

## TABERNACLE BIBLE-PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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### What is the second baptism of the Holy Spirit?

Modern Christians who believe that this outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost is not a one-time event, but can be repeated and experienced today are called “Pentecostals.” They teach the need for a second baptism of the Holy Spirit. Tongues-speaking is the sign of the second baptism. Everyone, they say, ought to earnestly seek this baptism, and speak in tongues.

Historically, it all started in 1901 at Bethel Bible College founded by Charles Parham in Topeka, Kansas. The tongues-speaking phenomenon started when one of Parham’s students—Agnes Ozman—spoke in tongues, reportedly Chinese, after receiving the baptism of the Spirit.

In 1906, tongues-speaking broke out in the Azusa Street Mission in Los Angeles, California, pastored by William J Seymour—a black holiness preacher. This Azusa Street revival, so-called, catapulted Pentecostalism onto the world stage. Azusa Street became the Mecca for those seeking the Pentecostal experience. From Azusa Street, Pentecostalism spread throughout the world. The Assemblies of God (AOG) became the largest Pentecostal denomination. The Holiness or Higher Life Movement or Keswick Convention promoted the Pentecostal experience. The Keswick conferences organised by the Full Gospel Businessmen Fellowship were particularly influential in Singapore in the 1970s and early ’80s.

In the late 1950s, the term “charismatic” was used by Donald Gee to distinguish Pentecostalism as a denomination from Pentecostalism as a movement (ie, the Neo-Pentecostalism). Pentecostal practices (second baptism of the Spirit, tongues-speaking, faith healing, etc) were no longer just found in the Assemblies of God (AOG), but have now broken into the mainline denominations (Anglican, Baptist, Brethren, Lutheran, Methodist, Presbyterian, etc). The Roman Catholic Church was influenced as well. This eventually led to the breaking down of the barriers that separated Protestants and Catholics. The charismatic movement served as an ecumenical catalyst. Well-known charismatics include Larry Christenson, Kenneth Copeland, Kenneth Hagin, Oral Roberts, and the latest sensation—Benny Hinn.

Contrary to what the Pentecostals and Charismatics teach, the baptism of the Spirit is a one-time experience for the Christian at the time of conversion (1 Cor 12:13, Eph 1:13). The Spirit indwells the believer, and makes him part of God’s family (Rom 8:9,14). The filling of the Spirit on the other hand is a repeatable work of the Spirit in the life of the Christian after his conversion (Eph 5:18). It enables the submissive believer to live a victorious Christian life in obedience to God’s Word (Rom 8:4).

However, in Acts 1:5, we find Jesus telling His disciples that they “*shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days from hence.*” The disciples must have already been baptised with the Spirit since they were already believers. On the basis of this incident, the charismatics argue for a second baptism or a second blessing. This argument is wrong because of a failure to take into account the literary genre of Acts. Acts is primarily a historical book. As such, the narratives are descriptive, not prescriptive. Moreover, the period covered in Acts is transitory. Many of the events recorded were one-time, non-repeatable experiences. The historical context may not be neglected in our efforts to understand God’s Word.

In the light of both historical and theological contexts, it is clear that “baptism” of the Holy Spirit in Acts 2 was technically not the “baptism” but the “filling” of the Spirit. Acts 2:4 tells us that they were “filled” with the Holy Spirit. The “baptism” of Acts 1:5 is defined as “filling” in Acts 2:4. What the Apostles experienced at Pentecost was not the baptism of the Spirit as commonly understood (ie, the baptism that occurs at conversion), but the filling of the Spirit. This baptismal filling of the Spirit was not for salvation, but for service. It gave them the ability to preach the gospel in other languages. Thus the radical view by certain charismatics that one is not saved until he receives a second baptism of the Spirit is entirely false.

## What is tongues-speaking?

The gift of tongues is one of the miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 12:10). The gift of tongues is really the gift of language. It is the supernatural ability of speaking in a foreign language not learnt before. The Greek *glossa* (English: "glossary") means "language." Another word used to describe tongues is *dialektos* (English: "dialect") (Acts 1:19, 2:6,8 cf, Acts 1:19, 21:40, 22:2, 26:14). When the Apostles spoke with other tongues at Pentecost, they spoke in the languages or dialects of the respective nationalities present, viz, Persians, Asians, Egyptians, Italians, Arabians among others (Acts 2:9-11). Their speech was not gibberish or ecstatic nonsense. The people who heard the words understood them (Acts 2:6,8). They said, "*we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God*" (Acts 2:11).

The first instance of tongue-speaking was at Pentecost when the Holy Spirit filled the disciples of Christ, and they began to speak "*with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance*" (Acts 2:4). The Greek word *glossai* (tongues) means "languages." The Apostles at Pentecost were supernaturally empowered to speak in foreign languages they had not previously learned. This is proven by the fact that when they spoke in tongues, the people were amazed because "every man heard them speak in his own language (literally, "dialect")," and questioned among themselves, "*Behold, are not all these which speak Galileans? And how hear we every man in our own tongue (dialect), wherein we were born?*" (Acts 2:6,8). Who were these people who heard the Apostles speak? They were "*Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia, Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes, Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues (languages) the wonderful works of God*" (Acts 2:9-11). Luke writing under divine inspiration would have us know that when the Apostles spoke in tongues, they spoke in foreign languages or ethnic dialects. Tongue-speaking is not ecstatic speech or gibberish. The gift of tongues is the gift of languages.

It is readily admitted by many modern tongue speakers that the tongues they speak are not human (i.e. foreign languages) but angelic tongues (i.e. ecstatic utterances, cf 1 Cor 13:1). As far as we know from Scripture, whenever the angels spoke, they did so in human languages, namely, Hebrew, Aramaic, or Greek. In any case, it ought to be understood that Paul was using hyperbolic speech here. A hyperbole is an intended exaggeration to drive home a desired point. Paul was not saying that he is able to speak in angelic tongues (or that there is such a thing as tongues of angels), or understand all mysteries, have all knowledge, or move mountains. He is saying that even if he can do all those things, but does not have love, he is a big zero. To understand 1 Cor 13:1-2 other than this is to miss Paul's point.

The confusion over tongue-speaking is not new. Paul found absolute confusion over the use of spiritual gifts in the church at Corinth (1 Cor 12-14). The gift of tongues was abused by the Christians there. Every member in church wanted to speak in tongues. Obviously, some did not have the gift, but pretended to have it by speaking ecstatically. It needs to be clarified that the "unknown tongue" (so KJV) Paul speaks of is not ecstatic speech but foreign language (1 Cor 14:2). It is "unknown" in the sense that the gifted man is able to speak in a foreign language he has never learned or heard before, and that it is unintelligible to the hearer who does not know the language spoken. In ordinary circumstances, when a person speaks in tongues in his own native church, no man understands; only God understands since He understands all languages (1 Cor 14:2). Thus the one who speaks in tongues edifies only himself since without an interpreter or translator, he is the only one who understands what he is saying (1 Cor 14:4). Paul emphasized the importance of understanding; "*Yet in the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue*" (1 Cor 14:19).

The central idea Paul was trying to get across was that edification (1 Cor 14:3, 4,5,12,17,26) comes by way of understanding (1 Cor 14:2,7,9,14,15,16,19). Paul said that prophesying is superior to tongue-speaking. The gift of prophecy is the gift of being able to foretell and forthtell the will and word of God. When the prophet speaks, he speaks to his own people in their own

native tongue. The members of the church benefit from the words spoken because they are able to understand the message given. The Apostle makes this very clear by using the illustration of music (1 Cor 14:7-8). Music is music only when there is a tune or a melody. How does one expect to appreciate music when the pianist plays only one note throughout, or a random string of notes that does not make up a tune? So unless one speaks in a language that others can understand, one is wasting one's breath (1 Cor 14:9).

A language has grammatical forms and syntactical structures comprising of nouns, verbs, conjunctions, prepositions, adjectives etc. As Paul said, *"There are, ... so many kinds of voices in the world, and none of them is without signification"* (1 Cor 14:10). When a person prays in tongues, he prays with his heart as well as with his mind (1 Cor 14:15). In other words, he knows what he is saying and can identify the language he is speaking. A genuine tongue-speaker will be able to analyse the language he has spoken by identifying the different words he has used, and their respective meanings. The Holy Spirit is perfect. The gifts that come from Him are perfect. The gifted tongue-speaker when given the supernatural ability to speak in a foreign language will be perfectly proficient in that language he is enabled to speak. He will be able to write out the content of his speech, list the vocabulary, and demonstrate the grammatical-syntactical relationship of the words. Modern-day tongue speakers are unable to do this.

### **What is faith healing?**

The gift of healing may be defined as the miraculous ability to restore the sick or handicapped to health and strength in order to authenticate the ministry of an Old Testament Prophet or an Apostle of Christ. The only explicit mention of healing as a gift of the Spirit is in verses 9, 28, and 30 of 1 Corinthians 12. In these verses, the term is used in the plural—"gifts of healing." The plural is probably due to demon casting being part of the healing ministry. Physical illnesses can be due to demon possession (cf, Matt 9:32-34, 17:14-21). Paul's healing ministry in Acts 19:11-12 seems to indicate that demon-casting is tied to the gift of healing: "And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul: So that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them" (see also Acts 5:16). Demon-casting is apparently one of the gifts of healing. Physical healing takes place when the demons are cast out. The gifts of healing empowered the Apostles to cure any form of illness, disease, or handicap caused by nature or by demons. When healing takes place, the person is completely restored to health and strength. When the demons are cast out, they leave the person altogether. There is no waiting period for the healing to take effect. The healing takes place instantaneously.

Charismatic faith healers who fail to heal usually put the blame on the sick by saying that they do not have enough faith. What a cruel thing to say! How could they tell? Perhaps they are the ones who did not have the faith. Maybe they did not have the ability to heal in the first place.

The Bible contains many accounts of Jesus healing all without exception, faith or no faith. Matthew 12:15 tells us that "great multitudes followed him, and he healed them all." In John 11, Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead. Can the dead exercise faith? Surely not. Neither was it the faith of his sisters, for both Martha and Mary doubted that Jesus could raise him up that day (John 11:24,32). Jesus was grieved for their lack of faith in Him (John 11:33,38). Their lack of faith notwithstanding, Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead. The Apostles did likewise. In Acts 5:13, the multitude of sick and demonised people were brought to the Apostles, *"and they were healed every one."*

In Acts 3:1-9, we find a lame man sitting by the temple gate Beautiful begging for alms. He was not looking for healing, but for money. Peter and John did not have any money for him. But they did have the power of Christ to heal. Peter told the lame beggar, *"Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk"* (Acts 3:6). Peter then *"took him by the right hand, and lifted him up: and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength"* (Acts 3:7). Clearly it was Peter and John's faith that resulted in the healing. The lame man had expected some small change from the Apostles, but he got much

more than that—a healthy pair of legs. He was healed not because he had the faith. He was healed because Peter and John had the power. In Acts 20:9-12, we have another instance where the healing was due not to the sick person's faith but to the God-given ability of the healer. Eutychus fell off the parapet while the Apostle Paul was preaching. The fall was fatal. Eutychus being dead could not exercise faith, but he was raised up miraculously by Paul. If modern-day healers truly have the same powers as the Apostles, then why don't they raise the dead? The answer is simple: They have no power whatsoever to heal, but are tricksters and charlatans!

### **Can God speak to me through visions and dreams?**

The Bible is complete, and God no longer reveals Himself through dreams and visions today. We know for sure because God has revealed all that He wants to reveal in His Living Word (ie, Jesus Christ), and in His Written Word (ie, the Holy Scriptures). The Bible is thus complete. God has revealed Himself fully and clearly in His Son—our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. This is taught in Hebrews 1:1-3, *“God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.”*

God spoke to His people in times past in spectacular ways. In those days, God spoke to His people through dreams and visions, and direct communication (Num 12:4-7). But today, He speaks to us through a Person—His Son Jesus Christ. God no longer needs to send snapshots of Himself to His people; He has already made a live appearance in Christ His Son. God also made it a point to inscripturate His Word for a permanent testimony to His people. He not only gave us the Living Word, He also gave us the Written Word. The inscripturated Word is the infallible testimony of the incarnate Word.

1 Corinthians 13:10 says, *“But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.”* The word “perfect” here is the Greek *to teleion* which literally means “the perfect thing.” This perfect thing is inseparably linked to the revelatory gifts of prophecy and knowledge. cause-and-effect relationship between the perfect and the partial (ie, prophecies and knowledge through visions and dreams) clues us to what the perfect is. The revelatory gifts of prophecy and knowledge are partial, but this coming Revelation is perfect. The “perfect” is thus God's Perfect Revelation. When God's Perfect or Complete Revelation comes, the partial will be taken away. God has been revealing Himself to His people part by part through the prophets (cf, Heb 1:1-2), but there will come a time when He will completely reveal what He wants to reveal. When that happens, there will no longer be any need for prophecies and knowledge.

When Paul wrote 1 Corinthians, the New Testament was in the process of being written. Prophecies and knowledge will cease when the New Testament is completed. When did this happen? This happened when the last book of the Bible was written and completed, namely, the book of Revelation. God confirmed its completion by issuing a very severe warning in the last chapter of Revelation, verses 18-19: *“For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.”* This effectively sealed and finalised God's Perfect Revelation—the 66 books of Holy Scripture.

The Apostle Jude says that this body of truth as contained in the Scriptures is *“once for all delivered unto the saints”* (Jude 3). We should not be seeking for further revelation. The Apostle Paul tells us that the canonical Scriptures we have today is sufficient for making us perfect in Christ (2 Tim 3:17). There is nothing more. God speaks to us today through His Word, and not through visions and dreams

### **Can a Christian be demon possessed?**

Christians cannot be possessed by demons. By "Christian" we mean someone who has truly believed in Christ, is born again and indwelt by the Holy Spirit (John 3:5-8,16). Satan cannot dwell together with Christ. Light dispels darkness (2 Cor 6:14-16, 1 John 4:4). Christ has already crushed Satan (Gen 3:15, Luke 10:18-19, 1 John 3:8). In Christ we are completely delivered from the power of darkness (Col 1:13, Heb 2:14-15). When Christ enters, Satan exits. Paul said, "*For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek*" (Rom 1:16). The gospel of Christ is "the power of God unto salvation," and this salvation includes deliverance from demonic possession and control. The gospel is most powerful to deliver a person not only from sin, but also from Satan.

When a person confesses his sins and trusts in Christ as his Lord and Saviour, his sins are cleansed by the blood of Christ, and he is made a child of God. Once the Holy Spirit indwells a person, the demons cannot inhabit that person and will have to depart. Darkness cannot fight Light. "*Greater is he (ie, the Holy Spirit) that is in you, than he (ie, Satan) that is in the world*" (1 John 4:4).

However, there are those who claim to be Christians but in actual fact are not. There are those who are Christians only in name. They may profess Christ, but were never possessed by Him. These are vulnerable to demonic possession, like unbelievers. A biblical example of such a person is Judas Iscariot. He appeared to be a disciple of Christ, but in actual fact was never truly saved. Judas was indeed possessed by Satan (John 13:21,26,27). We can certainly conclude that so-called "Christians" who are demon possessed are still unregenerate. They need to receive Christ as their Lord and Saviour if they are to be delivered from this bondage.

### **Can I raise my hands to praise the Lord?**

The Psalms often speak of the lifting up of hands to bless the Lord (Pss 63:4, 119:48, 134:2, 141:2). Lifting up of the hands is a common posture of prayer and praise among the Jews. I had the opportunity of seeing the Jews pray when I was in Jerusalem. They do lift up their hands in prayer, but the way they do it is quite different from that commonly seen among the charismatics. The charismatics usually lift up their hands over their heads like they are about to lift off. But the Jews lift their hands up only to the waist level with palms facing heavenwards. The open palms symbolise purity and expectancy. Psalm 24:3-5 expresses this thought well: "*Who shall ascend into the hill of the LORD? Or who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully. He shall receive the blessing from the LORD, and righteousness from the God of his salvation.*" Whether we lift up our hands or not is not the point. The point is the form must reflect the attitude. God accepts our worship not just because we lift up our hands. God wants us to lift up holy hands. For our worship of God to be acceptable, it must originate from a sincere and truthful heart (Josh 24:14).

Leviticus 7:30 is one of the texts cited in support for the waving of hands in church worship. Charismatics regard their waving of hands to God as a "wave offering." The problem with this charismatic practice is that it is totally foreign to the Old Testament concept of a wave offering. Let us read in context what the wave offering was all about: "*And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, He that offereth the sacrifice of his peace offerings unto the LORD shall bring his oblation unto the LORD of the sacrifice of his peace offerings. His own hands shall bring the offerings of the LORD made by fire, the fat with the breast, it shall he bring, that the breast may be waved for a wave offering before the LORD. And the priest shall burn the fat upon the altar: but the breast shall be Aaron's and his sons*" (Lev 7:28-31). Note that the wave offering was not done with open and empty hands. The priests held in their hands the breast of the sacrificial animal, and waved it as an offering to God. If the charismatics want to be truly biblical in their practice, they should first make sure they have breast meat in their hands before presenting to God a wave offering.

### **Can I dance in church?**

Psalm 149:3 is used by the charismatics as a proof-text for dancing in church. The psalm reads, *“Let them praise his name in the dance.”* This verse must be understood in the light of its cultural context. Dancing was part and parcel of Jewish life. They dance in thanksgiving to God for a good harvest, and for victory in war. The church is not a nation. It does not have seasonal agricultural festivals. It does not go out to war. These Jewish activities and their attendant celebrations thus do not apply to the church. For instance, verse 6 says, *“Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a two-edged sword in their hand.”* Do we then worship in church with a parang or a machine gun in our hand? Moreover, the Israelites do not dance in their Temple. They dance outdoors. To say that Psalm 149:3 teaches us to dance in the church sanctuary is to misunderstand and misapply the text altogether.

**For further study, read *Charismatism Q&A* by Jeffrey Khoo (FEBC Press, 1999). Go to [http://www.febc.edu.sg/assets/pdfs/febc\\_press/Charismatism%20Q%20&%20A.pdf](http://www.febc.edu.sg/assets/pdfs/febc_press/Charismatism%20Q%20&%20A.pdf).**