

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, 1-17-16 AM NOTES
"THE BIRTH OF THE CHURCH"
ACTS 2:1-13
#2 in Series, "The Spirit, the Church, and the World"

Matthew 16:18a (NASB) "I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church..."

John 7:37-39 (NASB) "³⁷ Now on the last day, the great *day* of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, 'If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. ³⁸ He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, 'From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.' ³⁹ 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.'"

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

"We are not going to move this world by criticism of it nor conformity to it, but by the combustion within it of lives ignited by the Spirit of God."
—Vance Havner

Acts 1:5 (NASB) "for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."

I. The Evidence of the Spirit's Coming (vv. 1-4)

Luke 24:49 (NASB) "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."

Genesis 1:2 (NASB) "The earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters."

Judges 6:34 (NASB) "So the Spirit of the Lord came upon Gideon; and he blew a trumpet, and the Abiezrites were called together to follow him."

1 Samuel 16:13a (NASB) "Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers; and the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon David from that day forward."

Psalms 51:11 (NASB) "Do not cast me away from Your presence and do not take Your Holy Spirit from me."

John 14:17b (NASB) "...*but* you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you."

A. Audible Evidence (v. 2)

Acts 1:8a (NASB) "but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you..."

B. Visible Evidence (v. 3)

Romans 8:9 (NASB) "But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him."

C. Oral Evidence (v. 4)

Acts 1:5 (NASB) “for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”

1 Corinthians 12:13 (NASB) “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.”

Matthew 28:19 (NASB) “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.”

Romans 6:3-5 (NASB) “³ Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? ⁴ Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. ⁵ For if we have become united with *Him* in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be *in the likeness* of His resurrection.”

“The baptism of the Spirit means I belong to His [Christ’s] body; the fullness of the Spirit means that my body belongs to Him.”
—Warren Weirsbe

II. The Effect of the Spirit’s Coming (vv. 5-13)

Revelation 7:9-12 (NASB) “⁹ After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could count, from every nation and *all* tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, and palm branches *were* in their hands; ¹⁰ and they cry out with a loud voice, saying, ‘Salvation to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.’ ¹¹ And all the angels were standing around the throne and *around* the elders and the four living creatures; and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, ¹² saying, ‘Amen, blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might, *be* to our God forever and ever. Amen.’”

First Baptist Church Powell 1 17 2016 AM
Sermon 2: The Birth of the Church
Series: The Spirit, the Church, and the World
Acts 2:1-13

Let’s look at the birth of the church. In the first chapter of Acts, the disciples were told to wait for the coming of the Holy Spirit and in chapter two, the Holy Spirit comes. In chapter one the disciples were

equipped with truth about their mission and in chapter two they were empowered to accomplish that mission. In Chapter one we see Christ ascend to the Father and in chapter two, we see the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Christ descend to indwell the disciples.

In multiple times and in multiple ways Jesus spoke earlier of the events that actually happened in chapter two. He said in Matthew 16:18a (NASB): "I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church..."

In Acts 2, we see the birth of this church He said He would build. John 7:37-39 (NASB):

Now on the last day, the great *day* of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, "From his innermost being will 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.

After His ascension, Jesus was gloriously seated at the right hand of the Father and then sent His Spirit, as He promised, to form the church by baptizing believers into His body, and filling their lives to equip them to obey. Jesus said in John 14:16-17 (NASB): "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 see Him or know Him, *but* you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you."

In chapter two we see the Spirit coming to dwell in believers just as Jesus promised. There is no more important chapter in the Bible than Acts 2! Evangelist Vance Havner said this: "We are not going to move this world by criticism of it nor conformity to it, but by the combustion within it of lives ignited by the Spirit of God." [Vance Havner, Quoted in Warren Weirsbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary, Volume 1*, page 406]

In chapter 2, we see the coming of the Holy Spirit to truly ignite believers. Luke tells us, in the first verse of chapter two, that the Spirit came on the day of Pentecost. What is Pentecost? The word "Pentecost" is from the Greek word that means "fifty." This feast was called *fifty* because it took place fifty days after Passover. It was called in the Old Testament, "The Feast of Weeks" (Exodus 34:22-23). Pentecost was one of three feasts that every Jewish male who lived in about twenty miles of Jerusalem was required to attend every year (the other two were Passover and the Feast of Tabernacles). This explains why so many people who spoke so many languages were in Jerusalem when the Holy Spirit came.

What exactly did the Holy Spirit accomplish when He came on Pentecost? Let me summarize it here and then we will look at it more in depth as we come to it in the text. First, the believers were baptized by the Holy Spirit into the body of Christ and the church was birthed. Jesus made a promise in Acts 1:5 (NASB): "for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now." In chapter two, we see the day that Acts 1:5 was referring to. Second, believers were indwelt by the Holy Spirit. From this point on in the book of Acts, there was a realization by believers that the Holy Spirit dwelt within them. Third, the believers experienced an initial filling of the Holy Spirit. We will go much deeper into these three things that happened on the day of Pentecost as we go through these exciting verses.

I. The Evidence of the Spirit's Coming (v 1-4)

The text doesn't tell us where the disciples were when the events described in this passage took place. We know that in chapter one, they were in an upper room, but it is likely that in chapter two they had moved into one of the court yards of the temple, probably the area called Solomon's porch. The word "house" in verse 2 can refer to the Temple (Acts 7:47). Let's look at the promise that they were waiting on, and praying for its fulfillment. The resurrected Christ said in Luke 24:49 (NASB): "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." Acts 2:1-4 is the fulfillment of what Jesus promised them before He ascended back to heaven.

Let's set the context of what happened around that word "suddenly" in verse 2. The disciples had been living with a sense of anticipation for ten days. Something big was going to happen. The Holy Spirit, the third member of the Trinity was going to come in a special way. They were not unfamiliar with the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit wasn't inactive or unknown in the Old Testament. In fact, we are told of the work of the Holy Spirit in the creation. Genesis 1:2 (NASB): "The earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters." Not only was the Holy Spirit active in creation, we see Him at work in the lives of people in empowering them to fulfill God's commands.

Here is the difference between the work of the Holy Spirit before Pentecost and after Pentecost. In the Old Testament, before Pentecost the Spirit would "come upon" people to equip them to accomplish a task and then depart. Here are some examples:

Judges 6:34 (NASB): "So the Spirit of the Lord came upon Gideon; and he blew a trumpet, and the Abiezrites were called together to follow him."

1 Samuel 16:13a (NASB): "Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him [David] in the midst of his brothers; and the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon David from that day forward."

Here is what was different. The Holy Spirit came upon people God called to accomplish His work (sometimes for a long period of time as with David), but He didn't come to indwell them. Also, His coming upon them was not permanent. After David's great sin, He pleads with God in Psalms 51:11 (NASB): "Do not cast me away from Your presence and do not take Your Holy Spirit from me." But remember what Jesus promised in John 14:17b (NASB): "...but you know Him [the Holy Spirit] because He abides with you and will be in you."

I can imagine that as the 120 disciples met together and prayed, there was a great excitement and anticipation. And then, in Acts 2:2a (NASB) we read these words, "And suddenly..." This reminds me of when the Lord Jesus will come again. We are to be anticipating it, but "suddenly" He will come! There were three evidences that the unseen Holy Spirit had come. It involved sound, sight, and supernatural speech.

A. Audible Evidence (v 2)

Notice that it was not wind that they heard; it was "a noise like a violent rushing wind". The sound was literal, but it was also symbolic. The word for "wind" and "spirit" is the same word in both the Hebrew and the Greek. The sound of the wind was literal, but also symbolic of the Holy Spirit (John 3:8). The description of this sound brought into modern times would perhaps be a noise like a jumbo jet taking off. The Moffat translation says "...like a violent blast of wind..." Wind is invisible and yet powerful. Even so the Holy Spirit is invisible and yet Jesus said of the Spirit in Acts 1:8a (NASB): "but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you..." Keep in mind that this was not a sound that only the 120 heard. It was heard by all!

B. Visible Evidence (v 3)

Notice that it was not literal fire, but "tongues as of fire." Throughout the Old Testament fire symbolizes the presence of God. Fire is an accurate symbol of the Holy Spirit because fire illuminates, purges, and warms. The Holy Spirit does all of these things. The tongues like fire were on each one because each disciple had received the Holy Spirit. The receiving of the Holy Spirit is not just for certain ones in the body of Christ; it is for all! Romans 8:9b (NASB): "But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him." Today, there is no such thing as a Christian who does not have the Holy Spirit indwelling him. It is also encouraging to know that you have the same Holy Spirit indwelling you that Peter, John, and later, Paul had dwelling in them.

C. Oral Evidence (v 4)

The word translated "tongues" is the common Greek word for "languages" and should be translated "languages." What were these tongues? They were languages that these disciples had not naturally

learned. Before they spoke in these languages that had not been naturally learned, we are told that they were “filled with the Holy Spirit.” This would be a good place to bring in some other passages and examine the difference between two phrases used in the New Testament. The New Testament speaks of Christians being “baptized by the Holy Spirit” and “filled with the Holy Spirit.” These phrases are *not* two different ways of describing the same thing.

The baptism by the Holy Spirit is referred to in Acts 1:5 (NASB): “for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.” The clearest statement about the baptism by the Holy Spirit is in 1 Corinthians 12:13 (NASB): “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.” The word “baptize” is used in a *literal way* and in a *figurative way* in the New Testament. The word itself means “to immerse.” When the word “baptize” is used literally, it is referring to a person who is immersed in water as a public testimony that they have repented of sin, and savingly believed on Jesus Christ and His finished work on the cross for their salvation.

An example of a literal translation would be in the great commission in Matthew 28:19 (NASB): “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit”. The figurative use of baptism refers to the believer being identified with, put in union with, or being “in Christ.” Baptism is used in this sense in Romans 6:3-5 (NASB):

Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. ⁵ For if we have become united with *Him* in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be *in the likeness* of His resurrection.

On the day of Pentecost, these 120 believers who were waiting for the promise, that Jesus gave in Luke 24:49 to be fulfilled, were individuals living their lives separately who only had in common a saving faith in Christ Jesus. After the Holy Spirit came, they were all baptized into, identified with, placed in union with Christ. They now were “the body of Christ,” the church.

The “filling of the Holy Spirit” has to do with power for witness and service. The word “filled” in verse 4 of our text has the three-fold meaning of being empowered with, permeated by, and controlled by. To be filled with the Spirit is to be empowered by the Holy Spirit, permeated with the Holy Spirit, and controlled by the Holy Spirit.

Warren Weirsbe gives a great way to distinguish the baptism by the Holy Spirit and the filling of the Holy Spirit. “The baptism of the Spirit means I belong to His [Christ’s] body; the fullness of the Spirit means that my body belongs to Him.” [Warren Weirsbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary, Volume 1*, page 408]

Nowhere are Christians commanded to be baptized by, or with, the Holy Spirit. The reason is that this is something that today happens to *all* Christians when they are saved. Yet we are all commanded to be filled with the Spirit – in fact we are commanded in Ephesians 5:18 to literally keep on being filled with the Holy Spirit.

What has happened here in Acts 2 is that the Holy Spirit has immersed believers into the body of Christ forming the church. Since that is not an experiential thing, the Holy Spirit gives this third evidence that something supernatural has happened. There was the sound like a violent rushing wind, the tongues as of fire, and now the speaking in languages that they had no natural knowledge of.

II. The Effect of the Spirit’s Coming (v 5-13)

The word *living* in verse 5 is probably better translated “staying” (NIV). Tens of thousands of Jews were in Jerusalem at the time of Pentecost. The Jewish historian of the first century, Josephus (37-100 AD), said the population of Jerusalem went from a normal population of 150,000 to over a million at the feast of Pentecost. The response of the people to the supernatural acts of the sound of wind, the tongues of fire,

and the supernatural speech was “bewilderment” (v 6). It is translated “confused” in the HCSB and “confounded” in the KJV. The Greek word literally means “to push out of their senses.” Our slang phrase, “It blew their minds” would be a good translation. It was especially bewildering that the apostles were mostly Galileans (v 7) and that they were looked down on as the “country bumpkins”, the uneducated, the rednecks, and they were speaking in all of these languages. Look at all of the places people were from who had come to Jerusalem for Pentecost. They were from Acts 2:9-11a (NASB): “Parthians and Medes and Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the districts of Libya around Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs...”

Luke begins with the east, and lists a group of dialects east of Jerusalem such as the residents of Mesopotamia; then he moves north and mentions the several Roman provinces of Asia Minor. Then he moves south to Egypt and what we would call North Africa today. He goes west to Rome and then south again to the Arabians. Each person heard these uneducated disciples of Jesus speaking in their own language or dialect. No wonder they were bewildered!

Those who say that these believers were speaking in some kind of ecstatic language that was not a human language are simply ignoring the text and trying to fit the modern day Pentecostal view of tongues into the text, and it just will not fit. There was no one interpreting. The people from all of these faraway places who had different languages were hearing their own language that these people could not have naturally known. What were they speaking? Acts 2:11b (NASB): “...we hear them in our *own* tongues speaking of the mighty deeds of God.” The hearers knew what they were saying without an interpreter.

Why do you think God chose this language sign to evidence the coming of the Holy Spirit? Here is what I believe is the reason for God giving this particular sign. Going all the way back to the early church fathers, many Bible scholars see the supernatural speaking in languages at Pentecost that all could understand as a dramatic reversal of the curse of Babel. In Genesis 11, God confused the languages of the people to cause them to scatter throughout the earth. Here in Jerusalem at Pentecost when the Holy Spirit came the language barrier was supernaturally overcome as a sign that the nations would now be spiritually gathered together in Christ. The tower of Babel in Genesis 11 was designed to praise and make a name for man. The events of Pentecost brought glory to God as these Galileans spoke the “mighty things of God” in languages that all understood. The building of Babel was an act of rebellion, but the events at Pentecost were the result of humble submission to God. This gathering prefigures that future day when as we read in Revelation 7:9-12 (NASB):

After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could count, from every nation and *all* tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, and palm branches *were* in their hands; and they cry out with a loud voice, saying, ‘Salvation to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.’ And all the angels were standing around the throne and *around* the elders and the four living creatures; and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, saying, “Amen, blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might, *be* to our God forever and ever. Amen.”

[This insight is taken from John Stott, *The Spirit, the Church, and the World*, page 68]

The best explanation that the skeptics could come up with is, “they are full of sweet wine” (drunk). That makes no sense. Who has ever gotten drunk and as a result spoke in a human language they had not naturally learned? This was a genuine miracle that God performed when He sent the Spirit to indwell His people.

Conclusion

Bethlehem was God with us; Calvary was God for us; Pentecost was God in us. Because of what God did at Pentecost, those who come to Christ repenting of sin and trusting completely in Christ now are in union with Christ – “in Christ,” partakers of His life. We have the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Christ living in us to empower us and direct us, and teach us so that we have in Him all that we need. Thank God for Pentecost.