

V. Theological considerations in Acts.

Fulfillment of the New Covenant:

*When the **day of Pentecost** arrived, they were all together in one place. And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting.³ And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. ⁴ And they were all **filled with the Holy Spirit** and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance. Acts 2:1-4*

*“Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the LORD. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD: **I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts.** And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Jer 31:31-33*

- A. The Holy Spirit guides and empowers believers as promised by the New Covenant in Ezekiel.

*And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And **I will remove the heart of stone** from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And **I will put my Spirit within you**, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules. Ezekiel 36:26-27*

- B. Speaking in foreign languages (i.e., tongues) is only done by some new believers at select points in the book in order to authorize the spread of the Gospel.

Critically Thinking About: ACTS -

What is Luke trying to communicate?

- In your reading of Acts, do all believers speak in “tongues”? No
- What does your answer to the above question tell you about Luke’s strategic use of this gift? Luke seems to be intentional in the way he’s portraying the gift of tongues.
- How might this help us to answer the question of whether “tongues” should be used today? Based on Luke’s work in Acts... Dr. McKay concludes No.

1. Foreign languages are miraculously spoken at Pentecost by the apostles (Jews)

*And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and **began to speak in other tongues** as the Spirit gave them utterance. Acts 2:4*

2. Foreign languages are miraculously spoken in Cornelius' house (Gentile convert receiving the Holy Spirit)

*While Peter was still saying these things, the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the word. And the believers from among the circumcised who had come with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out even on the **Gentiles**. For they were hearing them **speaking in tongues** and extolling God. Acts 10:44-46*

*And he told us how he had seen the angel stand in his house and say, 'Send to Joppa and bring Simon who is called Peter; he will declare to you a message by which you will be saved, you and all your household.' As I began to speak, **the Holy Spirit fell on them just as on us at the beginning**. And I remembered the word of the Lord, how he said, 'John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.' If then God gave the same gift to them as he gave to us when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could stand in God's way?"*

Acts 11:13-17

3. Foreign languages are miraculously spoken by disciples of John (the baptist) who were in Ephesus. People who were in an Old Testament situation, knew the Messiah was supposed to be coming but they had no knowledge of who that person is.

*And when Paul had laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and **they began speaking in tongues** and prophesying. Acts 19:6*

The book of Acts:

Descriptive - history of what happened, describes what's going on.

Prescriptive - this is how it should happen in future times.

Believers prayed that God would protect them from the unbelieving Jewish nation at that time. Over & over Luke gives us illustrations of people praying when times are tough and God coming in and often miraculously delivering them. Repeated emphasis makes something prescriptive.

C. Acts is a book of transitions; therefore, close reading of the text is needed to in order to build theology and application.

1. Observe the transition from predominantly Jewish believers to predominantly Gentile believers. Early church - Acts 1-7 everybody is Jewish. As the Gospel spreads the church begins to become predominantly Gentile.

2. Observe the transition from Jerusalem to Rome. (After chapter 7 the home of the church moves from Jerusalem to Antioch to Ephesus to Rome)
3. Observe the transition from the earthly Jesus to the personal indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

"If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, (Companion, Comforter, Advocate, Paraclete) to be with you forever, John 14:15-16

4. Observe the transition from Israel to the Church.

Paul asks and answers this question in Romans 9, 10, & 11.

Lots of Jews believe the Gospel but the Jewish leadership continues to be hard hearted. After Steven's death, we no longer see the Sanhedren receive the Gospel message. This is the point where it moves to the Gentiles and spreads around the Roman world.

5. Observe the transition from Peter (and all the other 42 11) to Paul (the apostle to the Gentiles).
6. The transitions of the book of Acts demonstrate that Paul is on the same team as Jesus; Acts bridges the Gospel to Paul's letters.

D. The Gospel message is clearly and repeatedly articulated:

1. Jesus dies on the cross for the sins of people.
2. Jesus was buried.
3. Jesus was resurrected.
4. For a Jewish audience - Jesus is the Messiah (Peter says... you killed him)!
5. For a Gentile audience - God is providing a way for all to be saved (Paul says... so turn from your idols)!
6. **Belief** in the work of Christ (i.e., the Gospel message) is the consistent requirement of all humanity.