

Acts Chapter 2

Acts chapter 2 is the birth of Jerusalem church with the Holy Spirit.

1 When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place.

2 And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting.

3 And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them.

4 And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.

Pentecost is a festival of Israel. Israel has the following festivals. There is theologian significance to all these feasts.

1. Passover.
2. Unleavened bread.
3. First fruit.
4. Pentecost.
5. Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur (the high priest goes into the holy of holies)
6. Feast of the tabernacles.
7. Chanukah

The death and resurrection of Jesus Christ occurs within these eight days when there is a Passover where the lamb is sacrificed, when they have to come out of Egypt in a real hurry, so that is Unleavened Bread and the First Fruits as Jesus rose from the dead on this time. Then we have got the Holy Spirit coming and the Holy Spirit comes and this particular time when there is Pentecost and this is a festival of Shavuot which is basically Pentecost. It is a time where they actually celebrate the giving of the law at Sinai. It is very important. So law of the Sinai desert which is basically the Ten Commandments is the law that will characterize the life of Israel that makes them distinct from every other nation. So when they go there they have two pieces of bread and they take this bread and they offer it up and it also represents the birth of the nation of Israel, because Israel was redeemed from Egypt and they were born as a nation about million and half people in the desert of Sinai. So therefore this is like their National Day as it were, so it is very-very significant.

Ezekiel 36:26 And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. **27** And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.

So these are the rules. The Old Testament believers are focused on this. This is what characterizes their belief. In the New Testament, the new covenant, God will say I will give you a new heart, new spirit, I will put my spirit in you. On that day that law was given on the same day God actually gives the Holy Spirit because this is a new deal, it is a new covenant,

it is the Ten Commandments put inside their hearts through the Holy Spirit. So therefore Pentecost is not only the birth of the nation, it is also the birth of the church. So now we got the New Israel. Last time was the birth of the Old Israel, now is the birth of the New Israel (church). These are fantastic significance, that is why God made them wait for so many days until the coming of the Holy Spirit and then we offers the two pieces of bread and one will be gentile and one will be Jew together to God, the Old Testament believers and New Testament believers.

The three phenomenon that characterize the coming of the Holy Spirit are

1. Huge sound of a rushing wind.
2. Fire.
3. Speaking in tongues.

We have to understand a little bit a background of the Bible to understand why there are these three phenomenons that are there.

Huge Sound of Wind:

The wind and the sound of wind represents God, because we actually see in genesis chapter 1 spirit of God is hovering over the waters like a wind. When God breathes into Adam to make him come alive from dust he breathes in.

John 3:8 The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit." **9**
Nicodemus said to him, "How can these things be?"

Here the wind blows as will on all the disciples (120) all there at that particular time. So it is very significant.

Tongues of Fire on Them:

Fire is very important sign of God. In Genesis chapter 15 when God renewed his covenant with Abraham, they cut pieces of animals and put them on either side of a ravine and then when you make promises in the Old Testament you are supposed to cut animals into half and then you walk through the two halves. This is to represent that if you go away from this promise you will be cut in half. Abraham was supposed to walk through as well as God, but actually God walk through. A blazing fire, a flaming torch and a smoking fire pot going in between to show that God alone will fulfill the covenant, Abraham does not. So the flaming torch is a sign of God. When Israel left Egypt at night time God was leading them as flaming pillar of fire. The whole mountain of Sinai was covered with fire, earthquake and smoke and if you will touch the base of the mountain you will die, the fire is actually fatal.

Vision of Daniel looking at the throne of God and the throne of God says ancient of days took his seat.

Daniel 7: **9**“As I looked, thrones were placed, and the Ancient of Days took his seat; his clothing was white as snow, and the hair of his head like pure wool; his throne was fiery flames; its wheels were burning fire.

So appearance of God is fire. Moses was in a desert God met him there in a burning bush. So fire is always an emblematic of God. Here we have fire on every single believer. It is as if every single believer is a burning bush that does not get burnt up. On Sinai if you will touch the mountain you will get burnt up, you will die but here in the New Testament because of Jesus's death you actually have fire engulfing people but they don't get burnt up. They actually have the indwelling presence of God and fire is important because fire is God coming upon you, so that you can therefore when the breath of God enters us we breathe out some of what God gives us, we testify about Jesus. Fire is warm and we will have the warmth of his presence in our lives. Jesus Christ when he was baptized, the Holy Spirit descended, this is my beloved son. So when the Holy Spirit descends on us, on the people of God at Pentecost, it is the same thing. They are then declared sons of the living God. The other part of God's warmth is we look at

Romans 5:5 and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.

So the Holy Spirit's job not only is to give us the light of revelation about God but it also gives warmth of His love. It is like two people walking, father and son. They are in a relationship. He holds his son's hand and halfway he stops and he hugs his son. In hugging the son he expresses that relationship and the Holy Spirit comes in our hearts with warmth of expression that you have this assurance that God loves you.

Different Languages:

At tower of Babylon everybody was building a tower and suddenly their languages differ. In this situation they are all speaking in different languages but they actually are understood. In contrast this to other religions. The Quran is only written in one language. If we translate the Quran to English they say that is not the Quran because the Quran has to be read, has to be understood, has to be recited in a particular language and it is Arabic. Throughout the world they all have only one culture. It is not just Arabic language; it is also an Arabic culture, so they all dress wherever they are whether in France or where else it is just one culture. In Christianity it is all over and yet it is intelligible. So right after the back on Acts chapter 2 you know that Christianity is a faith for the entire world because each one understands the language, the gospel in its own language.

Acts 2:4 And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.

11 both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians—we hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God.”

So these are actual languages. When we look at Book of Corinthians where Paul talks about tongues there.

1-Cor 14:**13** Therefore, one who speaks in a tongue should pray that he may interpret. **14** For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays but my mind is unfruitful. **15** What am I to do? I will pray with my spirit, but I will pray with my mind also; I will sing praise with my spirit, but I will sing with my mind also. **16** Otherwise, if you give thanks with your spirit, how can anyone in the position of an outsider say "Amen" to your thanksgiving when he does not know what you are saying?

So the tongue is in the Corinthian church, years later on it is all written in the AD 55 or 60. They tongues they spoke in that church are not the same. It seems as if the Corinthians tongues are a little bit different, so that actually need another gift or interpretation to actually interpret it. Acts chapter 2 is probably the only place where we actually see people say, "I recognize this language". The rest in Acts they just speak in different tongues, we don't know what these tongues were. Is it Corinthian type of tongues or is the Acts chapter 2 type of tongues? So we are not quite clear.

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

Act 2:17 "And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will **pour out** my Spirit on all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams;

Act 10:47 "Can anyone withhold water for baptizing these people, who have **received** the Holy Spirit just as we have?"

Filled, baptized, poured, received they are all interchangeable words. There is nothing special about it. Then a person who has received initial filling of the Holy Spirit can have repeated fresh subsequent filling to empower them for a specific task. This is if you look through the span of Acts you will see that.

Acts 4 Peter were answering the people who were persecuting them, the Jewish Pharisees and he said.

Act 4:7 And when they had set them in the midst, they inquired, "By what power or by what name did you do this?" **8** Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, "Rulers of the people and elders, **9** if we are being examined today concerning a good deed done to a crippled man, by what means this man has been healed,

Is it another filling or is it referring to old filling. Peter was filled with the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, now in Acts 4 fill again. This means that we can have actually repeated filling.

All the disciples were threatened by the authorities and they all received the Holy Spirit in Acts chapter 2. In chapter 4 when they prayed the place where they were gathered were shaken and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, continue to speak the word of God with boldness. They were filled in Acts chapter 2, in Acts chapter 4 facing persecution they filled again. So there is repeat filling.

Stephen was one of the first deacons.

3 Therefore, brothers, pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we will appoint to this duty.

It means godly people. Full of spirit means he must have been filled, it could have happened at Pentecost and then they kill him.

Act 7:55 But he, full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. **56** And he said, "Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God."

Here you have Stephen filled at Pentecost, Acts 7 facing death, sees a vision and in that vision he was filled with the Holy Spirit. So there is repeated filling along the way.

Act 13:49 And the word of the Lord was spreading throughout the whole region. **50** But the Jews incited the devout women of high standing and the leading men of the city, stirred up persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and drove them out of their district. **51** But they shook off the dust from their feet against them and went to Iconium. **52** And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.

They were filled at Pentecost, Acts 13 filled again. There is repeat filling all the time. Samson in the Old Testament had his eyes plucked out. Last minute he was filled with the Holy Spirit and he broke the pillars and brought the temple down. So the filling of the Holy Spirit occurs again and again. In the New Testament it is about 14 times but 9 times in Acts and every time in Acts that people immediately begin to testify about Jesus. The filling was for a particular purpose, it is not to make you look good, it is to make Jesus look good.

Charles Parham in the Midwestern Kansas, started the Pentecostal movement where he believes that the speaking in tongues and the baptism of Holy Spirit or filling of the Holy Spirit is a separate thing that occurs. He had a black student called William Seamore and together they started the Pentecostal revival. It is about one of the fastest growing churches in the world. The controversy is this is the normal route which we discuss in most evangelical churches, conversion. When you are converted the Holy Spirit enters you then you are filled with the spirit subsequently. What they believe is you have got convergence and the Holy Spirit is imparted but actually not really, you need another second experience called the Baptism of Holy Spirit and when this Baptism of Holy spirit comes in then you will have the power to live for him and then you have tongues but you can also have subsequent filling as well. So they are distinctive between most evangelical churches is that they actually have a second experience which is then experience exhibited by tongues. So without this you don't have the power. Let's look at the scripture and see whether it is true.

1. Jerusalem church Acts 1
2. Samaritan church Acts 8
3. Ephesian church Acts 19.

This is the basis of the doctrine. Here you have conversion, a period where there is faith but no spirit and then impartation of the spirit and then tongues. The disciples at ascension had belief, they were believers, they haven't had the Holy Spirit, Pentecost came they got energized, they got the spirit. It happened to Ephesian church; it happened to the Samaritan church. So therefore when you see this happens it applies to you.

Now if we look at gentile conversion.

Acts 10, Peter goes to Cornelius and his people and he was preaching and in the half way the Holy Spirit jumped on every one who heard the word and all the believers among the circumcise that come with Peter were amazed, Holy Spirit was poured even upon gentiles. They were hearing them speaking in tongues extoling God. So there the program is different. The early disciples they have conversion first, baptism first then they get the baptism of Holy Spirit. Now you got gentiles before they even get baptism or water baptism they got converted, they got baptism of Holy Spirit together.

Paul's conversion: He was struck blind and then he actually got the Holy Spirit, got the conversion at that time when Ananias's touched him and then Ananias said, you better go and mention you have water baptism. So the Holy Spirit baptism comes first and then only the water baptism and he mentioned no tongues. He only mentioned in 1-Corinthians later on about his tongues. Acts never mentions about Paul speaking in tongues.

In the whole of New Testament there is no noun, I will baptize you with the Holy Spirit but there is no such thing as the baptism of the Holy Spirit as a noun. It is always a verb, I will baptize you. So the Holy Spirit is usually used only for the initial reception of the Holy Spirit. Filling of the Holy Spirit is basically a repeat thing.

If we look at Acts 11:

As I remember the word of God, how he said John baptized with water but you will be baptized with Holy Spirit then if God gave the same gift to them as he gave to us when we believe, who was I to stand in God's way.

So here we see very clearly, when you are baptized in Holy Spirit it is when we believed.

Acts 2: 'And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams;

So baptism of the Holy Spirit is an initial filling of the Holy Spirit. All Christians have the spirit,

Romans, anyone who does not have the spirit of Christ, does not belong to him.

1-Corinthians, one spirit we are all baptized in one body.

Baptism of spirit must manifest tongues. When you get this second experience then you must have tongues, you don't have means you are not Christian.

Early church has water baptism, impartation of spirit. This is a Jerusalem church; Acts 1, Ephesian church Acts 19. Samaritan church Acts 8, exactly same model water baptism, conversion, impartation of spirit, Acts chapter 2 they got tongues, impartation of spirit but no tongues. Samaritan church don't have tongues or may be Luke forgot to write but Luke is a doctor he is very precise. He is not going to omit details like that. So here we actually have a situation where people have an impartation of spirit but there were no tongues. So this is descriptive, so that is a problem. When you come to narratives, it describes but it is not necessary prescriptive.

Acts 8:17 They laid hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit.

So there are no tongues at all. Now when you look at 1-Corinthians 12 tells you,

7 To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. 8 For to one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, 9 to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, 10 to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. 11 All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills.

If we want to speak in tongues we can pray for it but it is up to the spirit to what it give you and just because you don't have it does not mean you are not filled with a Holy Spirit. It is absolutely untrue. So this tells you that there are different gifts.

Then on the other side the conservative looking at the Church of England or Anglicans and all that, even some Baptist in this church. They will tell you there are no more gifts, no more spiritual gifts, like prophesy or tongues, everything stopped already and they will say there is an apostolic foundations, the apostles have now built the foundation of the church on the Bible and so therefore the Bible is there, no new revelation so no need to have any more prophesy and tongues interpreted is actually prophesy, so therefore no need to have any more tongues. This is very hard to sustain because if we look at Ephesian chapter 4

11 And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, 12 to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, 13 until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ,

Do today we have any more apostles? The argument if you do not have any apostles and then you don't really have those Old Testament prophets where you actually write scripture. So if these two are gone they say then all the rest are gone. There are pastor teachers, there are also evangelists. So how can you say all gifts are gone? If we say all gifts are gone you must take away everything isn't it. The whole lot must go. So you still need this and this to build up the body. So the people who say there are no gifts, I think there is something wrong with

that theology, very hard to sustain the argument. They say the apostolic foundation is gone, it is already laid. They are the ones with all the gifts, they are the ones with all the miracles but if you look at the Book of Acts, other people also have miracles, Philip. So therefore the miracle working is not just with the apostles, it is with other people as well. So therefore the miracle working is not just with the apostle it is with other people as well. So therefore it is a gift that is given to the entire church. So you can't say apostles have died and there are no more gifts for the whole church.

Not all prophets write into the Bible, Agabus in the New Testament prophesized that Paul will be captured and sent to Rome and he got thereabout couple of other prophets described. In the Old Testament there were schools and bands of prophets, Obadiah saved 100 prophets. Do you see any of them write scripture? None. So there are people who actually prophesized but the prophecy does not come into the scripture. So just because scripture canon is closed does not mean that there are no other prophets. Then these people think tongues are psychological. Again I think Paul ask for gifts and he ask you to prophesize, he ask you to ask for these gifts. So if they are all gone he wouldn't have asked you to ask for it.

1Cor 13:8 Love never ends. As for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away. **9** For we know in part and we prophesy in part, **10** but when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away.

Now before the perfect comes there are gaps, so we need prophesy. So the prophesy will still be there. Now the purpose of the gift is actually to share the gospel. If you look here all these different people heard them talking,

Act 2:11 both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians—we hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God."

In Greek it is Megalia which is all the might. In those languages that they receive they were talking about the mighty works of God (death and resurrection of Jesus Christ). So therefore the Holy Spirit's job is that the moment he hits you, you start telling people about Jesus died for you and Jesus rose for you. It is automatic, it just comes. That is the work of the spirit. Paul writes to Romans:

Rom 1:1 Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God,

5 through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the **obedience of faith** for the sake of his name among all the nations,

You share about the gospel event so the people will obey and have faith. So God's witness points to Jesus. The Holy Spirit makes us tell people what God has done and Jesus, it transforms us so that we have spiritual gifts, spiritual lives so that people can see that we become the message. When Holy Spirit comes we become the message. I mean what you say and how you live they are two things and that is the most important thing. If you are thinking of spiritual gifts just to show how clever and how spiritual you are that is actually the opposite of what you suppose to do because after that then your gospel witness reduces

and is basically causes lot of strife. One of the problems when the Pentecostal movement started, they started reveling in only speaking in tongues, worship must be in tongues, everything be in tongues, but people don't understand what you are speaking. If you don't interpret people cannot hear the gospel. The gospel is important to speak. If people don't understand the gospel then you are wasting your time. So people use to wrap off on all these tongues to show that they have power. The power comes in the gospel touching people's life. It is not impressing people how holy you are because you can speak in tongues and jump up and down that is not the issue. Every time the Holy Spirit comes people are telling the gospel. The bottom line is how much of the gospel you have told people. The whole Book of Acts is like that.

12 And all were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "What does this mean?" 13 But others mocking said, "They are filled with new wine."

A lot of people associated filled with the spirit with being drunk, Paul says don't get drunk with wine but be filled with the spirit. So drinking wine and being filled with the spirit have similar characteristic. Alcohol numbs our senses, the reality suppresses, all the stress in life, all the fears you have in life, they all suppress because in all you think you are king of the world. When you are filled with the spirit using the same analogy, spiritual reality is revealed. Alcohol suppresses the reality, but Spirit reveals the reality which we cannot see and then you become very bold.

Elisha was a prophet and the Syrian king wanted to send an assassination squad to kill him. They sent a huge army to get him at Dothan. This is the same place where they dump Joseph into a hole and he was telling his servant. The servant says, there are 1000 of troops outside; they are going to come and kill you. Then Elisha said to him, look at the hills there are thousands and millions of angels and the servant saw it. And then he was not afraid anymore and in fact they struck all this army down here blind.

Now the different in the Holy Spirit if we look at the Book of Acts is that there are going to be surrounded by enemies, incarcerated tortured, threatened. When Holy Spirit fills them Peter who was afraid previously, now he can stand in front of high priest stand up and say, you guys killed him, because he sees Jesus right next to him. Stephen being stoned, not afraid, why full of Holy Spirit he saw Jesus standing next to God.

Seek the filling of God's Holy Spirit because that filling of Holy Spirit will create in you an awareness of the spiritual reality. The problems will be there, you will see the reality of Jesus Christ and that will transform your life and that will make you bold to witness that is the secret.