek.

The three chapters commonly used are **Acts 2** for speaking in other tongues, **1 Corinthians 12** for the distribution of spiritual gifts, and **1 Corinthians 14** for the order of the Church when believers come together. We must ask whether any of them makes tongues the required evidence of receiving the Holy Spirit.

Acts 2 records the experience itself, while 1 Corinthians 12 explains the distribution of gifts and 1 Corinthians 14 gives instruction concerning their use in the gathered Church. We must read each chapter within its own setting.

The False Claims That Must Be Tested

The Pentecostal claim assumes that Acts 2 is a pattern every born-again believer must repeat, that Spirit baptism is separate from salvation and that tongues are its necessary evidence. Those claims must be proved from Scripture, not established by repeating statements from later religious movements.

None of those three chapters explicitly requires every person who is already born again to seek a further reception of the Holy Spirit. Nor do they teach that the ability to make sounds no one understands proves that Jesus Christ has entered a person's heart.

This is why we must examine what the Bible means by tongues and what happened on Pentecost. When we allow Scripture to explain Scripture, the difference between the genuine languages in Acts 2 and modern claims becomes clear.

Personal Response

Key Truth

What must the Bible establish before tongues can be made a requirement for a later reception of the Holy Spirit?

Personal Reflection

Have you ever accepted sounds as a sign of the Spirit without considering what the listeners understood?

Action Step

When a practice is presented as necessary, what will you check in Acts 2 and 1 Corinthians 12–14 before accepting it?

2. THE MEANING OF TONGUES IN SCRIPTURE

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The English words tongue and tongues can refer to the physical organ of speech or to a language. The Greek word GLOSSA has those uses, so its meaning in any verse must be established by its context, particularly by what the speakers said and what the hearers understood.

A Foreign Tongue

In **1 Corinthians 14:21** Paul uses a form of the Greek word HETEROGLOSSOS, which concerns speech in other tongues or foreign languages. His quotation refers to words spoken through people of another tongue; it does not describe the manufacture of sounds without known meaning.

Paul wrote in **1 Corinthians 14:21**:

> *"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."*

Most Jewish people rejected Jesus Christ and the gospel. God foretold that He would send people from other nations, speaking other languages, to preach the gospel. Therefore, *"other tongues"* in this verse points to foreign speech used as a witness and a sign.

Tongues At Pentecost

The word GLOSSA is also used in Acts chapter 2, where Luke tells us that the disciples spoke with other tongues. They spoke real languages that they understood, and each person who heard them heard the words in his own native language. This clear understanding on both sides is essential to the account.

Luke recorded in **Acts 2:4**:

> *"And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."*

For comparison, the LITV reads, **Acts 2:4**:

> *"And they were all filled of the Holy Spirit, and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave ability to them to speak."*

Tongue As Speech From The Mouth

Another use of GLOSSA is connected to the physical tongue and the words it produces. In **Romans 3:13**, the focus is on deceitful speech coming from the mouth. This shows that *"tongues"* can refer to spoken words, not strange sounds.

Paul wrote in **Romans 3:13**:

> *"Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips:"*

James also warns about sinful speech and its power to corrupt the whole person. He is not teaching that the physical organ is evil by itself. He is teaching that corrupt words, flowing from a corrupt heart, can defile the whole life.

James wrote in **James 3:6**:

> *"And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell."*

Tongue As A Known Language

Revelation 9:11 provides another example of tongue meaning a language: the names are given in Hebrew and Greek. Those are recognisable languages that can be spoken, read and understood, and this helps us recognise how Scripture uses the word in its proper setting.

John wrote in **Revelation 9:11**:

> *"And they had a king over them, which is the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath his name Apollyon."*

For comparison, the LITV reads, **Revelation 9:11**:

> *"And they have a king over them, the angel of the abyss. In Hebrew his name was Abaddon, and in Greek he has the name Apollyon."*

Here GLOSSA refers to a recognisable language, whether Hebrew or Greek. A language has words with meaning, and those who know the language can understand what is communicated.

If you look inside your King James Bible on the front page it says, *"translated out of the original tongues."* This means that it was translated from the original languages of Hebrew and Greek.

The Greek word GLOSSA can refer to the physical tongue or to speech in a language, according to its context. In Acts 2, the context leaves no uncertainty about understanding: the disciples knew what they were saying, and the people listening heard and understood their own languages.

None of these examples establishes that GLOSSA means meaningless sounds without linguistic content. Acts 2 demonstrates the opposite by describing intelligible speech and hearers who recognised the languages being spoken.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How does the context show whether tongue means an organ of speech or a recognisable language?

Personal Reflection

What has the importance of real, understood language changed in your view of tongues?

Action Step

Select one verse on tongues. What familiar claim will you reassess after reading the verse in its setting?

3. ACTS CHAPTER 2 RIGHTLY DIVIDED

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Pentecostalism claims that the experience recorded in Acts 2 is the same as its present practice of tongues. It also claims that the disciples were already born again before Pentecost and received a second baptism in the Holy Spirit on that day.

Those are serious claims, so we must examine Acts 2 in its historical and Scriptural setting. What did Jesus promise His disciples, when was the promise fulfilled, and what did the people in Jerusalem actually hear?

For the Pentecostal claim to stand, Acts 2 must establish that the disciples were already converted, received the Holy Spirit as a later experience and provided a pattern that every born-again believer must repeat. Those points must come from Scripture itself rather than from assumptions placed upon Luke's account.

The claim requires that the disciples were already converted before Pentecost, that the Holy Ghost came as a later experience and that this pattern is required for every believer. Scripture must establish all three claims before they can become teaching for the Church.

Acts 2 does not state that the disciples were already born again before they received the Holy Spirit. Neither does it command future believers to seek a second baptism marked by tongues; these conclusions are added when the historical event is treated as a model for later experiences.

Conversion Of The Disciples

The disciples had believed in and followed Jesus, but had not yet received the indwelling Spirit promised for the New Covenant. According to the teaching established in this Study Guide, they were born again when Jesus Christ came as the Holy Spirit at Pentecost and brought them into His spiritual body.

Paul explains the relationship between receiving the Spirit and entering the body of Christ. His words must govern our understanding of what happened to the disciples on the day of Pentecost.

Paul wrote in **1 Corinthians 12:13**:

> *"For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit."*

This verse shows that a person enters the body of Christ by the Spirit, not before. Therefore, the disciples could not have been born again and in the body of Christ before Pentecost, because the Holy Spirit had not yet been given.

The New Birth And The Kingdom Of God

The new birth brings the believer into life under God's rule. Paul explains the believer's deliverance and translation into the Kingdom of His dear Son.

Paul wrote in **Colossians 1:13-14**:

> *"Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins."*

Before Pentecost, the disciples had not yet entered the Kingdom through the completed New Covenant work of the indwelling Spirit. Their faith in the promised Christ must be distinguished from the spiritual birth that began when He came to dwell within His people.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How does baptism into one body help explain when the disciples entered New Covenant life?

Personal Reflection

Have you treated the disciples' earlier faith as the same as the new birth at Pentecost?

Action Step

Consider your understanding of entrance into Christ's body. What must you correct or affirm about receiving His Spirit at the new birth?

Jesus Spoke Of Conversion As Future

Jesus spoke to His disciples of the need to be converted and become as little children. We must understand His words according to their setting and the New Covenant life that had not yet begun.

Jesus said in **Matthew 18:3**:

> *"Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."*

If the disciples were already converted, this warning would make no sense. Jesus spoke of conversion as something still ahead of them.

Peter's Conversion Foretold

At the Last Supper, Jesus foretold Peter's denial. But He also spoke of Peter's future conversion, not a past one.

Jesus said in **Luke 22:32**:

> *"But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren."*

Peter was clearly not yet converted at that time. His conversion would come later.

When Was Peter Converted?

Peter was converted on the day of Pentecost, when he received the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Christ, and no one belongs to Christ without Him.

Paul wrote in **Romans 8:9**:

> *"But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his."*

Before Pentecost, the disciples did not yet have the Spirit dwelling in them under the New Covenant. On the day of Pentecost, they received the Holy Spirit, were baptised into one body, and were born again. That day marks their true conversion and the beginning of the New Testament church.

Rightly Dividing Acts 2

Acts 2 describes a specific day, a gathering in Jerusalem and the disciples who were waiting for the promise Jesus had given them. The surrounding verses help us identify who received the Spirit and what happened when the promise was fulfilled.

Luke wrote in **Acts 2:1**:

> *"And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place."*

They were there waiting for the promise of the Father, which is the Holy Spirit in New Covenant salvation. Jesus Christ had promised to come to His disciples and dwell within them as Spirit.

Luke wrote in **Acts 2:2-4**:

> *"And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."*

The Meaning Of "Other Tongues"

Before Pentecost, Jesus Christ was with His disciples in genuine humanity, and He promised to return to them as Spirit. The one true God was revealed through Jesus Christ, not as a second divine Person alongside the Father and the Holy Spirit. At Pentecost, the Lord came to dwell within His disciples as the Holy Spirit, fulfilling His own promise.

The Foreign Tongue In 1 Corinthians 14

A similar Greek word is used in **1 Corinthians 14:21**. The phrase there is HETEROGLOSSOIS, meaning the languages of foreigners.

The Meaning Of "Utterance" In Acts 2:4

The Greek word translated 'utterance' is APOPHTHEGGOMAI, used for speaking forth or declaring something. Its meaning must be read with Luke's report that the people heard the disciples in their own languages. What the disciples spoke was intelligible to them and to those who heard them.

So **Acts 2:4** teaches that the Spirit gave them clear, meaningful speech in other languages. Young's Literal Translation confirms this meaning.

"and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, according as the Spirit was giving them to declare."

In other words, they had a message to declare, the gospel, as is seen by continuing to read Acts chapter 2. The Spirit gave the disciples meaningful words to declare, and the speech was clear and intelligible. The disciples understood what they said, while the people heard and understood the same message in their own languages. This fits perfectly with the rest of Acts chapter 2, where people from many nations heard and understood the tongues being spoken.

The Languages Were Understood

The disciples had received the Holy Spirit and began declaring the message of Jesus Christ. They understood the words they spoke, even though they had not naturally learned the languages, and the people gathered in Jerusalem understood those same words in their native tongues.

As is custom, Jewish males were required to come to Jerusalem, and many Jews living in other nations also travelled there when they could. These Jews were part of the diaspora, meaning Jews who had been scattered from their homeland and were living in other countries. Pentecost, also called the Feast of Harvest and Firstfruits, was one of God's appointed feast days.

Moses wrote in **Deuteronomy 16:6**:

> *"But at the place which the LORD thy God shall choose to place his name in, there thou shalt sacrifice the passover at even, at the going down of the sun, at the season that thou camest forth out of Egypt."*

Deuteronomy 16:6 speaks specifically of Passover. The pilgrimage obligation for the Feast of Weeks appears in **Deuteronomy 16:16**. The gathering described in Acts 2 must be understood in that broader setting of Israel's appointed feasts. Because this feast drew large numbers of

pilgrims and visitors to Jerusalem, that is why in Acts chapter 2 there were Jews out of every nation under heaven in Jerusalem at Pentecost.

Luke wrote in **Acts 2:5-6**:

> *"And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven. Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language."*

What was spoken by the disciples, and what was heard by the multitude, was not what Pentecostalism describes as sounds that nobody understands. What was spoken were words, clearly understood by all who were present, each hearing in his own native language.

The Greek Word For "Speak"

In the New Testament, the English word *"speak"* is mainly translated from two Greek words. Each word has a clear and definite meaning.

The Greek Word Laleō

The most common Greek word translated *"speak"* is LALEŌ. LALEŌ means to speak words, to talk, or to utter speech. It refers to actual spoken language, not silent thought and not meaningless sounds. It always assumes communication.

This is the word used in **Acts 2:4** when it says they began to speak with other tongues. So in **Acts 2:4**, LALEŌ means they spoke real words in real languages.

The Greek Word Legō

Another common Greek word is LEGŌ. LEGŌ means to say, to tell, or to declare. It often emphasizes the message or meaning of what is spoken. This word is often used when someone is teaching, explaining, or proclaiming truth.

The Clear Conclusion

LALEO and LEGO can both describe meaningful speech, but a word must be understood within its setting. Neither Greek word, taken alone, proves that speech is always meaningful or always meaningless. In Acts 2 the answer is clear because the disciples understood what they spoke and the listeners understood the message in their own native languages.

Therefore, when Acts chapter 2 says the disciples spoke with other tongues, the Greek language itself shows that they spoke real, understandable language, not sounds or noises without meaning. Luke confirms the meaning by recording that the disciples understood their own words and the people listening understood the message in their native languages.

This is not the experience found in Pentecostalism, where people are urged to make sounds that they themselves do not understand, and those around them do not understand. That practice does not resemble in any way what took place on the day of Pentecost.

The People Heard In Their Own Native Tongue

Not only did the disciples speak in languages they had not learned, but those who were present heard the words spoken in their own native language. The disciples understood the

words that the Spirit enabled them to declare, and the people listening understood them in their own native tongues.

Luke wrote in **Acts 2:7-8**:

> *"And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galilaeans? And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?"*

The Meaning Of "Hear" In Acts 2:8

The Greek word for *"hear"* in this verse is AKOUO. Luke tells us that the hearers recognised their own native languages, which shows they understood the words being spoken.

The Greek word AKOUO means to hear and can, in the right setting, describe hearing with understanding. In Acts 2, Luke makes that understanding explicit by saying that every man heard the disciples in his own native language. We do not need to force a meaning onto the Greek word because the surrounding verses explain what took place.

The use of AKOUŌ shows that the people were not just hearing noise. They were hearing intelligible speech in their own native language and understanding it clearly.

Those who were gathered heard real words in real languages and understood what was said. The disciples themselves understood their speech, and the hearers recognised their own native tongues.

This again confirms that the tongues spoken in Acts chapter 2 were not sounds or noises without meaning, but understandable language heard and comprehended by those listening. The disciples also understood the words they spoke, so the account presents real communication on both sides.

The *"utterance"*, APOPHTHEGGOMAI, was the gospel declared on the first day of the Gospel Day, and more than 3000 souls were born again. The Lord gave His disciples an understandable message to proclaim, and the multitude responded to the Gospel rather than to sounds without meaning.

Luke wrote in **Acts 2:41**:

> *"Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls."*

It is also evident that what was spoken was not random languages, but the languages of the foreign nationals who were present on the day of Pentecost. Both the disciples and the people listening understood the words being declared, and Luke identifies the languages as those in which the people had been born.

It is evident that what Pentecostals practice has no resemblance and no connection to Acts chapter 2 and the day of Pentecost. Pentecostals make noises and sounds that nobody understands, and even the speaker does not understand, yet they claim it is identical to Acts chapter 2. This claimed equivalence must be rejected when it cannot be established from the account in Acts 2.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How do Jesus' words about future conversion and Luke's account of understood languages help explain Pentecost?

Personal Reflection

Which detail about the disciples or the understandable languages has most challenged an explanation you previously accepted?

Action Step

When you explain Acts 2, what assumption will you stop repeating so that both the speakers' and hearers' understanding remains clear?

4. THE PURPOSE OF TONGUES IN ACTS 2

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In **1 Corinthians 14:21-22**, Paul teaches that tongues are a sign for the unbeliever, meaning the unsaved, not a sign for believers or those who are born again. The purpose of a sign must not be turned into a new requirement for establishing the spiritual life of a believer.

Tongues Are A Sign For The Unbeliever

In these verses the word tongues refers to foreign languages. In **1 Corinthians 14:21** the phrase *"other tongues"* is the Greek HETEROGLOSSOIS, meaning the languages of foreigners.

In **1 Corinthians 14:21**, Paul quotes the Old Testament concerning the use of other tongues and foreign lips. He was explaining the role of understandable languages as a sign, not establishing the need for unintelligible sounds in a believer's spiritual life.

Paul wrote in **1 Corinthians 14:21**:

> *"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."*

Paul then explains the purpose of these other tongues as a sign to those who did not believe. His conclusion must be read alongside the Old Testament words he has just quoted.

Paul wrote in **1 Corinthians 14:22**:

> *"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."*

Paul distinguishes a sign given to unbelievers from the inward spiritual life that belongs to those who believe. A sign is not a substitute for salvation or for receiving the indwelling Christ.

Paul identifies tongues as a sign directed to those who do not believe rather than a required proof for the believer. The sign points to what God was declaring and does not create the new birth or replace faith in Jesus Christ.

Therefore, tongues in these verses are not the proof that a person has received the Holy Spirit. They are a sign directed toward the unbeliever, not a sign for the believer.

Personal Response

Key Truth

Why must a sign directed to unbelievers be distinguished from the inward life given at the new birth?

Personal Reflection

Have you ever depended upon an outward sign for assurance instead of the Spirit of Christ dwelling within?

Action Step

Identify a sign or experience you have relied upon. How will the truth of Christ's indwelling life reshape your confidence?

The Sign In Acts 2

Acts chapter 2 is the historical record of the first day of the New Covenant and the Gospel Day. It is also the return of Jesus Christ, not bodily, but by His Spirit, the Holy Spirit.

The writer of Hebrews wrote in **Hebrews 9:28**:

> *"So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation."*

Jesus Christ, the one true God revealed in genuine humanity, offered His life for the sins of many. His promised coming as the Holy Spirit was fulfilled at Pentecost in A.D. 31, when He came to dwell within those who received the Gospel.

Paul wrote in **Romans 8:9**:

> *"But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his."*

Jesus promised He would return on the day of Pentecost in the gospel of John to be in His disciples. He told them that the Spirit who was with them would be within them, and He declared, *"I will come to you."*

John wrote in **John 14:17-18**:

> *"Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you."*

This momentous day, ushering in the day of salvation, coincided with the Feast of Harvest and Firstfruits, when many Jewish people would be present in Jerusalem from many different countries. Acts chapter 2 lists many different peoples and regions represented among those assembled in Jerusalem.

As a whole, the Jewish nation had rejected Jesus as their Messiah when they chose Barabbas to be set free and Jesus to be crucified. Since tongues were given as a sign, the question must be asked, who were the believers and who were the unbelievers?

The Believers Were The 120 In The Upper Room

The believers in Acts 2 were the about 120 disciples who were gathered together waiting for the promise of the Father. They were waiting for Jesus Christ to fulfil His promise to come and dwell within them as the Holy Spirit.

Luke wrote in **Acts 1:15**:

> *"And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples, and said, (the number of names together were about an hundred and twenty,)"*

The disciples received the Holy Ghost at Pentecost and were brought into the one body of Christ. This was the work through which the Lord established His spiritual Church in the Gospel Day.

Paul wrote in **1 Corinthians 12:13**:

> *"For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit."*

The Unbelievers Were The Multitude In Jerusalem

The unbelievers were the multitude of Jews in Jerusalem who came for Pentecost from many nations. They were not the 120. They were the crowd who heard the tongues and then heard Peter preach.

Luke wrote in **Acts 2:5-6**:

> *"And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven. Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language."*

This multitude needed the gospel. To them it was a miraculous sign when these unlearned disciples spoke coherently in foreign languages. Many became attentive to the preaching of Peter.

Luke wrote in **Acts 2:37**:

> *"Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?"*

Then many of these unbelievers became believers, not through the sign, but because they received and believed the gospel. The sign brought the message to their attention, while the saving work of God took place as they received His Word.

Luke wrote in **Acts 2:41**:

> *"Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls."*

The Clear Summary

The group gathered to receive the promise was about 120 disciples, who received the Holy Ghost and spoke with other tongues. The listeners were Jews from many nations who heard

understandable languages, listened to Peter's preaching and, in about three thousand cases, gladly received the Gospel.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How did the sign heard by the crowd serve the Gospel without itself saving the hearers?

Personal Reflection

Do striking testimonies sometimes draw your attention away from the actual message of the Gospel?

Action Step

When hearing a remarkable testimony, how will you examine its message and keep your trust centred on Jesus Christ?

5. SIGNS, FAITH AND THE PENTECOSTAL CLAIM

BACK TO CONTENTS

The presence of an outward sign does not create the new birth or establish that a person belongs to Jesus Christ. We must examine the purpose of tongues in the Scriptures and distinguish a sign for unbelievers from the inward life given through salvation. Paul made that distinction when he wrote about tongues and prophecy.

Paul wrote in **1 Corinthians 14:22**:

> *"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."*

Signs Are Not For Believers

The Bible is clear. Signs are not for believers, but for those who do not believe. A physical sign does not make a person a believer, nor does it prove that one belongs to Christ.

The Jews believed that circumcision was the sign that made them the people of God. Paul corrected this error.

Paul wrote in **Romans 2:28-29**:

> *"For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God."*

Outward signs do not create the inward life that God alone gives. The believer must possess the life of Jesus Christ through the new birth rather than relying upon an outward mark.

Salvation Is By Faith, Not Signs

We are saved by faith, and we must continue to walk by faith. Our faith rests in the understanding that what the Word says, God will do.

Paul wrote in **Ephesians 2:8-10**:

> *"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."*

Jesus Warned About Following Signs

Jesus Himself warned that signs could be used to deceive people. We must therefore examine both the event and the teaching attached to it by the Word of God.

Jesus said in **Matthew 24:24**:

> *"For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect."*

Signs can deceive. Faith must rest in truth, not manifestations.

Personal Response

Key Truth

Why can outward signs not replace faith in the saving work of Jesus Christ?

Personal Reflection

Have signs or dramatic experiences made a teaching seem true to you before you examined God's Word?

Action Step

Recall one impressive claim. What Bible teaching will you use to judge it, and what belief might need to change?

The Sign In Acts 2

In Acts chapter 2, Jews from many nations witnessed a miraculous sign when unlearned Galilean disciples spoke coherently in their languages. This required no faith, because it was a physical fact. They saw with their eyes and heard with their ears.

The sign drew the crowd's attention to the preaching of Peter, but it was not the sign itself that saved the people. They heard the Gospel concerning Jesus Christ, were convicted and responded to the Word they had received.

Luke wrote in **Acts 2:37**:

> *"Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?"*

Peter answered the people by preaching repentance and the gift of the Holy Ghost. We must understand his words through the complete saving work of Jesus Christ, not through a later ceremony or experience.

Luke wrote in **Acts 2:38**:

> *"Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."*

Luke then records the response of those who gladly received the Gospel. The important point is that they responded to the Word, not that a sign had given them spiritual life.

Luke wrote in **Acts 2:41**:

> *"Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls."*

Not one verse says that these 3000 souls spoke in unknown tongues as an initial evidence of receiving the Holy Spirit. Luke emphasises that they received the Word and were added to the believers, rather than recording a further experience proved by tongues.

The True Baptism Into The Church

To be added to the church is to be baptised into the body of Christ. If a person does not have the Spirit of Christ dwelling in them, they do not belong to Christ.

Paul wrote in **Romans 8:9**:

> *"But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his."*

To be born again, a person must receive the baptism of Christ, which is in the Holy Spirit, not a Pentecostal imitation. Jesus Christ Himself baptises the believer in His own Spirit and brings that person into His spiritual body.

Signs Follow Believers, They Do Not Authenticate Them

Mark recorded the words of Jesus concerning faith and the signs that would follow believers. The purpose of the words must be examined without making one outward sign a universal test of the new birth.

Mark wrote in **Mark 16:16-18**:

> *"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."*

Jesus did not say signs prove believers. He said signs follow believers.

The Bible teaches that the just shall live by faith. Faith, joined with obedience, is what identifies the true believer.

The writer of Hebrews wrote in **Hebrews 11:6**:

> *"But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."*

The Error Of Pentecostal Interpretation

Pentecostals point to **Mark 16:17** and say, *"believers shall speak with new tongues."* This verse is not teaching an initial evidence of receiving the Holy Spirit, nor is it teaching sounds, noises, or grunts.

The Greek words behind 'new tongues' are KAINAIS GLOSSAIS. The word KAINAIS means new, while GLOSSAIS refers to tongues or languages; the spiritual lesson developed here also concerns how the new birth changes a believer's everyday speech.

KAINAIS means new or fresh in kind, while GLOSSAIS refers to tongues or languages. The surrounding teaching must determine how these words are understood, rather than the words being used to establish the initial-evidence doctrine.

The new birth gives a person a new way of speaking because the life of Christ now governs the heart. Where once someone used corrupt or hurtful words, the believer is to speak with truth, grace and love.

When a person is truly born again, God puts new words in their mouth. He gives them a new tongue, meaning a new way of speaking.

Where once a person cursed, swore, and spoke corruption, now their words are seasoned with grace, love, and blessing. This change is the fruit of Jesus Christ dwelling within, not a performance by which someone earns salvation.

The new birth changes the way we speak because the life of Jesus Christ now governs our hearts. Speech that was once corrupted by sin is to be replaced by words of truth, grace and love.

James Described The Unconverted Tongue

James explained the danger of speech that is not governed by God in **James 3:5-12**. He warned about the damage words can cause and the contradiction of blessing and cursing coming from the same mouth.

James called the tongue a *"little member"* and warned that *"the tongue is a fire"*. He described how speech can *"defileth the whole body"* and be *"set on fire of hell"*, comparing its effect to a small fire that spreads widely. He also warned that blessing and cursing should not come from the same mouth, declaring, *"My brethren, these things ought not so to be."*

When a person becomes a new creature in Christ, their tongue no longer defiles the body or sets their life on a course on fire of hell. The new life of Jesus Christ is to govern both the heart and the words spoken through the mouth.

Paul wrote in **2 Corinthians 5:17**:

> *"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."*

A Final Question About Signs

If Pentecostalism appeals to signs as proof of receiving the Holy Spirit, why does it single out tongues from Acts 2? The same account also mentions the sound of wind and cloven tongues like fire, and these details must not be ignored.

Acts 2 records the sound as of a rushing mighty wind, the appearance of cloven tongues like fire, and the speaking of intelligible languages understood by the disciples and their hearers. If every outward sign is to be treated as a requirement, why do Pentecostal teachings single out tongues while neglecting the others?

Mark 16 also refers to protection from serpents and deadly poison, yet Pentecostal teaching singles out tongues as the required sign of Spirit baptism. We must not select one sign from a larger account and turn it into a condition that Scripture does not state.

Selecting tongues alone as the required evidence cannot be justified from the full account of Pentecost. We must not make one sign a command for all believers when Scripture does not establish that requirement.

Personal Response

Key Truth

Why does the account of the three thousand not establish tongues as a condition of receiving the Spirit?

Personal Reflection

What have your own words revealed about the attitudes you allow to govern a difficult conversation?

Action Step

Think of an upcoming conversation. What will you say or avoid saying so the life and love of Christ govern your speech?

6. CORNELIUS AND HIS HOUSE

BACK TO CONTENTS

There are three clear occurrences in the book of Acts where speaking with tongues, like **Acts 2:4**, is explicitly recorded. There are no other places in the Bible that are the same or similar to what occurred in these three occurrences.

The Three Clear Occurrences

Acts 2:4, Jerusalem, Day of Pentecost

The disciples were filled with the Holy Ghost and spoke with other tongues, which were real, recognisable languages understood by the hearers. The Greek phrase is HETERAIS GLOSSAIS, meaning other languages.

Acts 10:44-46, Caesarea, House of Cornelius

Gentiles received the Holy Ghost and spoke with tongues. The Greek word is GLOSSAIS, the same word used in Acts 2. This convinced the Jewish believers that God had also given the Holy Ghost to the Gentiles. This is an important early record of Gentiles receiving the Gospel and the indwelling Spirit.

Acts 19:6, Ephesus

About twelve disciples of John received the Holy Ghost and spoke with tongues and prophesied. The Greek word is again GLOSSAIS, the same word used in Acts 2 and Acts 10. This event reinforced the baptism of Christ, which is in the Holy Spirit, and showed the rejection of the baptism of John, which was a baptism in water only.

Cornelius And His House

This account records the Spirit being received by Gentiles and God's acceptance of them through the Gospel. This is about ten years after Acts 2, when Jewish people received the gospel at Pentecost. The opening chapters of Acts concentrate on Jewish believers; the welcome of the Gentiles is made explicit in the account of Cornelius. Even many years later, the church in Jerusalem still had a mixture of the Law of Moses and the New Covenant.

Luke wrote in **Acts 21:20**:

> *"And when they heard it, they glorified the Lord, and said unto him, Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe; and they are all zealous of the law:"*

Why God permitted this mixture will be explained in the module dealing with the New Testament ordinances. For the present, it is important to recognise that the early believers were learning to leave the former covenant practices behind.

The Visions Given To Cornelius And Peter

Cornelius received a vision. An angel of God told him to send men to Joppa and ask Peter to come and preach the gospel to him.

At the same time, Peter also received a vision. He saw heaven opened, and a great sheet coming down with four footed beasts, wild beasts, creeping things, and fowls of the air. He heard a voice saying, *"Rise, kill, and eat."* Peter refused because the food was common and unclean under the Law of Moses. This happened three times. Then the voice said, *"What God hath cleansed, that call thou not common."*

Many people use this vision as a reason not to eat certain foods. However, visions carry spiritual meaning and are not to be taken only in a literal sense. This becomes clear when Peter himself explains the meaning of the vision.

Luke wrote in **Acts 10:28**:

> *"And he said unto them, Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation; but God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean."*

This event took place about ten years after Pentecost, and even Peter still believed that salvation was for the Jews only, and that Gentiles were to be avoided as unclean. God used the vision and the reception of the Spirit by Cornelius to correct that mistaken understanding.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How did God's dealings with Peter challenge the belief that Gentiles could not receive salvation?

Personal Reflection

Have you ever judged a group of people as less likely to receive salvation?

Action Step

Identify an attitude towards people from another background that needs changing. How will Peter's experience with Cornelius shape your response?

Jewish Believers Went With Peter

Peter went with the servants to Cornelius' house with *"certain brethren"* of the circumcision. These Jewish believers accompanied him as witnesses when God made clear that the Gospel was for the Gentiles as well.

These were Jewish believers who still practised the Law of Moses, and like Peter, they believed Gentiles were unclean. Their astonishment when the Gentiles received the Spirit shows how strongly those former distinctions affected their understanding.

As Peter preached to Cornelius and his house, the Holy Ghost fell on them. They believed the gospel and were born again.

Luke wrote in **Acts 10:44-46**:

> *"While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. 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. For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter,"*

Knowing that tongues are a sign to the unbeliever, it is clear that in this situation the sign was for the Jewish believers who still practised the Law of Moses and did not believe Gentiles could be saved. Cornelius and his house were the ones who believed the gospel and were saved.

The original account leaves the particular language unnamed. Because Cornelius was a Roman centurion and the witnesses included Jewish believers, Hebrew has been suggested as one possible language, which would help explain their understanding that the household was magnifying God. However, Luke does not identify the language, so this possibility must not be treated as an established fact.

Luke records that the Jewish believers heard Cornelius and his household speaking with tongues and magnifying God. The account supports meaningful speech in the hearing of these witnesses, but does not tell us the precise language or provide the spoken words.

Peter's Report Confirms What Happened

The book of Acts confirms that what took place with Cornelius and his household was identical to what occurred on the day of Pentecost. Peter himself compared the reception of the Spirit by these Gentiles with what had happened to the disciples at the beginning.

When Peter returned to Jerusalem, he had to explain why he went to Gentiles. In doing so, he gives important details.

Luke wrote in **Acts 11:14-15**:

> *"Who shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved. And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning."*

This proves that Cornelius and his house were not saved before Peter preached to them. They were saved when they heard the word, believed the gospel, and received the Holy Ghost.

It also proves that tongues were not an *"initial evidence"* for believers to seek, but a sign confirming that God had given the same salvation to the Gentiles as He had given to the Jews. The Jewish believers heard the Gentiles magnify God and could no longer deny that the gift of the Spirit had been given to them.

The Pentecostal Claim Compared With The Bible

Pentecostals claim that Cornelius was already saved and born again, and that Peter came to give him a second work after salvation, called the baptism of the Holy Spirit, with the initial evidence of tongues. Peter's own report says that he was sent to speak words through which Cornelius and his household would be saved.

But Peter said he was sent to Cornelius to preach words whereby he would be saved. The gospel is the power of God unto salvation. To enter the kingdom of God, a person must be born again, and to be born again a person must receive the Holy Spirit in them.

Paul wrote in **Romans 8:9**:

> *"But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his."*

To be saved is to be in Christ and a member of His body. To be saved, the Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit, must dwell in you. Pentecostals cannot have it both ways.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How does Peter's report show when Cornelius and his household received salvation?

Personal Reflection

What has Peter's report taught you about distinguishing the new birth from an experience said to come afterwards?

Action Step

When explaining Cornelius' conversion, what claim will you stop making beyond Luke's account, and how will you explain Christ's saving work?

7. PAUL AND THE MEN IN EPHESUS

BACK TO CONTENTS

This is the third recorded instance in the book of Acts where tongues appear in direct connection with salvation. The account concerns men who had received John's baptism and still needed to hear the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

In Acts 19, Paul encountered about twelve men in Ephesus who were called disciples, but they were disciples of John the Baptist, not believers in Jesus Christ. Their understanding was connected with John's preparatory ministry, and Paul therefore directed them to Jesus Christ.

Luke recorded Paul's question in **Acts 19:2**:

> *"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."*

Their answer showed they had not yet believed the gospel and were not under the New Covenant. Their knowledge of John's baptism was not proof that they had received the indwelling Spirit of Christ.

They had only received John's baptism, which was a baptism of repentance and preparation, not salvation. John's ministry pointed people towards the One who would give them spiritual life through the Holy Spirit.

At first, this verse may seem to confirm the Pentecostal belief that these disciples of John were already saved. However, the KJV wording requires careful examination alongside Paul's following questions and the men's answers.

The Question Paul Asked

The KJV wording *"since ye believed"* in **Acts 19:2** may suggest to some readers that receiving the Holy Spirit occurs sometime after believing. Pentecostal teachers use this wording to support a second spiritual experience after salvation. However, we must examine the Greek wording and the circumstances in which Paul asked the question.

Luke recorded Paul's words in **Acts 19:2**:

> *"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."*

For comparison, Young's Literal Translation (YLT) renders the complete verse:

"he said unto them, 'The Holy Spirit did ye receive -- having believed?' and they said unto him, 'But we did not even hear whether there is any Holy Spirit;'"

Notice the expression *"having believed"*. This wording connects Paul's question about receiving the Holy Spirit with believing. It does not, by itself, establish that the men were already born again and were waiting for a second experience.

The Greek question contains five important words, shown below in their original order.

Greek word	Pronunciation	English meaning
Εἰ	EI	If or whether
Πνεῦμα	PNEUMA	Spirit

Ἅγιον	HAGION	Holy
ἐλάβετε	ELABETE	Did you receive
πιστεύσαντες	PISTEUSANTES	Having believed

The words PNEUMA HAGION mean Holy Spirit. The verb ELABETE means did you receive, while PISTEUSANTES means having believed. Together, these words form Paul's question, which may be expressed naturally in English as: *"Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?"*

However, the Greek wording alone does not settle the spiritual condition of these men. We must continue reading Acts chapter 19 and examine their answers. When Paul asked about their baptism, they explained that they had received John's baptism, which prepared people to believe in Jesus Christ.

Paul was establishing whether these men had received the Holy Spirit, not instructing people who were already born again to seek another Spirit baptism. Receiving the Holy Spirit belongs to New Covenant salvation, not to a second experience after the new birth.

This agrees with **Romans 8:9**, where Paul declares that anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to Him. The Spirit of God is the Spirit of Jesus Christ, and every person who is truly born again possesses His indwelling Spirit. There is one new birth, one Spirit and one complete salvation in Jesus Christ.

Personal Response

Key Truth

Why must Paul's question about receiving the Holy Ghost be read with the Ephesian men's answers?

Personal Reflection

Have you drawn a conclusion about the Spirit from one English phrase without reading the surrounding account?

Action Step

Identify one claim you have accepted from **Acts 19:2**. *What will you reconsider after reading the men's answers and* **Romans 8:9***?*

Their Answer Brings Clarity

Luke wrote in **Acts 19:3-4**:

> *"And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism. Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus."*

Their answer made the situation clear. They had not heard of Jesus Christ. They only knew John's baptism.

John's baptism was a shadow. It pointed forward to Christ.

These men had not yet been born again, because they had not received Jesus Christ through the Gospel. Their knowledge of John's preparatory baptism must not be treated as proof that they already possessed New Covenant salvation.

New Covenant Salvation Requires The Spirit

Paul wrote in **Romans 8:9**:

> *"But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his."*

Paul wrote in **Romans 10:9**:

> *"That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved."*

Luke wrote in **Acts 4:12**:

> *"Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."*

Without Jesus Christ there is no salvation, and without His indwelling Spirit no person belongs to Him. These are not separate saving experiences because the Spirit of God is the Spirit of Christ.

What Actually Happened In Acts 19

Luke wrote in **Acts 19:5-6**:

> *"When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied."*

The word *"tongues"* is GLOSSA. It means known words in a real tongue, that is, a language that can be understood. It does not mean sounds or noises.

The word *"prophesied"* is PROPHĒTEUŌ. It means they spoke a clear message from God that could be understood. In this context, it includes preaching and declaring the truth of Christ in coherent words.

What the exact language was is not stated. The teaching established here is that these twelve men did not need another water baptism to make them born again. John's baptism had been a preparatory shadow, while these men received the saving baptism of Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit. The outward action recorded in Acts must be read within that historical transition and cannot replace the spiritual reality that Christ gives.

Paul wrote in **1 Corinthians 12:13**:

> *"For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit."*

We also do not know which specific tongue they spoke. However, we do know that Paul himself understood more than his native tongue.

Paul acknowledged that he spoke with tongues more than the Corinthians. However, his wider teaching must still be understood through meaningful speech and the edification of the Church.

Paul wrote in **1 Corinthians 14:18**:

> *"I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than ye all:"*

Here, the word *"tongues"* is again GLOSSA, meaning known languages, not sounds or noises. We must read Paul's statement alongside his teaching that speech in the congregation must bring understanding and edification.

Paul was saying he spoke many real languages, which fits his ministry among Jews and Gentiles across many regions. Yet he placed the need for understanding and edification above any display of spiritual ability.

For comparison, the LITV reads, **1 Corinthians 14:18**:

> *"I thank God that I speak more languages than all of you."*

This verse also repudiates the idea that water baptism forms part of the New Covenant. That subject will be covered fully in the module dealing with the ordinances of the New Covenant.

The words concerning belief and baptism occur in **Mark 16:16**, not verse 18. In the COGMA teaching, that baptism points to the saving work of Christ in the Holy Spirit, not a ceremony in water. The new birth is God's work, and an outward action cannot create or complete that spiritual life.

A Clear Conclusion

Pentecostalism cannot find any comfort or validation in Acts 19. The verse does not teach a second blessing after salvation.

The account does not teach an initial-evidence doctrine, nor does it establish an ongoing private prayer tongue. Its subject is the saving work of Jesus Christ and the response of these men to the Gospel.

These claims are not stated in Acts 19, and they are not stated anywhere else in the New Testament. The teaching must therefore be established from what the Scripture actually says rather than from Pentecostal expectations about the experience.

These Ephesian men were not saved until **Acts 19:5-6**, because receiving the Holy Spirit marked their new birth. Before that moment they only knew John's baptism, and they had not yet believed on Christ Jesus. When they heard the truth, they believed, and the Holy Ghost came upon them. This was their entrance into New Covenant salvation.

Their tongues were known languages, and their prophecy was understood speech. The tongues were not sounds or noises. They were real words with meaning. Their prophecy was not confusion, but clear proclamation. It was speech that could be understood and judged.

The account in Acts 19 must not be used to authenticate practices that Luke does not describe. He records speaking with tongues and prophesying, but does not identify the precise languages or give a transcript of what was spoken. Its setting concerns people receiving the Gospel of Jesus Christ, not an instruction to manufacture unfamiliar sounds.

What Pentecostals practise is noises and sounds, and it is not GLOSSA. The speaker does not understand the tongue. The hearers do not understand the tongue. The practice produces confusion, and not edification. This is not what took place in Acts 19.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How did John's preparatory baptism differ from the saving work these men received through Jesus Christ?

Personal Reflection

Have you trusted an outward act as evidence that you or another person already possesses the Spirit of Christ?

Action Step

Consider one outward practice you have treated as proof of spiritual life. What must change in your understanding of the new birth?

8. THE SPIRIT MAKES INTERCESSION WITH GROANS

BACK TO CONTENTS

Pentecostalism claims to have validity in Romans 8 because it speaks of *"groans."* They claim these groans are tongues, and they further claim this is the witness of having the Holy Spirit. Some go even further and teach that these groans or sounds are a *"heavenly language"* used so that the devil cannot hear what they are saying. This is not what the verse teaches.

What Romans 8 Does Not Say

Nowhere in Romans 8 does Paul identify these groanings as a language, describe the believer as speaking them, or suggest that prayer must be hidden from the devil. Those ideas are imposed upon the verses rather than established by Paul.

Paul wrote in **Romans 8:26**:

> *"Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered."*

Romans 8:26 does not say the believer speaks. It says the Spirit makes intercession. The groanings are not described as words, speech, or language. They are described as *"which cannot be uttered."*

The Greek form LALĒTHĒNAI lies behind the word *"uttered"*. It concerns something being spoken or expressed in words, while Paul says these groanings cannot be uttered. This supports the difference between the audible languages described in Acts 2 and the Spirit making intercession in **Romans 8:26**.

Paul described the groanings in **Romans 8:26** as things that cannot be uttered. They therefore cannot be made into spoken languages without adding a claim the verse does not give.

The verse begins with the word *"Likewise."* This means Paul is building on what he has already said.

Paul wrote in **Romans 8:16**:

> *"The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:"*

Pentecostalism claims the witness of the Spirit is *"groanings,"* and they call these groanings *"unknown tongues."* This is not true.

In Acts 2 the disciples spoke outwardly as the Spirit gave them meaningful languages, and their listeners understood those words. In Romans 8 Paul speaks of the Spirit helping a believer in prayer, including groanings that cannot be uttered. These are different subjects and cannot be combined to establish a secret prayer tongue.

What "Groanings" Means

The word *"groanings"* is the Greek word STENAGMOS. It means a groan or a sigh. It does not mean a spoken tongue. It does not mean a language.

Sometimes the burdens of life are so heavy that we do not know what to pray, or we cannot find words to express our need. We may be concerned for someone who is unsaved, facing a difficult decision or carrying a sorrow that others do not understand. In such moments we may only be able to say, *"Lord, help,"* or sigh before God. The Spirit of Jesus Christ knows our need and makes intercession according to the will of God.

You do not know what to pray, but the Holy Spirit does. You may not know the exact words to express to God, but God knows the intent of your heart.

Personal Response

Key Truth

Why does the Spirit's intercession with groanings that cannot be uttered differ from speaking a language?

Personal Reflection

When words for prayer are difficult to find, do you feel pressure to produce special sounds?

Action Step

Think of a burden you can bring to God. How will you depend upon Christ's Spirit rather than trying to manufacture words?

Prayer Is Not Hidden From The Devil

Scripture never teaches that prayer must be hidden from the devil to be effective. Nowhere in the Bible does God say believers need a secret language so Satan cannot hear. The power of prayer is not secrecy. The power of prayer is God Himself.

God does not need to hide from Satan, for Satan is a created being who is limited and is neither omniscient nor sovereign. God is Almighty and rules over everything, including the devil. Scripture does not teach that a believer must speak a secret language to prevent Satan from hearing a prayer.

Job wrote in **Job 1:12**:

> *"And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand. So Satan went forth from the presence of the Lord."*

Job wrote in **Job 2:6**:

> *"And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, he is in thine hand; but save his life."*

Satan could do only what God allowed, and God established the limits within which he could act. The account in Job shows that Satan could not overturn God's authority or act outside the boundaries the Lord set. Our confidence in prayer therefore rests in God's power and care, not in keeping our words hidden from the devil.

The Focus Is God's Will, Not Sounds

Paul wrote in **Romans 8:27**:

> *"And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God."*

The focus is not on sounds. The focus is not on noise. The focus is God searching the heart and the Spirit interceding according to the will of God.

Paul wrote in **Romans 8:28**:

> *"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose."*

Disorder In Meetings Is Forbidden

Pentecostals will claim that *"groanings and noises"* are the unknown tongues that they speak in their services as part of worship. In many Pentecostal meetings, many speak over each other in sounds that nobody understands. This often takes place after singing, and no interpretation is given.

Paul instructed the Church to pray and sing with understanding so that everyone could be strengthened. Confusion and speech without understanding are not the pattern he established for the gathering of believers.

Paul wrote in **1 Corinthians 14:14-15**:

> *"For if I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful. What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also."*

When we come together as the body of Christ, the whole body must be edified. Prayer and worship must be done with understanding, so that the church is built up and God is honoured in clarity. This chapter will be covered in detail in the next Study Guide.

A Clear Conclusion

Romans 8:26 does not teach tongues. It teaches intercession.

The *"groanings"* are not identified as a heavenly language or sounds designed to hide prayer from the devil. Paul is describing the Spirit's intercession amid human weakness and our uncertainty about what to pray.

The Spirit's help is not the believer speaking in secret noises. The Spirit's help is the Spirit making intercession according to the will of God.

Therefore, Pentecostal claims about Romans 8 are not stated in the verse, and they are not stated anywhere else in the New Testament. Paul is explaining how the Spirit helps us in weakness and makes intercession according to the will of God.

Personal Response

Key Truth

Why does confidence in prayer rest in God's will and power rather than a secret language?

Personal Reflection

Have you assumed that God needs a special language in order to hear or understand you?

Action Step

Choose a difficulty you can pray about. How will you approach God with trust in His power and understanding?

9. THE ENDURING EVIDENCE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

BACK TO CONTENTS

A momentary sound cannot establish the permanent life of Jesus Christ within a person. Scripture directs our attention to the Spirit who dwells within the redeemed and whose life bears lasting fruit. We must now ask what God identifies as the evidence of that indwelling life.

The Eternal Evidence Is The Love Of God

Pentecostalism speaks of an *"initial"* evidence of having received the Holy Spirit. They claim the first proof is speaking with tongues. These claims are not stated in Acts 2, Acts 10, or Acts 19, and they are not stated anywhere else in the New Testament.

God's Word shows not an initial evidence, but an eternal evidence of having received the Holy Spirit. The eternal evidence is the love of God planted within the believer. This is not a momentary sign. It is an abiding reality. It is God living in His people.

Paul wrote in **Romans 5:5**:

> *"And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us."*

This love is not human discipline. It is not personality. It is not natural kindness. It is God's love, placed in the heart by the Holy Ghost.

This evidence endures because the Holy Spirit does not visit the believer for a short time and then depart. Jesus Christ lives within those who are born again, and His love is to be expressed through them during trials, pressure and offence. His love is not controlled by changing feelings or passing moods.

A person can imitate religious behaviour, copy unfamiliar sounds and repeat outward expressions of devotion. However, human effort cannot produce the love of God, which comes from Jesus Christ dwelling within the believer.

But he cannot manufacture the love of God in his heart. Only God can give this love. Only the Holy Ghost can pour it into the soul.

A New Commandment From The Lord Jesus

At the Last Supper, the Lord Jesus Christ gave His disciples a new commandment. This commandment did not point to a temporary sign. It pointed to a permanent mark of discipleship.

John wrote in **John 13:34-35**:

> *"A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."*

The world does not recognise Christ's disciples by unusual sounds or religious performances. Jesus identified love for one another as a mark of His disciples, and that love comes from His indwelling life rather than outward imitation.

The love of Jesus Christ is expressed in patience, gentleness, mercy and forgiveness. It remains faithful when tested or offended, because it is the life of Christ within rather than an outward performance created by human strength.

Personal Response

Key Truth

Why is God's love within His children different from an outward performance that can be copied?

Personal Reflection

What relationship is testing your willingness to express the love Christ has already given you?

Action Step

Choose one relationship where patience or forgiveness is needed. What response will you make from Christ's love within rather than from outward appearance?

The Love Of God Proves The Indwelling Spirit

John teaches that the proof of God dwelling in us is shown in love. This is not sentimental talk. It is a spiritual reality.

John wrote in **1 John 4:13**:

> *"Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit."*

John wrote in **1 John 4:15**:

> *"Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God."*

Many people can repeat correct words and learn the language of religion without possessing spiritual life. John's teaching therefore directs us beyond an outward confession to the indwelling life and love of God.

The Scriptures do not stop at the words a person can repeat with the lips. John directs our attention to God dwelling within the believer and the love that His presence produces.

John wrote in **1 John 4:16**:

> *"And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him."*

The evidence of the indwelling Spirit is not established by a sound, a noise or a religious performance. The life of Jesus Christ expresses itself through genuine love, righteousness and faithful obedience, and that life is not produced by human effort.

The Cross Shows The Source Of This Love

The greatest declaration of God's love is that Jesus Christ died for us while we were still sinners. This was the saving work of the one true God revealed in flesh, and it is the source of the love now poured into the believer's heart by His Spirit.

Paul wrote in **Romans 5:8**:

> *"But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."*

God's love is sacrificial, selfless and holy, and it is not earned through human goodness. It reaches sinners and brings saving mercy to those who were once enemies of God, because its source is Jesus Christ Himself.

This saving love comes from God and is given to the believer by His Spirit. It is to be expressed through the life of Jesus Christ within, not produced through human effort.

A Clear Conclusion

Pentecostalism speaks of an initial evidence of speaking in sounds and noises. The speaker does not understand the tongue, and the hearers do not understand the tongue. These claims are not stated in Acts 2, Acts 10, or Acts 19, and they are not stated anywhere else in the New Testament.

God's Word reveals not an initial evidence, but an eternal evidence. The eternal evidence is the love of God shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost.

This love cannot be copied. It cannot be mimicked by discipline. It cannot be sustained by the flesh. It is of divine origin. It is intelligent, witnessed, and understood by all.

This love is the living testimony of God within His children. It is the life of Jesus Christ being expressed through the born-again believer.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How do Christ's sacrifice and the Spirit's gift of love explain the source of enduring spiritual evidence?

Personal Reflection

Have you confused natural friendliness with the love of God that is given through the Holy Ghost?

Action Step

Think of a difficult situation with another person. What choice will you make so Christ's love, not hurt feelings, governs your conduct?

CONCLUSION: ACTS 2 AND THE HOLY SPIRIT

BACK TO CONTENTS

This Study Guide has examined Acts chapter 2 carefully and without assumption. The result is clear: Acts 2 does not teach a second experience after salvation.

The disciples were not yet converted before the day of Pentecost. Jesus Himself spoke of their conversion as future, and the apostles later taught that a person belongs to Christ only when the Spirit of Christ dwells in them. Therefore, the disciples were converted on the day of Pentecost, not before it.

Acts 2 marks the beginning of the Gospel Day. It is the moment when the Holy Spirit was first given to dwell in believers, not simply with them. On that day, the disciples were baptised into one body by one Spirit and became part of the New Testament church.

The New Testament establishes one new birth, not two stages of salvation, and one Spirit rather than a further Spirit to be received. The believer is brought into Christ by one spiritual baptism, and no later sign completes what Jesus Christ has already accomplished.

The teaching that separates receiving Christ from receiving the Holy Spirit creates a false division. Scripture does not support the idea that a believer can belong to Christ without the Spirit of Christ dwelling in them.

Acts 2 also shows that the tongues spoken on that day were real, known languages, spoken clearly and understood by those who heard. They were not sounds or noises, and they were not given as proof that the disciples had received the Holy Spirit. The disciples received the Holy Spirit because God fulfilled His promise, not because they spoke in tongues.

Therefore, Acts 2 cannot be used to support Pentecostal doctrine. When rightly divided, it destroys the foundation on which that doctrine stands.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How do the disciples' conversion, the understood languages and the one indwelling Spirit fit together in Acts 2?

Personal Reflection

What claim about a later Spirit baptism has most challenged your confidence in complete salvation?

Action Step

When faced with that claim again, what Bible truth will you rely upon, and what change in your response will show your trust in Christ?

SUBMISSION TO COGMA FOR APPRAISAL

Instructions

Complete this section after you have finished the Study Guide. It must be completed online.

The link is located at the bottom of the online Study Guide — https://cogma.com.au/study-guides/

Your answers should reflect your understanding, your personal response, and how you intend to live by the truth you have studied. Answer honestly and be specific.

1. Main Truth

Why does Acts 2 record the disciples' entrance into New Covenant life rather than a second experience after salvation? Use Jesus' words about conversion and **Romans 8:9** *to explain your answer.*

2. Understanding

How do the meaning of GLOSSA, the disciples' speech and the crowd's recognition of their own languages help explain the purpose of tongues at Pentecost? Distinguish what the sign did from what receiving the Gospel accomplished.

3. Personal Reflection

Which belief about tongues or receiving the Spirit has Acts 2 challenged in your own understanding? Explain the correction you now need to make.

4. Response to Truth

Have you trusted a sign or religious experience more than the Word of God? Explain what needs to change in where you place your confidence.

5. Action Step

Think of a conversation in which your words could hurt or help. What will you change so that the indwelling life of Christ governs the way you speak?

6. Early Response

Have you responded to the conversation or concern identified in Question 5? If yes, explain what you said or changed. If not, explain what you are preparing to do or what is holding you back.

7. Ongoing Practice

How could the love of God described in **Romans 5:5** *and* **John 13:34-35** *continue to guide the way you speak when you are under pressure or offended? Explain why this love is different from a temporary religious performance.*

8. Doctrinal Clarity

How do Peter's report about Cornelius and the Ephesian men's answers to Paul show when they received salvation? Explain why neither account establishes a second reception of the Spirit after the new birth.

9. Living the Truth

When you do not know what to pray, how could **Romans 8:26-27** *guide your response to God? Explain why the Spirit's intercession does not require you to produce a secret language or sounds others cannot understand.*

10. Final Response

Bring together what Acts 2 teaches about the disciples' conversion, meaningful languages and the indwelling Spirit. What has become clearer about one complete salvation in Christ, and what personal response or further thought does this call for from you?