

The Book of Acts, part 3 – PENTECOST – God’s Heart for Lost People (Acts 2:1-11)

Acts 1:3

“... teaching them things pertaining to the Kingdom of God.”

Acts 1:4-5

“... Jesus commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the Promise of the Father . . . For John baptized with water, but you will be baptized by the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”

Acts 2:1

“And when the day of *Pentecost* had come, they were all together in one place.”

“*Pentecost*” = Jewish feast of “*Shavuot*”

“*Shavuot*” in Hebrew = “weeks” because it is celebrated exactly seven “weeks” [50 days] after the first day of Passover.

Greek word “*Pentecost*” = “50th” [i.e., 50th day after Passover]

According to Jewish tradition, the feast celebrates the day that Moses brought the Old Testament LAW down from Mount Sinai.

Pentecost was one of the three Jewish “pilgrimage feasts” – along with Passover and Sukkot [Tabernacles] – when all Jewish men were expected to make a pilgrimage to the Temple in Jerusalem.

This explains why [Acts 2:5] “There were, staying in Jerusalem, God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven.”

Acts 2:2

“And suddenly, there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they [apostles/120 believers] were sitting.”

Acts 2:3

“And they saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them.”

Acts 2:4

“And all of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit ENABLED them.”

This was the moment when God “plugged in the Church’s power cord.”

Anything – and everything – God has called the Church [and us as Christians] to do – can only be done by the power of the Holy Spirit working through us!

Zechariah 4:6

“‘Not by might nor by power but BY MY SPIRIT,’ says the LORD.”

Greek “*glossa*” –

1 – A literal human tongue

2 – By extension, a spoken language

Here in Acts 2, the word is obviously being used to describe “spoken languages.”

Acts 2:5

“And there were, staying in Jerusalem, God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven.”

Acts 2:6

“And when they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard them speaking in HIS OWN LANGUAGE.

Greek word (translated “language”) = “*dialektos*” from which we get our English word “dialect.”

Acts 2:7-11

“And they were all amazed and marveled, saying to one another, ‘Are not all these men who are speaking Galileans [i.e., uneducated men]? And how is it that we hear them, each of us in our own native language? Parthians, Medes, Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea, and Cappadocia; Pontus, and Asia, Phrygia, and Pamphylia; Egypt, and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs – we hear them telling in our own TONGUES [our own languages] the mighty works of God.’”

Here in Acts 2 – we find the only description in the Bible of the “gift of tongues” in actual operation.

NOTICE:

Here in Acts 2, it is intelligent, coherent speech in fifteen different human dialects.

Acts 2 is clear that this was a miraculous event – because these early Christians did not know - nor had they studied – any of these fifteen languages ahead of time.

The Holy Spirit was “enabling them” to speak these languages supernaturally and miraculously.

The “gift of tongues [languages]” = the miraculous ability – given to people directly by the Holy Spirit – to speak in previously unlearned human languages.

There has been much linguistic research and analysis done on what is taking place in churches and being called “speaking in tongues.”

According to this research, what is happening matches up with no known human language.

Tongues of Men and Angels

By Dr. William J. Samarin

University of Toronto Department of Linguistics

Second kind of speaking in tongues = a “private prayer language” that enriches and empowers our prayer life – a heavenly angelic language.

1 Corinthians 13:1

“Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become as sounding brass or a clanging cymbal.”

“Even if I could do something beyond-beyond [like speaking angel language] – which I’m not saying that I can do – loving people is still more important.”

When we go through the New Testament, we find no example of anyone praying in some kind of special prayer language.

Luke 11:1

“Lord, teach us to pray.”

Jesus taught them to pray the Lord’s Prayer understandably in their natural human language.

If your prayer life is not as powerful as you want it to be – the solution is not God giving you some special prayer language!

The solution is (1) more love for Jesus; (2) cleaning up our sin; (3) more humility and obedience to God in our lives.

SO WHAT?

“What do I learn about God in these verses?”

Lingua franca

A language that people use to carry on commerce and trade internationally even though it’s not their native language.

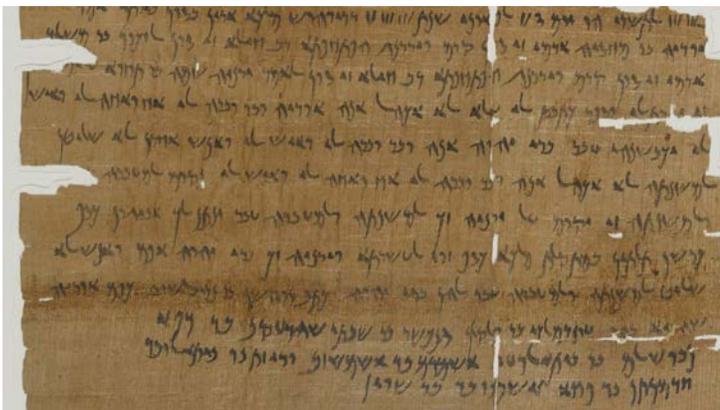
1200 B.C. – 750 B.C. – Akkadian

Language of Assyrian Empire, written in cuneiform on clay tablets



750 B.C. – 325 B.C. – Aramaic

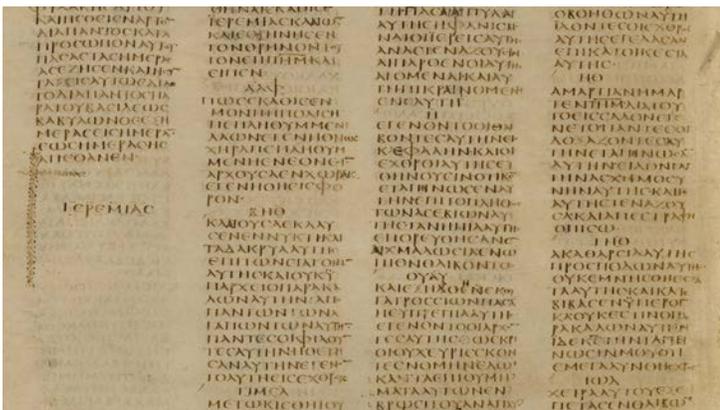
Language of Babylonian Empire [Nebuchadnezzar]



325 B.C. – A.D. 400 – Greek

As a result of Alexander the Great’s conquest of most of the known world

[Codex Siniaticus – a copy of the Greek New Testament]



This doesn’t mean that people all over the world no longer had their own local dialects – THEY DID!

Acts 2:6

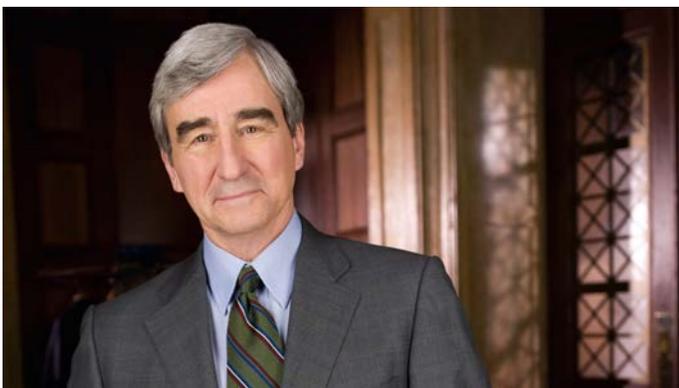
“And when they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard them speaking in HIS OWN LANGUAGE (dialect).”

This tells us about how much God loves lost people.

God loved these pilgrims in Jerusalem so much that He went to the trouble of giving these early Christians the ability to miraculously speak in these pilgrims’ native languages so that God could attract a crowd, so that Peter could preach Christ to them.

This passage reminds me that if God loves lost people this much – then I need to do the same!

And that if God went to this extra trouble to try and reach lost people for Christ – then I need to do the same!



Romans 1:16

“I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone who believes . . .”