

## Acts, Sermon #3

Acts 2

The Book of Acts is designed to show us the continuous actions of the ascended Christ, through His people who are empowered by the Spirit of God to witness to the world of Jesus Christ in advancing the Kingdom of God.

I've entitled today's sermon: **The Birthday of the Church**

Acts 2:1

Let us stand for the reading of God's Word.

Acts 2:1-21

Let us pray

You may be seated.

## The Birthday of the Church

What is the day of Pentecost? (vs. 1) – Greek word for 50. On the Jewish calendar, Pentecost came 50 days after another feast of unleavened bread which we call Easter.

- Pentecost was a Jewish holiday for harvest
- Holy day- one of the 3 times a year that all Jewish males were to make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem.

On the day of Pentecost, the apostles were waiting for the promise of God to be fulfilled.

What was that promise? -- They did not know the hour or day the Spirit would come.

They had been waiting now for 10 days, after Jesus had ascended.

During the 10 days of waiting they occupied themselves in prayer, searching and studying the scriptures and in making good decisions like replacing Judas

All of this while waiting, before launching out to carry out the commission of Acts 1:8, to be witnesses unto the ends of the earth.

There is a fascination about this passage because of the false teaching regarding the Holy Spirit.

- This particular passage has been a major ground of controversy amongst God's people.
- As a result of that, the real thrust of this passage in the history of the church has almost been lost sight of.

The teeth of this is the conclusion, vs. 21 -- It shall come to pass that whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

That is the result of what happened at Pentecost.

- People could call upon the name of the Lord to be saved.
- Pentecost has everything to do with men becoming Christians.

- At Pentecost, the Holy Spirit came and inaugurated an entire new dispensation in the dealings of God – the Church Age.

The Holy Spirit was front and center:

- All the references to the Holy Spirit and His work in the O.T. – just a little under 100 references, over a period of 4,000 years, 39 Books.
- When we come to the Gospels, covering 30 years, we find about 50 references to the Holy Spirit.
- Quite an increase regarding His activity but when we come to the Book of Acts, we have nearly 70 references to the Holy Spirit in this first book of just 28 chapters.

From this point on, in the New Testament, the scriptures are filled with instructions regarding His ministry and the believers relationship to this third person of the Trinity and it begins at Pentecost.

Vs. 2, 3, 4, – is what is called the Pentecostal experience. What was the Pentecostal experience?

The description of it is given here in verse 2 (**vs. 2**).

- There was something for the ears; a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind.
- Last Monday night and Tuesday morning (a skiff of snow) we heard that sound in Kansas. 50 mph winds
- Quite honestly, that sound is a regular sound in Kansas. Violent wind – the sound of it, you can hear the wind

The same word for Spirit in the Bible is the same word for wind. Something for the ear that suggested the coming of the Spirit of God.

In John 3, Jesus told Nicodemus that the Spirit was like the unseen power of the wind,  
**John 3:8.**

Something also for the eyes, (**vs. 3**).

- “There appeared” – it was visible to them, initially a whole cluster of tongues like flames.
- Those flames as a fire distributed themselves, so that each of them sat upon each of these believers, hovering literally on or over the head of each believer.

This is the Spirit, vs. 2, who is a flame, vs. 3.

- Fire is representative of purging, thus identifying the Spirit and His work, Spirit of Holiness.
- Baptism of Fire

**John the Baptist said in Matthew 3:11**, *“I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance. But he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire:”*

Something for the ear, the eye and thirdly, speech on the part of the disciples themselves, **vs. 4**.

Of the three things that happened in this Pentecostal experience, it is speech that occupies the remainder of the verses we read.

The first two, sound of wind and the tongues of fire are never repeated in the Book of Acts, but we do see tongues two more times in the Book of Acts.

It is obviously the “tongue speaking” which causes the most questions to believers and back then to the observers. That’s why in vs. 5-13, you have an extended description of those experiences.

First of all this passage tells us something about those who heard these tongues.

- The hearing is mentioned three times in this passage, vs. 6, 8, and 11.
- This whole passage is about the hearing of these tongues.

Now, who is it that heard?

- Racially, vs. 5 – Jews.

- Religiously, vs. 5 – devout men - not just run of the mill people or fringe, religious people.

Geographically, vs. 9-11 – why does the scripture take three verses to give us all of those geographical places?

- That list covers the surface of the then known world.
- It involves people from Iran/Persia East to Rome in the West, a distance of 2,000 miles and north to south, Italy to Arabia, 1,000 miles north to south.

Notice they were naturally born there (**vs. 8**).

- What were they doing in Jerusalem from all these places? You tell me!
- Why were they in Jerusalem?
- Pentecost, the feast. Pentecost is one of three major feasts that the Jewish males were to be together in Jerusalem.

The Bible also describes these people linguistically.

- That is part of why they gave all the geographical places.
- In those geographical areas there are at least 11 different languages represented.
- Some would have spoken Arabic, Aramaic, Coptic, Elamite, Georgian, Persian, Egyptian, Latin, Greek and so forth and possibly more than eleven.

Who heard? Four things:

Racially? Jews

Religiously? Devout

Geographically? All over the world

Linguistically? Many languages

What did this melting pot of people hear? -- They will tell you in verses 6, 8, and 11.

There are two different words translated tongue in this passage.

- In verses 4 and 11, glossas – glow-sas – we get our English word “glossary” – articulate speech.

- In verses 6 and 8, dialecto – dialect – language

So, what were biblical tongues on the day of Pentecost?

- They were human languages, foreign languages.
- This should never be confusing to us again.

Whatever tongues speaking was, it was intelligible speech, recognizable speech.

- It was a known language.
- It was not heavenly language, nor the dialect of angelic beings.

The people who are hearing it in vs. 7 say, these are Galileans who are speaking and we are hearing our own language from them.

- The gift was not in the hearing.
- The gift was in the speaking, vs. 4.

Now, what was the content of what they heard?

**Vs. 11** – The wonderful works of God.

- It was speech of spiritual content.
- All of the tongue speaking in the book of Acts 10, 19:6, were known languages with spiritual content.

The Corinthians were attempting to practice something other than that and the correction of it was given in I Corinthians, chapters 12-14.

The Pentecost experience was a reversal of what happened at the tower of Babel where God confused the languages.

The Pentecostal experience was the breaking down of certain boundaries in order to open up channels for what God wanted to accomplish.

Individuals, that were from Galilee, engaging in conversation -- This created a stir amongst the people.

- The people recognized by their dress, or accent, that these people were Galileans and their speech was Aramaic.
- They did not have the ability to speak this way.
- They surely were not taught this or educated (**4:13**) - refers to the Galileans being unlearned and ignorant men.

So this speaking was absolutely confusing.

Vs. 6 – put in a daze / confounded

Vs. 12, they were amazed, perplexed, in doubt

Vs. 13, and some said they were drunk

In Vs. 14-20, Peter gives the explanation of what has happened.

First of all, in vs. 15, Peter denies drunkenness but he says in vs. 16, that this is Joel's prophecy, a prediction made in Joel 2:28-32, 700 years prior.

In the upper room, they were searching the scriptures and Peter knows what is happening.

Joel's prophecy was for a certain time called the "last days." (vs. 17)

- That's our era. Hebrews 1, the "last days" began with the ministry of Jesus Christ.
- God is working with this world in His plan of redemption.
- We are at the end of the world in that sense and ends with the Day of the Lord at the end of the Tribulation period.

The events that Joel prophesizes are two events:

- First in vs. 17. I will pour out my Spirit – when did that happen? Pentecost
- Second in vs. 19. I will show wonders – when did this happen? Not yet

What would happen according to Joel when God poured out His Spirit?

The results: vs. 17

**First**, your sons and daughters will prophesy. That is repeated in vs. 18,

- People, young, handmaiden, sons, daughters, regardless of age or sex.
- God's people will prophesy and second, young men will see visions and old men will dream dreams.

Two things – Prophecy, and then in addition, is predictions of visions and dreams.

- Visions and dreams were how they received revelation from God, i.e. Ananias and Paul, Cornelius in a vision [regarding] Peter, Peter in a vision of a sheet, and Paul's Macedonian call.
- When we look in Acts they received it this way by direct communication through the Spirit of God.

The thing that is significant is that Peter is explaining the tongues speaking in terms of a prophecy that says when God pours out His Spirit, people will prophesy.

What does that tell us?

The word prophecy is being used here as a very broad umbrella word.

- Prophecy could mean prediction, as in foretelling the future.
- But most frequently it's used in a general sense in the Bible of proclamation.
- It is used throughout the N.T. for preaching or personal testimony.

In this passage, it is used to explain tongue speaking:

- God will pour out His Spirit and the result will be this prophesying on the part of all of God's people. What is it that they will proclaim? Jesus Christ!
- And vs. 21 gives the possibilities for the entire earth.

In this new dispensation, N.T., when all of God's people are filled with the Spirit of God, and enabled to prophesy, though they be sons and daughters, young or old, it shall come to pass, vs. 21.

God directed Peter to Joel's prophecy to explain what was happening at Pentecost.

What was happening?

- Most people focus on tongue speaking or the wind or the flame and they really miss what the passage is about.
- The whole heart of this is the great possibility that is before all people.

What did God promise them? – Ye shall receive power after the Holy Spirit is come upon you. And then what? Ye shall be witnesses unto me from Jerusalem to all over the world.

All of God's people have the potential of proclaiming the Word of the Lord, look at the potential for universal witnessing. Anybody can hear it from anybody who knows it.

Proclaiming Christ doesn't have to happen in a building or through the lips of a preacher.

- It can come through young or old, male or female.
- The only thing needed is a person in whom God's Spirit resides.

Acts 11:15-18

Baptism of the Spirit is mentioned eleven times in the N.T. Jesus and John predicted and promised it would happen.

Who, among God's people, has the Holy Spirit? -- All believers.

What happens when people are baptized into the Spirit?

I Cor. 12:13 tells us. The baptism with the Spirit is simultaneous with a person's salvation.

- No one in the N.T. is commanded to seek or get the Holy Spirit.
- We are commanded to be filled.

**Eph. 5:18**, *And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;*

- Don't be influenced or controlled by alcohol, but be controlled by the Spirit

Filling is something that the believers must maintain. That is why the command of Eph. 5:18.

- The baptism is when the Spirit of God places us in the body of Christ.
- Every believer has the baptism of the Spirit

At Pentecost they were baptized and filled (vs. 4)

God wants spirit filled people to prophecy, to proclaim the message of the cross.

- Spirit filled believers are advancing the kingdom of God – proclaiming Christ crucified, buried, and risen again.
- Preaching repentance and forgiveness of sins.

And whosoever calls on the name of the Lord is saved. The day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit came, was the day of launching the gospel of Jesus Christ by Spirit empowered people until the Lord's return to the earth.

Let us stand for closing invitation.

1. Are you saved? Have you been baptized by the Spirit into the Body of Christ?  
Jesus said the Holy Spirit would bring conviction of sin, unrighteousness
2. Are you a Spirit filled believer? Are you witnessing, proclaiming? We are empowered to witness of Jesus Christ. Are we sharing?  
Share the gospel, proclaim to others – obedient, advance the kingdom