

To Them That Believe Not

by G.W. North

The purpose of tongues in the Church is to be an abiding sign for unbelievers, not an initial sign for believers.

Scripture: Acts 2:1, 1 Corinthians 14:22

Topics: "Spiritual Gifts", "Understanding Tongues"

Description

G.W. North addresses the misconception surrounding the use of tongues as a sign for believers, emphasizing that the Apostle Paul intended for tongues to serve as a sign for unbelievers, not as a requirement for validating a believer's experience. He clarifies that the reference in I Corinthians 14:22 should not be used to support the theory of initial evidence, as it misinterprets the context of Paul's message. North highlights that the initial outpouring of tongues at Pentecost was directed towards religious unbelievers, who were not seeking this sign as evidence of the Holy Spirit's baptism. He argues that the modern church often mistakenly demands tongues from believers, contrary to the original intent of the scripture. Ultimately, North calls for a deeper understanding of the purpose of tongues in the church, distinguishing between signs for unbelievers and the experiences of believers.

Transcript

To some this may at first seem a completely unacceptable premise, especially when in I Corinthians 14:22, Paul says quite clearly that 'tongues are for a sign' ; and indeed had he ceased there the objection might appear to be sustained, but he adds, 'to them that believe not'. Examination of this section of scripture shews that this statement ought not to be advanced in support of the claim for the theory of initial evidence, for it is quite plain that Paul never intended it should be put to this use. The following reasons may be acceptable as evidences of that fact:

- (1) the indefinite and not the definite article is used here -- 'a' sign, not 'the' sign:
- (2) Paul is not here speaking of either an individual or group experience immediately following Baptism in the Spirit.

The apostle was speaking of the use of Tongues in the Church as an abiding sign given by God to convince unbelievers of God's presence, which is quite a different thing from an initial sign. Contrary to the reason stated here, in certain sections of the modern Church it is believers, not unbelievers who mistakenly demand Tongues before they will accept a person's experience as genuine.

They were Amazed

The error of this is nowhere more powerfully demonstrated in scripture than on the day of Pentecost itself. None of the men whose attention was caught by the use of Tongues then was a man in the street as we know him today. They were all religious unbelievers, Christ-rejectors. When the initial and initiating Baptism took place, the sign was given especially for their sake. They were all religious people, believing in God according to the Law, but not one of them was a Christian. Not one of them was looking or listening for Tongues as being the evidence of Baptism in Spirit: to anyone seeking truth for truth's sake nothing could be plainer than that. However, when they heard their own tongues being spoken, they were greatly impressed and enquired what they should do.

The obvious mistake which has been made is to insist that because this phenomenon occurred when those people were baptized in the Spirit, it is therefore scripturally established that God intends it to take place every time to every person who is baptized in the Spirit.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/gw-north/to-them-that-believe-not/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net