



Acts 2

An OCF Bible Study

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What was Pentecost (v. 1)? Known as Shavuot (or Weeks) in the Old Testament, “Pentecost” is a Greek word meaning “fifty.” Falling on the fiftieth day after Passover, this Jewish wheat harvest festival was one of three annual feasts that every Jewish male was required to attend (Exodus 34:22-23).

With all Jewish males required to make the yearly pilgrimage to Jerusalem for these three feasts, what do you think Jerusalem must have looked like then? Jews from all over the known world choked the city. It has been estimated that the population of Jerusalem swelled from 50,000 to 250,000.

They were together in one place (vv. 1-4). Who are “they”? The believers mentioned in Acts 1:15—Galileans – Palestinian Jews. **What was the first thing that happened?** The sound like the blowing of a vicious wind came from heaven (not actual wind). **Second?** (What seemed to be) Individual tongues of fire that came to rest on each of them. **Next?** They were filled with the Holy Spirit—all 120 of them.

What happened to them when they received the Holy Spirit (v. 4)? They were given the ability to speak actual foreign languages that they had never learned, which was clearly a supernatural work of the Spirit—as the Spirit enabled them (New International Version). The events of Pentecost marked the grand entrance of the Holy Spirit onto the world scene. They all received the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit had been present during Old Testament times but what was different now? The Holy Spirit came upon men in the Old Testament on a temporary basis for a specific purpose or a specific length of time, but not as an abiding resident. He had previously been with the disciples but now He took up His residence in them on a permanent basis (John 14:17).

How did the crowd react (vv. 7-13)? They were amazed to discover Galileans speaking in the native languages of the remote regions from which they had come. Some were amazed, perplexed and inquisitive. Others ridiculed them for being drunk. Unregenerate men are often ready to offer a natural explanation for spiritual phenomena.

What were they saying when they spoke in tongues (v. 11)? They were declaring the wonders of God. Not calling for repentance, not proclaiming the gospel, they were praising God.

Pentecost was the only time in Acts when the Holy Spirit came with wind-like sound and fire-like appearance. What may have been the point of these outward signs? Why were they necessary? The Jews needed a spectacular initial entrance of the Holy Spirit to realize that this was what Jesus had promised. They needed convincing evidence that something supernatural had occurred. There must be no room for doubt that the promised Holy Spirit had arrived just as promised.

It is understandable why God-fearing Jews, whom the apostles asked to accept new truth in addition to their already authenticated Old Testament, would have required a sign. They would have wanted strong proof that God was now giving new revelation that seemed on the surface to contradict their Scriptures.

The baptism (initial filling) of the Holy Spirit did something God had never done before in history. It united believers with Christ in a new relationship; as fellow members of the spiritual body of Christ. This Pentecost was the birthday of the Church.

How would you describe what Peter did next (vv. 14-41)? He took on a leadership mantle and confronted the Jews with the truth about Jesus. Note that since he was talking to Jews (v. 14), he quoted the Old Testament prophet Joel—who stated that salvation is by faith alone (v. 21) —whom the Jews would be familiar with. His performance was bold and courageous, clearly the result of being empowered by the Holy Spirit.

What was the heart of his message? Jesus was Messiah (Savior) and Lord. God sent Him, you crucified Him. He rose from the dead and is now seated at the right hand of God. He has poured out the Holy Spirit. The expected response is to repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus for the forgiveness of your sins. And you too will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

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Is this the same Peter that we saw in the Gospels? The one who denied Christ three times? What's the difference? Acts 1:8—the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit. Is this the same Holy Spirit who indwells believers today?

How did the people respond (v. 37)? They were convicted—cut to the heart. They realized they had missed the Messiah. They realized they were guilty of murder—this Jesus they had slain was truly God's beloved Son. They feared God's impending and inevitable judgment. Was there any hope for them?

What was Peter's solution to their dilemma (v. 38)? Repent and be baptized.

What does repent mean? Turning away from, a changing of direction. Repentance involves a change of mind and heart first and secondarily a change of conduct. People who heard Peter on that day formerly thought of Jesus as mere man; now they were asked to change their hearts and minds and accept Him as Lord (deity) and Christ (promised Messiah). To do this would bring salvation.

The Greek word for repentance is *metanoia*, literally meaning a change of one's inner man which comes from recognizing and acknowledging one's guilt. Repentance is nothing more than taking sides with God against yourself. **Why is repentance an essential part of salvation?**

What was the end result of Peter's sermon (v. 41)? The hearts of the listeners were opened; 3,000 were saved.

Did they receive the Holy Spirit when they believed? Yes. Did they have the same wind, fire and tongues experience of Pentecost? No. **What does that say?** The events of Pentecost did not establish a set methodology for receiving the Holy Spirit. Pentecost was the only time in Acts when the Holy Spirit came with wind-like sound and fire-like appearance. Subsequent to Pentecost, there are four communities of believers in the Book of Acts (chapters 2, 8, 10 and 19), and the order of events in connection with their reception of the Holy Spirit is different in each case. God is not predictable; He does not do miracles the same way every time. Jesus opened the eyes of the blind four times, and did so each time in different ways.

When the feast of Pentecost was over, what would have been the result of these Jews from all over the known world witnessing this event? They would have returned to their homelands with a message of the supernatural events and the salvation message of Peter. They were now witnesses (1:8). They would be declaring, "Let me tell you what I have seen, heard, experienced." Which is not unlike us. We are scattered all over our world; we are witnesses, and we have the same Gospel message to proclaim.

Application: What elements of Peter's speech should be a model for the way we do evangelism?

What characterized the lives of these new converts (v. 42)? What did they do? How did they live? They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching (desire to know the truth), to fellowship, the breaking of bread (Communion) and prayer. They developed a sense of community.

Was this communism or socialism (vv. 44-45)? Neither, because it was a voluntary activity. Resources weren't distributed evenly but rather as needs arose.

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