

CHURCH HISTORY LITERACY

Lesson 90

The Holiness - Pentecostal Movement – Part 2

WARNING: THIS LESSON HAS MANY FOOTNOTES! THEY DO NOT NEED TO BE READ FOR THE LESSON TO MAKE SENSE, BUT THEY DO ADD EXTRA MATERIAL FOR THE CURIOUS!

“Pentecostals? Charismatics? Aren’t they the ones that speak in tongues?” Others might say, “I call them ‘holy rollers,’ although I’m not sure why!” “They are the ones on TV. Who fall down when slain in the Spirit.” “Maybe they are the ones who believe in miracle healings.” Who are Pentecostals and Charismatics? Are they the same thing?¹ Where did they come from and what do they believe? Today we consider these groups as we look at our second part of the Holiness – Pentecostal Movement in the history of the church.

Speaking in tongues and other charismatic gifts are large points of debate for many in Christendom. The debates over these spiritual gifts cover such a broad area, that we could spend an entire series simply on those issues alone. We can not cover all aspects of spiritual gifts here, but as we discuss the Pentecost and Charismatic Movements we will study speaking in tongues in a bit of depth. This is useful for two reasons; it gives us background to understand a particularly distinguishing characteristic of the historical movement. It also structures many of the debating points on other miraculous gift questions.

We are studying the movement in light of its historical roots that we can trace back through the last century. In other words, we consider the Assemblies of God, for example, and study backwards into the origin of the denomination and the people and ideas that preceded its existence. This is important to note because, like the Restoration Movement churches we studied in lessons 87 - 88, many Pentecostals and Charismatics would rather identify their historical roots as the roots of the church in Acts and other New Testament expressions and accounts of the church.

To support their view, many Pentecostals would cite the church speaking in tongues and would seek to show that the practice has waxed and waned, but has still been continuous in the church since the day of Pentecost recorded in Acts

¹ “No!” is the answer to that, in case it is not clear in this lesson! A Pentecostal is charismatic, but a charismatic is not always a Pentecostal in the strict historical sense. This is kind of like whales and mammals. A whale is always a mammal, but a mammal (like you or me) is not always a whale!

chapter 2. Such a claim would be backed up with entries about speaking in tongues from Irenaeus (c120-202 A.D., see lesson 8),² Tertullian (c150-c230 A.D., see lesson 10),³ Novatian (210-280 A.D.),⁴ Ambrose (c339 – 397 A.D., see lesson 24),⁵ and others throughout church history, Pentecostal scholars will thus assert that the New Testament practice of miraculous gifts, including speaking in tongues, has never ceased in the church.⁶

Not all Christian scholars agree on this issue. Some scholars argue that genuine charismatic gifts ceased after the generation of the Apostles and those on whom the Apostles had laid hands.⁷ Others alter that time slightly by pointing to the completion of the New Testament as a time that ceased both the need for tongues and the practice of speaking in tongues.⁸

² “In like manner we do also hear many brethren in the Church, who possess [prophetic](#) gifts, and who through the Spirit speak all kinds of languages.” Irenaeus, *Adversus Haereses*, Book V, Chapter 6:1.

³ “Let Marcion then exhibit, as gifts of his god, some prophets, such as have not spoken by human sense, but with the Spirit of God, such as have both predicted things to come, and have made manifest the secrets of the heart; let him produce a psalm, a vision, a prayer - only let it be by the Spirit, in an ecstasy, that is, in a rapture, whenever an interpretation of tongues has occurred to him... Now all these signs (of spiritual gifts) are forthcoming from my side without any difficulty.” Tertullian, *Against Marcion*, Book V, Chapter 8.

⁴ “This is He [the Holy Spirit] who places prophets in the Church, instructs teachers, directs tongues, give powers and healings, does wonderful works, offers discrimination of spirits, affords powers of government, suggests counsels, and orders and arranges whatever other gifts there are of *charismata*; and thus make the Lord’s Church everywhere, and in all, perfected and completed.” Novatian, *Treatise Concerning The Trinity*, Chapter 29.

⁵ “You see the Father and Christ also set teachers in the Churches; and as the Father gives the gift of healings, so, too, does the Son give; as the Father gives the gift of tongues, so, too, has the Son also granted it. In like manner we have heard also above concerning the Holy Spirit, that He too grants the same kinds of graces.” Ambrose, *Of the Holy Spirit*, Book 2:151-152.

⁶ Moon, Elmer Louis, *The Pentecostal Church, A History and Popular Survey* (Carlton Press 1966). Most Pentecostal and Charismatic scholars would also note that there have been certain “awakenings” or times of “outpouring” where the Holy Spirit has come in greater waves or measures.

⁷ The scripture used for this position is Acts 8:14-19 which some believe indicates that only through the apostles laying on their hands could the Holy Spirit be given in measures that account for miraculous gifts.

⁸ The scripture frequently used for this position is 1 Corinthians 13:8-10, “Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when perfection comes, the imperfect disappears.” Some perceive the “perfect” Paul writes of as the completed scriptures.

When miraculous gifts existed is only one point of many in debate. There is a huge debate over what is meant biblically by the term, “speaking in tongues.” Acts 2:4 has the first key “tongues” verse in reference to church practice⁹, “All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.”¹⁰ This passage indicates that the tongues used were other languages known and used by people. Verse six of the story tells us that the crowd was amazed for, even though they came from many provinces and cultures, each was able to hear and understand the Apostles in their own respective language.¹¹ Some see from this and other similar passages that in the New Testament, tongues are supernatural abilities to speak in foreign languages for mission purposes, even though the speaker has not learned the language.

Others may agree with this interpretation of the tongues as manifested in Acts 2, but point to a different manifestation that Paul wrote of to the Corinthians. Paul writes of spiritual gifts in 1 Corinthians 12 so that the church would “not be ignorant” (1 Cor. 12:1). While setting out various gifts of the spirit, Paul notes the Spirit gives, “to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and still to another the interpretation of tongues” (1 Cor. 12:10).¹² Many will point to this as tongues “of angels” (1 Cor. 13:1) rather than tongues of man. This is seen as the ecstatic utterance featured in many Pentecostal and charismatic expressions.

In summary, some see the New Testament as teaching that some will have an ability to speak in known languages without learning the language. Others believe the New Testament teaches speaking in both known and unknown languages. A third prominent view sees the tongues in Acts 2 as angelic tongues incomprehensible to the unbelievers (who think the apostles are speaking drunken

⁹ The first reference in the New Testament may precede the establishment of the church in Pentecost. Mark 16:17 records Jesus as saying, “And these signs shall accompany those who believe: In my name they will drive out demons; they will speak in new tongues.” This scripture is debated as to whether it was originally in Mark’s gospel or was added later. See lesson _____. To further complicate things, there is “some degree of doubt” to Aland, Metzger and others who prepare the Greek New Testament text for the United Bible Society whether the word “new” should be included in the passage.

¹⁰ The Greek Luke used that is translated “other tongues” is: *ετεραις γλωσσαις* (*heterais glossais*). The word *glossa* (the root for Luke’s word) is appropriately translated either “*tongue*; *language*; or *utterance*.”

¹¹ Luke here uses *διαλεκτω* (*dialecto*) to mean the *dialect* or *language* of each listener.

¹² Paul uses the Greek *glossa* for tongues just like Luke in Acts 2, although he modifies it as “different kinds” using *ετερω γενη* (*hetero gene*) rather than *dialect* like Luke.

gibberish, using Acts 2:13). The fact that many believers could understand the tongues in their own language is seen by this view as a gift of interpretation or hearing.

Within the Pentecostal movement, many will attest to examples of both types of tongues, those known as foreign languages of men and those unknown languages of angels, manifested in the church. We should again add that the Pentecostal Movement and charismatic movement is much broader than merely the issue of tongues. Other spiritual gifts, prophesy, healing, words of knowledge, etc. are also important to the movement, but space dictates our limited consideration here.

So with that background, let's tour the historical development of these issues in the church through our completion of study on the Holiness-Pentecostal Movement.

HOLINESS – PENTECOSTAL RELATIONSHIP

Last week we spent time developing the holiness Movement in the church. We saw that from the roots of John Wesley, the idea percolated and grew within Protestant circles that saved people could reach a point in their lives where they lived sinless. Charles Finney and others preached revivals advocating that perfection was not only attainable for the Christian but was actually a duty. This doctrine of perfection ultimately brought splits within a number of churches, especially some Methodist congregations, and saw the launch of a number of new denominations.

Many in the Holiness movement termed the attainment of perfection a “second work of grace.” The idea was that the first work of grace was salvation itself (or “justification” in theological terminology.) The reaching of perfection was then considered an independent second work of God’s Spirit in the life of one saved. The Holiness Movement branched off from there, with some advocating yet a third work of grace! (Actually some had more levels/works of grace than even three!). The Canadian born Holiness preacher R.C. Horner taught that a baptism of the Holy Spirit was a third work of grace that was separate and apart from the work of sanctification or perfection. Coming out of Iowa in the mid-1890’s was a “John Wesley Methodist” named Benjamin Irwin who started the “Fire-Baptized Holiness Church.” Irwin preached a third experience of grace beyond perfection that was a “baptism of fire.” Those who received it reported to feel as if they were “literally on fire.” They would frequently “shout scream, speak in other tongues, fall into trances, receive the holy dance and holy laugh, and even get the ‘jerks.’”¹³

¹³ Synan, Vinson, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition* (Eerdmans 1997) p.53.

These experiences were not without their critics. Synan tells of A. M. Hills writing to the *Holiness Advocate* about a woman who claimed 6 experiences of grace:

August 1st, 1898, I was pardoned of my sins. On the following Sunday at eleven o'clock, *God sanctified me wholly*. A few days later I received the Comforter. Later in October, God gave me the Baptism of fire. The devil and all the hosts of hell cannot make me doubt this. When my sister Mattie was married, I fell into a trance and saw a vision. During services a night or so afterwards, God showed me that I needed more power for service, so I made my wants known, and prayer being offered, my faith took hold of God's promises, and I received the *Dynamite* [this was another level of the "Baptism of fire"]. A few nights after this I received the *definite experience of lyddite* [this was another term for yet another perceived 'Baptism of fire']. This gives the devil trouble, and he wonders what is coming next."

Hill supposedly said the poor woman should have sought one last baptism, that of "common sense."¹⁴

The churches that arose from the Holiness Movement, especially as it began to trace actions deemed consistent with the church at Pentecost, took a variety of names. Many of these churches called themselves by names that reflected their experiences, for example, the "Fire-Baptized Holiness Church." Many took other names. One of the most common names for these churches that claimed Pentecostal experiences was "Church of God." Many of these independent churches assembled together in 1905 and then again in 1907 and chose to form a coherent denomination, designating it the "Church of God."

PENTECOSTALISM

Most historians trace the Pentecostal start to the experiences of the Azusa Street Mission in Los Angeles starting in 1906. At the time, Los Angeles had about a quarter of a million people. A Louisiana born, African-American named William Joseph Seymore found an empty old church building at 312 Azusa Street in Los Angeles in which he could preach. "No sooner had Seymore began preaching in the Azusa location than a monumental revival began."¹⁵ For a period of over two years, thousands were attending daily meetings at the Azusa mission. People traveled from all over the world seeking the miraculous manifestations reportedly

¹⁴ *Ibid.* at 58.

¹⁵ *Ibid.* at 97.

occurring there. Speaking in tongues, healings, words of prophecy and an interracial fellowship were unlike anything seen anywhere in the U.S. at the time. The Los Angeles Times reported on the “strange utterances” that were coming forth under a headline, “Weird Babel of Tongues.”¹⁶

Many have termed Azusa the “Jerusalem” of the Pentecostal Movement, considering it the equivalent of the New Testament city of Jerusalem in Acts 2 where the Spirit descended and launched a charismatic first century church. Others take issue with that name and urge an understanding of a similar worldwide movement that just failed to get as much publicity!¹⁷

In fairness, one might ask how Seymore came to L.A. to preach in the first place. Where did Seymore learn his message? Seymore was the son of former slaves born in Centerville, Louisiana in 1870. Baptized in the Catholic church of his parents, Seymore grew up attending a Baptist church nearby. At 25, Seymore moved to Indianapolis where he became familiar with a Church of God. Seymore briefly attended a Holiness Bible School in Cincinnati when about 30 years old. At that time, small pox left Seymore blind in his left eye.

Seymore moved to Houston in 1905 working as an evangelist when he met Charles Parham. Parham taught a Pentecostal faith. Parham was from Kansas and he moved to Houston teaching his belief that when one received the baptism of the Holy Spirit, the only evidence of the baptism was speaking in tongues. Parham also taught that tongues were to be a common worship experience rather than an unusual occurrence. Although originally a Methodist, Parham considered himself anti-denominational. Parham firmly believed in the perfection taught in the Holiness Movement and took that into his Pentecostal teaching.

While in Houston, Parham was teaching his Pentecostal theology in Bible Classes. Because of segregation, Seymore was not allowed to attend, but instead was granted the chance to sit outside the door and listen and learn. It was in Houston that Seymore learned a theology of Pentecostal speaking in tongues that was a showing of the power of God that came upon believers who were previously saved and sanctified.

Many of the Azusa experience believed that they were speaking in known languages of man. Synan writes of A. G. Garr who believed he had received the gift of tongues prompting him to move to India to preach in the local language even though he had never trained in it. Once in India, Garr found he was not able

¹⁶ *L. A. Times*, April 18, 1906.

¹⁷ Anderson, Allan *An Introduction to Pentecostalism* (Cambridge 2006) at 171.

to speak or understand the language. Garr then moved to Hong Kong where he worked diligently to learn Chinese in normal manner and his mission efforts there bore fruit.¹⁸

From Azusa, Pentecostalism spread far and wide. News of the Pentecostal actions in Los Angeles swept through the south. At the general Assembly of the Churches of God in 1907, preaching on tongues resulted in the denomination adopting it as a normative Christian experience.

Of the many different fragmented and independent Holiness churches, many began to embrace the Pentecostal doctrine of tongues as evidence of a Baptism of the Spirit. As they shared in embracing this teaching of Pentecostal revival and speaking in tongues, some of the churches began banding together. In April 1914 a “General Council” of many of these churches that had sought to consolidate met in Hot Springs Arkansas. In Hot Springs, they drew up a document that served as a Constitution for a new denomination they formed together. They chose to call themselves the “Assemblies of God.”¹⁹

Ultimately many denominations would start from these teachings²⁰, eventually spreading and infiltrating most every different Christian religious tradition in the form of the modern charismatic movement.²¹ Synan notes, “In historical

¹⁸ Synan at 101-102.

¹⁹ Many Assembly of God people would place themselves in the “charismatic” section of this lesson rather than the “Pentecostal” section. At time evolved, the Assemblies of God became less structured on the idea of “perfection” and more focused on charismatic expressions. Even on those, there has been a transformation from public expressions toward more personal expressions, at least of the tongues gift.

²⁰ For example, in 1921, the female evangelist Aimee Semple McPherson was preaching on the beast with four faces found in Ezekiel 1:1-28 and decided that there was a “Foursquare Gospel” consisting of (1) salvation, (2) Holy Spirit Baptism with the evidence of tongues, (3) divine healing, and (4) the second coming of Christ. The Foursquare Church continues today with its most prominent preacher being Jack Hayford.

We have left out here the “Quakers” and “Shakers” because these groups have traits similar to the Pentecostal tradition, but are not really part of it. Both groups pre-date the tradition and neither holds an orthodox view concerning Jesus as God incarnate (Shakers believe that Jesus became God at the time of his baptism). The Shakers took their name from the shaking they experienced in worship, and in the 1830’s they began experiencing tongues in worship as well. The Shakers also believed in the attainment of perfection for believers, which included full celibacy. As of 2006, there were only 4 Shakers left in one community in Sabbath Day Lake, Maine. Shakers are most known for their simple yet sturdy furniture and their music. Many protestant churches sing, *Lord of the Dance*, a Shaker tune from the Shaker song, *Simple Gifts*.

²¹ The movement had so many different churches that it could easily form a full study in itself. We have left out many of the darker sides of the movement and some of its churches. We have

perspective the Pentecostal movement was the child of the holiness movement, which in turn was a child of Methodism.” To this we might add that the Charismatic Movement was the offspring of Pentecostalism.

CHARISMATIC MOVEMENT

There are a number of “charismatic churches” that exist as independent autonomous churches. Charismatic churches believe in modern manifestations of the Holy Spirit through miraculous workings, and yet do not necessarily ascribe to the perfectionist doctrines or requisite tongues of many Pentecostal churches. There are also a number of charismatic believers and fellowships found in mainline denominations. The proliferation of the charismatic movement into mainline churches is worthy of some added attention. Most of this infiltration of the theology and practice of such spiritual gifts came after World War II. Prior to this time, Pentecostalism was generally seen as predominantly a religion of the lower classes. But with the post-war boom, some Pentecostals rode the economic upswing and suddenly became more affluent and influential.

This increased affluence mixed in with new media opportunities (radio, television) and gave birth to a greater exposure of Pentecostalism to the world at large. Oral Roberts came on the scene in the mid-1950’ and by the mid-1960’s was found on the television in most American houses.

With this heightened exposure, many began to question whether or not miraculous gifts ceased or whether they continue to present times. As people began to study this, many people concluded that modern spiritual gifts were scriptural, even if the Pentecostal and Holiness doctrines of sanctification and a subsequent baptism of the Holy Spirit was not. Within normative churches, manifestations and practices of spiritual gifts (tongues, healings, prophecies, etc.) became more accepted, if not actually common place.

The Episcopal Church, the Roman Catholic Church, The Presbyterian Church, and many others have active expressions of charismatic participation in a number of places.

POINTS FOR HOME

Today in points for home, I would ask for the luxury of teaching a bit on my own personal views. There are certainly wide ranges of views on these issues. I know that a number who read these lessons are either themselves “Charismatic,” former

also left out some of the more extreme teachings of a minority of the churches like the handling of poisonous snakes.

Charismatics, sympathetic to the Charismatic Movement or at least have family or dear friends in the movement. Some see a place for charismatic gifts, yet find them often misplaced or abused. I also know that we have a good number who read this lesson who consider charismatic gifts at best psychological occurrences if not outright chicanery. So with that awareness, I suggest that there is some common ground for all of us at any place on that continuum. That is what I would like to emphasize.

To start with, I would urge all to carefully consider the last full teaching time our Lord had with his apostles. As John records it in John 13:31-17:26 (chapter 17 is Jesus' prayer after the teaching in the preceding chapters) Jesus explains to the twelve that his time of departure is at hand. But Jesus promises not to leave the apostles alone. He promises to send the Holy Spirit. As Jesus makes this promise, Jesus sets out various things the Holy Spirit will do. These are our points for home!

1. The Holy Spirit will teach and confirm the relationship of Jesus to God the Father and to us. Jesus is speaking to followers who do **not** understand Jesus as God, his role and mission, and his destiny. That is clear. "Don't you know me?" Jesus has to ask Philip when Philip asks Jesus to show them the Father! (Jn 14:8-9). No, Philip did not understand the relationship. He did not understand that seeing Jesus, he saw the Father. Philip did not understand this because spiritual things are understood by help and work of the Spirit. (1 Cor. 2:14). While the Spirit was with the disciples, in that the Spirit and Jesus are one and Jesus was with the disciples, the Spirit was not yet *in* the apostles (Jn. 14:17). And so, as Jesus promised, he would send the "Spirit of Truth" and on the day the apostles receive the Spirit, they "will realize that I [Jesus] am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you" (Jn. 14:20). One may quickly read through Acts and see that such is consistently true. The Holy Spirit brings understanding of Jesus, God the Father, and our relationship.
2. The Holy Spirit teaches and reminds us about Jesus. The second time in this last teaching of his apostles Jesus speaks about the Holy Spirit as a Counselor "whom the Father will send in my name" (Jn. 14:26). The coming Holy Spirit will, Jesus assures his apostles, "teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you" (Jn. 14:26). Now the comment that the Holy Spirit will teach "all things" should not distract us. The Greek used, *panta* (παντα) refers to everything in a group or set, not every possible thing. In other words, the point is that the Holy Spirit will teach everything that is needed, and will remind the apostles of what they need to remember. That must have alleviated their concerns over taking notes! Not only that, but as John wrote these words some 50 plus years after Jesus said them, it must have carried special meaning that the

- Holy Spirit would be working to make sure he remembered the things he needed to write down!
3. The Holy Spirit will testify about Jesus. In chapter 15, John continues Jesus' explanation of things noting that the Holy Spirit will testify about Jesus along with the apostles. "When the Counselor comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father, he will testify about me. And you also must testify" (Jn. 15:26-27).
 4. The Holy Spirit will convict the world of sin, righteousness and judgment. The next reference Jesus makes to the coming Holy Spirit is found in John 16:7-11. Here Jesus notes that unless Jesus goes to the cross, the Holy Spirit cannot come to the apostles. As we have seen the work of the Holy Spirit described by Jesus, it is easy to understand why. If the Holy Spirit is coming to bear testimony to the death of Christ on behalf of his church, how could the Holy Spirit do so unless Jesus died? Jesus then explains the Spirit will "convict the world of sin" because of the unbelief of humanity. The Spirit will convict the world of "righteousness" in that Christ will die, but ultimately be restored to the Father. And the Spirit will convict the world "in regard to judgment, because the prince of this world stands condemned."
 5. The Holy Spirit will bring glory to Jesus. Jesus' last reference to the Holy Spirit in this passage comes in John 16:12-15. Here Jesus notes that while Jesus still has much to tell his apostles, the time was not right to do so. But the apostles were not to despair because the Holy Spirit would come and guide them into truth speaking on Jesus' behalf and bringing "glory" to Jesus "by taking what is mine [Jesus'] and making it known to you."

Let us consider what Jesus said and promised concerning the future coming of the Holy Spirit. Each of those promises concern *what* the Holy Spirit would do, not *how* the Holy Spirit would do it! The emphasis God has placed on the Spirit is an emphasis on how the Spirit glorifies Jesus, teaches Jesus, convicts of Jesus, etc. Surely we would never go wrong if we focused on the Holy Spirit in those ways. Look for the Holy Spirit by the work he does. The manner in which he does the work becomes important only as it weighs on the work itself. So Paul teaches in Corinthians that speaking in tongues in the church should take place in where a translator is present. Otherwise, Jesus is not exalted, and people might think the speaker a nut! (1 Cor. 14:23). For Paul wants Jesus glorified! Accordingly he would rather say five words people could understand than 10,000 they could not (1 Cor. 14:19).

Let us find the work of the Spirit, and there we will see Jesus lifted up – not the Spirit, not the Christian, not the assembly. Just Jesus.