

Can you guess Who said these famous last words?

"The strongest."

("τῷ κρατίστῳ")

Answer: Alexander the Great, conqueror and king of Macedonia (c. 11 June 323 BC), when asked to whom his vast empire should belong after his death.

"You too, my child?"

("καὶ σὺ, τέκνον;")

Answer: Julius Caesar, Roman dictator (15 March 44 BC), discovering that his stepson Brutus was among his murderers.

What was Jesus' last word before He died?

Answer: Tetelestai! It is done! It is finished!

What was Jesus' last words before He ascended to heaven?

The very last words of our Lord Jesus Christ before He ascended to heaven:

"... you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you and you shall be my witness in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

오직 성령이 너희에게 임하시면 너희가 권능을 받고 예루살렘과 온 유대와 사마리아와 땅끝까지 이르러 내 증인이 되리라 하시니라 (사도행전 1:8)

In this passage and in light of the Great Commission in Matt 28:19,

ALL believers of ALL generations have here a clear MISSIONS MANDATE: TO GO AND SHARE THE GOSPEL OF TRUE SALVATION IN CHRIST TO ALL

PEOPLES, NATIONS, TONGUES TO THE ENDS OR REMOTEST PARTS OF THE EARTH.

Now this Great Commission to go into all the world and preach the Gospel and make disciples of all nations is a daunting task, but Christ said, I won't leave you alone. I send the Holy Spirit: According to Acts 1:8, what does the Holy Spirit give us?

The Holy Spirit Gives Us Power

“... you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you and you shall be my witness in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

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So Jesus says the Holy Spirit will give us Power! Power!

Do you want power?

Yes?

But what kind of power?

Some mystical, magical force?

Or maybe the power to become wealthy, healthy and happy?

What does the Bible mean when it says power?

The Power to Do What?

- We -- Christians -- will have the power to be His witnesses to the nations!

What does witness mean?

- The word “witness” in Greek is the word “martus” which refers to “those who bear witness or testify to the truth.”

So the Holy Spirit will give us the power to testify as witnesses to the truth. But...

What is the Truth?

- Jesus is CALLING HIS DISCIPLES TO TELL OTHERS THE TRUTH ABOUT HIM.
- WE TOO ARE HIS DISCIPLES SO WE ARE CALLED TO BEAR WITNESS TO THE TRUTH: The GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST's life and death and resurrection for our justification – for the forgiveness of our sins.

And this testifying to Jesus can only be done if we have the Holy Spirit.

We see this with Jesus:

Jesus received the Holy Spirit and

He preached the Gospel.

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the Gospel”

(Luke 4:18).

주의 성령이 내게 임하셨으니 이는 가난한 자에게 복음을 전하게 하시려고

(누가복음 4:18)

Only with power given to us through the Holy Spirit will we preach the Gospel to all the nations.

“This GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM shall be preached in the whole world as a testimony TO ALL THE NATIONS, and then THE END WILL COME.” Matthew 24:14

The end will come only when the Gospel is preached to all the nations.

- TO ALL THE NATIONS means that mission sits at the very heart of the entire book: GOD'S MISSION THROUGH THE CHURCH.
- Acts 1:8 is therefore a mission passage.
- It is both an OUTLINE AND A SUMMARY OF the book of ACTS.
- Therefore, Acts is a book about God's mission – through the use of missionaries – to bring the Gospel to the nations.

And these missionaries are given power to proclaim the Gospel through Holy Spirit.

- We see the work of God's Spirit in the mission of the Church throughout the book of Acts.
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- The geographical scope of Acts 1:8 provides an outline of the entire book:
 - Jerusalem (Acts 1–7),
 - Judea and Samaria (Acts 8–12),
 - The ends of the earth (Acts 13–28).

Our passage in Acts 2, we see the Holy Spirit is poured from Heaven to earth first in in Jerusalem.

Why Jerusalem first?

Because Jerusalem is the center of the World, so the Gospel goes first to the Jews and then later to the Gentiles to the ends of the earth.

And that is why Jesus commands His Jewish followers to wait in Jerusalem for **The Holy Spirit: The Gift The Father Promised**

- The Command -- Jesus commands his disciples ==

- “Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit” (Acts 1:4–5).

- The Promise of God

- “I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days” (Joel 2:28–29).

And that Holy Spirit will later be spread from Jerusalem to Judea and Samaria and to the nations. Take a look at this Map Showing the spread of the gospel to the Gentiles in Acts



Missionaries such as Paul in less than 30 years took the Gospel to places like Asia Minor (which is Turkey today) and Greece/Macedonia and Italy and so on and so forth.

Take a look at these cities on the map – do you recognize the cities in the rectangle boxes – like Rome, Corinth, Galatia, Ephesus, Phillipi, and Colossae.

What are these cities known for? How do you know these cities?

Yes, they are cities of the books of the New Testament, they are cities where the churches are located in the NT. Paul wrote letters to these churches.

And wherever the Gospel went, a church was planted. A body of believers gathered together and met regularly – just like our church.

Remember Acts 2:42 – the marks of a church. the Apostles Teaching – the Gospel, fellowship among believers, breaking of bread (communion), and prayer.

The early church met regularly to worship God so -- as the original disciples of Jesus and the early church did -- we should meet every Lord's Day.

Let us ... not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching. Heb. 10:25

So as the Bible commands, we should not miss church but we should meet together and encourage each other. We

should worship together, have bible study together, eat together and pray together and love each other.

The Bible commands us to love each other.

Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. He who loves not, does not know God, for God is love. In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son *to be* the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. 1 John 4:7-11

Not only does God commands us to love – He gives us reason to love: God loved us first and sent His son to be a propitiation for our sin.

He gave us His Son to take the penalty of our sin – He bore the righteous wrath of God on the cross – and by doing so, Jesus has propitiated for our sins so that God can now forgive us of our sin.

And so Beloved, because He loved us first and proved it through His Son, we can love him and we can also forgive and love one another. And now we are born of God – we are His children and we as a family meet on the Lord's day. Just as you meet with your family on Solal and Chusok – we too meet with gladness and joy and thanksgiving on the Lord's Day. And so did the early church.

In Acts 2, the Jews also came together in Jerusalem at the House of God – the Temple to celebrate a special day – it is called **The Day of Pentecost**

- Pentecost was a day of celebration and joy for the end of the barley harvest. It was a harvest celebration.

- The Day of Pentecost is related to spiritual harvest. God poured out His Spirit to enable believers to reap that harvest.
- “The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field” (Luke 10:2).
- Pentecost prepares harvesters for the fields.
- Most modern day Christians, when we hear the word Pentecost, the first thing that comes to mind is Pentecostalism, or the *Pentecostal Church*, a group of Christians which I will be arguing has seriously misinterpreted this text. The word Pentecost simply means **fiftieth**
- **in the Greek means Pentecost in the Greek is pentékosté**
- The Old Testament Feast of Pentecost was celebrated fifty days after Passover.

Or in Hebrew, Seven Weeks

- Pentecost was also known as the Feast of Weeks (In Hebrew: Shavuot) because it falls seven weeks after the first fruits, the offering of the first of the barley harvest to God.

So in light of the true meaning of Pentecost, we Christians should consider ourselves like farmers that plant the seed of the Gospel to the nations so that when Jesus comes again, He can reap the Harvest and we can – and will -- celebrate in the Harvest!

Now that we have set the context of Pentecost, let us read Acts 2.

Acts 2:4

All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.

As we read Acts 2, I want us to ask the question – what does tongues mean?

To get to the right answer we must do a good exegesis of the text – we must let the text tell us what it means, not pour our own meaning into it.

We should ask what did the word “tongues” mean to people 2000 years ago in Jerusalem?

Unfortunately, today, for most of our Christian brothers and sisters in Christ – especially Pentecostals and Charismatics -- speaking in “tongues” means speaking gibberish or uttering nonsensical syllables.

This is what many scholars call ecstatic utterance.

What happens is that these Pentecostal or Charismatic Christians get into an altered state of consciousness and then utter syllables and sounds that make no sense.

But is this what the Bible is teaching for us to do? Is this what the Bible means when it talks about tongues?

No, this is in fact a 20/21st century definition of tongues.

We should not be anachronistic and pour a 20/21st century definition of tongues into this ancient Greek word.

Why I say the Pentecostals/Charasmatics are being anachronistic in their definition of tongues is that within Christianity from the 1st century to the 19th century, there were no Christians that spoke the modern-day, nonsensical gibberish tongues we hear today.

In 2006, the church at Asuza Street had their 100th year anniversary of speaking in tongues. The fact that Pentecostal tongue speaking has a 100-year anniversary is telling and makes this movement suspicious -- because the real speaking of tongues at Pentecost occurred almost 2000 years ago.

If Pentecostal/Charismatic “tongues” were spoken in New Testament times and if they had not ceased, then where was it for almost 1900 years in history?

It should be strange for the tongue speaker that it is not clearly mentioned in history for almost 1900 years, especially considering the importance they place in speaking in tongues.

So if Pentecostal/Charismatic tongues is not the tongues of the Bible, what is?

One way we can figure out the answer is to look at the original language.

“Tongues” in Koine Greek is **γλῶσσα (glossa)**

Meaning 1) tongue (literally) and 2) language

Language like Greek, Swahili, Korean or Hebrew.

And **γλῶσσα** means nothing more – (even in modern Greek, the definition has not changed).

Some of you know I went to Greece about 2 summers ago and I took lessons in basic Modern Greek at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. And I remember my Greek instructor trying to communicate the word “language” to us and to do so -- without using English -- he pointed to his tongue to help us understand the word “language.” So the meaning of the Koine word “tongue” has not changed in Modern Greek.

Another thing we must do to better get to the meaning is understand the context.

As all Bible experts say, context is key in Biblical interpretation.

Also taking into consideration the purpose of the text is also important.

The context and purpose of Acts is found in Acts 1:8 – Witnesses will spread the Gospel from Jerusalem to the nations through the power of the Holy Spirit. In order to spread the Good News to the nations– that is, the Gentiles, what must be done?

The Gospel must be preached in different tongues – different languages.

Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven... a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard their own language being spoken. Acts 2:5

You see hundreds of thousands of these God-fearing Jews had pilgrimaged to Jerusalem – as they do on Shavuot – Pentecost in Jerusalem Today.

Amazingly, 2000 years later, hundreds of thousands of Jews still celebrate Shavuot the same way, but there is one thing that is different.

The Jews speak and worship in modern Hebrew. But 2000 years ago, most Jews in Israel and the Jews of the Diaspora outside Israel had forgotten their original language – Hebrew.

Instead, they spoke the lingua franca of the Roman Empire – which was Aramaic and Koine Greek.

Any of these 2 languages 2000 years ago became the Jews' native language. Hence in vs. 8 - 10, they ask,

⁸ Then how is it that each of us hears them in our native language? ⁹ Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia ¹⁰ Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome

This passage is mystifying for us today, since we don't know what languages these regions represent. In fact, most of us read this as a list of languages. But at this time, the various people groups didn't have their distinct language like Koreans have their Korean language.

No! Scholars of ancient languages know that in the first century, almost all people groups in the Roman Empire spoke at least one of two **Lingua Francas**: **Jews from Parthia, Media, Elam, Arabia, and Mesopotamia spoke Aramaic** *because the Assyrian and Babylonian Empire (which spoke Aramaic) colonized these areas.*

And Jews visiting from Cappadocia, Pontus, Phrygia, Pamphylia, and the area around Asia Minor, as the New Testament Epistles demonstrate, spoke *Greek*.

The native language of Jews from Egypt, Libya, Cyrene, Crete, and Rome was also Greek.

Now, you might expect Jews from Egypt to speak Egyptian, but from the time of Alexander the Great this area had essentially become a Greek colony, and -- if you remember -- it was from Egypt that the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Old Testament) was produced by the seventy Jewish scholars.

If you also recall, Paul wrote his epistle to the Jews in Rome, Phillipi, and Ephesus, and Corinth in which language?

Koine Greek.

Why is this significant? Remember Jesus in Acts 1:8 prophesies that the Gospel will be spread to the nations.

Therefore, instead of declaring the glories of God – that is, the Gospel in Jerusalem only in **Hebrew**.

– the tongue of Angels (the heavenly language)

– the Holy Language

– the Lashon HaKodesh.

Which is the language you praise God with and pray to Him. If you are a good Jew, you aren't suppose to praise God and declare his glories in a pagan tongue like Greek or Aramaic.

What God is saying now through the Holy Spirit – which was shocking to the Jews was that the glories of God – the Gospel will be declared in the pagan, Gentile tongues.

(both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs—we hear them declaring the glories of God in our own tongues!” vs. 11

Brothers and Sisters this is good news for us because the Gospel is preached in other tongues – Gentile tongues. So we today can worship God in English, Korean, Swahili, Chinese, Japanese, in all tongues so that all people can come to saving faith in any language and Christians of all nations can declare the glories of God in their own tongue. Whether it be in Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the world. We can praise God in our own language.

I want to end with one passage from Revelation. This prophecy is something we await.

[B]efore me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. And they cried out in a loud voice:

“Salvation belongs to our God,
who sits on the throne,
and to the Lamb.”

...

Praise and glory
and wisdom and thanks and honor
and power and strength
be to our God for ever and ever.
Amen!” Rev. 7:9-12

Let us pray!