

Acts 2:1-13 – Let the action begin

Everyone loves to celebrate their birthday. You know that your birthday is coming, and that someone who loves you has a present for you. You are not sure exactly what the present is (although you've been told you will really like it), and you don't know exactly when you will receive it. You know it is something good, and that it is coming soon.

The event we are looking at today compares to a birthday. However the difference is that with a birthday you know the date but not the gift with this event we know the gift but people didn't know the date.

We have been looking at the Lightning and thunder events of God in history. The lightning being the coming of Jesus and thunder we look at today.

Today the real action of the book of Acts begins with an event called Pentecost.

**The meaning of Pentecost is God's equipping His church
with the power of His Spirit so that Jesus will be made known to the nations.**

1. The event - What happened? Vv.1-13

Jesus sends his Spirit - Pentecost

Read it: 1:1-13

We need to set the scene.

When?

The Day of Pentecost is one of the Jewish Feasts. In the Old Testament it was known as the Feast of Weeks/Harvest. See Exodus 23:16, which came at the end of harvest. It was 50 days after Passover. So this is why in verse 5 we are told that there are God fearing Jews from every nation in Jerusalem.

Who are the 'they'?

The 12 who are gathered. It probably includes the 120 as well from Chapter 1. But the 12 are the focus as they are the ones Jesus said would receive the Holy Spirit. In 2:7 the people speaking are referred to as Galileans and the Apostle's are Galileans. And then in 2:14 it says Peter stood up with the other 11.

So what happens to the Apostles?

They are in a house together and there's sight and sound show. The sound is like blowing wind. The sight is like Fire – individual fires on each head. These are physical signs that something significant is happening. Like other events in unfolding plan of salvation history. Exodus – 10 commandments - Elijah

On **New Year's eve** we have light and sound shows ie fireworks and music. Why? Because it is a significant occasion in the year. We want to mark the occasion with something memorable. So it is with Pentecost.

Why all the spectacular signs?

It is almost as if God turned on a great siren and so was calling people together. God wants to get your attention. This is an event for the whole world.

So that is the event. In the giving of the details of the event as well as in the Old Testament we find an explanation of this event

2. The explanation

Read it: 2:4

The disciples have been filled with the Holy Spirit. This is something that has never happened before. This is something unique. Something distinct about the Holy Spirit's that hasn't been seen before.

This is fulfilment.

Fulfilment of John the Baptist words

See Mark 1:8:- "I baptise you with water but he will baptise you with the Holy Spirit."

Fulfilment of Jesus word

John 14 & Acts 1:8

Fulfilment of an Old Testament promise

This is what Peter says when he preaches in vv.14-21 Not clear what all the details mean. It is the kind of language that is used in God's word when things are going well or something significant is happening. There are hints of things seen when Jesus died on the cross. The emphasis is that this is a universal blessing. The Spirit will now come on everyone who believes when they believe. The Spirit is going to be poured out and God's word is going to be spoken

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C.S. Lewis in his book *Mere Christianity* says this:- "God became a man to turn creatures into sons: not simply to produce better people of the old kind but to produce a new kind of person. It is not like teaching a horse to jump better and better but like turning a horse into a winged creature."

We need to remember that our purpose as Jesus' church is not to focus on ourselves and our own happiness. Our purpose is to spread the knowledge of God to all the nations, beginning here in our own "Jerusalem." If we lose our outward focus, with the overall purpose of God's glory, we have lost our reason for existence.

3. The effects

There are different responses to what happened in this event. Some are bewildered – amazed – perplexed. There are the **skeptics** who think these people are drunk.

What are they responding to?

They hear a noise. What is the noise they hear?

People speaking in "**Tongues**" which are other languages. Leave aside what 'tongues' mean in 1 Corinthians 12 & 14 for now.

That tongues are known languages is made clear in vv.6-8. This is a miracle of speaking not of hearing.

The people were comprehending words that these people were speaking. They were coherent and understandable. These guys were speaking languages they did not know before this moment. They were speaking the 'wonders of God.'

To their amazement each one of them is hearing the Apostle's speaking in the language of the hearers. It is a miracle. V.7, 8 These men are Galileans how can they speak all these languages.

What are they speaking?

v. 11 They are praising God.

What was the expectation of 1:8? The Gospel would go out to every nation. Already here we have immediate fulfilment of that promise. God's plan for the world comes about when he says it will.

This makes it clear that the God's plan is for people from every nation. It includes people from every language, every nationality and every race.

This is a reversal of what happened at Babel in Gen 11. At Babel human languages were confused and the people were scattered. In Jerusalem on this day the languages were heard and understood and the people were gathered.

At Babel the people were trying to build to get up to God here God comes down to earth.

This is all a picture and anticipation of what will be the reality in heaven.

The programme for Acts is that the H.S would come and it has. The programme for Jesus continued work through the Spirit is the preaching of the word to every nation and here it's happening.

Power can be used in at least two ways: it can be unleashed, or it can be harnessed. The energy in ten gallons of petrol instance, can be released explosively by dropping a lighted match into the can. Or it can be channelled through the engine of a car in a controlled burn and used to transport a person 350 kilometres. Explosions are spectacular, but controlled burns have lasting effect, staying power.

The Holy Spirit works both ways. At Pentecost, he exploded on the scene; His presence was like "tongues of fire" ([Acts 2:3](#)). Thousands were affected by one burst of God's power.

But He also works through the church—the institution God began to tap the Holy Spirit's power for the long haul. Through worship, fellowship, and service, Christians are provided with staying power.

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Here's a few questions to consider:-

Is my passion that the nations would glorify God through the gospel?

If my heart is not on world missions, it is not in tune with God's heart.

Is my daily life consciously dependent on the Holy Spirit?

Would I have missed Him if He had withdrawn from me this past week? Do I lean on Him to empower to live and speak for Jesus? Is this seen in my prayer life?

Is my daily desire to bear witness of Christ to those who are lost and perishing?

The power of the Spirit isn't given just to make me happy. It is given to make me holy so that my life and my words bring glory to God as I bear witness to His saving grace.

Discussion questions:

1. What was the significance of the 'signs' that happened at Pentecost?
2. What was happening in these events?
3. What does Pentecost mean for all disciples?
4. What was the result of Pentecost for 'the nations'?
5. What difference does knowing that you have the Holy Spirit make to your life?