

Series: A Study of the Book of Acts - Sermon 3

Title: The Day the Fire Fell

Text: Acts 2:1-13

January 31, 2016

NKJ Acts 2:1 When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. 2 And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. 3 Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. 4 And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. 5 And there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven. 6 And when this sound occurred, the multitude came together, and were confused, because everyone heard them speak in his own language. 7 Then they were all amazed and marveled, saying to one another, "Look, are not all these who speak Galileans? 8 "And how is it that we hear, each in our own language in which we were born? 9 "Parthians and Medes and Elamites, those dwelling in Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, 10 "Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya adjoining Cyrene, visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, 11 "Cretans and Arabs -- we hear them speaking in our own tongues the wonderful works of God." 12 So they were all amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "Whatever could this mean?" 13 Others mocking said, "They are full of new wine."

I. Introduction

An accurate understanding of what happened on the day of Pentecost is essential to our understanding of the Book of Acts. Jesus had told the disciples to remain in Jerusalem and wait for the power to carry out the Great Commission of reaching the entire world for Christ. Jesus had promised them power from on high, power that would enable them to go to the ends of the earth, to continue to preach the gospel, to face persecution. And that is just what He did, this power was so great that a sorcerer later in the book of Acts would offer to buy the secret of this power from Peter.

Last week we saw the five ways in which the disciples prepared themselves as they waited for the promise of the coming of the Holy Spirit. They prepared

- by practicing simple obedience,
- by continuing in fellowship,
- by being constant in prayer,
- by study of God's word
- by the selection and development of godly leadership.

Today it is necessary that we begin with an understanding of why the Holy Spirit came.

➤ **First - The Holy Spirit came in fulfillment of a Promise.**

The Holy Spirit came not because the believers prayed but because He had been promised (Luke 24:49). As Warren Wiersbe states, "We must not conclude that this ten-day prayer meeting brought about the miracles of Pentecost; or that we today may pray as they did and experience 'another Pentecost.' Like our Lord's death at Calvary, Pentecost was a once-for-all-event that will not be repeated. The church may experience new fillings of the Spirit, and certainly patient prayer is an essential element of spiritual power, but we would not ask for another Pentecost any more than we would ask for another Calvary."

➤ **Second - The Holy Spirit came to fulfill Prophecy.**

In verse one it says,

"When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place."

There are in fact three fulfilled prophecies,

1. The feast of the Passover.

The Passover was an observance of God's mercy to Israel in Egypt, when God brought judgment on the land of the Egyptians to convince the Pharaoh to release the children of Israel. To escape the plague on the firstborn in Egypt, the Israelites had to kill a lamb and put the blood on the door-post and the lintels of their houses, and thus were protected from God's wrath. Down through the centuries Israel had commemorated this event with the feast of the Passover. According to God's timing Christ was crucified on Passover as the complete sacrificial lamb, the once for all time sacrifice for sin. His blood protects us from God's wrath.

2. Offering of First Fruits.

On the day after the Sabbath following Passover, an offering was made to God of the first fruits of the coming harvest. In John 12:24 Jesus says of Himself,

“Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain.” (NKJV)

In 1 Corinthians 15:20 Paul says,

“But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep.” (NKJV)

3. Pentecost – Feast of the Harvest.

Fifty days after the feast of the first fruits (thus the name Pentecost meaning fifty) came the feast of the Harvest. Pentecost also occurred on the first day of the week (Sunday). God chose this day to clearly identify His church and to initiate the world wide mission, which is the preaching of the gospel to every nation.

➤ Third - The Holy Spirit came to provide Power.

The power promised by Jesus in Acts 1:8 and Luke 24:49 is a supernatural power. This promise that the disciples would receive power when the Holy Spirit came upon them (Acts 1:8) and that they would be clothed with power from on high (Luke 24:49) was a promise given to identify the Lord’s Kingdom representatives: the New Testament Church. It’s a shame that the term "Pentecostal power" has for many people become more associated with speaking in tongues than with the power provided purpose of world evangelization. Since the responsibility for kingdom work rest with the Church, than we need to have a burden for world evangelization.

Notice with me Three things about the Holy Spirits Coming,

II. The Evidence Of His Coming 2:2-4

His coming is indicated by three phenomena or signs (vv. 2-4)

1. The Wind – A Miracle of Sound (v. 2)

“And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting.”

As the Apostles’ heads were bowed in prayer a breeze began to move across them, then it more than a breeze. Literally, “an echoing sound as of a mighty wind borne violently” roared through the house like the whirr of a tornado. The phenomenon of Pentecost was spectacular. There was a loud sound, it was not the wind but it sounded like the sound of a mighty, rushing wind. Like the deep deafening roar of a 747 at take off, the noise must have shaken the house down to its foundations. This perhaps “tornado-like” sound seems to be that which drew the large crowd to the place where the apostles were gathered.

2. The Fire - A Miracle of Sight (v. 3)

“Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them.”

Through John the Baptist, God had promised a baptism with fire (Matt 3:11), and now it was here. To their amazement, the fire-like manifestation settled on each person present. This occurrence is never mentioned again in Scripture. It has never been repeated.

3. The Tongues – A Miracle of Speech (v. 4)

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

Have you ever considered how the apostles must have felt when the heavens began to roar so loudly that the sound attracted a vast multitude from all corners of Jerusalem? Surely there were some involuntary gasps and cries of surprise in the Upper room. What was it like when the flames began to flash over their heads and they began speaking languages that they had never learned?

III. The Effects Of The Spirit’s Coming Vv. 5-11

“And there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven. (6) And when this sound occurred, the multitude came together, and were confused, because everyone heard them speak in his own language. (7) Then they were all amazed and marveled, saying to one another, “Look, are not all these who speak Galileans? (8) And how is it that we hear, each in our own language in which we were born? (9) Parthians and Medes and Elamites, those dwelling in Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, (10) Phrygia (frij’-yah) and Pamphylia (pam-fil’-yah) , Egypt and the parts of Libya adjoining Cyrene (si-re’-nee) , visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, (11) Cretans (kreet’-yans) and Arabs—we hear them speaking in our own tongues the wonderful works of God.”

Luke tells us in verse 4 that *“all of them were filled with the Holy Spirit.”* The promises made by John and Jesus were now a reality.

This whole notion of "being filled with the Holy Spirit," raises the question for us about the exact nature of the "filling" that occurred. Luke uses this term in many different ways. We are told that this filling with the Holy Spirit was an event which was repeated. It is presented as an initial endowment for service (Acts 9:17). We are told variously that filling is both a process of "being filled" (13:52) or the state of being full (Acts 6:3). A person already filled can receive a fresh or a continuous filling.

The "baptism in the Holy Spirit" is, however, never used to describe a subsequent experience or a repeatable event. This once for all time event was and is passed from scriptural church to scriptural church from then until the end of time.

Luke is crystal clear that what was being spoken here was a known language, which may or may not be known to the speaker. In v. 6 for example, when the crowd heard the commotion raised by what was going on in the upper room, they gathered around. Luke does not state the details of this, but it is very likely that the 120 left the upper room and went out into the streets of Jerusalem. The Jews who had gathered for the Pentecost celebration were from every nation under heaven. Verse 6 says,

"When they heard this sound [the commotion in the upper room] a crowd came together [those Jews from the nations mentioned here] in bewilderment, because each one heard them speaking in his own language."

This is reiterated in v. 8.

"Then how is it that each of us hears them in his own native language?"

And in v. 11,

"we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues [literally our own language]."

There can be no doubt that in this passage the tongues being spoken, under the direction of the Holy Spirit, were languages known to the audience, whether known or unknown to the speaker. But the text is crystal clear that the audience heard those in the upper room declaring the wonders of God in known languages which they clearly understood. There is no biblical support, whatsoever, that tongues is a "heavenly language."

IV. The Explanation Of His Coming - Vv. 12-13

"So they were all amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "Whatever could this mean?" (13) Others mocking said, "They are full of new wine." (NKJV)

Notice the reaction Dr. Luke records of this crowd. There are, first, two words he uses for astonishment -- they were amazed and perplexed. Twice he indicates that they were amazed. The word in Greek is a word that means literally, **"to push out of their senses."** It is exactly what we say when we use the modern phrase, "it blew their minds." That is exactly what he said. It blew their minds as they heard this phenomenon occurring. And linked with that, Luke says, they were perplexed. It is really a word which means they were **"hit hard, stunned."** They were staggered by this amazing thing. They heard these Galilean peasants speaking these languages and they were staggered by it, especially since they easily recognized the languages they were speaking.

Then we have two more words that indicate puzzlement: They wondered, and they were perplexed. Those are suggestive words. "Wondered" means they sought for a solution. They began to ask themselves, what is behind all this. They began to think through, why does this occur? The second word means literally, "thoughts running through their minds." They were perplexed, they had various thoughts running through their minds.

That in turn gave way to two expressions that are recorded of this crowd which are very interesting to note. They indicate the two divisions that always occur when something is suddenly sprung on people. When the human mind is confronted with the new thing it reacts in one of two ways, as in this case.

First, they said to one another, "What does this mean?" i.e., they began to inquire, What is behind this? What is the purpose of it? Why does this occur? That represents the group of open minds that are always ready to investigate further before coming to a conclusion.

But there was another group who immediately dismissed the phenomenon with the infantile reaction of mockery, ridicule. They looked at the disciples and said, "Yes, they're drunk! That explains it. They've been getting into the new wine." Thus they dismissed it with ridicule.

This is the caution: whenever revival comes -- whenever the Holy Spirit is poured out in extraordinary power -- this division happens in the Christian community. Some genuinely inquire as to what this is, and test all things, and hold fast to what is good. Others stand outside and mock and write off the enthusiasm as merely human, "They are filled with new wine."

V. Conclusion

First, the Pentecost experience in Acts is a once-for-all event unique in church history.

Second, the experience of the filling of the Holy Spirit is in the NT a repeatable or a perpetual "state or condition" enjoyed by believers, the Holy Spirit enabling Christians to bear witnesses of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the end of the Earth. Baptism in the Holy Spirit is a onetime event, bestowed upon the church. It is never repeated in the NT. All New Testament Churches are baptized in the Spirit at the time of their organization. There is no second level or stage of Christian experience.

The Holy Spirit gives us the power to go beyond our human limitations, to reach the unreachable, to take a strong stand with fresh convictions. It is the Holy Spirit that inspires us to carry our faith across barriers of culture, race and nationality, and to take a stand for the living hope that burns within us. The Holy Spirit calls us to move to a new level of daily dependence on God, one that will give us deeper serenity in the midst of our personal storms and a greater concern for the welfare of persons around us that are being devastated by the tempests of their lives.