

## Acts 2:1-13: Have You Felt the Power of the Spirit...in Your Life?

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### I. Introduction

What's your Christian life like day to day, week to week, year to year? Are you better able to handle the stress at work? Does facing your health issues seem a little easier? Do you have the upper hand on the personal relationships that used to cause you stress and anxiety? If nothing has changed, if you're still living the same life, the same struggles, why do you think that is?

### II. Acts 2:1-13: Has the Power of the Holy Spirit Enabled You to Face Life Differently Or Is Your Christianity More About Going to Church, Singing Praise Songs, and Reading Your Bible?

**2:1-4**, before He ascended Jesus promised the apostles that soon they would be baptized with the Holy Spirit and receive the power they needed to conquer the world with the message of Christ. That day was now here. It happened on the Day of Pentecost. Pentecost means 50 and it was called this because it took place 50 days after Passover. It was also known as the Feast of Weeks because it happened seven weeks after Passover. By Jewish tradition God gave the Law on Mt. Sinai 50 days after God freed Israel from Egypt on the first Passover. That day on Mt. Sinai God came down from heaven to give Israel a new way of life. On this day, something similar happens: God comes down from heaven (2:2) in the form of the Holy Spirit to give twelve apostles a new way of life.

From the context it's likely that just the 12 apostles are present (2:7, 14, 37) and not the 120 mentioned in 1:15. And they're likely in the Temple compound not in the upper room that's mentioned in 1:13. As the 12 apostles are gathered, suddenly they hear the sound of a mighty wind from heaven and it fills the entire area. This is the Holy Spirit (in fact, the Hebrew word for "wind" in the Old Testament is the same word for "spirit"). What happens next changes the course of history and the lives of these apostles forever. There appeared to them tongues of fire which divided and rested on each one of them. As with the wind, they saw fire but nothing was burning. It's akin to the burning bush that Moses saw; the bush was on fire, but it was not consumed. The fire was the Shekinah Glory of God; it enveloped the bush, but it did not burn it (Exodus 3:1-6). Likewise here, the Holy Spirit in the form of fire rested on each one of the apostles and the effect these burning tongues had on them is that it enabled them to speak a foreign language they had never spoken before.

Jesus in John 16:7-15 had promised the apostles that He would send them a Helper who would convict the world of sin, righteousness, and of judgment. But there was something else this Helper would do: the Holy Spirit would enable them to understand God's Word; He would guide them into all truth. He would speak to them and tell them of things to come, thus, they would be able to hear God's voice. He would also reveal to them the things of the Father and Son as they went about their lives, i.e., they would be able to have the kind of life and relationship that Jesus had with the Father. Thus, through the Holy Spirit they would have access to God's presence, guidance, and wisdom. And the fulfillment of all this that Jesus promised was now here on the Day of Pentecost.

**Why's Pentecost important?** It's the day God fulfilled His promise to give us His Holy Spirit; He is now with us in power. It's the day God fulfilled His promise that the Holy Spirit would not only be with us but *in* us (John 14:15-17). It's the day God gave us the power to do what He asked of us: make disciples of all the nations (Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 1:8). It also was the birthday of the Church. How do we know the Church was born this day? Some think that the Church has always been around since the time of Adam and Eve and that there's no distinction between Israel and the Church. But there is. The Church began on the Day of Pentecost and here's how we know: 1 Corinthians 12:13 shows that the Holy Spirit baptizes us into Christ's Body, which is the Church (Colossians 1:18). The question is, when did Holy Spirit baptism begin? It began on the Day of Pentecost as Jesus promised, Acts 1:5; 2:1-4; 11:15-16. Also, the Church (the Body of Christ, the New Man) was born after Christ's death; it took His death to create it, Ephesians 2:11-18.

**2:5-13**, on this particular day Jerusalem was crowded with Jews and proselytes from all over the world. Why? Because the Mosaic Law demanded that Jewish males appear before the Lord three times a year: during the Feasts of Passover, Weeks, and Tabernacles. And since traveling in those days took much, much longer, many people stayed in Jerusalem after Passover to wait for the Feast of Weeks. So when the multitude of people see and hear what happens with the 12 apostles, that they're now speaking to them in their own language, they are confused and amazed. They could not believe that these Galileans (who were considered uneducated and backward by many and had a very noticeable accent, Mark 14:70) were now fluent in their own language. There were four languages involved: Aramaic, Greek, Latin and Nabatean, which are the languages spoken by all these people who came to Jerusalem from all over the world.

There were two responses by the crowd. The first group accepted it as something supernatural and they were genuinely trying to make sense of the whole thing. The second group mocked the apostles and accused them of being drunk on new wine which was sweet and had high alcohol content. One might ask what being drunk has to do with the ability to speak a foreign language you've never spoken before.

**Have you felt the Holy Spirit's Power the way the apostles did?** Has it affected you this powerfully, where it changed the way you looked at life and how you lived it from that moment on? Whether or not you believe in the gift of tongues is beside the point. The point is this: if God promised to give you His Holy Spirit, but you have not sensed and lived by His power, then you're missing the most incredible part of being a Christian: being one with God and living life with Him, every bit of it. God did not send His Son to simply guarantee us heaven after we die. Jesus came to transform our life here and now not after we die. God wants His Kingdom to come to earth now; He wants His will for our life to be done now not after we die (Matthew 6:9-13).

### III. Conclusion

*When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance....Then they were all amazed and marveled, saying to one another, "Look, are not all these who speak Galileans?" And how is it that we hear, each in our own language in which we were born?*