

Over the past 3 weeks we have gone through **the book of Acts**. I want to encourage you to read the book of Acts this month. It comprises of 28 chapters, so if you read a chapter a day, you should finish it by the end of the month

Admittedly, Acts is a difficult book to understand for us today. We are after all 2000 years removed from the events in Acts.

Most Christians fail to unfortunately understand and appreciate this book of the Bible. One of the reasons, we Christians fail to fully understand Acts is that we read the Book without context – and so we naturally read it anachronistically.

We read it through our 20/21st century eyes without considering what was actually going on in the first century. And so, we Christians make egregious assumptions.

I've even seen pastors and theologians pour their own meaning into the texts of Acts.

As a former history teacher, I know that to better understand historical events you have to look at the context.

Some of you know that I have actually traveled to many of the cities mentioned in Acts and have looked at the history, the language, the archaeology and even ancient documents to help me better understand the book of Acts.

I hope today the Holy Spirit will open your eyes and give you insight into the book of Acts so that we can better appreciate what God has done for the church – and for us today.

Just to refresh your memory, let us review a few important points.

First the **Summary and Outline of Acts** is found in Acts 1:8: ... **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)

We also learned that:

Throughout the book of Acts, we see the work of the Holy Spirit in the mission of the Church

- **We see God pour out His Holy Spirit:**
 - **In Acts 2, starting from Heaven to Jerusalem (centre of the world) the 120 disciples declare the Gospel in Gentile tongues rather than in the Holy Tongue**
 - **In Acts 8, starting from Jerusalem to Judea/Samaria (the Land of Israel), e.g., Phillip preaches the Gospel in Judea and Samaria**
 - **In Acts 10, starting from Judea/Samaria to Caesarea (Hellenized Judean port city) which was the gateway to all major port cities of the Roman Empire -- (i.e., the Roman Cornelius and his household first declaring the Gospel in another Gentile tongue).**

We also learned that there are today approximately 7000 languages in our world, so because of the diversity of languages that exist **The only way the Gospel can go to the nations is if the Gospel is proclaimed in other tongues – other languages.**

Now a common mistake many Christians make is that Acts 2:9 is a list of about 15 languages. But **Do these regions mentioned in Acts 2:9 actually represent other tongues?**

NO!

Then what did Diaspora Jews speak?

They spoke the Linguae Francae (Lingua Francas) of their region

And what were they?

Aramaic and Koine Greek

From this map we see that the **West spoke Greek**

East spoke Aramaic

Why did the West speak Greek?

Do you remember who was responsible for the West speaking Greek? Alexander the Great.

And the East spoke Aramaic.

Which Empires were responsible for the East speaking Aramaic? The Assyrian and the Babylonian Empire.

Hundreds of years previous to Acts 2, the Assyrian and Babylonian conquered and colonized these areas and so for hundreds of years, the East spoke Aramaic and the West spoke Greek.

A case in point: If Japan had continued to rule over Korea, and if there were no bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, we Koreans would be speaking which language?

Japanese.

And today the younger generations would have forgotten Korean and that after only a few decades. And the same phenomenon happened to Israel and Judah. They forgot their language after a few centuries.

What was the original spoken language of Israel? Hebrew. By the time of Acts, however, Hebrew was reduced to only a formal, liturgical language.

So because it was the language of liturgy, a good religious Jew would worship usually in Hebrew – especially in the Temple and on special feasts. They would worship in Hebrew: praying to God through memorized prayers and singing Psalms (praises to God) – all in Hebrew – the **Lashon Hakodesh (the holy tongue)**. Do you remember -- Jews thought it blasphemous to speak to or praise God in a pagan, Gentile tongue?

But outside the worship of God -- because everyone forgot how to speak Hebrew – Jews would communicate with family and friends in Aramaic or Greek.

Just a sidebar, when I say Aramaic – The Jews spoke a Hebrew/Jewish dialect of Aramaic called Hebraisti – Hebraized Aramaic.

Last week we established that the Pentecostal/charismatic so called “tongues” we see today in the modern church is not the tongues mentioned in the Bible.

Although I want to say that Pentecostals and Charismatics who believe in Jesus for their justification are our brothers and sisters in Christ, it doesn't mean everything they believe in or practice is right. We agree on the essentials but because the Pentecostal and Charismatic movement has spread very quickly and because Pentecostals and Charismatics often leave Christianity very quickly after they get “burned over.” I would like to take some time to address the **Pentecostal/Charismatic Tongues** again:

- not actual intelligible languages
- private prayer language
- spoken in an altered state of conscience
- repetitious, nonsensical (gibberish)
- ecstatic utterance

We don't see any clear reference to Pentecostal/Charismatic tongues in orthodox Christianity history. We see perhaps an ambiguous mention of something – but we don't know if it is Pentecostal tongues – and it is attributed to a Christian cult perhaps Montanism -- but this reference is vague and unclear. If Charismatic tongues is true – and is an indication of the filling of the Holy Spirit, if it is something that important, should we not see multiple and clear references to it throughout Christian history? Of course we should.

However, there are no clear references to Pentecostal/Charismatic tongues found anywhere in Christian history. The first clear mention of Pentecostal/Charismatic tongues spoken in Christian circles is found at the beginning of the 20th century.

If you remember, the Pentecostal/Charismatic tongues movement celebrated their 100th year anniversary in 2006 as the Asuza Street revival began in 1906 —but technically. In 1900/1901 Agnes Osman, student of Holiness preacher, Charles Parham was the first to speak Pentecostal/Charismatic tongues.

Now if Pentecostal tongues is the tongues of the Bible, why is it first spoken almost 1900 years after Acts 2 – and that in the US – and interestingly, in the birthplace of so many cults.

We should be very suspicious of this movement.

What's more? Did you know that the exact tongue-speaking phenomenon is also found in other mystic religions and cults, and in shamanism – all over the world. .

Experts have conducted anthropological studies of various ethnic cultic traditions all over the world. In an article

entitled “An Ethnological Study of Glossolalia” published in a scholarly periodical called the Journal of American Scientific Affiliation reveals that:

Glossolalia (Pentecostal Tongues) is practiced among non-Christian religions:

...the Peyote cult among the North American Indians, the Haida Indians ..., Shamans in Sudan, the Shango cult of the West Coast of Africa, the Shago cult in Trinidad, the Voodoo cult in Haiti, the Aborigines of South America and Australia, ... Eskimos ..., Shamans in Greenland, the Dyaks of Borneo, the Zor cult of Ethiopia, Siberian shamans, the Chaco Indians of South America, the Curanderos of the Andes, the Kinka in the African Sudan, the Thonga shamans of Africa, and ... Tibetan monks”

Jennings, G. J.: An Ethnological Study of Glossolalia, J. Am. Sci. Affil. (1968)

The tongues these non-Christian mystic religious groups and cults speak sound exactly the same as the Charismatic/Pentecostal tongues we hear at church.

What’s more? Language experts have actually done extensive research on the language properties of Pentecostal/Charismatic tongues. These:

Language experts – linguists -- conclusions on Pentecostal/Charismatic tongues:

“it has no systematic resemblance to any natural language.”

“the syllable string did not form words, the stream of speech was not internally organized, and – most

importantly of all – there was no systematic relationship between units of speech and concepts.”

It is "only a facade of language."

The early church in Acts did not speak a façade of a language. They spoke real communicative words. They spoke in real sentences that made sense in a real language so that we can boldly preach the Gospel and people can understand in their own tongue. And ...

The Holy Spirit enables us (gives power to us) to be His witness (to boldly testify to the truth [the Gospel]) in other tongues.

All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in **other tongues** as the Spirit enabled them. (Acts 2:4)

저희가 다 성령의 충만함을 받고 성령이 말하게 하심을 따라 다른 방언으로 말하기를 시작하니라 (사도행전 2:4)
... other tongues ... = ... ἑτέραις γλώσσαις ...

If we say other tongues, -- there must be an original, unprecedented tongue?

What is the original tongue that is supposed to be declared in the temple in Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost – the Feast of Weeks?

Hint:

- The Heavenly Language
- The Language of God
- The Tongue of Angels

What is the
Answer?: Hebrew

Lashon Hakodesh: The Holy Tongue

לשון הקודש

So the question:

What are the “other tongues” that is not supposed to be declared in the Temple in Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost?

I'll give you a hint – the

The Other Tongues: Pagan Tongues

Remember religious Jews hated anything pagan, Gentil – that was considered dirty, unclean – paganism was tied to idolatry so it was blasphemous to declare God's glory in a pagan tongue.

And so the multitudes were surprised that these Galileans were speaking in pagan tongues because you are supposed to declare the glories on Pentecost ONLY in Hebrew.

Next we go to

Acts 8: Holy Spirit poured in Judea and Samaria but no speaking of tongues – why?

Because

In Acts 2 both Aramaic and Greek are spoken by the Jewish disciples to declare the glories of God. Thus by the time we get to Acts 8 both Aramaic and Greek (colloquial languages of the Jews and Diaspora Jews) are now accepted as holy tongues.

Also you should note albeit controversial among Jews there are Scriptures and commentaries written and read in both Aramaic (The Targum) and Greek (The Septuagint) at this time – Hence, it was easier for some Jews to

accept these two – and only these two – pagan languages in worship.

Now lets go to

Acts 10, What is the other tongue? Why are the Jewish believers surprised that Cornelius and his household speak in tongues?

Remember: Cornelius is a Roman Centurion. He is not Jewish at all.

They declare the glories of God in Latin, 100% pagan language.

This proves to the Jewish believers that the Gospel is for Gentiles too – this is Good News for us Gentiles.

1 Cor.14:26-28

...When you assemble, each one has a psalm, has a teaching, has a revelation, has a tongue, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification. ²⁷ If anyone speaks in a tongue, *it should be* by two or at the most three, and *each* in turn, and one must interpret; ²⁸ but if there is no interpreter, he must keep silent in the church
....

Now by the time, the Gospel went to places like Corinth – in the assembly – the church – where they would assemble -- they would sing a psalm – that was their 찬가. Psalter.

And then there would be a teaching from the Bible, and then an explanation of what that teaching is (just like what I am doing to you) – but because Corinth was a port city and it was diverse in ethnic groups –

people would speak in many languages – other tongues (most likely including barbaric languages) – so Paul says it is important to interpret these tongues because if there is no interpreter no one will understand and if no one understand there will be no communication possible of the Gospel – just confusion

– 1 Corinthians 14:33

For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints.

I'm reminded of when I was 4 years old (pix?).

I had just immigrated to Canada and I couldn't speak any English – I remember going to pre-school and it was time for lunch – I had a 6 million dollar man lunch box. He was my hero – the Bionic Man.

Because I could not speak the language, there was confusion and it led to me losing my lunch box. If there was an interpreter, I could have easily gotten my lunch box.

I'm reminded of another story of confusion told by a student I once tutored. He had gone to Canada to study English. He

Popeye eat spinach. Popeye's girlfriend is Olive.

Some of you know I started **Liberty Protestant Reformation Theological College**, a Bible college that trains poor people in Kenya to be pastors. Many of my students cannot speak English well and their congregation is not English-speaking. But I teach the Gospel to them in English and then a translator relays my message to them in Kalenjin – their tribal language. SEM – about 10 of you actually financially sponsored these poor students' about 3

years ago and all them are now graduated and are now pastors and have gone back to their villages and every Sunday they preach the Gospel to hundreds of their own people.

Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

God is a God who loves us no matter our race, our color, our language. He loves both Jew and Gentile.

It's amazing but do you know who the first tongue speaker in the Bible is?

It's Jesus.

And this is good news to us. The Gospel writers did not have to mention that Jesus spoke in tongues but for some reason they did.

I believe during his ministry, Jesus was hinting that the Gospel would be declared in pagan tongues.

Remember when Jesus was on the cross, what does He cry out to God?

Eli, Eli ...

Which language was that?

It's Aramaic (a pagan tongue), Jesus cries out to God – in Aramaic – that He is forsaken. Because Jesus took our sins, God who is holy – set apart from sin -- cannot help but abandon His son and so Jesus cries out to His father – not in the holy tongue – but surprisingly in a pagan tongue – Why have you My God forsaken me – signaling that the message of the cross will be preached in a foreign tongue.

And what were Jesus' last words before He died?

Tetelestai – It is finished – Your debts have been paid in full -- which language did He use to say this?

In Greek, Jesus was pronouncing to you and me: Your sins have been paid in full. The debt has been paid completely.

Do you remember the synagogue leader Jarius? His daughter had died. But what did Jesus do to his daughter? He took her by the hand and said to her, “*Talitha koum!*” (which means “Little girl, arise!”).⁴² Immediately the girl rose ... Mark 5:41,42

Which language was *Talitha koum*? In Aramaic Koum – means rise!

You see Mark didn't have to write this in Aramaic but he did. Wow!

Jesus declared Good News of resurrection to the dead girl in her language, Aramaic.

Brothers and sisters, Beloved ...

One day just like Darius' daughter we too will all die, but if you admit your sins and believe that Jesus was forsaken for you. If you believe that Jesus has paid the debt of your sins in full – Tetelstai – that it was completed on the cross! And through the Gospel preached in your tongue you have come to saving faith in Christ, I give you good news! When Jesus comes again, He will come to your grave and say in your pagan, Gentile tongue – Koum! Rise! And we will all resurrect from the grave and live and be with Him forevermore! Praise God that Jesus is the Savior of all nations, and all tribes and all people and all tongues! Let us praise Him in our tongues! Let us pray!