

## The Coming of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost

### Acts 2:1-13

Acts 2:1-13: *“When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. <sup>2</sup> And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. <sup>3</sup> Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. <sup>4</sup> And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. <sup>5</sup> And there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven. <sup>6</sup> And when this sound occurred, the multitude came together, and were confused, because everyone heard them speak in his own language. <sup>7</sup> Then they were all amazed and marveled, saying to one another, “Look, are not all these who speak Galileans? <sup>8</sup> And how is it that we hear, each in our own language in which we were born? <sup>9</sup> Parthians and Medes and Elamites, those dwelling in Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, <sup>10</sup> Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya adjoining Cyrene, visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, <sup>11</sup> Cretans and Arabs—we hear them speaking in our own tongues the wonderful works of God.” <sup>12</sup> So they were all amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, “Whatever could this mean?” <sup>13</sup> Others mocking said, “They are full of new wine.”*

### Background Notes

Shavuot, or Pentecost, was one of the annual Jewish religious festivals. “Pentecost” is the Greek word meaning “fiftieth day,” because this festival was celebrated fifty days after the Feast of First Fruits. Our Lord, the true Passover Lamb, was crucified on the Jewish feast of Passover, and He arose on the Feast of First Fruits. Forty days later He ascended into Heaven. Another ten days had gone by; so on the fiftieth day after the resurrection, on the feast of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit came.

The event in Acts 2 took place in a house where the early Christians met. This house must have been located near the Temple courts because verse 6 indicates that a multitude heard the noise that was like “*a rushing mighty wind.*” Verse 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.”* And verse 6: *“And when this sound occurred, the multitude came together.”* This multitude consisted of Jews from all over the Roman Empire who would have come to the Temple to celebrate the Feast of Pentecost.

Associated with the coming of the Holy Spirit were an auditory manifestation (a sound from Heaven of a rushing mighty wind) and a visible manifestation (the appearance as “tongues of fire” resting on all the believers). Notice that this visible manifestation of tongues was not literal fire, but *as of fire* (v3), symbolizing the purifying work of the Holy Spirit.

As a result of the coming of the Holy Spirit, all the believers were filled with the Holy Spirit. They began to miraculously speak in tongues of known languages, bringing praise to God. Probably at this point, the believers left the house where they were meeting and went into the Temple courts, praising God.

Jews had come from all over the Roman Empire to Jerusalem to celebrate the festival, and were in the Temple courts. They were amazed to hear this group of people praising God in all the languages of the Empire - and yet most of these believers were from Galilee. As a result, many of the devout Jews from around the Roman Empire became believers.

The converts from the Day of Pentecost (v41) then carried the gospel back to their homes throughout the Roman Empire! Most likely that is why a local church was already established in Rome, even before the apostle Paul got there.

## Doctrinal Points

### 1. The birth of the Church was at Pentecost.

The Church did not begin in the Old Testament. In fact, the Church is not even mentioned in the Bible until the New Testament. In Matthew 16:17 the Lord said, *"I will build My Church."* Notice that the Lord used the **future tense**: **I will** build My Church.

Furthermore, the Church is called a *mystery* in the book of Ephesians. A biblical *mystery* is something that was concealed in the Old Testament, but was revealed in the New Testament (Ephesians 3:4-5 & 9).

Ephesians 3:1-11: *"For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for you Gentiles—<sup>2</sup> if indeed you have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which was given to me for you,<sup>3</sup> how that by revelation He made known to me the mystery (as I have briefly written already,<sup>4</sup> by which, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ),<sup>5</sup> which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets:<sup>6</sup> that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel,<sup>7</sup> of which I became a minister according to the gift of the grace of God given to me by the effective working of His power.<sup>8</sup> To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ,<sup>9</sup> and to make all see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God who created all things through Jesus Christ;<sup>10</sup> to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places,<sup>11</sup> according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord."*

Notice that several times in Ephesians 3 the Church was clearly called a **mystery** - truth that was **concealed** in the Old Testament. The Church did not begin in Old Testament times. It was unheard of in Old Testament times. And it was not built during the public ministry of our Lord. But the Church (universal) and churches (local) are mentioned throughout the book of Acts. So when did the Church begin?

It's pretty obvious that **the Church began at Pentecost**. It began when the Holy Spirit came and filled the early Christians (v4). The Holy Spirit came upon them as a group, and yet came upon them individually as well. This is emphasized with a mighty wind and united fire, reaching out to them as individuals with tongues of fire.

Now that the Church has been formed, the Holy Spirit indwells each individual believer, and the Holy Spirit also dwells in the midst of believers united together as the Church. As individuals and as a body, believers are the Temple of the Holy Spirit. The individual believer is called the Temple of the Holy Spirit in 1 Corinthians 6. Believers together as the Church are called the Temple of the Holy Spirit in 1 Corinthians 3.

The Holy Spirit did not continually indwell the Old Testament believers. The Holy Spirit came upon different Old Testament believers at different times for different purposes. But once the Holy Spirit came upon the early Christians and the Church was born, the Holy Spirit now permanently indwells every true believer. Ephesians 1:13 says, *“When you believe, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise.”* The birth of the Church was at Pentecost.

## **2. The baptism of the Holy Spirit was at Pentecost.**

In Matthew 3:11, John the Baptist said, *“I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.”* Then in Acts 1:5 our risen Lord said, *“For John truly baptized with water but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”* In Acts 2, that baptism came. The baptism of the Holy Spirit was at Pentecost.

Notice that the Lord did not add the phrase, *“and with fire,”* as John did. John the Baptist was addressing a lot of unbelievers, and we believe the “fire” in John’s statement refers not to the tongues of fire at Pentecost, but rather to the fire of judgment upon unbelievers when the Lord returns. Look at the context of Matthew 3:5, when John made this statement. The “you” he mentioned was a mixed group - there were believers and many unbelievers in his audience. Their judgment is also mentioned in Matthew 3:12. So the baptism of the Holy Spirit was for believers only, at Pentecost. The baptism of fire of which John spoke will be for unbelievers at the judgment.

When we become Christians today, we are incorporated into a company of believers that was baptized with the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. 1 Corinthians 12:13: *“For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, ...and were all given the one Spirit to drink.”*

So the *baptism* of the Holy Spirit is not a subsequent stage in a Christian’s life after salvation. However, there is a *filling* of the Spirit after salvation. In fact, Ephesians 5:18 exhorts *all* believers to be *continually filled* with the Spirit. Every believer is *baptized with* the Holy Spirit and *indwelled by* the Holy Spirit from the moment of conversion. At the time of salvation, a believer is brought into, or baptized into the body of the Church that was baptized by the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. It’s best to think of the baptism of the Holy Spirit as having taken place once, for the entire Church, at Pentecost.

Here’s an illustration. When a new employee joins a corporation, it could be said that this person becomes “incorporated into the corporation.” But the corporation was incorporated in the past, at the time it was founded. The new employee is simply being incorporated into an already incorporated body.

In the same way, biblically speaking, when a person becomes a believer, they are brought into or incorporated into or baptized by the Holy Spirit into the already-incorporated body of the Church. And the Church was “incorporated” or formed or baptized by the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. The baptism of the Holy Spirit was at Pentecost.

## **2. Plan ahead as the Lord wills.**

Verses 5-9: *“Now I will come to you when I pass through Macedonia (for I am passing through Macedonia).<sup>6</sup> And it may be that I will remain, or even spend the winter with you, that you may send me on my journey, wherever I go.<sup>7</sup> For I do not wish to see you now on the way; but I hope to stay a while with you, if the Lord permits.<sup>8</sup> But I will tarry in Ephesus until Pentecost.<sup>9</sup> For a great and effective door has opened to me, and there are many adversaries.”*

It’s not wrong for committed Christians to plan ahead. In fact, in the work of the Lord goal setting is Scriptural. However, all plans should be subject to the Lord’s will, and therefore flexible. In 2 Corinthians Paul revealed that he had to change the plans he intended because of the Lord’s direction. But it wasn’t wrong for Paul to plan ahead.

Paul didn’t just sit around waiting for a special sign from Heaven. He made plans using his common sense. He planned out his future itinerary in view of the need and situations of the churches - subject to the Lord’s will. We, too, should plan ahead as the Lord wills.

## **Practical Application**

### **Expect mixed reactions to your godly lifestyle.**

The early Christians were filled with the Spirit (v4) and as a result, there were mixed reactions from the crowd. Look at the reactions of the observers in verses 12-13: *“So they were all amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, “Whatever could this mean?” Others mocking said, “They are full of new wine.”*

Mixed reactions will happen today as well. When you’re walking with the Lord and you’re allowing the Holy Spirit to fill you, there will be mixed reactions to your godly lifestyle. Some people will think you’re a fanatic. Some will be curious, and wonder what makes you tick. Others will think you’re crazy – that you’re out of your mind. But some folks will recognize that God is at work in your life. They’ll be open to the Lord, and they will respond to what you have to say.

So don’t be surprised! There will be mixed reactions if you’re not just blending in with the crowd, but are seeking to live your life in a way that is pleasing to the Lord. Expect mixed reactions to your godly lifestyle.