

Friends, don't get me wrong. By no means do I count myself as an expert in all of this, but I've got my eyes on the goal, where God is beckoning us onward to Jesus. I'm off and running, and I'm not turning back.

Philippians 3:13-14 THE MESSAGE BIBLE

First Love Ministries, Inc.

Prayer Study #230

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

Chapter 2

Filling with the Holy Spirit

1. When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.
2. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting.
3. Then there appeared in them divided tongues as of fire, and one sat upon each of them.
4. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

Pentecost literally means 50. It was an Israeli celebration of the giving of the Law on Mount Sinai fifty days after the Israelites left Egypt, or what is called the Exodus. For Christians, Pentecost is celebrated as the day the Holy Spirit descended on the followers of Jesus in the Upper Room fifty days after the resurrection. Jesus was on the earth after His resurrection for 40 days. Pentecost came 10 days after His ascension. Pentecost is considered by Christians as the birth of the Christian Church and occurs 50 days after Easter (Resurrection Sunday). Under the Old Testament, the law was written on stone (Exodus 19:1-6). Under the New Testament, the law is written on the tablets of the heart, by the Spirit (2nd Corinthians 3).

The three main feasts in the Old Testament that the Jews were ordered by Jehovah to keep were the feast of Passover (Exodus 12, fulfilled in the Gospels with the crucifixion of Christ), the feast of Pentecost (in Acts, fulfilled by the coming of the Holy Spirit, during the days of the early rain or planting rain), and the feast of Tabernacles (or Trumpets, Ingathering, or Booths), which will be fulfilled at the Second Coming of Christ, during the time of the latter rain).

Pentecost is also called the Feast of Weeks since it represents a week of weeks (7 days times & weeks plus one). Passover is usually in mid-April so Pentecost is in June and is the best travel days for visitors to the Holy Land, thus that is why so many foreign people were in Jerusalem.

The supernatural manifestation of the Spirit descending from God were the mighty rushing wind, the cloven tongues of fire, and the speaking with other tongues. The wind symbolizes the power of the Holy Spirit, the fire symbolizes the holiness of the Holy Spirit, and the tongues show the manifest presence of the Holy Spirit in men. The latter is given as a sign of grace; is available for all mankind, through faith in Christ; and comes as a result of obedience to the Word of God. They waited in unity and in prayer, as the Lord had commanded, 10 days in Jerusalem in the Upper Room on Mount Zion, before this wondrous experience came.

It is important to note that God the Holy Spirit has always been and will always be. He had spoken to David in the Old Testament (Acts 1:16), through Isaiah (Acts 28:25). Stephen accuses the Jews of having opposed the Spirit all through their history (Acts 7:51), just to give a few examples. And yet something special happened on the Day of Pentecost that changed the Church forever. From that day onward, the Holy Spirit became the dominant reality in the early Church.

Speaking with Other Tongues

5. And there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven.
6. And when the sound occurred, the multitude came together and were confused, because everyone heard them speaking in his own language.
7. Then they were all amazed and marveled, saying to one another, "Look, are not all these who speak Galileans?"
8. "And how is it that we hear each in our own language in which we were born?"
9. Parthians and Medes and Elamites, those dwelling in Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia,
10. Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya adjoining Cyrene, visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes,
11. Cretans and Arabs—we hear them speaking in our own tongues the wonderful works of God."
12. So they were all amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "Whatever could this mean?"
13. Others mocking said, "They are full of new wine."

The disciples were not preaching the Gospel in tongues. They were speaking praises to the Lord and declaring the wonderful works of God. The miracle was in the speaking, not the hearing. These unlearned men were speaking in foreign languages without ever having studied or learned them, and all these foreigners were hearing what the disciples were saying. These foreigners were Jews who had come from other nations to celebrate the

Passover in Jerusalem. The 17 places named covered the four corners of the known world. Jesus had prophesied that His disciples would speak in NEW tongues (Mark 16:17).

The only places in the Bible where the disciples were told to tarry or wait for the Holy Spirit are Acts 1 and Acts 2. God's will for today is not that we wait for the Holy Spirit, but that we receive it. The sign of the Baptism in the Spirit in Acts is usually the unique sign of speaking in tongues, and many believe it is *the* evidence of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit.

There is a distinct difference in tongues as a sign of the Baptism. We differentiate the sign by calling it our "prayer language," and this gift is for the edification of the individual believer. There is also the Gift of Tongues and Interpretation, which is for the edification of the Church and which is what Paul speaks up in 1st Corinthians when he warns the believers not to give a message in tongues in the Church without an interpreter being present. I do not think this is referring to present day churches where many in the body speak in their prayer language at one time. We will probably cover this topic more extensively when we study the gifts of the Holy Spirit, but for now, let me say again that there are two kinds of tongues, which Paul calls in 1st Corinthians 13 *the tongues of men* and *the tongues of angels*. I interpret this as tongues that are known languages, unlearned by the speaker, and tongues that are not from any language on earth and thus cannot be interpreted by listeners without the Gift of Interpretation.

The irony of verse 13 in this chapter is that they *were* drunk with wine, but it was not the wine of this world and was not alcoholic.

Peter Explains Pentecost

14. But Peter, standing up with the eleven, raised his voice and said to them, "Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you and heed my words.

15. "For these are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is *only* the third hour of the day.

16. "But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel:

17. *And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, that I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your young men shall see visions, your old men shall dream dreams.*

18. *And on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days, and they shall prophesy.*

19. *I will show wonders in heaven above and signs in the earth beneath: Blood and fire and vapor of smoke.*

20. *The sun shall be turned in to darkness, and the moon into blood, before the coming of the great and awesome day of the LORD.*
21. *And it shall come to pass that whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved.*
22. "Men of Israel hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know-
23. "Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified and put to death;
24. "Whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it.
25. "For David says concerning Him: *'I foresaw the LORD always before my face, for He is at my right hand, that I may not be shaken.*
26. *Therefore, my heart rejoiced, and my tongue was glad. Moreover my flesh also will rest in hope.*
27. *For You will not leave my soul in Hades, nor will you allow Your Holy One to see corruption.*
28. *You have made known to me the ways of life; You will make me full of joy in your presence.'*
29. "Men and brethren, let me speak freely to you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his tomb is with us to this day.
30. "Therefore, being a prophet and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that of the fruit of his body, according to the flesh, He would raise up the Christ to sit on his throne.
31. "He, foreseeing this, spoke concerning the resurrection of the Christ, that His soul was not left in Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption.
32. "This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses.
33. "Therefore, being exalted in the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out this which you now see and hear.
34. "For David did not ascend in to the heavens, but he says himself: *The LORD said to my Lord, 'Sit at My right hand*
35. *Till I make Your enemies Your footstool.'*
36. "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ."
37. Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?"

38. Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let everyone of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

39. "For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call."

40. And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying "Be saved from this perverse generation."

41. Then those who gladly received his word were baptized and that day about three thousand were added to them.

Peter, the one who denied Christ three times, emerges as the leader of the disciples. His whole heart has changed by this Baptism in the Spirit. In fact, all of the apostles were emboldened by this experience and truly were willing to die for their belief in Jesus: Matthew died from a sword wound in Ethiopia. Mark died in Alexandria, Egypt, after being dragged by horses through the streets until he was dead. Luke was hung in Greece because of his powerful preaching to the lost. Peter was crucified upside down in Rome. James, the leader of the church in Jerusalem, was thrown over a hundred-foot drop off at the southeast pinnacle of the Temple (This is the same place where Satan had taken Jesus during the Wilderness Temptation. James, the brother of John, was beheaded in Jerusalem. The Roman officer who guarded James and led him to his place of execution was so moved by James' courage in not denying Christ that he too became a Christian and knelt beside James to accept his own beheading as a Christian. Bartholomew or Nathaniel was skinned alive by a whip in Armenia. Andrew was crucified on an X-shaped cross after being severely beaten. He survived for two days and hung on the cross preaching to tormentors and reportedly said, "I have long desired and expected this happy hour. The cross has been consecrated by the body of Christ hanging on it." Thomas was stabbed to death in India. Jude was killed with arrows. Matthias was stoned and then beheaded. Paul, after a lengthy imprisonment, was tortured and beheaded by orders of Nero in A.D. 67. What made the difference from men who had run and hid during the trial and crucifixion of Jesus to men who gladly gave their life and refused to deny the faith? The Baptism in the Holy Spirit!

Peter preaches the first sermon of the Christian Church on the Day of Pentecost. He gives us the pattern for how everyone should preach: Use the Word of God and preach Christ! According to Kevin Conner in *The Book of Acts* Peter declares, in this sermon, 8 facts about Jesus: He was sinless. His life ministry consisted of miracles, signs and wonders like the world had never seen. He was crucified. He rose again. He had the Spirit in full

measure (John 3:34) and was exalted by God the Father. He ascended into heaven. He is enthroned at the right hand of God the Father. He has been glorified as Lord and Christ.

One of the purposes of Acts and Peter's preaching was to show the Jews scripturally that the sufferings and death on a cross of Jesus were fulfillment of prophecy. The Jews knew Deuteronomy 21:23 which states, "...*Anyone hung on a tree is under God's curse.*" Thus, for the Messiah to be hung on a tree was impossible. The followers of Jesus, therefore, had to show the Jews scripture, such as Isaiah 53, that prophesied the suffering of the Messiah and also to emphasize the Resurrection as the final proof that Jesus was the Messiah, for without the Resurrection there would have been no Christian Church at all.

Peter's sermon brought great conviction to the audience, and three thousand people repented and were baptized that day into the Christian faith.

Practices of the Early Church

42. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship in the breaking of bread and to prayers.

43. Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles.

44. Now all who believed were together and had all things in common,

45. And sold their possessions and goods and divided them among all, as anyone had need.

46. So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart,

47. Praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their church daily those who were being saved.

The Apostles' Doctrine is found in Hebrews 6:1-2:

a. Repentance from Dead Works, b. Faith toward God, c. Doctrine of Baptisms, d. Laying on of Hands, e. Resurrection of the Dead, f. Eternal Judgment, g. Perfection of Saints.

The New Testament Church members were committed Christians. The Church at this time was walking in obedience, had great fellowship with each other, shared meals, and prayed steadfastly. The leaders were doing signs and wonders. The people shared everything they had with each other, even selling their possessions so they could provide the needs of anyone who had a need. They were in unity and knew the power of praise.