

Th122 Foundation Doctrines

Lesson Th122 - 14 Baptism: Speaking in Tongues

About 30 boys gathered in the middle of the football playing field. They stood in a line in front of two of the older boys. A football lay on the ground in front of them. "I'll take the big kid." The first older boy said as they began choosing sides for a game of football. Among those wishing to be chosen was a small dark-skinned boy. Everyone there had brown skin, dark hair, and dark brown eyes. But it was obvious that this one boy was not from their village, or for that matter, even their country.

One by one the two captains chose their teams. It was obvious that neither captain was going to take a chance on a small kid, whom they did not know. As far as they were concerned, he probably knew nothing about playing football. Both teams were almost complete when suddenly the small dark-skinned boy stepped forward and picked up the football. Suddenly everyone began to laugh. "What are you going to do with that?" they teased.

The boy slowly turned to face one of the goals. It was 45 meters away! Then, he dropped the ball. It bounced once and in one smooth, powerful movement, the boy kicked the ball towards the goal. The ball flew through the air with a vicious side spin, curving dramatically as it entered the net in the upper corner. All of the boys just stood there in shock. Then, one of the captains said, "I'll take the small kid!"

An old English saying goes like this, "Seeing is believing." Remember Thomas, one of Jesus' disciples? He expressed a similar view when he heard that Jesus had risen from the dead. He would not believe it until he saw Jesus himself.

The apostle Peter had an experience similar to this. It was after Jesus had ascended into heaven and the believers in Jerusalem had been baptized in the Holy Spirit. That had been a miraculous day! The power of God had swept through the upper room where they had gathered to pray. Every one of them had been filled with the Holy Spirit and had begun to speak in tongues. Peter and all of the other believers were Jews. They knew that Jesus was the Messiah that had been promised to their people. Jesus had taught them that God loved the entire world. They did not yet really understand, however, that salvation was for everyone, not just Jews. Three amazing events happened that brought Peter and the entire Christian community the truth that Jesus and his Gospel were for all mankind.

In the city of Caesarea lived a Roman captain named Cornelius. He loved God very much. But neither he, nor anyone in his household, knew about Jesus. One afternoon something amazing happened to him. An angel appeared to him and told him to send for Simon Peter. You can imagine how surprised Cornelius must have been. But he obeyed and sent two servants to find Peter in Joppa.

Meanwhile, Peter was experiencing the second amazing event. He was having a vision! In the vision God challenged his Jewish traditions. Jews are commanded to be a separated people and not to enter into a home that did not belong to a fellow Jew. To associate with

anyone who was not a Jew would cause them to become ceremonially dirty and unclean. It was just after this vision that the men arrived from Cornelius. Now Peter, being a good Jew, would never consider going to a non-Jew's house. But with the vision fresh in his mind, Peter and a few fellow believers, set off with the men to go to the house of Cornelius.

Cornelius humbly greeted Peter when he arrived and told him about the angel that had visited him. Peter then began to preach to Cornelius, his relatives, friends, and servants who had all gathered in his home. "I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism but accepts from every nation the one who fears him and does what is right. You know the message God sent to the people of Israel, announcing the good news of peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all," Peter said as he began his message. He continued by telling them about Jesus' death on the cross and how God had raised him from the dead.

Now, while Peter was still preaching, the Holy Spirit fell upon Cornelius and all who were gathered in his house. Peter and his fellow believers watched and listened in amazement. They heard all of those present speaking in tongues and praising God (Acts 10:1-46). These were not Jews, yet God had filled them. They were baptized with the same Holy Spirit with the proof of speaking in tongues. It was the same way the 120 had received on the Day of Pentecost! Seeing was believing! It was clear that God had poured out his Spirit on these Gentiles. So Peter ordered that they also be baptized in water. He stayed with them a few days and taught them more about Jesus.

Jesus promised the gift of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit to every believer. The apostle Peter proclaimed this in his first sermon on the Day of Pentecost. "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call" (Acts 2:38-39).

This lesson is **important** because it explains how God clearly showed the disciples that salvation, baptism in water, and baptism in the Holy Spirit are for all people.

The **main truth** of this story is that God has no favorites. Anyone who believes in Jesus as God's Son can be saved and baptized in water. And they will be baptized in the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues.

Let's **review** this lesson:

1. Peter was preaching to Cornelius and his entire household when they received what? [Pause]
 - A. If you answered that they received the Baptism in the Holy Spirit, then you answered correctly.
2. How did Peter and his friends know that Cornelius and his household had received the Baptism in the Holy Spirit? [Pause]
 - A. If you said that Cornelius and his entire household began to speak in tongues when the Holy Spirit came upon them, you are correct.
3. Who did Peter say that the gift of the Holy Spirit is for? [Pause]

A. If you said that the promise of the Holy Spirit is for you, your children, and for all who are far off, you are right.

Your **assignment** for this lesson is to listen to it at least three times until you can tell the story of Peter and the house of Cornelius. Gather a group of believers and tell them the story. Then pray together, asking for God to fill everyone present with his Holy Spirit.