

## ACTS 2:1-13

CHAPTER 2		
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## DIVISION II

### THE BIRTH AND GROWTH OF THE CHURCH, 2:1–7:60

#### A. The Day of Pentecost and the Coming of the Holy Spirit: The Church Is Born, 2:1-13

(2:1-13) **Introduction:** the Day of Pentecost was one of the most phenomenal and important events in all of history. There are several reasons why the event was so important.

- It was “the coming of the Holy Spirit.”
- It was the birth of the church.
- It was the corporate filling of the Holy Spirit, of the body of believers with the promised presence of Christ (Jn.14:16-18).
- It was the personal filling of the individual believer by the Holy Spirit.
- It was the Presence and Power of God coming upon believers, gifting and equipping them to proclaim the glorious message of salvation to men.

1. God's providence (v.1).
2. Man's obedience (v.1).
3. The spirit of being together, in unity (v.1).
4. The Spirit's infilling (vv.2-4).
5. There was witnessing by the disciples: To God-fearing men of every nation (vv.5-11).
6. There were different reactions (vv.12-13).

#### DEEPER STUDY # 1

(2:1-4) **Holy Spirit—Pentecost:** the disciples had been deliberately prepared for the coming of the Holy Spirit. Throughout the Bible the revelation of the Spirit had been step by step, that is, progressive.

Prophecy shows this clearly.

1. Joel prophesied, “It shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh....” (Joel 2:28-29).
2. John the Baptist said, “I baptize with water, but He shall baptize with [en, in] the Holy Spirit” (Mt.3:11; Lu.3:16).
3. In the early part of Jesus' ministry, He had said that believers were to be “born again...by the Spirit” (Jn.3:3-4; see 1 Jn.5:1).
4. During His ministry, Jesus taught that men were to receive the Holy Spirit by prayer (Lu.11:13).
5. In the Upper Room, Jesus identified the Holy Spirit as a Person (Jn.14:15-26), and He outlined the work of the Spirit with both unbelievers and believers (Jn.16:7-15). Significantly, He revealed that He was praying to the Father for the Comforter to come and abide with the disciples (Jn.14:16-17).

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6. After His resurrection from the dead, Jesus appeared to His disciples in the Upper Room. There He symbolically breathed on them, saying, “Receive ye the Holy Spirit” (Jn.20:22). But He insisted they not begin their ministry until they experienced the Spirit actually coming upon them with power (Lu.24:49; Ac.1:8).

7. Right before Jesus was to ascend into heaven, He said, “John truly baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit” (Ac.1:5).

8. Then, ten days after Jesus’ ascension and after much prayer, the Holy Spirit came upon and filled the whole body of believers at Pentecost (Ac.2:1-4).

There are two events of the Holy Spirit’s coming that seem to hold historical significance. These two particular events are very, very special to the church, for both Jewish and Gentile believers were clearly seen to be in God’s historical plan. Both Jew and Gentile were baptized by the Holy Spirit, that is, placed into the body of Christ, His Church.

1. At Pentecost: the disciples were “filled with the Holy Spirit” (Ac.2:4).
  - a. This was in fulfillment of the prophecy by Joel. The Spirit was *poured out* upon the believers (Ac.2:16).
  - b. This was in fulfillment of the prophesies by Jesus and John. The Spirit *baptized*, that is, immersed the believers with His own presence (Ac.1:5; 10:44-48; see 11:15-16, esp. 16).
2. At Cornelius’ house: the Holy Spirit “fell,” was “poured out,” and was “received” by the Gentile believers (Ac.10:44-47).
  - a. Peter said to the Jews who came with him, “These received the Holy Spirit *as well as we*” (Ac.10:47).
  - b. Peter reported the event to the Jerusalem Church: “The Holy Spirit fell on them, *as on us at the beginning*. Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that He said, John indeed baptized with water: but ‘ye shall be *baptized* with the Holy Spirit’” (Ac.11:15-16).
  - c. Peter used the experience to support Paul before the great Jerusalem Council:

**“God...[gave] them the Holy Spirit even as He did unto us” (Ac.15:8).**

In all three instances the idea conveyed is that of an event just like *their own* experience. It is as though Peter pointed to a Gentile Pentecost or at least an extension of Pentecost in Acts 2 to include the Gentiles.

Note two other facts:

1. At Pentecost, the account uses the word *filled*, not *baptized*.
2. At Cornelius’ house, the account says the Holy Spirit *fell*, was *poured out*, and *received*. But in reporting the experience to the Jerusalem Church, Peter used the word *baptized*. He said the Gentile believers were “baptized with the Holy Spirit” (Ac.11:16) “as on us at the beginning” (Ac.11:15). This clearly says that although the word *baptized* is not used in the Pentecost experience, the disciples were baptized or immersed with the Spirit’s presence at Pentecost. The words *filled*, *received*, *poured*, *baptized*, and *fell upon* are all used interchangeably to describe the Spirit’s presence coming into a believer’s life. (If believers would heed this, it would eliminate many of the arguments that arise over terminology.)

Other than these two events Acts records only four other times that the Holy Spirit came upon believers.

1. A little prayer band in Jerusalem was “filled” with the Holy Spirit (see Ac.4:8).
2. The Samaritans (half-Jews, half-Gentiles) “received the Holy Spirit” (Ac.8:15-17).
3. Paul was “filled with the Holy Spirit” (Ac.9:17).
4. The disciples of John experienced “the Spirit coming on them” (Ac.19:6).

One other fact is important. Other than Pentecost and Cornelius’ house, the word *baptize* is used in connection with the Holy Spirit only once in the rest of the New Testament. That one reference is 1 Co.12:13: “For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body.” That is, the Holy Spirit takes all believers and baptizes or immerses, places, and positions them into the body of Christ—into the church, the universal church.

In conclusion, what does all this mean?

1. When a man grasps the gospel and believes, really believes, the Holy Spirit enters his life. He *comes upon*, *falls upon*, *pours*, *fills*, *baptizes* (immerses) Himself into the life of the believer. This is a personal *experience*. This act of the Spirit takes place in the life of the believer. The believer *experiences* the Spirit coming into his life. The believer receives the Spirit *experientially*.
2. When a man grasps the gospel and believes, really believes, the Holy Spirit takes him and *baptizes* or immerses, and places him into the body of Christ, which is God’s Church. The believer does not feel or experience this act. It is an act of God that takes place in heaven. The believer is *counted* as a child of God. He is *counted* as a member of the body, of the church. This is a *position*, not an experience, which the believer feels. It happens once-for-all. The believer is adopted as a child of God—irrevocably. It is an eternal *position*, an eternal sonship (see DEEPER STUDY # 2—Gal.4:5-6). The believer becomes a member of God’s Church—positionally (1 Co.12:13).
3. After a man is saved, he is to “keep on being filled with the Spirit”—day by day (Ep.5:18; see Jn.14:21, the word “manifest”). The early believers were continually filled (Ac.4:8, 31).

**1** (2:1) **Feast of Pentecost—God, Providence of:** there was God’s providence. The Feast of Pentecost needs to be understood in order to see God’s providence at work. Pentecost was celebrated fifty days after the Passover. It was also known as the “Day of the First Fruits” (Nu.28:26), or the “Feast of Weeks” (Ex.34:22), or the “Feast of Harvest.”

Pentecost was a glorious day of celebration, a day when the people were to heap praise and thanksgiving upon God. There were three particular reasons for which they were to thank God.

- a. The harvest of the fields. Note the very name of the Feast says that it is a celebration of the “First Fruits.” It was celebrated when the first fruits of the harvest began to come in, which was around the first of June. It actually opened the harvest season.

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b. The Exodus, the deliverance of the nation Israel from Egyptian bondage (De.16:12). The people were to thank God for the day he delivered them out of slavery.

c. The giving of the law upon Mt. Sinai (Ex.19-20). This was the day the people were constituted as a nation, as the great nation of Israel. They were to live as God's very own people upon earth. They were to thank God for Himself and for His law, the rules and principles He had given to govern their lives and nation. It is important to note that the Jews figured the law had been given to Moses fifty days after the Exodus.

Now note the providence of God, how all three events were fulfilled in the coming of the Holy Spirit.

- When "Pentecost was fully come" the first fruits were born—the church itself and the first harvest of souls. The new beginning, that is, the filling of the Holy Spirit, began fifty days after Jesus' death and resurrection (Ac.2:4).
- The coming of the Holy Spirit had a very specific purpose. The Holy Spirit was to live and work within the heart of man, to deliver and free him from the enslavements of this world—from sin, death, and hell. The Holy Spirit came to set man at liberty even as God had delivered the Jews out of Egyptian slavery (2 Co.3:17; see Jn.16:8-11).
- The coming of the Holy Spirit was two things.

1) It was the birth of the church, the new people of God. People who truly came to God were now to be sealed and known by the presence of the Holy Spirit, by His very presence within their hearts and lives.

**"Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts" (2 Co.1:21-22).**

**"In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory" (Ep.1:13-14).**

**"And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption" (Ep.4:30).**

2) It was the institution of the new law, the new rule and principle of God. Man is now to be guided by the Spirit who empowers him to live right and to serve Christ.

**"But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you" (Jn.14:26).**

**"Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come" (Jn.16:13).**

**"For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God" (Ro.8:14).**

**"But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Co.2:14).**

### DEEPER STUDY # 2

(2:1) **Feasts, Jewish:** there were three major Feasts celebrated by the Jews. Each had been instituted by God to celebrate significant events in both the daily life and history of the people and their nation. But God also had something else in mind as well, the coming of His Son and the birth of His followers. Therefore each of the Feasts find their fulfillment in Christ and His Church.

1. There was the "Feast of the Passover." It was a week of giving thanks...

- for God's deliverance out of bondage and slavery, looking back to their forefathers' slavery under Egypt.

The Passover Feast was fulfilled in the crucifixion of Christ. Christ was the "Lamb of God" who was to die for the sins of the world. He and His death had been symbolized in the sacrifice of the Passover Lamb. (See notes—Mt.26:17-30; Lu.22:7-23 for more discussion.)

2. There was the "Feast of the First Fruits." It was a day of giving thanks...

- for the birth and growth of the new crops, the reaping of the first fruits of the earth.
- for the birth of their nation at Mt. Sinai.

This Feast was fulfilled in the coming of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, the day when the church was born and the first of God's new people were reaped. (See note—Ac.2:1 for more discussion.)

3. There was the "Feast of Tabernacles." It was a week of giving thanks...

- for the end and completion of the harvest season, the journey of toil and struggle experienced in gathering the harvest.
- for the end of their nation's wilderness wanderings under Moses.

The "Feast of Tabernacles" is yet to be fulfilled. It will be fulfilled when our Lord returns. The Feast will symbolize our joy, liberty, and victory through the wilderness wanderings of life and the glorious provision of God, that of living and serving eternally in His wonderful presence (Zec.14:16). (See Outline note 1—Jn.7:37 for more discussion.)

### DEEPER STUDY # 3

(2:1) **Power:** Jesus had instructed the disciples to "tarry" in Jerusalem until they were endued with power (Lu.24:49).

**2** (2:1) **Obedience:** there was man obeying. Note: the believers were in "one place," in the city of Jerusalem precisely where Christ told them to go and wait upon the coming of the Holy Spirit. They were obedient—obedient despite the great danger the Jerusalem authorities posed to them. (See note—Ac.1:12-15 for discussion.)

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**Thought 1.** One thing is absolutely essential if a believer wants to receive the fulness of God's Spirit: *obedience*. The believer must obey Christ and follow His instructions.

**“If ye love me, keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you” (Jn.14:15-17).**

**“Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him” (Jn.14:23).**

**3** (2:1) Unity: there was the spirit of being in one accord. (See DEEPER STUDY # 1, *One Accord*—Ac.1:14 for discussion.)

**4** (2:2-4) **Holy Spirit—Pentecost:** there was the Spirit's infilling. Note the word “suddenly.” The Holy Spirit came suddenly, abruptly, unexpectedly, the kind of abrupt happening that jolts and startles a person. God was dramatizing the supernatural and precious significance of the event.

a. There was a mighty sound that filled the room.

1) The sound was from heaven, that is, from God. It came from God's activity, not from the activity of natural causes upon earth. It was supernatural. God created sound for this very special occasion.

2) The sound was like the rushing of a *mighty* wind. It was not wind, but a sound like the deafening roar or blast of a strong wind (eg. a hurricane, tornado, or gale).

3) The sound filled *all the house*, that is, it was localized upon the house where they were *sitting*. Why? There are at least three reasons.

➤ First, people needed to be startled and alarmed, attracted to gather from all over Jerusalem, seeking to know what had happened. An audience needed to be gathered for the first preaching of the gospel.

➤ Second, the mighty power of the Spirit needed to be symbolized and dramatized for the disciples. They needed strong confidence instilled within them in order to stand and preach the gospel before the very persons who had crucified the Lord and who had hunted them down as accomplices.

➤ Third, the disciples would learn how Christ wanted them to preach the gospel. The presence of the Holy Spirit upon them would either bring people flocking from all over, asking what had happened or lead them to the people whom they were to reach.

b. There was the appearance of *cloven tongues* (*diamerizomenai*). The Greek means a tongue that was cloven, that is, parting asunder. The idea is that a single tongue appeared and then began to split and divide itself, resting upon each of the disciples.

1) The tongues were not fire, but *like fire*; that is, they only looked like fire. They were a brilliant, luminous, fire-like substance created by God to dramatize the moment of the Holy Spirit coming upon the disciples.

2) The tongue of fire that first appeared symbolized the presence of the Holy Spirit which was to dwell in the midst of God's people as a whole. When He began to divide into many tongues of fire and to rest upon each believer, He was symbolizing that He was to dwell within each believer as well as within the whole body of believers. (See notes—1 Co.3:16-17; 1 Co.6:19-20.)

Note the words, *It [He] sat* (*ekathisen*). The word is singular, not plural. Scripture does not say “they sat,” but He, the Holy Spirit Himself, was descending and resting upon *each* of the disciples. They were not receiving “tongues of fire” but the Spirit of God.

Note also that the Spirit appeared in the form of a tongue of fire. The tongue symbolizes the instrument of speaking and preaching and sharing the gospel. The Holy Spirit was to be the burning power of the tongue, of the convicting message to be proclaimed.

c. There were the results which were twofold.

1) The disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit. (See DEEPER STUDY # 1—Ac.2:1-4 for more discussion.)

First, both the body (church) and each individual believer were filled. They were “all filled” with the presence and power of the Spirit—all of them corporately and each of them individually. It was both a corporate and a personal, individual infilling. Each believer had been commanded to wait for the baptism of the Spirit, and each one was to be so filled with His presence and power. It was a command to the individual believer as well as to the corporate body. Each one was to experience and know His grace and power and fruit (Ga.5:22-23).

**Thought 1.** A critical point is often ignored and neglected. The command to be filled with the Spirit is still God's command to every believer, both individually and corporately (the church).

**“Be filled with the Spirit” (Ep.5:18).**

**“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law” (Ga.5:22-23).**

**Thought 2.** How neglectful the church is! Ignoring and neglecting the command “[to seek to] be filled with the Spirit.” How many churches actually meet together to pray and wait for the filling of God's Spirit?

**“If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?” (Lu.11:13).**

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Second, the disciples were given the gifts of the Spirit to carry on the work of the ministry upon earth. This fact is not mentioned here, although it is certainly to be demonstrated in the preaching and witnessing about to take place. The giving of the Spirit's gifts is covered in Ephesians.

**“Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men....And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ” (Ep.4:8, 11-12).**

**“But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Ac.1:8).**

**“And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe, according to the working of his might power [Holy Spirit], Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places” (Ep.1:19-20).**

2) The disciples began to speak with other tongues (see DEEPER STUDY # 4, *Tongues*—Ac.2:4).

### DEEPER STUDY # 4

(2:4) **Tongues—Holy Spirit:** what is meant by “other tongues” *here*? Note two things.

1. “Other tongues” definitely means foreign languages (see verse 6-13). The disciples were supernaturally witnessing and preaching in the languages of the different nationalities gathering together. Scripture is so clear about this that there can be no reasonable doubt without really twisting the Word of God.

2. “Other tongues” could also mean the *tongues* or ecstatic utterance covered in 1 Corinthians; that is, it could have been what is commonly called the *heavenly* or *prayer language* (1 Co.14:2, 14. See outlines and notes—1 Co.14:1-40 for discussion on *Tongues*.) An ecstatic worship could be taking place while the disciples were experiencing the infilling of the Holy Spirit. There seems to be some time between the moments of infilling and the crowds arriving to see what caused the explosive sound or noise (v.2). And there can be no doubt that the disciples were flooded with joy, an ecstatic worshipful joy. They now knew the most wonderful things...

- Christ was in them, His Spirit had actually entered into their hearts and lives. Their wonderful Lord had returned to them just as He had said He would.
- They were filled with a deep sense of His presence and power, His concern and love for the world, His courage and drive to share the great news of the glorious gospel.

One thing needs to be noted, however: the words “as the Spirit gave them utterance.” They spoke in tongues “as the Spirit gave them utterance.” This may indicate a clear difference from the gift of tongues in 1 Co.14, a clear difference in this sense:

- All gifts once bestowed by the Spirit are thereafter exercised by the believer as the believer wills to use them. In fact, in order to be faithful, the believer *has* to use his gifts as need or as opportunity arises. This is clear from 1 Co.14:28-33.
- The gift of tongues here in Acts 2 says that the gift was supernaturally exercised by the Spirit, not by the individual believer.

**5** (2:5-11) **Witnessing:** there was witnessing—devout men heard the Word. Witnessing is also a result of being filled with the Spirit. Note several things. Devout men, Jewish pilgrims who had come from *all over the world*, had returned to Jerusalem to celebrate the “Feast of the First Fruits.” The word *devout* (eulabeis) means reverent, worshipful, careful. It means persons who handle spiritual matters carefully.

a. The words “when this was noised abroad” seems to be saying it was the news of the disciples’ behavior that brought the crowd together. But the Greek says, *When this sound was heard* (genomenes tes phones tantes). It was apparently the sound of the thunderous blast caused by God that brought the people rushing to the scene.

b. The crowd heard an amazing thing—the disciples supernaturally speaking in their own tongue (dialect, language) (see vv.6, 8, 11).

c. The number of dialects and languages spoken included most of those from the known areas of the world at that time. Luke’s purpose in giving the list seems to stress that people from all over the world were present for Christ to save and to send back to their native lands as servants of His, servants to proclaim the message of the glorious gospel.

d. What the crowd heard in their native languages was “the wonderful works of God,” the personal witness of the gospel, the very things Peter was about to preach to the whole crowd (vv.14-40).

**Thought 1.** Note how the groundwork for preaching is first laid by personal witnessing. (See DEEPER STUDY # 1, *Witnessing*—Acts 1:8 for Scripture.)

**6** (2:12-13) **Gospel, Reaction to:** there were different reactions. All were *amazed* (existanto) and astonished, marvelling at what was happening. There was a twofold reaction.

a. Some were *attracted* (dieporounto), perplexed and wondering, at a loss as to what was happening. But they were attracted to seek meaning in it all.

b. Others simply mocked, accusing the disciples of being drunk. (Just imagine the ecstatic joy flooding their hearts for them to behave in a way to cause such a charge! Where is the infilling of such joy today?)

**“For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation” (2 Co.6:2).**