

ACTS CHAPTER TWO

Read Acts 2:1-14

1. Pentecost is the 50th day after Passover. It coincided with the end of the Feast of Weeks (also called the Feast of Harvests). cp. Deut. 16:9-12 with I Cor. 15:20-23. Why is it appropriate that the Holy Spirit was given on the day the harvest was being celebrated?

Remember that Pentecost is not a new thing for the Jews. Pentecost had been celebrated since the time of the Jews leaving Egypt. It was one of several celebrations, all of which had been pointing to Christ through the centuries. Christ is the first-fruits of the resurrection, the beginning of the harvest of souls through the church. The coming of the Holy Spirit is the birth of the church. See I Cor. 5:7 also.

Was it because of the activities of the disciples that Pentecost came at this time? No, it was to be fulfilled because it was time for it to be fulfilled. It wouldn't have mattered what the disciples were doing.

Was it an accident that Jesus was killed at Passover? No, it was a fulfillment of God's plan from the beginning. The Spirit came on that day because it had to be....it was fulfillment of God's plan.

2. How many people were filled with the Holy Spirit at this time? see Acts 1:15 and Acts 2:3 & 4

All of the disciples were filled. This is the birthday of the Spirit. It was at this time that He came to dwell and stay with the church. He will continue to be here until the church is taken away at the rapture of the church. Fire and wind were also used in the O.T. as a sign of God's presence. (See Ps. 104:3, Gen 15:17 – smoking pot, Ex. 3:2 – burning bush, Ex. 13:21 – pillar of fire and Ex. 19:18 – Mt. Sinai.

This is also what is being referred to in Eph. 4:4-6 where Paul says that there is one baptism. The church was baptized at this time and we were included in that baptism. Believers are now filled with the Spirit at the time of salvation, but the baptism took place only once and cannot be repeated, nor is it necessary. Look also at I Cor. 12:12-13 where Paul says we were all baptized into one body. Notice the past tense; we were all baptized.

We are commanded to be filled with the Spirit in Eph. 5:18. This can happen many times. We are never told how to do it, so it is evidently a natural process coming with a pure life and confessed sin.

3. *What external evidence did they have that something super-natural had happened to them? (vs. 4)*

Were these known languages? How do you know? (Acts 2:10) It is interesting to note that this wasn't necessary to get the message out, since they probably all understood Greek. Why did this happen? It was to get their attention and serve as a sign to them confirming that this phenomenon was from God. Peter is quick to remind them of Joel 2 so they would connect this event with the Spirit of God.

4. *What race of people witnessed this phenomenon?*

Historical records indicate that 200,000 people could crowd into the temple area when necessary. Judaism required the people to come to the temple for Pentecost.

God frequently used signs to prove authenticity for His people. As we move through the book of Acts, we will see the sign of tongues given two more times and both times there were Jews present who needed this reinforcement from God. (Acts 10 and Acts 19) Also notice Mark 16:20 where it clearly says that God confirmed the words of the apostles with signs. Why was this necessary? Why didn't the people just have faith and believe the words? Remember the great changes taking place at this time. It was a challenging time to be Jewish because God was making so many sweeping changes. It would have been extremely difficult for them to accept new ideas after being trained since children in the Old Testament teachings.

5. *What languages were the people speaking under the Holy Spirit's control?*

All of these people were in Jerusalem because they were the devout Jews who had come for this holy time. They wanted to be near the temple to observe this special holiday. The languages listed here describe practically the whole known world at this point in history. Do you think that maybe God had this planned way back when He first appointed the holiday? What an evangelistic thrust He had planned!

6. *What were they speaking about? (vs. 11)*

The Holy Spirit always gives glory to God. The Spirit would only speak words that agree with scripture.

7. *Read I Cor. 14:21-22 where God says He will speak to "this people" (the Jews) with other tongues. In Acts 2, who are the people that believe? Who are people that believe not?*

Were the languages a sign for the 120 believers?

The believers didn't need sign. They had just been filled with the Holy Spirit and they knew it. The languages got the attention of the unbelieving Jews that were around the temple area. It attracted them to the apostles like a magnet. Now Peter has the attention of the crowd and the perfect opportunity to speak to them. God always has a reason for doing

any miraculous event. It is always for His glory and His purpose. God does not perform for us. It's not about us.

8. *Why might the unbelievers have needed a "sign" at this particular time in history?*

God uses signs and miracles to authenticate the apostle's words. Peter is going to preach about the resurrection and give a salvation message. God wanted to show them that this was from Him and that He was doing something special in their midst. He wanted to get their attention!

9. *What resulted from the commotion surrounding the Holy Spirit's arrival?*

God's plan accomplished His will. The apostles couldn't have come up with anything so effective on their own!

Read Acts 2:15-24

10. *Was the Spirit poured out _____ at this time?*

No. If we look back to Joel ch. 2, which is what Peter is quoting, we find that the passage is speaking of the time that we now know will happen after the church is taken out of the world – during the tribulation. This is a little difficult, but we must remember again the time that this passage in Acts 2 occurs. Peter knows nothing about the church era. In his mind, it is the last days. There are several instances in Acts where it seems that God is watching intently to see which way Israel will turn. If they had indeed accepted Jesus as Messiah, then the church age might not have happened. God wouldn't have set His people aside and turned to the Gentiles. If that had happened, then the rest of those events would have occurred soon after Acts 2, but because of their rejection, we have a long parenthesis in history that is the church age and that we are still living in right now.

11. *Did the events of vs. 19 and 20 occur at this time?*

These events will happen during the tribulation (Rev. 6:12) when God takes up His dealing with Israel exactly where He left off in the book of Acts.

Consider Romans 11:25-32 where Paul explains how God has paused the spiritual history of the Jewish nation during this time. In this interim God is building His church with the people of other nations. When He has accomplished His plan for the church, then He will again turn to the Jews and draw them to Himself. At that time, they WILL turn to Him in the way that He wanted them to in the book of Acts.

12. *Who does Peter address his sermon to? vs. 22*

Remember God's plan from Acts 1:8? This is the beginning of the fulfillment that the gospel would be taken to the Jews first.

13. *How had God demonstrated His approval of Jesus? vs. 22*

Jesus used His miraculous power to prove that He was the Son of God, and secondly, to help the people who were recipients of His miracles. Lazarus was a good example of that. Jesus could have kept him from dying, but He purposely let him die. Look what the result of that miracle was in John 12:9-11. Jesus' ministry had a purpose and a plan and so did His use of miracles.

14. *Was God surprised by the rejection of the Jews? vs. 23*

God knew exactly what would happen and yet He never closed the door for their repentance. In the first part of Acts, that door is still open. He is still offering Himself as their Messiah and in fact, it seems at first that they are going to repent as a nation. Thousands of them are saved, but starting in chapter 4, we see things deteriorating rapidly.

15. *How does Peter refer to the power of death on Christ? Why?*

Jesus is the strongest force in all of creation. He is the creator. Compare John 1:3 Even death could not hold Him. He conquered death for all mankind when He died and rose again. See Heb. 2:14

Read Acts 2:25-36

16. *David spoke prophetically about the _____ of Christ.*

This whole passage is simply to convince the Jews that Jesus did indeed come back to life. We miss the importance of this because to us it is a given fact. But imagine if I were trying to convince you that Abraham Lincoln was still alive! I would need some pretty impressive facts or you would think I was completely crazy. It was just as unbelievable to the Jews that Jesus was alive again. Probably many of them had even seen the crucifixion and they no doubt heard the story that was circulating about the disciples having stolen the body while the soldiers slept. (Matt. 28:13-15)

Peter uses the only scripture that he had available, the old testament. He refers them back to the Psalms and forces them to think about what David was really writing about. It couldn't have been himself, so who was it? Jesus!

Peter's arguments:

- A. David says the Holy One won't see corruption. (Ps. 16:8-11)*
- B. David hasn't ascended into the heavens. (Ps. 110:1) Who can he be talking about?*
- C. In addition, they were all eye witnesses! Vs. 32*

17. *We know that vs. 27 can't refer to David because:_____.* (see vs. 29)

18. *Which verse in this passage summarized Peter's sermon?*

When the people heard Peter's final summary, they were shocked. You crucified Jesus, but God raised Him from the dead and He is your Christ!

19. *How did the audience react to the sermon? (vs. 37, 41, & 42)*

The spirit used the words of Peter to open their understanding and they believed. What do you think would have happened if Peter had preached this sermon before the spirit came? Nothing! They might have even stoned him for blasphemy.

20. *How many were converted on this day?*

21. *Meditate on vs. 43-47. Give several possible reasons for them to sell their possessions and have all things in common.*

22. *What were their circumstances a few years later? see Ro. 15:25-27 and I Cor. 16:3*

Many of the people sold their farm lands and their businesses. Even though their motives were pure, it later brought great hardship to them. They, of course, at the time, didn't realize that Jesus wouldn't even return in their lifetime. Was it wrong for them to do this? No, but it does teach us a valuable lesson. We don't know the time of the rapture, so even though we must expect it at any moment, we must also make preparations for our lifetime to be lived on earth.

23. *Describe the church growth at this time in history.*

There was phenomenal growth happening. The church was pure and the Spirit was moving mightily. Also note in vs. 47, they had favor with all people. The persecution hadn't started yet. They had a real greenhouse growing experience.