

Was the Early Church Oneness Apostolic Pentecostal?

And

A Continuous Apostolic Witness

THE EARLY CHURCH IN THE BOOK OF ACTS

ONENESS • APOSTOLIC • PENTECOSTAL



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Acts 2:42 (KJV)



Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the **NAME OF JESUS CHRIST** for the remission of sins...
Acts 2:38 (KJV)

They worshiped God in spirit and in truth. • They baptized in the NAME OF JESUS. • They were filled with the Holy Ghost and spoke with tongues.

THE MODERN CHURCH DOING THE SAME

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"And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." Acts 2:4 (KJV)

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Was the Early Church Oneness Apostolic Pentecostal?

Perhaps a better question is:

Are we Oneness Apostolic Pentecostals the same as the early church found in the Bible?

I will answer both.

Yes, the early church was Oneness Apostolic Pentecostal.

Oneness

If the early church had been Trinitarian in the modern sense, we would expect to find them baptizing in the titles "Father, Son, and Holy Ghost." Instead, we find the Apostles consistently baptizing in the name of Jesus Christ.

 Acts 2:38 (KJV)

"Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins..."

 Acts 8:16 (KJV)

"...they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus."

 Acts 10:48 (KJV)

"And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord."

 Acts 19:5 (KJV)

"When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus."

There are tens of thousands of Christian denominations and churches in existence today, yet virtually none of them baptize in the name of Jesus as the Apostles did. The Apostles clearly understood Matthew 28:19 and obeyed it by invoking the name.

The Apostle Paul wrote:

 1 Corinthians 8:6 (KJV)

"But to us there is but one God, the Father..."

He also wrote:

 1 Timothy 3:16 (KJV)

"God was manifest in the flesh... preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory."

Notice carefully what Paul is saying.

The FATHER was manifest in flesh then preached unto the Gentiles. Who preached unto the Gentiles? Jesus Christ!

Paul begins by declaring that God was manifest in the flesh and then proceeds to describe the earthly ministry, preaching, reception, and ascension of Jesus Christ. The entire verse identifies Jesus Christ as the manifestation of the one God.

This harmonizes perfectly with:

 John 14:9 (KJV)

"...he that hath seen me hath seen the Father..."

The early church did not preach three divine persons. They preached one God revealed in Jesus Christ.

That is pure Biblical Oneness.

Apostolic

By definition, the early church was Apostolic because it was founded upon the teachings, doctrine, examples, and practices of the Apostles.

 Acts 2:42 (KJV)

"And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship..."

The Book of Acts serves as the blueprint for the function and operation of the church. The Epistles provide instruction, correction, doctrine, and guidance to the churches.

Many churches today reject both.

When confronted with Apostolic practices, they often say:

"That's not for today."

"We don't do it that way."

"That was only for the early church."

The problem with that reasoning is simple. Once you reject the Apostolic blueprint, you must create your own blueprint. That is exactly what has happened.

The result is thousands of competing versions of Christianity, each choosing which Apostolic teachings to keep and which to discard.

The early church did not follow denominational traditions. It followed the Apostles.

Pentecostal

The early church was born on the Day of Pentecost.

 Acts 2:1-4 (KJV)

"And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."

This was the first outpouring of the Holy Ghost upon believers under the New Covenant.

The initial evidence was speaking in tongues.

That same experience continued throughout the Book of Acts.

 Acts 10:46 (KJV)

"For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God."

 Acts 19:6 (KJV)

"And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied."

The early church embraced speaking in tongues and considered it a normal part of Spirit-filled Christianity. Neither are we ashamed of speaking in tongues today.

Most modern churches reject tongues, mock it, dismiss it as gibberish, or even claim it is of the devil.

The early church never did.

Throughout church history, various groups who embraced spiritual gifts and charismatic manifestations were opposed, persecuted, imprisoned, tortured, and sometimes executed by religious authorities who viewed such practices as dangerous, heretical, or demonic. Many of these persecutions occurred under the authority of the medieval Roman Catholic system, which often suppressed movements that departed from its established doctrines and practices.

History demonstrates that many believers suffered for embracing spiritual experiences and practices that resembled those found in the Book of Acts.

The early church was unmistakably Pentecostal.

A Continuous Apostolic Witness

Critics often assume that if the majority of Christianity departed from Apostolic doctrine, then those doctrines must have vanished entirely from history. Yet history does not support such a conclusion.

Throughout the centuries there have always been groups of believers who rejected prevailing religious traditions and sought to return to the teachings and practices of the Apostles. They existed under different names, in different nations, and at different times. Many of their writings have been lost, suppressed, or destroyed through persecution, leaving historians with only fragments of their beliefs and practices.

What we do know is that throughout church history there have continually been people who:

- rejected unscriptural traditions
- emphasized the authority of Scripture
- believed in the absolute Oneness of God
- practiced believers' baptism and baptism in Jesus' name in various forms
- embraced the supernatural work of the Holy Ghost
- expected spiritual gifts to operate in the church
- separated themselves from the dominant religious systems of their day

Many of these groups were branded as heretics by the religious establishment, not because they rejected Christ, but because they challenged prevailing doctrines and practices. Their history is often difficult to reconstruct because the records that survive were frequently written by their opponents.

While we do not claim that every dissenting group throughout history was fully Oneness Apostolic Pentecostal in every doctrine, the historical record demonstrates that there has never been a complete absence of believers seeking to preserve Apostolic truth. God has always had a people.

This pattern is consistent with Scripture itself.

 Romans 11:4 (KJV)

"But what saith the answer of God unto him? I have reserved to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal."

Just as God preserved a remnant in Elijah's day, He has preserved a remnant throughout church history.

📖 Matthew 16:18 (KJV)

"And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

This promise of Jesus Christ is devastating to the idea that the true church disappeared, died out, or went dormant for centuries.

Jesus did not say the gates of hell would temporarily prevail. He did not say His church would vanish from the earth and need to be restarted hundreds or thousands of years later. He explicitly promised that the gates of hell would not prevail against it.

If the true church completely disappeared, then hell prevailed.

If the true church ceased to exist for centuries, then hell prevailed.

If all true believers vanished from the earth and God was left without a faithful witness, then hell prevailed.

But Jesus said the opposite.

Throughout history, there has always been a remnant of believers who held to biblical truth, even if they were small, scattered, persecuted, or known by different names. Their writings may have been destroyed, their history suppressed, and their numbers reduced, but Christ's promise remained intact.

The true church was never extinguished because Jesus Himself guaranteed its survival.

The gates of hell have attacked it, persecuted it, imprisoned it, tortured it, and attempted to destroy it, but they have never prevailed against it.

The existence of modern Oneness Apostolic Pentecostals is not the sudden appearance of a new religion. Rather, we see ourselves as part of a continuing effort to return to the faith, doctrine, experience, and practice of the Apostolic church found in the Book of Acts.

The names may have changed. The nations may have changed. The circumstances may have changed.

But there has always been a people who desired to follow the Apostles rather than the traditions of men.

Conclusion

Today's Oneness Apostolic Pentecostals follow the same pattern found in Scripture.

We preach one God.

We baptize in the name of Jesus Christ.

We believe in the infilling of the Holy Ghost with the evidence of speaking in tongues.

We continue in the Apostles' doctrine.

We use the Book of Acts as our blueprint for church practice and function.

For these reasons, we believe that modern Oneness Apostolic Pentecostalism most closely reflects the faith, doctrine, worship, and experience of the early church found in the Bible.

The question is not whether the early church was Oneness Apostolic Pentecostal.

The question is whether modern Christianity is willing to return to the pattern the Apostles established.

Important Note

In speaking of the Apostolic church, we are not suggesting that every church which bears the name "Apostolic" today necessarily reflects the doctrine, practice, and spirit of the Apostles.

Names do not determine authenticity. Doctrine, practice, and obedience to Scripture do.

Just as many churches use the names "Baptist," "Methodist," "Presbyterian," or "Pentecostal" while holding vastly different beliefs, there are also churches that identify themselves as Apostolic yet have departed from some of the Apostles' teachings and examples.

The standard is not a denominational label. The standard is the Word of God.

Every church, including those calling themselves Apostolic, should be measured by the teachings of Jesus Christ, the doctrine of the Apostles, and the pattern established in the Book of Acts.

Our goal is not to defend a label, but to follow the original Apostolic blueprint as closely as possible in doctrine, worship, practice, and experience.