

ACTS
The Day Of Pentecost
Acts 2:1-13

What was the greatest event of all human history up until now? Was it when God created the world? Or when He created Adam and Eve? Or the Flood? Could it be when God called Abraham out of the Ur of Chaldea to form the Jewish race? Was it the giving of the Law at Mount Sinai? Was it the birth of John the Baptist? Surely the birth, death, resurrection and ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ were great days in history. Yet, in some respects, the Day of Pentecost was the greatest event of all, for it was the culmination of four thousand years of history. Pentecost was the day of power. It was the day Christ started to continue all that He began to do in his death, burial and resurrection. It was the day of the forming of the church of Jesus Christ. Pentecost, if not the greatest, was surely one of the greatest days in all of human history.

Whatever else we may conclude about the Day of Pentecost, it was the day of the Holy Spirit. Some have said that the Old Testament was the age of the Father, and the birth, life, death, burial, resurrection and ascension was the age of the Son, and the period between the Day of Pentecost and the second advent of Christ is the age of the Holy Spirit. The Day of Pentecost records for us the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, in a way unknown in the Old Testament or the Gospels, on the church to prepare the disciples to carry out Christ's witnessing program to the ends of the earth.

PLAN OF PENTECOST Acts 2:1

“And when the day of Pentecost had come,” -- A more accurate translation would be, “And when the day of Pentecost was being fulfilled.” This tells us that the Day of Pentecost was a fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy. It was a prophetic day; it did not happen by accident for it was part of the infinite plan of Almighty God.

(1) Feast of Pentecost. The word “Pentecost” means fifty and is connected with the sacred calendar of Israel's festivals in the Old Testament. Pentecost was one of the seven Jewish feasts mentioned in Leviticus 23, beginning with the Passover Feast and ending with the Feast of Tabernacles. These were annual, prophetic, typical feasts, pointing forward to Christ's work. The seven feasts were: 1) Passover which depicts Christ's death, for it was during the Passover Feasts that Christ was crucified. “For Christ our Passover also has been sacrificed” (I Cor. 5:7); 2) Unleavened Bread which typifies Christ's burial; 3) First Fruits which illustrates Christ's resurrection for He is the first fruits of resurrection - “But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ's at His coming” (I Cor. 15:23); 4) Pentecost which speaks of Christ forming His church through the Holy Spirit; 5) Trumpets which typifies Christ regathering Israel; 6) Atonement which depicts Christ returning and the nation of Israel receiving Messiah, and 7) Tabernacles which speaks of Christ establishing His kingdom on this earth.

According to the Jewish calendar, seven weeks were to be numbered from Passover for forty-nine days. Then on the fiftieth day they were to have the Feast of Pentecost or the Feasts of Weeks or as it was sometimes called the Feasts of Wave Loaves. One of the rituals on the Day of Pentecost consisted of two loaves of bread that were baked with grain from the new harvest (Lev. 23:15-17). Now this is highly symbolical and it indicates that the New Testament has its roots in the Old Testament. These two loaves were symbols of two groups from which the church was to be formed -- the Jews and Gentiles. There was no longer to be separation of Jews and Gentiles because the church includes men and women of all races, nationalities, cultures and backgrounds, and the death of Christ broke down the middle wall of partition between Jews and Gentiles. “And I have other sheep, which are not of this fold (Jewish fold); I must bring them (Gentiles) also, and they shall hear My voice; and they shall become one flock (the church) with one Shepherd (Christ)” (Jn. 10:16). Furthermore, these loaves were to be baked with leaven. Leaven is yeast and usually is a symbol of sin. The wave loaves were the only

sacrifice in the Old Testament with leaven included. Why? This is to remind us that the church is not made up of perfect people. They are saints (set apart to God) but are sinful saints. Christians are not perfect but are in the process of becoming what God wants them to be. Christ is changing them but they are not yet perfect and never will be until the coming of Christ.

Pentecost was a planned event. The Holy Spirit came because it was time for Him to come. Even if the disciples were not in one accord, even if they had not been praying, and even if they had not been waiting, Pentecost would have come. It was in God's sovereign plan and according to His timetable.

Fullness of the Spirit. The Day of Pentecost is all about the forming of the church. In the plan of God, this was the birthday of the church. The church came into existence because of the baptism of the Holy Spirit which interestingly is not mentioned in Acts 2 but was the main event of that day. There are some unique ministries of the Holy Spirit which came into existence on the Day of Pentecost, but the most important one was the baptism of the Holy Spirit. What one concludes about the baptism of the Holy Spirit will have a great effect on how he lives his Christian life. Is the baptism of the Spirit some second work of grace which totally eradicates the sin nature or gives special power for service? Is the baptism of the Holy Spirit a special work of God to enable a person to speak in tongues? Is the baptism of the Holy Spirit the placing of a Christian into Christ to form the church? Much confusion has come over this subject so we will spend some time as to what the baptism of the Holy Spirit really is.

Baptism of the Holy Spirit. The primary work of the Holy Spirit unique to the Day of Pentecost was the baptizing work of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit had been at work in the Old Testament and at the time of the Gospels but He takes up unique ministries in the age of the church.

1) John the Baptist stated that Christ would baptize believers in (by) the Holy Spirit.

“As for me, I baptize you in water for repentance; but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, and I am not even fit to remove His sandals; He Himself will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire” (Matt.3:11).

2) Christ told His disciples to wait in Jerusalem until they were clothed with power, referring to the Holy Spirit.

“And behold, I am sending forth the promise of My Father upon you; but you are to stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high” (Lk. 24:49).

The disciples were told to wait for the baptism of the Spirit.

“And gathering them together, He commanded them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for what the Father had promised, ‘Which,’ He said, ‘You heard of from Me; for John baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now’” (Acts 1:4,5).

3) We know the church was not yet in existence because Christ said, "I will build my church" (Matt. 16:18).

4) We also find in the epistles the truth that the church is the body of Christ.

“And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all” (Eph.1:22, 23).

We know that each individual Christian is baptized by the Holy Spirit into Christ at the moment faith in Christ is exercised.

“For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ” (Gal. 3:26, 27).

Every Christian is put into vital, organic spiritual union with Christ, sharing the very life of Christ.

5) We also know that true believers in Christ are baptized into Christ, forming the body of Christ. "For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit" (I Cor. 12:13). This is the only time we find the phrase "baptized in (by) the Spirit" after the event at Pentecost. The baptism of the Spirit came to the church on the Day of Pentecost and comes to each individual person the moment he believes in Christ. The baptism of the Holy Spirit is not an experience but a position. It is not felt and there is no sign accompanying it. On the Day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit began to baptize believers which means that the Holy Spirit identified then with Christ as His body on this earth.

It is also interesting to note that nowhere in the Bible are Christians commanded to be baptized with the Spirit, but believers are commanded to be filled with the Spirit. While the baptism of the Spirit is not experienced, it does become the foundation upon which all the experiences produced by the Holy Spirit rests. We do not feel the baptism of the Holy Spirit but we do feel the results of having been baptized through the filling of the Spirit.

6) We know the baptism of the Holy Spirit took place on the Day of Pentecost from Acts 11:15-17.

"And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell upon them, just as He did upon us at the beginning. And I remembered the word of the Lord, how He used to say, 'John baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit.' If God therefore gave to them the same gift as He gave to us also after believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could stand in God's way?"

When Peter was sent to Cornelius' house, who was a Gentile, the Holy Spirit fell upon Cornelius and others just as He had "at the beginning" which is an obvious reference to the Day of Pentecost. Every person who has believed has already been baptized by the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit came on the Day of Pentecost and is available to all who believe in Christ. It would be as foolish to talk about a fresh baptism of the Holy Spirit as it would be for me to ask my wife to marry me after having been married for twenty years. If I said to my wife, "Let's get married!" she would think me crazy and not playing with a full deck. I have been married and we have been baptized by the Holy Spirit.

Indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Another ministry of the Spirit unique to the church age is the permanent indwelling of the Holy Spirit. In the Old Testament, men were indwelt by the Holy Spirit but it was not a permanent indwelling and could be removed such as in the case of Saul or when David prayed, "Take not Thy Spirit from me" (Psa. 51:10). Our Lord taught His disciples that the Spirit was with them but not in them.

"And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive because it does not behold Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you, and will be in you" (Jn.14:16, 17)

However, since the Day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit came in His baptizing power and believers are put into union with Christ, there is a permanent indwelling of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit can never be taken away from a true Christian for any reason.

:However you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him" (Rom. 8:9).

"Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own?" (I Cor. 6:19).

Sealing of the Holy Spirit. Since the Day of Pentecost, based on the baptism of the Holy Spirit, which places a true believer into eternal, spiritual union with Christ, the Holy Spirit seals the Christian into an eternal relationship with God which can never be broken.

". . . you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a

view to the redemption of God's own possession, to the praise of His glory” (Eph.1:13, 14).

“And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption” (Eph.4:30).

It is possible to grieve the Holy Spirit by sin in the believer's life but it is impossible to grieve Him away. He seals the Christian unto the day of redemption

Freshness of the Spirit. It is because this is the age of the Spirit that Christians can receive the fullness of the Spirit in blessing. The Holy Spirit is a person and it is impossible to get more of a person. Every Christian has the Holy Spirit indwelling him, but the goal of the Christian is to allow the Holy Spirit to get more of him. We cannot get more of the Spirit but He can get more of us. When a person gets rightly related to the Holy Spirit, the life of Christ will flow through him and he will be a blessing to others.

“Now on the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, ‘If any man is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, ‘From his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water.’ But this He spoke of the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive; for the Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified” (Jn. 7:37-39).

Final Coming of the Holy Spirit. The Day of Pentecost can never be duplicated. It happened once in history and the Holy Spirit came to form the church. We cannot duplicate Pentecost any more than we can duplicate the birth or death of Christ. The Holy Spirit has come. We do not have to beg Him to come or urge Him to come or tarry for Him to come. He is available to all who exercise faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit has come to glorify Christ in the believer's life. “He (the Holy Spirit) shall glorify Me (Christ), for He shall take of Mine and shall disclose it to you“ (Jn. 16:14).

One time Harry Ironside was conducting a meeting in California and a man came to him and said, “We have just been praying in a tarrying meeting.” “What do you mean?” said Ironside. The man said, “We are tarrying for the Holy Spirit as they did in Acts 2.” “Where do you find any scripture for this?” said Ironside. The man said, “Jesus said to tarry in Jerusalem until you be endued with power from on high.” Ironside said, “Are you not confusing time and place? Jesus said tarry in Jerusalem and you are tarrying in California. You are 1900 years too late!”

Lewis Sperry Chafer used to say to his young seminarians, “Men if you will take out the ordinary church hymnal (he probably was speaking of the Hymnal of the Presbyterian Church) and look under the sections on the Holy Spirit you will find that 80% of them begin with the words ‘Come Holy Spirit’ as if the Holy Spirit has not already come on the Day of Pentecost.”

“They were all together in one place.” -- There were one hundred and twenty people gathered together probably in the Temple area. Up until the coming of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost, these were one hundred and twenty isolated individuals who had been living quite separate lives and were loosely held together a mutual interest in Christ. With the baptism of the Holy Spirit, they were welded together in Christ. They became one body, sharing the life of Christ with mutual spiritual interests, goals and determinations. The Holy Spirit makes a body and we Christians must function as a body or we are fighting against the Holy Spirit

PHENOMENAL EVIDENCES Acts 2:2-4

Evidence of Noise (2:2). “And suddenly there came from heaven a noise like a violent, rushing wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting.” -- The first supernatural phenomena to occur on the Day of Pentecost was a violent noise. It was not wind but it was like the wind. Perhaps it was like the noise of a tornado. This noise came directly from heaven and surely attracted the attention of all in Jerusalem.

The symbol of wind is often used in the Bible. “The wind blows where it wishes and you hear the sound of it, but do not know where it comes from and where it is going; so is everyone who is born of the spirit” (Jn. 38).

Wind is the symbol of the invisible power of the Holy Spirit. This power is sovereign, mighty, invincible and irresistible, but it is an invisible power. We do not see the Holy Spirit but we see the results of His power in the church and in the world. Whenever Christian men and women operate on this power, they accomplish great things for God and when they do not operate on this power, they spin their wheels for Christ. The power of the Holy Spirit is not always spectacular; most of the time it is very quiet and unassuming but through His power people are made Christians and lives are changed and supernatural events occur in one's life.

Evidence of Tongues (2:3). “And there appeared to them tongues as of fire distributing themselves, and they rested on each one of them.” -- The second supernatural phenomenon was visible tongues which rested on the heads of the one hundred and twenty. These tongues were not fire but they looked like fire.

Fire is a symbol of various things in the Old Testament. When Moses came to the burning bush, he realized he was in the presence of God and God said, “Take off your shoes, you are on holy ground.” Fire, therefore, represents the presence of God. Fire also symbolizes that which purifies, and it may also be a symbol of enthusiasm, passion or purpose that comes from within a soul, for Jeremiah said, “As I was musing, the fire burned.” Perhaps the fire symbolizes that the church is to have a consciousness of the presence of the Lord in all it does and a purifying passion to do His will. When D. L. Moody was a young man, he went to a meeting and heard a man preach and say, “The world has yet to see what God can do with a man who is wholly yielded unto Him.” Moody while walking home pondered this statement. There came into his heart a great hunger for God and he cried out, “O God, make me that man!” He was so filled with a sense of the overwhelming love of God that he had to go to a friend's house nearby and ask for the use of a room. He went into that room and for an hour or more was caught up by this purifying passion.

Evidence of Speaking in Tongues (2:4). “And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit was giving them utterance.” 1) The third supernatural phenomena was the ability to speak with other tongues. This certainly was not gibberish or some unintelligible heavenly language or some unknown, strange, fanciful speaking. Those who spoke used other (heteros) tongues; that is, tongues of a different kind, completely foreign to them. They were Galileans who probably spoke their own language only, but Acts 2 tells us that the one hundred and twenty spoke the languages of visiting Jews from all over the Roman Empire. Most of these Jews and Jewish proselytes knew very little Hebrew and only their own native tongue. Yet we are told they heard the disciples speak in their own language or tongue (Acts 2:4, 6, 11). The word translated "language" in Acts 2:4 and 6 really means dialect. These tongues the one hundred and twenty spoke were obviously foreign languages. Every tongue spoken at Pentecost was a known tongue, perfectly intelligible and reducible to writing, and in each case was understood by those present in Jerusalem who normally spoke those languages.

Some Bible scholars feel the miracle of tongues at Pentecost was not the miracle of speaking but the miracle of hearing; that is, they propose the one hundred and twenty were only speaking in their native Galilean or some heavenly tongue but the men from different countries heard them in their own language. The context does not seem to favor this view.

There are some today who claim it is possible to have a twentieth century Pentecostal experiences and they are referring mainly to speaking in tongues (heavenly languages). If it is possible to have a Pentecostal experience today, there must also be noise and tongues resting on the head because this was part of the first century phenomena.

What were the disciples saying when they were speaking in tongues? We do not know for sure but they were “speaking of the mighty deeds of God” (Acts 2:11). They were praising God and speaking of His wondrous works. Surely, this included the telling of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Multiple thousands of Jews from all over the Roman Empire heard about Christ that day. Some of them undoubtedly went back to their countries converted men and women. Tongues was a definite means God used in the early church to rapidly disseminate the gospel. Those who had the gift of tongues did not have to go to language school, but were given the supernatural gift of foreign languages.

One of the results of being filled with the Spirit in the Book of Acts was the speaking in tongues. Men spoke in tongues not because of the baptism of the Spirit but as a result of the filling of the Spirit. The filling of the Spirit deals with one's experience. Every Christian experiences thousands of fillings of the Holy Spirit but only one baptism of the Spirit, and that at the moment of conversion. The Christian is commanded to be filled with the Spirit. "And do not get drunk with wines for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit" (Eph.5:18). Tongues was only one result of being filled and is not a necessary result of being filled, because the filling is mentioned a number of times in Acts and is not accompanied with speaking in tongues.

"... and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 6:5).

"But being full of the Holy Spirit, he (Stephen) gazed intently into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God" (Acts 7:55).

The filling of the Spirit is the control by the Spirit. When a Christian is yielded to the Holy Spirit, he is controlled or filled by the Spirit, and out from his life will flow the fruit of the Spirit. "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control..." (Gal. 5:22, 23).

The ultimate purpose of the filling of the Spirit is always to help the Christian speak with boldness, clarity and sincerity the mighty works of God. When the one hundred and twenty were filled with the Holy Spirit, they began to speak and make proclamation of the gospel. Men are filled by the Spirit in order that they might speak for Christ.

J. Vernon McGee expresses it well, "Perhaps many of us today need the filling of the Spirit to make us talkative -- not to speak in an unknown tongue, but power to speak the Gospel to others. That is the kind of tongues movement we need today. And, by the way, we need a tongues movement of giving the Gospel in the language that the man can understand."

We cannot deny that whatever happened to the disciples on the Day of Pentecost was so life transforming they were never the same again. What happened? They experienced the person and power of the Holy Spirit in their lives, and, therefore, felt resurrection power which comes from the Living Christ.

PEOPLE FROM EVERY NATION Acts 2:5-11

Nationality Jewish (2:5). "NOW THERE WERE Jews living in Jerusalem, devout men, from every nation under heaven." -- Jewish men were required by law to attend the Jewish feast days. These Jewish pilgrims and proselytes came from every nation under heaven. Many of these Jews made an annual pilgrimage back to Jerusalem. Josephus, the Jewish historian who lived at this time, tells us that oftentimes the city of Jerusalem which normally had a population of 150,000 would be swollen in numbers to well over a million. The city was packed and the suburbs were filled. Pilgrims were camped all along the hillsides.

Dr. Luke carefully pointed out to us that these people on the Day of Pentecost were unbelieving Jews. The supernatural phenomena was designed as a sign to unbelieving Jews to confirm and authenticate the message of Christ to show the Jews that God was with this new movement of Christianity. Jews were hardened people and they constantly needed signs before they would believe (Matt. 12:38-40; I Cor. 1:22). "For indeed Jews ask for signs, and Greeks search for wisdom." Tongues were a sign to unbelievers and not to believers.

Noise Attraction (2:6). "And when that sound occurred, the multitude came together, and were bewildered, because they were each one hearing them speak in his own language (dialect)." -- Thousands of people broke up into small groups (action groups) while the disciples preached to this captive audience.

Notoriety of the Galileans (2:7). "And they were amazed and marveled, saying, 'Why are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that each hear them in their own language to which we were born'" -- Galileans were thought of as an ignorant and rude people (Jn. 1:46). Their own dialect was somewhat corrupt and they were looked down upon by the more cultured Jews. The Jews, however, were amazed at these rough,

uncouth and ignorant Galileans as they were praising God in at least sixteen different languages and many dialects.

Nations Represented (2:9-11). “Parthians and Medes and Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Libya around Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs -- we hear them in our own tongues speaking of the mighty deeds of God.” -- Among these Jewish pilgrims three continents and sixteen different nations were represented. Although the disciples were speaking different languages, they were all saying the same thing. They were speaking the mighty works of God.

PERPLEXITY AND PREJUDICE Acts 2:12, 13

Amazement (2:12). “And they continued in amazement and great perplexity, saying to one another, ‘What does this mean?’” -- What these unbelieving Jews heard and saw literally “blew their minds” in amazement and they were perplexed in that they began asking what all this phenomena really meant. Some began to think through the issues before them and were pondering the events and the mighty deeds of God. This group was open-minded to what was being said.

Prejudice (2:13). “But others were mocking and saying, ‘They are full of sweet wine’” -- Sweet wine had a way of going to the head and many of the closed minded, skeptical Jews accused the one hundred and twenty of being drunk. This group of doubting Jews began immediately to rationalize the supernatural and gave a logical explanation to that which was obviously supernatural.

CONCLUSION

Saved. Christian, I want to ask you a question or two. Do you know the Holy Spirit? You may know the Father elected you and Christ died for you but do you know the Holy Spirit who has been sent to fill you, guide you and sanctify you? Do you know the Spirit’s activity? Do you experience His ministry in your life? The ordinary person in the Book of Acts was filled with the Spirit. It is the purpose of the Father that you should have a Spirit-filled life. The Spirit-filled life is to be the norm of the Christian life and not the abnormal. The work of the Holy Spirit infilling is for every Christian. Are you filled? If not, why not? What darling sin are you holding on to which keeps you from experiencing the fullness of the Spirit in your life? God wants your best and you can never give it to Him apart from the filling of the Holy Spirit.

Unsaved. For you without Christ, you have learned today that the Holy Spirit is a tremendous force and power. It is the Holy Spirit who moves on men and women to give them the desire to respond to Jesus Christ for salvation. The Holy Spirit will convict you of your sin and you may resist Him. He will begin to draw you and you will fight His wooings to come to Christ, but the Holy Spirit power is irresistible and He will win out. If you feel the tug of the Holy Spirit upon your soul, telling you to receive Christ, do not resist. Yield to Christ lest you perish in your sins!