

They Spoke the Word With Boldness

by G.W. North

The sermon argues that the phenomenon of speaking in tongues is not initial evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and that other manifestations, such as speaking the word with boldness, are more significant.

Scripture: Acts 2:1

Topics: "Boldness in Faith", "Evidence of the Holy Spirit"

Description

G.W. North discusses the nature of the Holy Spirit's manifestations, particularly focusing on the events of Pentecost and subsequent instances in the early Church. He argues that while the initial experience of speaking in tongues was significant, it should not be considered the sole evidence of the Spirit's presence, as many instances, such as in Acts 4 and Samaria, show believers speaking the word with boldness instead. North emphasizes that the lack of consistent evidence for tongues in various accounts suggests that other forms of expression, like prophecy, are equally valid indicators of the Spirit's work. He challenges the assumption that tongues must always accompany the baptism of the Spirit, advocating for a broader understanding of spiritual evidence.

Transcript

Perhaps some clarification is needed on the point of the scriptural evidence which is claimed for the theory. It has already been suggested that what took place on the day of Pentecost, real as it was, cannot be regarded by sincere investigators as initial evidence. Plainly that which genuinely takes place in people's experiences today cannot be compared with it. Upon that occasion, although all the original Church members spoke with other tongues, there is no evidence to prove that the other 3000 did so, even though they were baptized within minutes of the first 120. This seems to provide evidence that the first experience was initiating evidence, and not a demonstration of initial evidence.

Passing on to Acts 4, we read that a number of others were also filled with the Spirit, but we find no evidence that any of them spoke with other tongues. Instead they all spoke the word with boldness, which is a very different thing. Of course it could be surmised that perhaps some of the words were in other tongues, but that would be nothing but wishful thinking.

And in Samaria

Later, when the Samaritans were baptized in the Spirit, the watching Simon Magus undoubtedly observed some kind of evidence, but if any verbal manifestation took place, it is not mentioned, and so must not be

presumed. To say that Tongues must have been spoken is specious pleading of a gross order indeed, and weakens the case for initial evidence altogether. Likewise, when Paul was baptized in the Spirit (chapter 9), nothing further than the fact is noted. It could be that in accordance with Paul's later teaching in I Corinthians 14, Tongues did occur, but is not mentioned because it is not a sign to believers, and only Ananias, a believer, was there. There is no justification for such a gratuitous assumption though; it is more likely, and almost certain, that it is not mentioned because it did not occur.

To the Gentiles also

Cornelius and his household certainly responded with Tongues (chapter 10), but turning to chapter 16, we find no evidence that the Philippians did, neither is there any record of the recurrence of the phenomenon in the intervening chapters. However, in chapter 19, we find Tongues in evidence again at Ephesus, where it was accompanied by and bracketed together with prophecy. This latter information is most interesting and quite vital to those who originate theories. It seems to present us with no option but to accept that in this matter prophecy is at least on a par with Tongues, and should be promoted to the dubious importance of being accepted as a twin-proof with Tongues that the Baptism has taken place. Apparently, however, that is no more an acceptable proposition than it is a proven fact, so it must be rejected.

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