

Acts 2:1-13 Teacher's Notes The Baptism & Filling of the Holy Spirit

Review:

Who wrote the book of Acts? It was written by Luke, a physician and traveling companion of Paul.

Time & Place: Luke ended Acts with Paul imprisoned in Rome. Since Luke traveled a lot with Paul it is thought that Luke wrote Acts in Rome sometime in the early A.D. 60s.

To whom did he write it? He wrote it to the mysterious Theophilus, 1:1.

Purpose: Luke's interest is in how the Holy Spirit **1)** replaced Jesus on earth **2)** overcame all obstacles in causing the Gospel to be spread from Jerusalem westward to Rome and **3)** changed the church from being predominantly Jewish to being predominately Gentile, three seismic shifts.

Outline: Acts 1:8. Let's all read 1:8 aloud in unison! Overall application: "You shall be my witnesses".

Involve Class & Review Repeatedly:

30 years: The book of Acts covers about 30 years, from A.D. 33 to A.D. 62.

28 chapters

3 sections: Jerusalem	Judea & Samaria	End of the Earth.
Chapters 1-7	Chapters 8-12	Chapters 13-28
2 years	13 years	14 years

Introduction: Today we will study the baptism & filling of the Holy Spirit.

Surface Felt Need: I came out from the grocery store and found a religious pamphlet on my windshield. Toward the end of the pamphlet was this urgent command, "Pray for the baptism in the Holy Spirit."¹ *What is the baptism of the Holy Spirit? Is the baptism of the Holy Spirit something Christians should actively seek? What are the signs of being baptized in the Holy Spirit? How is it different from being filled with the Spirit?*

****** What did Jesus promise shortly before His ascension (1:4-5)?** He promised they would be baptized with the Holy Spirit.

******Comparing 1:4-5 to 1:8a, what is one important result of being baptized in the Holy Spirit?**

The main result mentioned was power from the Holy Spirit to be Jesus' witnesses. As we shall see today in Acts 2, this is exactly what happened when the Holy Spirit came upon them.

¹ Tony and Susan Alamo, "Framed" (Hollywood, CA: Tony Alamo Christian Ministries Worldwide, 1996), 4. After years of legal problems, Tony Alamo was imprisoned in 2009 as a sex offender. He died in 2017.

******What miracles happened when the church was baptized with the Holy Spirit (2:1-4)?**

- 1) **Wind**; there was a sound like a mighty rushing wind.
- 2) **Fire**; tongues like fire appeared and rested on each person.
- 3) **Tongues**. They were filled with the Spirit and supernaturally spoke in what Luke called “other tongues”.

All this happened on the day of Pentecost. What and when was Pentecost (2:1)? Elsewhere it is called the Feast of Weeks, one of the Old Testament harvest feast days. It was held fifty days after the start of the Passover Feast. Its name is transliterated from the Greek word for fifty.

Pentecostalism: It was only very recently, in the year 1900, when an American evangelist began teaching that speaking in tongues is still the evidence of being baptized in the Spirit, not just initially back in the first century but still today as well. Those who accepted this teaching came to be called Pentecostals (based on Acts 2). Then, in 1906, the three year long Azusa Street revival in Los Angeles led to the spread of Pentecostalism throughout the United States.

Issues: *What is the baptism of the Holy Spirit? Is speaking in tongues really the modern evidence of having experienced the baptism of the Spirit?* (Rhetorical).

Wind: 1. Why do you suppose God caused the arrival of the Holy Spirit to sound like a mighty rushing wind (2:2)? The Greek word for Spirit and wind are the same (*pneuma*). This was a sound effect to let the church know something remarkable was happening.

Was it literal, actual wind they heard (2:2)? Luke said the sound was “like” wind, not that it was wind. **Joke**: Since this was not literal wind, perhaps it was a freight train they heard, which I am told sounds like the wind of a tornado.

Fire: 2. Why do you suppose Luke described it as a tongue of fire rather than a finger of fire (2:3) or a candle of fire? It was evidently a cylindrical flame that was the size of a tongue. Since it affected their speech, it was quite appropriate to describe it as a tongue.

Was this actual, literal fire (2:3)? No; Luke described it “as of” fire.

3. Why was it fitting to let the Holy Spirit be represented by fire (2:3)? *See Luke 3:16*. Perhaps it was because John the Baptist predicted Jesus would baptize people with the Spirit and with fire:

ESV **Luke 3:16** "I baptize you with water, but . . . He [Jesus] will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire."

Fire can represent judgment, but in this case it seems to represent God’s presence and empowerment (God spoke to Moses in the burning bush and led the Israelites with a pillar of fire).

The Baptism of the Spirit

The Baptism of the Spirit: Luke's interest was history, not theology. Luke simply did not give a consistent, systematic, detailed presentation of the things concerning the Spirit. Luke's interest was in the Holy Spirit's power to be witnesses (Acts 1:8). The rest of the New Testament must be factored in to get the whole picture. A study of the epistles (which were intended to be didactic), indicates the baptism of the Holy Spirit was:

- 1) A onetime event in the history of the early church. It was promised by Jesus and fulfilled at Pentecost.
- 2) Was when the Spirit permanently came upon the church to guide and to empower for us living the Christian life and carrying out ministry.

Systematic Theology: "The day of Pentecost was the point of transition between the old covenant work and ministry of the Holy Spirit and the new covenant work and ministry of the Holy Spirit."²

Second Experience: Some people say that first a person is saved, then later he can be baptized with the Holy Spirit as a second experience. It is quite true that in Acts 2, the disciples were already saved and for them it truly was a "second experience" (to use charismatic terminology). However it has not been that way for anybody else since. The baptism of the Holy Spirit is not a phrase the New Testament authors would use to describe a post salvation experience.³ Since Pentecost, whenever a new person becomes a Christian he is automatically grafted back into this historical Pentecostal baptism and is himself baptized with the Holy Spirit at the moment of salvation.

ESV 1 Corinthians 12:13 . . . in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body - Jews or Greeks, slaves or free - and all were made to drink of one Spirit.

If you are not baptized by the Spirit, you are not saved.

The Baptist Faith and Message of 2000 states, "At the moment of regeneration He baptizes every believer into the Body of Christ."⁴

For people today, the baptism of the Spirit is when you are born again. The baptism of the Spirit is never commanded. It is something over which neither the church then nor believers today have any control. That is why Jesus, when asked by Nichodemus how to be born again, said it was like the wind. You can see its effects but don't know where it comes from or where it goes.

Summary: The baptism of the Holy Spirit is **1)** not commanded (you don't need to pray for it), **2)** it is automatic at salvation and **3)** it is not a second experience.

² Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1994) 770.

³ Grudem, 773.

⁴ Article 2 (God), sub point C (God the Holy Spirit)

The Filling of the Holy Spirit

4. Luke recorded that they were also filled with the Holy Spirit (2:4). What did Luke mean by the filling of the Spirit? See *Luke 1:15, 41, 67*. In his Gospel, Luke had already referred to various people being filled with the Spirit: John the Baptist from his mother's womb, John's mother Elizabeth when she met Jesus' pregnant mother Mary, and John's father Zechariah. In each case the idea seems to be that the person was empowered by God to speak a special message from God. John the Baptist was empowered to preach a gospel of repentance. Elizabeth was empowered to praise the Lord. Zechariah was empowered to prophecy. Here in Acts 2, when they were filled with the Holy Spirit they began speaking a message from God in tongues. This was in fulfillment of Acts 1:8 ("you shall be my witnesses").

Filling Application: The filling of the Spirit resulted in believers speaking as moved by God. In Acts 2 they were empowered to speak in other tongues. It will also impact our speech today (though not necessarily in the ability to speak in other tongues):

ESV **Ephesians 5:18-20** . . . be filled with the Spirit, addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with all your heart, giving thanks always and for everything to God . . .

In Ephesians 5:18, being filled with the Spirit is actually commanded. We are to seek it, to live it.

5. Symbolically, what does it mean to be filled with something (2:4)? It generally means a person is influenced by whatever he is said to be full of. A person full of liquor is under its influence. A person full of "it" is completely wrong. Someone full of anger is angry. A person full of love is in a sense controlled by love. A person full of himself is conceited. Thus a person full of the Holy Spirit is influenced by the Holy Spirit and empowered by the Spirit.

Paul's Meaning: One would think that since Luke and Paul traveled together, they would mean the same thing when they wrote of the filling of the Spirit. Paul commanded that we be filled with the Spirit in Ephesians 5:18-21. In the parallel passage to Ephesians 5:18 (Colossians 3:16), he described it as letting the word of Christ dwell in you richly. This means one not only knows the teachings of Christ, but also obeys them.

Comparison

6. How is the filling of the Spirit (2:4) different from the baptism of the Holy Spirit (1:5)? See *Acts 1:5, 8, 1 Corinthians 12:13*. The baptism of the Holy Spirit is a supernatural and sovereign act of God wherein you are born again into His kingdom. You have no say in the matter or control over it. The filling of the Spirit occurs after the baptism of the Spirit. Unlike the baptism of the Spirit, it is a post salvation experience. It is commanded that believers be filled with the Spirit. Unlike the baptism of the Spirit, it is not a one-time event, it is on-going. It is very similar to letting the word of Christ dwell in us richly. It is to be influenced by the Spirit, to be led by the Spirit, to be empowered by the Spirit.

Baptism of the Spirit

Not Commanded
 One-Time Event
 Saves
 1st Experience
 Holy Spirit Indwells
 Imparts Spiritual Gifts

vs.

Filling of the Spirit

Command
 On-Going Need
 Sanctifies
 2nd Experience
 Holy Spirit Empowers
 Impacts Speech (song, praise)

Tongues

7. What did Luke mean by tongues (2:4)? *See ahead to 2:6.* It is from *glossa* and simply means language. *Glossa* is basis for our word glossary (a list of words and their definitions). As we shall see in the next paragraph, they were supernaturally given the ability to speak foreign languages for the purpose of evangelism. They were not speaking a heavenly language. *As seen in Acts 1:8, a major result of the baptism of the Spirit is to empower the church for evangelism.*

Tongues of Angels: Only once does Scripture mention something called the tongues of angels (1Co 13:1), evidently a heavenly language, but clearly that is not what was happening in Acts 2.

8. Why should we be cautious in concluding that everyone who is baptized or filled with the Spirit will speak in tongues (2:4)? *See 1 Corinthians 12:4-11, 29.*

- 1) Pentecost was a unique one-time event.
- 2) One must be very careful when deriving theology from historical narrative, especially when the recorded information is so minimal. One commentator observed that “it is somewhat startling to realize just how slender and sparse an account it is. The description of the event itself talks only four verses (2:1-4), and is extraordinarily circumspect . . .”⁵
- 3) Other passages of Scripture that were actually intended to teach doctrine make it clear that not all believers have the gift of speaking in tongues (“Do all speak in tongues”, 1Co 12:30).
- 4) It is unlikely that someone would discover truth in the Scripture no one else ever saw before the year 1900 (that speaking in tongues is the normal and regular sign of the baptism of the Spirit).

******What words did Luke use to describe the response of the international community when they heard Galilean Jews speaking foreign languages (2:5-13)?⁶** The crowd was bewildered (2:6), amazed and astonished (2:7) and perplexed (2:12). However, others (a minority?) mocked (2:13).

Example: I assisted at an estate sale in an old Memphis neighborhood. My station was in the poorly lit garage. A Chinese couple, students, wandered in. I had just returned from a trip to China, remembered a little Chinese, and so greeted them in Mandarin. They were shocked and surprised to meet a Westerner in a dark garage behind an old house in a Memphis suburb speaking

⁵ Johnson, 45.

⁶ There were devout Jews who had permanently moved to Jerusalem from all over the Roman Empire. Some of the few temporary visitors mentioned were from the city of Rome, 2:10b.

Chinese. The man smiled, threw his arms around me and gave me a big hug. Doubtless this was the same type of wonderful excitement felt by the ex-pats living in Jerusalem.

9. According to 2:6, what was it that drew this multitude of people together? It was the sound of the 120 telling the mighty works of God in all the various languages. Since the Spirit came when they were in a house, they evidently moved outside or to some larger venue, such as the Temple courts. Wherever they went, it was large enough for thousands of people to eventually hear them because 3,000 of them were saved (2:41).

10. Why was the multitude so bewildered that it was Galileans who were speaking their mother tongues (2:7)? It is possible that Galileans were seen as the hillbillies of their day! Beyond that, for any one local group to be able to speak so many different languages was astounding.

11. Why do you suppose Luke went to the trouble of listing all the various countries these Jews were from (2:9-11)? Jesus wanted the Gospel taken to the ends of the earth (1:8); right away it was being heard by people from all over the Roman world.⁷

12. What message were the 120 supernaturally empowered to speak (2:11)? They were telling the mighty works of God, not doing direct evangelism (Gospel presentations). This was like a preliminary artillery barrage before the main infantry attack (Peter's Gospel preaching).

13. Did those who mocked really believe they were drunk (2:13)? Drunkenness does not result in being able to coherently speak foreign languages. This was simply part of the mocking. They were throwing mud against the wall and hoping some of it would stick, much as politicians still do today. Perhaps it is possible they heard languages they did not know and thought it drunken gibberish.

Insight: There are almost always a few people who have an unreasonable interpretation of any situation. In dealing with such people, remember the words of Mark Twain: "Let us be thankful for the fools. But for them the rest of us could not succeed".⁸

14. How might 2:13 have influenced what Paul wrote in Ephesians 5:18?

ESV **Ephesians 5:18** . . . do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit . . .

Teacher's Note: "Filled" in 2:13 is from a different Greek word than "filled" in 2:4

So What?

15. What impact did the coming of the Holy Spirit have on the church? Luke's interest was to show that they were empowered for evangelism. In this case they were supernaturally able to speak in foreign languages they had never studied.

⁷ The only Gentiles are the proselytes mentioned in 2:11. First century Judaism was active in seeking Gentile recruits.

⁸ working-minds.com/MTquotes.htm. Accessed May 16, 2017.

16. What is the baptism of the Spirit? It is never commanded that we seek it, it was promised by Jesus, it was a one-time event in the history when the Spirit came on the church, every new believer since Pentecost is automatically grafted back into this baptism, it was a second experience for them since they were already saved but for everyone since them it is salvific (it happens when we are saved) and it resulted in power (power to be witnesses, power to obey Jesus' commands).

17. What is the filling of the Spirit? The filling of the Spirit is commanded, it is an on-going event, it is a second experience (post salvation) and it results in power (to be witnesses and to obey Jesus' commands). In Colossians, Paul parallels the filling of the Spirit with letting the Word of Christ dwell in us richly. Perhaps the filling should be imaged not as a glass that is fill by leaks and needs refilling, but as a balloon that gets ever bigger as more air is blown into it.

What is the relationship between the baptism of the Spirit and speaking in tongues today?

When a person is born again he is baptized in the Holy Spirit. It is automatic at salvation. At that moment the Holy Spirit also imparts spiritual gifts to the person, as the Spirit wills, to be used in service to the Lord. Tongues is only one of many spiritual gifts and not all have the same gifts.

18. How should the filling of the Holy Spirit be reflected in your life? The filling should show up in our speech (as Jesus' witnesses, singing, giving thanks, praising God, etc). The Holy Spirit gives us the desire and the ability to obey Jesus' teachings.

Location, Location, Location: Where were the 120 believers gathered when this happened (2:1-2)? They were all together in one place (2:1), identified as a house (*oikos*, 2:2). There was a house church magazine out of Australia called *Oikos*.

First Century House Church Sizes: Luke stated that all 120 believers were gathered in a house (2:2) that had a room big enough to hold all of them. The early church almost universally met in the homes of its members. *Would your home hold this many people?* A first century Roman villa would! An unanticipated challenge facing most modern Western home churches is that the houses are simply too small to hold as many people as would a Roman villa. This substandard size typically results in a weak church with a leadership shortage and a lack of diversity of spiritual gifts in the body. Like the runt of a litter, it is typically not healthy.

**** = ask this question before reading the text aloud. Doing so will cause focus.

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