

Acts Chapter 2

Acts 2:1 "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place."

“Day of Pentecost”: Pentecost means fiftieth” and refers to the feast of weeks (Exodus 34:22-23), or Harvest (Lev. 23:16), which was celebrated 50 days after Passover in May/June (Lev. 23:15-22). It was one of 3 annual feasts for which the nation was to come to Jerusalem (see note on Exodus 23:14-19).

At Pentecost, an offering of firstfruits was made (Lev. 23:20). The Holy Spirit came on this day as the firstfruits of the believer’s inheritance (2 Cor. 4:5; Eph. 1:11, 14). Those gathered into the church then were also the firstfruits of the full harvest of all believers to come after.

“In one place”: The upper room mentioned (in 1:13).

Before “Pentecost” the Holy Spirit’s work had been:

- (1) From without (“Spirit came upon”);
- (2) Temporary; and
- (3) Exceptional.

After Pentecost, the Spirit’s work is:

- (1) From within He indwells (John 7:37-39; 14:17; 1 Cor. 6:19; 1 John 3:24; 4:13);
- (2) Permanent (Rom. 8:9); and
- (3) Normal, involving all (1 Cor. 12:12).

Under the Old (Mosaic Covenant), God’s work with Israel had been external, but under the New Covenant it is internal (Ezek. 36:26-27; Heb. 8:9-10).

Pentecost means fifty. In (Exodus 23:16), we find that this time is one of the three most important feasts or festivals of the Hebrews. The other two are Passover and Tabernacles. This festival (Pentecost), is also called the Feast of Weeks. It is called this, because it is celebrated seven weeks after Passover, or actually fifty days.

It was also called the Feast of Harvest and the day of First Fruits. The first loaves of the new grain are offered on the altar on this day. The time this feast is to be celebrated is the fiftieth day after the resurrection of Jesus. Of course, with the Hebrews, it was the fiftieth day after the Sunday of Passover. We will find that God is exact. Notice the harmony of the 120 here (they were in one accord).

Pentecost can also, be thought of as Jubilee. On Jubilee, the fiftieth year, the captives were to be set free. These things are symbolized in the day of Pentecost. These disciples would be set free to

minister for God. As we said in a previous lesson, their old fears and doubts would all be gone. This would be an assurance of their standing with God.

Verses 2-3: On the Day of Pentecost God provided two symbols of the Spirit's presence. The "wind," which was associated by the Jews with the Spirit (Ezekiel 37:9-14; John 3:8), and the fiery "tongues", which divided and rested "upon each" one, showing that the Spirit's baptism included all.

The purpose here for the sign gift of tongues was not to make possible the hearing of the gospel but to seize the attention of all, so they would listen. The hearers were not pilgrims, but foreign-born inhabitants (verse 8). They were not merely visiting, but living in Jerusalem (verses 5-14).

Only those from Rome are identified as visitors (verse 10). Also, when the gospel is preached, Peter speaks to them all in one language.

Acts 2:2 "And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting."

"A sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind": Luke's simile described God's action of sending the Holy Spirit. Wind is frequently used in Scripture as a picture of the Spirit (Ezek. 37:9-10; John 3:8).

The disciples were probably gathered in this home for prayer. This was probably in the upper room where Jesus had eaten the Last Supper with the disciples. It was probably near the time for the Morning Prayer, perhaps around 9 a.m. in the morning.

This mighty wind filled the house (not the temple). This is probably the way the churches got started, with these home meetings. The wind is symbolic of the Spirit.

Acts 2:3 "And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them."

The disciples could not comprehend the significance of the Spirit's arrival without the Lord sovereignly illustrating what was occurring with a visible phenomenon.'

"Tongues like as of fire": Just as the sound, like wind was symbolic, these were not literal flames of fire but supernatural indicators, like fire, that God had sent the Holy Spirit upon each believer. In Scripture, fire often denoted the divine presence (Exodus 3:2-6).

God's use of a fire-like appearance here parallels what He did with the dove when Jesus was baptized (Matt. 3:11; Luke 3:16).

These cloven tongues were like a fire. When each of the 120 people in attendance, men and women, were touched by a tongue of fire, the Spirit of God came upon them. Notice here, that it sat on each of them. This is not a collective happening. It happened to each of them individually.

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

“All”: The apostles and the 120 (Joel 2:28-32).

“Filled with the Holy Ghost”: In contrast to the baptism with the Spirit, which is the one-time act by which God places believers into His body (see notes on 1 Cor. 12:13), the filling is a repeated reality of Spirit-controlled behavior that God commands believers to maintain (see notes on Ephesians 5:18).

Peter and many others in Acts 2 were filled with the Spirit (e.g., 4:8, 31; 6:5; 7:55), and so often spoke boldly the Word of God. The fullness of the Spirit affects all areas of life, not just speaking boldly (Eph. 5:19-33).

“With other tongues”: Known languages (see notes on verse 6; 1 Cor. 14:1-25), not ecstatic utterances. These languages given by the Spirit were a sign of judgment to unbelieving Israel (see notes on 1 Cor. 14:21-22).

They also showed that from then on God’s people would come from all nations, and marked the transition from Israel to the church. Tongues’ speaking occurs only twice more in Acts (10:46; 19:6).

Though verse 4 mentions only the filling with the Spirit, both the filling and the baptism occurred. Christ promised that the baptism would occur (1:4-5), and Peter later affirms that it did happen at Pentecost (11:15-16). The filling and baptism are two different works performed by the Holy “Spirit.”

Note their contrasts:

- (1) Following Pentecost every believer receives the baptism of the Spirit (1 Cor. 12:13); hence the New Testament never commands the Christian to receive it.
- (2) The baptism is permanent, happening but once for all.

The filling is ongoing, occurring continuously as seen in the present tense imperative of Ephesians 5:18, that is, “Keep on being filled.” The verse commands: “And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess [riotousness]; but be filled with the Spirit.”

Since Paul compares the influences of wine and the filling of the Spirit, the word control can aptly express the idea of either. The filling of the Spirit is the controlling influence of the Spirit within the believer. Such control is neither universal nor unending, thus it must be commanded and does recur within the believers (4:8, 31). Peter and others had been previously filled on Pentecost, verse 4).

The adjective *full* expresses the abiding character of a Spirit-filled man (6:3, 5; 7:55; 11:24), but the participle form “filled” (used in 2:4; 4:8, 31; 9:17; 13:9), expresses an action performed at that moment. The baptism is the act by which Jesus, through the Spirit, at conversion brings the believer into relation with himself and makes the believer a part of God’s people, the church.

The filling is the continuous experience within the Christian whereby the Spirit, who already indwells him, keeps control over his life.

There is a lot of confusion today about the Holy Ghost baptism. May I say right here, that you cannot be taught to receive the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost is received by the Spirit of God coming on an individual. This is a gift from God to an individual. The purpose of this is so the individual receiving this gift can be a more effective witness for God.

This is the baptism that John the Baptist was speaking of, when he said that Jesus would baptize with the Holy Ghost and fire. Not all tongue speaking is of God. Satan is a counterfeiter, and we must be sure the tongue we receive is of God. The Holy Spirit or Holy Ghost will not enter into an unclean vessel.

Notice that these 120 people were praying, and had been praying and in one accord, for ten days when this happened. I say again, this not something you learn, it is a gift from God to those who God has called to minister. Another thing that is greatly misunderstood, it is not an unknown tongue, as you will see in the next few verses. It is a language the person receiving has never learned to speak.

You will notice that the tongue they were speaking in was a language of another country. Language that perhaps was unknown to the person receiving it but easily understood by someone who knew the language. Notice where the utterance came from; (the Holy Spirit).

Spirit is capitalized, meaning the Holy Spirit. When you repeat a language after someone else, you have learned a language. You must not learn to speak in tongues. You must receive the gift of the Holy Spirit from God alone. The things of the Spirit cannot be learned. They must be received.

Acts 2:5 "And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven."

“Jews, devout men”: Hebrew males who made the pilgrimage to Jerusalem. They were expected to celebrate Pentecost (see note on verse 1), in Jerusalem, as part of observing the Jewish religious calendar (see note on Exodus 23:14-19).

Notice that these devout Jews were from many nations. They had different native languages.

Acts 2:6 "Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language."

“This was noised”: The noise like gusty wind (verse 2), not the sound of the various languages.

“Speak in his own language”: As the believers were speaking, each pilgrim in the crowd recognized the language or dialect from his own country.

This verse 6 seems to be at a later time, because this says when it was noised abroad. Now here, you can easily see that this is not an unknown language at all. This was individuals speaking in a language not their own language.

Whoever the baptized person witnessed to, that person heard it in their own language.

Acts 2:7 "And they were all amazed and marveled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galileans?"

“Galileans”: Inhabitants of the mostly rural area of northern Israel around the Sea of Galilee. Galilean Jews spoke with a distinct regional accent and were considered to be unsophisticated and uneducated by the southern Judean Jews. When Galileans were seen to be speaking so many different languages, the Judean Jews were astonished.

The strange thing to these people was that Galileans were speaking in languages not native to their own tongue, but to the tongue of the people who were listening. This amazed them; because they expected to hear the Galileans speak in their own tongue. These 120 received their gift of the Holy Ghost in the upper room, but, I believe, those hearing them speak were on the streets.

I believe, if God calls you to minister in Mexico, then the foreign language you would get would be Spanish. The purpose, as I have said before, of the Holy Spirit baptism is to equip you to better minister God's word to the people He has called you to minister to.

Verses 9-11: The listing of specific countries and ethnic groups proves again that these utterances were known human languages.

Acts 2:8-9 "And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?" "Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia,"

“Parthians”: They lived in what is modern Iran.

“Meads”: In Daniel’s time, they ruled with the Persians, but had settled in Parthia.

“Elamites”: They were from the southwestern part of the Parthian Empire.

“Mesopotamia”: This means “between the rivers” (the Tigris and Euphrates). Many Jews still lived there, descendants of those who were in captivity and who never returned to the land of Israel (2 Chron. 36:22-23).

“Judea”: All the region once controlled by David and Solomon, including Syria.

Acts 2:10 "Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes,"

“Egypt”: Many Jews lived there, especially in the city of Alexandria. The nation then covered the same general area as modern Egypt.

“Libya about Cyrene”: These districts were west of Egypt, along the North African coast.

“Rome”: The capital of the Empire had a sizeable Jewish population, dating from the second century B.C.

“Proselytes”: Gentile converts to Judaism. Jews in Rome were especially active in seeking such converts.

Acts 2:11 "Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God."

“Cretes”: Residents of the island of Crete, off the southern coast of Greece.

“Arabians”: Jews who lived south of Damascus, among the Nabatean Arabs (Gal. 1:17).

“We do hear them speak” (see note on verse 6).

“Wonderful works of God”: The Christians were quoting from the Old Testament what God had done for His people (Exodus 15:11; Psalms 40:5, 77:11; 96:3; 107:21). Such praises were often heard in Jerusalem during festival times.

This is just an extended explanation of all the different languages these Galileans spoke on that day. This message of the wonderful works of God is not just for one nation, but for all. These who spoke in languages foreign to their own were not speaking to these people; but were rather letting God speak to these people through them.

Even a minister speaking in English to an English-speaking congregation will have a much more effective message, if God speaks through him as the Spirit gives him utterance.

Acts 2:12 "And they were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another, What meaneth this?"

It is amazing every time that God speaks. Can you believe that they would doubt? They should have known for sure that this was a miracle of God.

Acts 2:13 "Others mocking said, These men are full of new wine."

“New Wine”: A drink that could have made one drunk.

These who doubted are like many today, who will not believe anything that they have not experienced. They want to believe only things that they have seen with their own eyes. If you have seen something with your natural eye, it takes no faith to believe it. Fact is not faith.

Hebrews 11:1, "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."

New wine would make you so drunk that you would not be able to even speak in your own native tongue, much less speak in a foreign language.

Verses 14-40: After the Holy Spirit's arrival, the first major event of church history was Peter's sermon, which led to 3,000 conversions and established the church (verses 41-47).

Acts 2:14 "But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judaea, and all [ye] that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words:"

“With the eleven”: This number of the apostles included the newly-appointed Matthias, who replaced Judas Iscariot (see notes on 1:23-24).

Peter was the authority of this body of believers. Peter stood, and in a grave voice told them, how ridiculous it was to make such a rash statement about this gift of God.

Acts 2:15 "For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is [but] the third hour of the day."

“The third hour”: Calculated in Jewish fashion from sunrise, this was 9:00 a.m.

The third hour of the day was a time of prayer. Peter was possibly speaking this in the court of the Gentiles where all were allowed to come.

Verses 16-21: Peter does not say that Pentecost is the fulfillment of Joel's prophecy concerning the last days (Rev. 6:12). Peter does not see a celestial cataclysm (verses 19-20), yet it is that of which “Joel” speaks, because it is the beginning of that fulfillment.

Peter did not see the “Spirit” coming upon all people, but he did see Him coming upon 120. It was the beginning, but surely not the complete fulfillment. Peter understood, as we should, that the “last days” had already begun, even with the birth of Christ (Heb. 1:2; 1 Pet. 1:20).

Verses 16-21: Joel's prophecy will not be completely fulfilled until the millennial kingdom. But Peter, by using it, shows that Pentecost was a pre-fulfillment, a taste of what will happen in the millennial kingdom when the Spirit is poured out on all flesh (10:45).

Acts 2:16 "But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel;"

This leaves no doubt that this is a fulfillment of Joel's prophecy in Joel 2:28-29.

Acts 2:17 "And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams:"

"Last days": This phrase refers to the present era of redemptive history from the first coming of Christ (Heb. 1:2; 1 Pet. 1:20; 1 John 2:18), to His return.

"My Spirit" (see notes on 1:2, 5, and 8).

"All flesh": This indicates all people will receive the Holy Spirit, because everyone who enters the millennial kingdom will be redeemed (Matt. 24:29-25:46; Rev. 20:4-6).

"Visions ... dreams": Dreams (Gen. 20:3; Dan. 7:1), and visions (Gen. 15:1; Rev. 9:17), were some of God's most memorable means of revelation since they were pictorial in nature. While they were not limited to believers (e.g. Abimelech, Gen. 20:3 and Pharaoh, Gen. 41:1-8), they were primarily reserved for prophets and apostles (Num. 12:6).

While frequent in the Old Testament, they were rare in the New Testament. In Acts, most of God's visions were associated with either Peter's (chapters 10 and 11), or Paul's (chapters 9, 18; 2 Cor. 12:1). Most frequently they were used to reveal apocalyptic imagery (Ezekiel, Daniel, Zechariah, and Revelation).

They were not considered normal in biblical times; nor should they be so now. The time will come however, when God will use visions and dreams during the Tribulation period (as predicted by Joel 2:28-32).

One of the characteristics of the future reign of Christ is the abundant outpouring of the Holy Spirit. On the Day of Pentecost, Peter recognized that the outpouring anticipated an even greater outpouring yet to come (verse 17).

The frequent outpourings of the Holy Spirit in this age are the source of the great spiritual revivals and spiritual awakenings. Because of the great blessings received in times of revival, Christians have often used descriptions from the future kingdom age to describe their experiences (3:19).

While the believer looks forward to the coming kingdom of Christ, he may also pray for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit in revival today (Joel 2:28; Acts 2:17; Gal. 5:22).

We are certainly living in the last days, so we know this is for now, as well as the day of Pentecost. This word prophesy can be translated so many ways, one of which means to preach. In the Spirit, there is no difference between a male and female. The flesh is the only difference. God is not the one who makes a difference between men and women. God is not interested in the flesh.

Galatians 3:28 "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus."

If the old men won't do it, then He will send a young man. God also sends women, old and young, to bring in the harvest.

Acts 2:18 "And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy:"

“Prophesy”: The proclamation of God’s truth will be pervasive in the millennial kingdom.

This Holy Spirit of God fell on all the 120, male and female, and empowered them to be ministers of God. God's purpose is to get as many people as will come, into the kingdom of God.

Acts Chapter 2 Questions

1. What was the state of the 120 on the day of Pentecost?
2. What does Pentecost mean?
3. In Exodus 23:16, we find that there are how many important feasts of the Hebrews?
4. Name them.
5. What are two other names for Pentecost?
6. What day after Jesus' resurrection was Pentecost?
7. What was Jubilee?
8. What would this do for the believers?
9. What did it sound like?
10. Where were the 120 when this happened?
11. What generally happened at 9 a.m.?
12. What did these believers see?

13. How many of them were filled with the Holy Ghost?
14. What outward expression came with the Holy Ghost?
15. How is the Holy Ghost received?
16. What is the purpose of the Holy Ghost?
17. Who had spoken of this baptism of the Holy Ghost earlier?
18. Have all who speak in tongues been baptized of God? Explain.
19. It is not really an unknown tongue, but what?
20. Why were the people confounded about this?
21. What were all who spoke?
22. Name some of the countries these listeners were from.
23. What did they speak in tongues?
24. What did some mockers say?
25. What is faith?
26. What was so ridiculous about them saying they were full of new wine?
27. Who spoke out for the disciples?
28. What time of day was it?
29. What did the disciples usually do at this time?
30. What did Peter tell them this was?
31. In what days was this prophesied to happen?
32. What were the young men prophesied to do?
33. What were the old men prophesied to do?
34. Who will God pour out His Spirit on?
35. In Galatians 3:28, we read what about male and female?

36. Who will preach and bring people into the kingdom?