

The Baptism of the Holy Spirit, Part 2

Scripture: Acts 2:5–13

Code: 1704

INTRODUCTION

In the second chapter of Acts we see two great promises come to pass: the birth of the church and the coming of the Spirit. In Matthew 16:18 Christ says, "I will build my church, and the gates of hades shall not prevail against it." In John 14:16-17 the Lord says, "I will pray [to] the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever; even the Spirit of truth ... ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." Acts 2:1-13 chronicles the fulfillment of those two promises.

REVIEW

I. THE EVIDENCE OF THE SPIRIT'S COMING (vv. 1-4)

A. The Specifics of the Spirit's Arrival (v. 1)

B. The Signs of the Spirit's Arrival (vv. 2-4)

1. The wind (v. 2)

2. The fire (v. 3) What Does It Mean to Be Filled with the Spirit?

Throughout the New Testament the word filled is used many times. It commonly refers to something that overpowers everything else. For example, Acts 6:5 says Stephen was a man filled with faith. His overwhelming belief in God carried him through the horrible stoning that led to his death in Acts 7:58-60. Luke 6:11 describes the scribes and Pharisees as being filled with anger. When a person is filled with fury, that emotion dominates all others. First Corinthians 13 and 1 John 3 teach the importance of being filled with love to the point it is preeminent in all you do.

Being filled with the Holy Spirit means you're yielding totally to the Spirit's control in your life. If you're a Christian you already have the baptism of the Spirit (1 Cor. 12:13); He lives within you (Rom. 8:9). That happened at salvation. But the filling of the Spirit can come and go. Paul says in Ephesians 5:18 to always be filled with the Spirit.

Ephesians 5:19; 6:9 gives the results of being filled with the Spirit. Colossians 3:16; 4:1 states that the same results will happen if you "let the word of Christ dwell in you richly" (Col. 3:16). So to be filled with the Spirit you need to let the Word of Christ saturate your mind.

LESSON

3. The tongues (v. 4)

"They were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."

a) Explaining the phenomena of speaking in tongues When the people in the room became filled with the Spirit, they began speaking in tongues, a manifestation of that reality. The Greek word translated "tongues" (glossa) means "language." In verse 11 the word clearly refers to various dialects. So gibberish or ecstatic speech wasn't present in Acts 2, but real languages and dialects. Verses 9-11 specify which languages were being spoken. Notice that the languages came as a result of being filled with the Spirit. Many advocate that tongues come as a result of being baptized in the Spirit. But that's not what happened in Acts 2. Baptism in the Spirit is a nonexperiential event. The phenomena of speaking in tongues was a special event for that era. Just because it happened at the birth of the

church doesn't mean tongues will be present each time you're filled with the Spirit. If you look at the list of results Paul gives from being filled with the Spirit (Eph. 5:19; 6:9), you'll notice that tongues--speaking in other languages--isn't included. Husbands and wives will love each other, so will parents and children. Employers and employees will have good working relations. But by the time the book of Ephesians was written, tongues were not a manifestation of the filling of the Spirit anymore.

Inconsistent Testimony Some of those who believe the filling of the Spirit enables them to speak in tongues don't manifest the results listed in Ephesians 5:19; 6:9. They claim to speak in tongues but don't submit to their husbands or fail to love their wives in a sacrificial way. Some provoke their children to anger. Others are not good employers or employees. If such people really were filled with the Spirit, it would be manifest in right relationships with the significant people in their lives.^{b)}

Examining the purpose of speaking in tongues The miracle of speaking in tongues had a strategic purpose in Acts 2. At that time Jewish people from all over the world were in Jerusalem for the feast of Pentecost. We are told that when Titus besieged Jerusalem, an event that occurred around Passover, there were approximately three million people in the city. First century Jewish historian Josephus also mentions that great multitudes of Jews from other nations were present in Jerusalem for the feast of Pentecost (*Wars* II.iii.1). As we'll see later, God used this speaking in other languages to help the foreign Jews hear about Him in their native languages. The purpose of tongues becomes more apparent as we look further in the book of Acts.

(1) **The Samaritans in Acts 8** Verses 14-17 say, "When the apostles who were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John, who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Spirit; for as yet he was fallen upon none of them; only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit." Peter and John went to visit a group of Samaritans. Now the Jewish people despised the Samaritans because they were descendents of Jews who had intermarried with Gentiles. In fact, the Jews wouldn't even travel through Samaria; that's how intense their hatred was. By the time of Acts 8, the gospel message had spread from Jerusalem to Samaria. Some Samaritans were becoming Christians. The tendency of the Jewish people would have been to see the Samaritans as second-class Christians. To keep that from happening, the Holy Spirit did something special. He allowed the Samaritans to become converted without being baptized into the body of Christ. He wanted some important Jews to be present when that happened. That way the Jews would realize the Samaritans were one with them. Peter and John were two important Jewish Christians at the time, and it wasn't until their arrival in Samaria that the Holy Spirit came. The Spirit wanted Peter and John to testify that the Samaritans were one in the body of Christ with the Jews. I believe the Samaritans spoke in tongues when they received the baptism and filling of the Spirit; otherwise the apostles would have no way of confirming that the Jews and Samaritans were being brought into one body.

(2) **The Gentiles in Acts 10** In Acts 10 Peter visits a Gentile named Cornelius. The gospel message was really spreading by now. Verses 44-46 say that while Peter was speaking to him and his family, "the Holy Spirit fell on all them who heard the word. And they of the circumcision who believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Spirit. For they heard them speak with tongues." The Jewish believers who were with Peter were astonished to see the Gentiles receive the Holy Spirit. In this instance, the tongues weren't for communicating so much as they were for evidence that the Gentiles were also part of the church.

In Acts 11 Peter recounts to his fellow apostles the miraculous event of Acts 10: "As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell on them, as on us at the beginning. Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit. Forasmuch then, as God gave them the same gift as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, what was I, that I could withstand God?" (vv. 15-17). That last statement shows there was no way to deny that the Gentiles had received the Holy Spirit. Had it happened any other way, Peter might not have believed it.

When Peter told the Jerusalem Council what happened to the Gentiles, some of the

Pharisees raised objections. The council met together to decide if the Gentiles could really be considered a part of the church. Acts 15:6-9 says, "The apostles and elders came together to consider of this matter. And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up, and said unto them, Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe. And God, who knoweth the hearts, bore them witness, giving them the Holy Spirit, even as he did unto us; and put no difference between us and them" (emphasis added). The reason the Gentiles received the Holy Spirit the same way the Jews did in Acts 2 was to confirm that they too were part of the church. Speaking in tongues was the visible proof.

(3) John the Baptist's disciples in Acts 19 By the time we reach Acts 19 there's one other group of people that hadn't been included in the body of Christ: a little group of twelve Old Testament saints who had been baptized by John the Baptist. They didn't know Christ had risen and sent the Holy Spirit. Verses 1-4 say, "It came to pass that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper borders came to Ephesus and, finding certain disciples, he said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Spirit since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there is any Holy Spirit. And he said unto them, Unto what, then, were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism. Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people that they should believe on him who should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus." At that point, Paul went on to share about Christ. Verses 5-6 continue, "When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke with tongues, and prophesied." As with the Samaritans in Acts 8 and the Gentiles in Acts 10, the Spirit made clear to an apostolic witness that the disciples of John the Baptist were also part of the church. Through the book of Acts you can see the marvelous genius of the Holy Spirit in putting together the body of Christ. There no one part of the body that can say, "We have something you don't have." Once it was proven that Jews, Samaritans, Gentiles, and the remnant of Old Testament saints could come into the body of Christ, there was no need for the filling of the Spirit to be accompanied by tongues- speaking. In Ephesians 2 Paul speaks of Jew and Gentile being made one in the Lord: Christ "is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us" (v. 14). So everyone who became a Christian from Acts 19 onward was placed into the body by the baptism of the Spirit without any need for external confirmation. Before that the Spirit gave the gift of speaking in tongues to the different parts of the church--in the presence of the apostles--that there might not be any question about who belonged where. The unity of the body is now secure. What happened in the book of Acts is not a pattern for us today. It's not doctrinal teaching; it's the historical record of the transition that took place during the birth of the church. We can't say, "If you're a Samaritan, you don't get the Spirit until so many days after receiving Christ." By the time Paul wrote his epistles, doctrine regarding the Holy Spirit was clearly defined. At the point of salvation, every believer receives the Spirit and is placed into the body by the baptism of the Spirit (1 Cor. 12:13).c)

Evaluating the power of speaking in tongues Acts 2:4 says that the people who were filled with the Spirit on the day of Pentecost "began to speak with tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." It was the Holy Spirit who controlled the speakers. An individual who is filled with the Spirit is controlled by the Spirit. How long does the filling of the Spirit last? As long as your life is yielded to the Holy Spirit. That's a constant discipline. However, don't let that make you worry about the future; you can yield only for the present moment anyway. You can't live in the future. Just yield in the present moment you live in, and when it's past, you can yield in what's to come. Don't think, How can I yield my life to the Spirit for eighty years? Acts 2:1-4 gives the evidence of the Spirit's coming. The people in the room heard the sound like a wind, saw cloven tongues that appeared to be like fire, and spoke the different languages. There was no question that the Holy Spirit had come. The promise of Jesus came true. Every Christian today possesses the Holy Spirit. Because the Spirit dwells within us, we are able to see God work within us "exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think" (Eph.

3:20). The Purpose of Miracles in the Apostolic Era When the people in Acts 2 spoke in different languages, they were speaking of the wonderful works of God (Acts 2:11). They weren't preaching the gospel. The preaching came later on in chapter 2 when Peter arose to speak (vv. 14-40). God was using the different languages to get the attention of unbelieving Jews nearby. He wanted them to realize that something supernatural was happening. Then they would know that Peter's preaching was also from a divine source. In the earliest days of the church, the apostles' preaching was always accompanied by signs, wonders, and mighty deeds. Speaking in tongues didn't substitute for preaching, nor did any of the other miracles. The miraculous events simply preceded the preaching to confirm its supernatural origin. Second Corinthians 12:12 says, "Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds." Hebrews 2:3 says, "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him." How did the apostles confirm their message? Verse 4 says God bore them witness "both with signs and wonders, and with diverse miracles and gifts of the Holy Spirit." The miraculous gifts were to confirm the divine source of the apostles' message. Can Missionaries Acquire New Languages Overnight? If the gift of tongues is still supposed to be present in the church, as some say, then something is terribly wrong with the church. Commentator Albert Barnes said, "The gift of miracles is withdrawn. The apostles, by that miracle, simply were empowered to speak other languages. That power must still be had if the gospel is to be preached. But it is now to be obtained, not by miracle, but by slow and careful study and toil" (Notes on the New Testament--Acts [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1971], p. 23). If the gift of speaking different languages still exists, then for some strange reason, God is requiring missionaries to take many years of language study so they can preach the gospel in other countries. He's making it hard for us to reach out to other countries. But why would God require years of intense study to fulfill the Great Commission when He could simply give the gift of languages? It would seem that if the gift still existed, that's what would happen. But since it doesn't, we need to study other languages. We can't make the experience in Acts 2 the norm for all Christians. It happened at a special time among certain people for a specific reason. An organization like Wycliffe Bible Translators would be more than glad if the gift of speaking other languages were still present because many of its missionaries spend years laboring to translate the gospel into other languages.

II. THE EFFECT OF THE SPIRIT'S COMING (vv. 5-11)

A. The Crowd (v. 5)

"There were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven."

The latter half of that verse is an idiomatic statement; it means there were Jews from many other countries present in Jerusalem. Who were they? The verse says they were devout men. The Greek word translated "devout" (eulabeis) means "cautious." They were reverent; they came to Jerusalem for the feast of Pentecost because they didn't want to offend the Lord. Proverbs 9:10 says, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom."

B. The Confusion (vv. 6-8)

1. The sound that attracted them (v. 6a)

"Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together."

What was the noise that was heard abroad? Some say it's the speaking in different languages, mentioned later in verse 6. However the literal translation of the Greek text is, "But this sound [Gk., phones, which is singular] having come, the multitude came together." Whatever they heard, it was a single sound. The Greek verb genomenes is in that statement, and indicates that the sound was heard at one specific time. The only time a single sound occurred at a specific time was when the sound like a mighty wind was heard earlier in verse 2. So the crowd was drawn by that great sound.

2. The speech that amazed them (vv. 6b-8)

"[They] were confounded, because every man heard them speak in his own language. And they

were all amazed and marveled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these who speak Galilaeans? And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?"

When the crowd gathered to see what was happening, they heard the apostles and their friends speaking different languages.

They were confounded--the Greek root word means "to pour together." The foreign Jews were all mixed up. They were shocked to hear the people in the room speaking in their own languages.

What amazed them even more was that the speakers were Galileans. The Jews of that time didn't have very high regard for Galilee. They viewed Galileans as uneducated people. In John 1:46 Nathanael says, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" (Nazareth was one of the cities in Galilee.) When Jesus told the Jews He was a prophet from Galilee, they said, "Search, and look; for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet" (John 7:52).

The Galileans had a distinct dialect that gave away their background. Some people said they knew Peter was one of Christ's disciples because of his speech (Matt. 26:73). The Galileans who were speaking in other languages were speaking as if those languages had been their native tongue (Acts 2:8). Evidently their dialect didn't impede on what was happening. The foreign Jews were dumbfounded; there was no logical explanation for what was happening.

C. The Communication (vv. 9-11)

1. The languages (vv. 9-11a)

"Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judaea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia, Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and sojourners of Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans, and Arabians."

That is the roll call of languages spoken by those who were filled with the Spirit. Among the people who recognized their native languages were Jews from Asia Minor, Egypt, and Rome. There were proselytes, who were converts of Judaism. There were people from the island of Crete, as well as Arabians from the peninsula between the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf.

2. The message (v. 11b)

"We do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God."

There's no evidence that those who were speaking in tongues were proclaiming the gospel; we simply read that they declared the wonderful works of God. Why is that? Once the Spirit attracted the attention of the visiting Jews through the wind-like sound and the varying languages, the foreign Jews had two choices: They could attribute the miracle to Satan or to God. Because the people speaking in tongues were praising God, that eliminated the possibility of it being a miracle of Satan. The Holy Spirit had the people who were speaking in tongues praise God so that the foreign Jews would know God was working in their midst. Once that became obvious, Peter could get up and preach. They would know Peter's words would also be from God. What a beautiful strategy for introducing people to Christ!

What exactly does it mean to speak about the wonderful works of God? That was a Jewish custom of the time; it meant reciting from Scripture the miraculous things God had done. We see this practice evident in Exodus 15:11, where we read, "Who is like unto thee, O Lord ... doing wonders?" In Psalm 26:6-7 David says, "I will wash mine hands in innocence ... that I may make known with the voice of thanksgiving, and tell of all thy wondrous works." Psalm 40:5 says, "Many, O Lord, my God, are thy wonderful works which thou hast done." Psalm 77:11 says, "I will remember the works of the Lord; surely I will remember thy wonders of old." In Isaiah 25:1 we read, "O Lord, thou art my God; I will exalt thee, I will praise thy name; for thou hast done wonderful things."

Those who were speaking in tongues in Acts 2 were praising God. This was an excellent setup for Peter, who stood up in verse 14 to proclaim the gospel. Even during his sermon, Peter spoke from the Old Testament and connected all that he said with God. In verse 17 he quotes the prophet Joel, and in verses 22-24 proclaims that Jesus was approved by God, delivered by God, and raised by God. In verse 30 he says Jesus was promised by God, and in verse 33 that Jesus was exalted by

God. Then he concluded by saying, "Therefore, let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ" (v. 36).

The Holy Spirit had a specific strategy in mind in Acts 2. The events that took place didn't happen haphazardly. The ultimate end of the baptism and filling with the Spirit and the speaking in different languages was to open the door for Peter to preach the gospel.

III. THE EXPLANATION OF THE SPIRIT'S COMING (vv. 12-13)

The crowd listening to the apostles was comprised of unbelieving Jews. Later in Acts 2 we read that even with the miraculous evidence they saw, some still rejected Christ. They were the kind who say, "I've made up my mind; don't confuse me with the facts." You can give such people all kinds of evidence but they still won't believe the truth. That proves bringing people to salvation is not just a matter of how well we argue. God's sovereignty is involved in a person's salvation because it is the Spirit who breaks down a person's resistance to Christ. How did the crowd in Acts 2 respond?

A. The Curiosity (v. 12)

"And they were all amazed, and were perplexed, saying one to another, What meaneth this?"

The crowd didn't yet understand what was happening because the gospel hadn't been preached yet. The multitude of languages was only a sign to get them to listen. They all wanted to know what was going on.

B. The Callousness (v. 13)

"Others, mocking, said, These men are full of new wine."

This response from some members of the crowd wasn't simply a suggestion explaining what was happening; it was mockery. The Greek word translated "wine" makes clear the mockery. Oinos refers to strong, fermented wine. When a person has had so much of it, there's no question he is drunk. But the Greek word used here (aleukos) refers to sweet, freshly pressed grape juice. So the callous observers were saying, "These men are such babies that when they take a little sip of grape juice, they become drunk. Look at them!" They attributed the multiplicity of languages from Galilean speakers about the wonderful works of God to drunkenness. What blindness! To them, the events taking place were a joke. The Jewish people who thought themselves wise didn't know that God chose the foolish things of the world to confound them (1 Cor. 1:27). In John 8 Jesus says the Jewish religious leaders didn't understand Him because He spoke the truth (vv. 43, 45). They were of their father the devil (v. 44).

The mockery of Acts 2:13 was only the beginning of rejection from callous Jews. In Acts 4:7 such men questioned the apostles, in Acts 4:17 they threatened them, in Acts 5:18 they imprisoned them, in Acts 5:40 they beat them, and in Acts 7:58 they stoned Stephen. The gospel either draws people to Christ or causes them to reject Him with hatred. That's seen throughout the book of Acts.

CONCLUSION

The Spirit of God has been given to you just as He was given to the apostles on the day of Pentecost. He can work through you--not in the miraculous way He did in Acts 2, but in a sense that is indeed miraculous. He will work through you as you yield to Him, allowing Him to fill you and control your life. If you want to be an effective Christian, begin where the Bible says to begin: be continually filled with the Spirit. The power is already in you; it just needs to be turned on by yielding to it. Then you'll see God work through your life in a way that prepares others to receive God. Without that preparation by the Spirit--without the evidence of God in your life--you won't earn from others the right to speak about Him. If Peter had spoken without the miracles that preceded his sermon, he would have probably been stoned on the spot. Let the Spirit control your life so that you live in a way that makes others willing to hear you.

Focusing on the Facts

1. Explain what it means to be filled with the Spirit. What is being filled with the Spirit analogous to?
2. What does the Greek word translated "tongues" in Acts 2:4 mean?
3. Using Ephesians 5:19; 6:9, what is one way we can know speaking in tongues accompanied the filling of the Spirit only at the birth of the church?
4. Why did God wait until Peter and John arrived in Samaria before He baptized the Samaritans with the Holy Spirit?
5. How did some Pharisees respond in Acts 15 when Peter told them Gentiles were being baptized with the Spirit? What was Peter's defense (Acts 15:7-9)?
6. What was the purpose of tongues-speaking in Acts 8, 10, and 19?
7. When the men in Acts 2:4 spoke in tongues, what were they declaring? Why?
8. What was the purpose of miraculous gifts according to Hebrews 2:3- 4?
9. What specifically confounded the foreign Jews in Acts 2:6-8? For what two reasons were they surprised about the speakers being Galileans?
10. Why did the Holy Spirit have the people speaking in different languages praise God? How did that help Peter's sermon, which came soon after?
11. How did the crowd respond to the miraculous events in Acts 2:1-11?
12. Using verses from the book of Acts, how did the callous Jews slowly worsen in their attitude toward the apostles and their followers?
13. Let the Spirit _____ your life so that you live in a way that makes others willing to _____ .

Pondering the Principles

1. To be filled with the Spirit is the same as letting the Word of Christ dwell in you richly (Col. 3:16). Some of the different ways you can do that are going to a church that teaches the Bible, attending a Bible study, reading God's Word daily, meditating on what you learn from the Bible, memorizing verses, and reading good Christian books that explain how to apply Scripture to your life. Which of those things are you already doing right now? Are there any you're not that you should be? Write down the names of some Christians you know who are letting God's Word saturate their lives. How are they accomplishing that? Get together with them, and see if you can share ideas with one another on other good ways to let God's Word have more influence on your lives.
2. Using your answers from the third and sixth Focusing on the Facts questions, how would you answer someone who says that the filling with the Spirit is always accompanied by speaking in tongues?

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