

Acts 2:1-13

- Be amazed, the Spirit of Christ is within us -

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Introduction

- ❖ Pentecost is an amazing, inspiring, God-fearing event: God gave his Spirit, the Spirit of Christ to be within us! Let's celebrate with great joy!
- ❖ Pentecost is an amazing event in world history, following the birth of Christ, his crucifixion, and resurrection and finally his ascension, receiving from the Father all authority in heaven and on earth.
- ❖ Before Christ was visible and touchable present and at one location a time. While he was travelling with his disciples, he was not present at the house of his friends in Bethany where his friend Lazarus was seriously ill (Jn 11:1-16).
But since Pentecost, the Spirit of Christ is present everywhere in this world, where Christians live and praise God in words and deeds, as he promised in Jn 14:16-17: "And I will ask the Father, and he will give you **another Counselor to be with you forever— the Spirit of truth.** The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, **for he lives with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.**"
- ❖ Without the Holy Spirit, Christian discipleship would be inconceivable, even impossible. There can be no life without the life-giver, no understanding without the Spirit of truth, no fellowship without the unity of the Spirit, no Christlikeness of character apart from his fruit, and no effective witness without his power. As a body without breath is a corpse, so the church without the Spirit is dead.¹

¹ Stott, J. R. W. (1994, p. 60).

- ❖ The context, form and structure, theological, technical and hermeneutical notes given in this sermon outline overlap with other sermon outlines taken from the Acts of the Apostles. This makes it possible to use this sermon outline as a “stand-alone”. You can also fit this outline into a series of sermons.

Context

- ❖ The story of the coming of the Holy Spirit is the fulfilment of the promises of Christ and the Father.
 - Luke 24:49: “I am going to send you what **my Father has promised**; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.”
 - John 14:16-17: “And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever— the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you.”
 - Acts 1:4-5: “On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: “Do not leave Jerusalem, **but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about.** For John baptized with water, **but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.**”
 - Acts 1:6-8: The disciples asked Jesus an important question. The answer of the Lord gives at the same time also a short overview of the book of Acts:

“Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?”		
<i>The question of the disciples</i>	<i>The answer of the Lord</i>	<i>Acts</i>
“at this time?”	“It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority.”	
“are you going to restore”?	“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you;”	Acts 2:1-13
“the kingdom to Israel?”	“and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”	Acts 2:14-8:3 Acts 8:4-40 Acts 9:1-28:31

- Acts 2:1-13 is the first part of Acts 2:
 - Acts 2:1-13: The coming of the Spirit.
 - Acts 2:14-41: The sermon of the apostle Paul and the baptism of three thousand. He connected the coming of the Spirit with the Lordship of Jesus Christ and his salvation.
 - Acts 2:42-47: The New Testament Christian community.

Form and structure

❖ Acts 2:1-13: (the marked words are semantically related)

<i>The house in Jerusalem (verse 1-4)</i>	
<i>Time:</i>	When the day of Pentecost came,
<i>Location:</i>	they were all together in one place.
<i>The sound:</i>	Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting.
<i>The vision:</i>	They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them.
<i>Filled with the Spirit:</i>	All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit
<i>Enabled to speak by the Spirit:</i>	and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.
<i>The street of Jerusalem (verse 5-13)</i>	
<i>Comment:</i>	Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven.
<i>Bewilderment:</i>	When they heard this sound , a crowd came together in bewilderment ,
<i>Reason:</i>	because each one heard them speaking in his own language .
<i>Amazed (1a):</i>	Utterly amazed , they asked: "Are not all these men who are speaking Galileans? Then how is it that each of us hears them in his own native language? Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs—we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues! "
<i>Amazed (1b):</i>	Amazed and perplexed , they asked one another, "What does this mean?"
<i>Sarcastic:</i>	Some, however, made fun of them and said, "They have had too much wine."

Technical, hermeneutical and historical notes

Pentecost

- ❖ The day of Pentecost was the fiftieth day after Passover. It was the day the Jews celebrated the Feast of the Grain Harvest.
 - “Celebrate the **Feast of Harvest** with the firstfruits of the crops you sow in your field” (Ex 23:16; 34:22)
“From the day after the Sabbath, the day you brought the sheaf of the wave offering, count off seven full weeks. Count off **fifty days** up to the day after the seventh Sabbath, and then present an offering of new grain to the Lord.” (Lev 23:15-16)
“Then celebrate the Feast of Weeks to the Lord your God by giving a freewill offering in proportion to the blessings the Lord your God has given you. **And rejoice before the Lord your God**” (Deut 16:9–11).
- ❖ “Towards the end of the inter-testamental – in between the Old and the New Testament – period, however, it began also to be observed as the anniversary of the giving of the law at Mount Sinai, because this was reckoned as having happened fifty days after the Exodus.”²
 - Leo the Great (A.D. 400 – 461) noted this parallel between the old and the Second Covenant: “To the Hebrew people, now freed from Egypt, the law was given on Mount Sinai fifty days after the immolation of the paschal lamb. Similarly, after the passion of Christ in which the true Lamb of God was killed, just fifty days after his resurrection, the Holy Spirit fell upon the apostles and the whole group of believers. Thus the earnest Christian may easily perceive that the beginnings of the Old Covenant were at the service of the beginnings of the gospel and that the same Spirit who instituted the first established the Second Covenant” (Sermon 75).³

Verse 2-4

- ❖ Came = “**συμπληρώω**”: 2. figurative of time **to arrive as the timely moment** for an event to take place, fulfill, approach, come.⁴
- ❖ Sound = “**ἦχος**”: 1. **auditory impression of varying degrees of loudness, sound, tone, noise.**⁵
- ❖ Tongue = “**γλῶσσα**”: 2. **a distinctive language, language, tongue.**⁶

² Stott, J. R. W. (1994, p. 62).

³ Martin, F., & Smith, E. (Red.). (2006, p. 20).

⁴ Arndt, W., Danker, F. W., & Bauer, W. (2000, p. 959).

⁵ Arndt, W., Danker, F. W., & Bauer, W. (2000, p. 441).

- This is not ecstatic speech (1 Cor 14:1-27) but intelligible language. “Each one heard them speaking in **his own language**” (Acts 2:6) = “**διάλεκτος**”: a **language** of a nation or a region.⁷
- ❖ Were filled = “**πλήρωσι**”: 1. **to cause to be completely full, fill, fulfill. b. of a person's inner life by the Holy Spirit.**⁸
 - “be filled with the Holy Spirit” is a Lucan expression, only found in the Gospel of Luke and in Acts:⁹
 - Of John the Baptist:
“for he will be great in the sight of the Lord. He is never to take wine or other fermented drink, **and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit** even from birth” (Lk 1:15).
 - Of Elizabeth and Zechariah:
“When Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth **was filled with the Holy Spirit**” (Lk 1:41).
“His father Zechariah **was filled with the Holy Spirit** and prophesied” (Lk 1:67).
 - The disciples:
“All of them **were filled with the Holy Spirit** and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them” (Acts 2:4).
Then Peter, **filled with the Holy Spirit**, said to them: “Rulers and elders of the people!” (Acts 4:8)
“After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all **filled with the Holy Spirit** and spoke the word of God boldly” (Acts 4:31).
 - It seems that this filling with the Holy Spirit is followed by speaking the word of God boldly and freely.
 - The apostle Paul:
“**be filled with the Holy Spirit.**” (Acts 9:17).
“Then Saul, who was also called Paul, **filled with the Holy Spirit**, looked straight at Elymas” (Acts 13:9).

⁶ Arndt, W., Danker, F. W., & Bauer, W. (2000, p. 201).

⁷ Arndt, W., Danker, F. W., & Bauer, W. (2000, p. 232).

⁸ Arndt, W., Danker, F. W., & Bauer, W. (2000, p. 813).

⁹ To be filled with (= “**πληρώω**”, although a different verb) is also used with regard of Satan: “Then Peter said, ‘Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart?’” (Acts 5:3).

- The disciples at Antioch (Pisidia):
“And the disciples **were filled** (=“πληρώω”) with joy and **with the Holy Spirit**” (Acts 13:52; see also Eph 5:18).
- ❖ Enabled = (ἐδίδου) “ἀποφθέγγομαι”: **to express oneself orally, with focus on sound rather than content, speak out, declare boldly or loudly.**¹⁰

Exposition

Verse 1-4

- ❖ **“When the day of Pentecost came.”** Pentecost, the festival fifty days after Pesach, was the second of the three great festivals. It was celebrated after the grain harvest, about at the end of the month of May. The people were often full of joy.
 - It is symbolical, that the Holy Spirit has been given at a harvest festival.
- ❖ **“They were all together.”** All can refer to the disciples, with the women and Mary and the brothers of Jesus (Acts 1:12-14) or to all believers, at that moment “a group numbering about a hundred and twenty” (Acts 1:15). But in the end, it is not important because the Spirit has been given to all who believe in Jesus Christ (Acts 2:17-18; Eph 1:13,14).
- ❖ **“In one place.”** They stayed together according to the word of Jesus: “Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised” (Acts 1:4).
- ❖ **“Suddenly a sound filled the whole house where they were sitting.”**
 - It was an unexpected moment when this sound came. The Father has set the times or dates by his own authority (Acts 1:7).
 - **It was the sound that filled** the house. And this sound was like the blowing of a violent wind. The sound came from heaven. The ESV translates: “And suddenly there **came from heaven** a sound.” This translation following the original Greek word order stresses the fact that this sound came from heaven, from God himself.
 - Newman & Louw translate: **“the people heard a noise that was coming from the sky; the noise was just like what a wind makes when it blows strong.”**¹¹
 - **“Like the blowing of a violent wind”.** There was no actual blowing of a violent wind, only a sound like it. Jesus compared the mystery of the gift of the Spirit also with the wind and its sound: “The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the

¹⁰ Arndt, W., Danker, F. W., & Bauer, W. (2000, p. 125).

¹¹ Newman, B. M., & Nida, E. A. (1972, p. 34).

Spirit” (Jn 3:8). The Greek word “πνεῦμα” (pneuma) can have both meanings. It is a kind of wordplay.

❖ **“They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them.”**

- Newman & Nida: “The Greek expression ‘a tongue sat on each of them’ is rendered variously in different translations, but it should be kept in mind that the text itself does not state how this was accomplished or where the tongues ‘sat’ on each person.”¹²
- Again Newman & Nida suggest a description: “they saw something which looked like little flames, in the shape of tongues.”

These tongues were *spreading out* (not ‘cloven tongues’ or ‘divided tongues,’ as some earlier translators described them), which means that each tongue was going out separately and resting on some person. The total picture then is that of many tongue-like objects, each looking like fire, and darting out separately and touching (or ‘resting on’) someone. The expression *spreading out* may be translated in some languages by a distributive expression, for example, ‘divided one to each person.’¹³

❖ **“All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit.”** Nobody is excluded.

- “The Holy Spirit possessed them completely” or “the Holy Spirit came into them entirely.”¹⁴

❖ **“And began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.”**

- “Luke’s **focus in this passage is on one event** that happened to the early followers of Jesus as a corporate gathering, but then affected many others because of their witness. Luke is **not trying here to give us a detailed description or chronology of individual Christian experience**. It is quite clear that in crucial ways this event is unique. It is the beginning of the creation of God’s eschatological people, properly speaking. It is the empowering of them to do their job—to witness to Christ.”¹⁵

❖ “These three experiences seemed like natural phenomena (wind, fire and speech); yet they were supernatural both in origin and in character. The noise was not wind, but sounded like it; the sight was not fire but resembled it; and the speech was in languages which were not ordinary but in some way ‘other’.”¹⁶

¹² Newman, B. M., & Nida, E. A. (1972, p. 34).

¹³ Newman, B. M., & Nida, E. A. (1972, p. 35).

¹⁴ Newman, B. M., & Nida, E. A. (1972, p. 35).

¹⁵ Witherington, B., III. (1998, p.132).

¹⁶ Stott, J. R. W. (1994, p. 62).

- Peter commented this event, starting with the famous quotation from the prophet Joel (2:28-32).

Verse 5-13

❖ **“Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven.”**

- There is an interesting connection between verse 5 and verse 2:

Verse 5	Verse 2
Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven .	Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting.

from heaven



- Luke seemed to imply that the Holy Spirit brings heaven and earth (under heaven) together.

Application

- ❖ God, the Father is faithful to his promises!
 - Moses: “I wish that all the LORD’s people were prophets and that the LORD would put his Spirit on them!” (Nu 11:29; read: Nu 11:25-29).
 - “I will put my Spirit in you” (Ezek 36:24; Jer). “I will pour out my Spirit on all people” (Joel 2:28). “And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever— the Spirit of truth”(Jn 14:16, 17).
- ❖ Be amazed!
 - Pentecost is it the birthday of the New Testament church, the new community of Christ. A new era in the history of this world has begun, the era of the Spirit of Christ. It is important to know, that the Spirit of God has been active during the whole course of history.
 - “for he lives with you and will be in you” (Jn 14:17).
 - “the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you” (Acts 14:26).
 - While it is certainly true that every individual Christian must have his or her own filling by the Spirit in order to be Christian, his or her own “Pentecost” so to speak, that is not what this text is about.”¹⁸
- ❖ The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Christ:
 - the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding,
the Spirit of counsel and of power,
the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD— (Isa 11:2).

Quotes

- ❖ Chrysostom (A.D. 349 – 407, Archbishop of Constantinople): Do you see the type? What is this Pentecost? The time when the sickle was to be put to the harvest and the fruits to be gathered. Look at the reality now, how the time has come to ply the sickle of the Word. The Spirit, keen-edged, came down in place of the sickle. For hear the words of Christ, “Lift up your eyes and see how the fields are ripe for harvesting.” (Jn 4:35) And again, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few.” (Mt 9:37) He himself, taking [our nature] as the first fruits, lifted it up high and he was himself the first to ply the sickle. For this reason he calls [the Word] also the Seed. Homilies on the Acts of the Apostles 4.¹⁹

¹⁸ Witherington, B., III. (1998, p.132).

¹⁹ Martin, F., & Smith, E. (Red.). (2006, p. 20).

- ❖ Bede (A.D. 672/3 –735, also known as Saint Bede, Venerable Bede, and Bede the Venerable, was an English monk): Now the Holy Spirit appeared in fire and in tongues because all those whom he fills he makes simultaneously to burn and to speak—to burn because of him and to speak about him. And at the same time he indicated that the holy church, when it had spread to the ends of the earth, was to speak in the languages of all nations. Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles 2.3a.²⁰
- ❖ Leo the Great: “From this day the trumpet of the gospel teaching resounds. From this day showers of graces and streams of benedictions water all the desert and every wasteland, to ‘renew the face of the earth,’ (Ps 104:30) ‘God’s Spirit hovered over the water’ (Gen 1:2). To take away the old darkness, beams of new light flash out, when by the splendor of those glowing tongues, the Word of the Lord becomes “clear” (Ps 19:9) and “speech takes fire” (119:140, Vulgate). Both the force of giving light and the power of burning were present for this reason, to create knowledge and to destroy sin.” (Sermon 75.2.)²¹

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²⁰ Martin, F., & Smith, E. (Red.). (2006, p. 22).

²¹ Martin, F., & Smith, E. (Red.). (2006, p. 23).