

## Acts 2

There is no chapter more significant in Acts than the second chapter. Jesus had promised His disciples, "Upon this rock I will build my church..." and that promise found its fulfillment in Acts Two as the promise of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles also was realized (Matt. 16:18).

### The Day of Pentecost

It was about ten days from the ascension of Jesus to the descent of the Holy Spirit. Pentecost was one of three yearly feasts which Jews were commanded to observe and none was more popular with Jews than this feast, called also "the feast of weeks." The time of its observance had something to do with its popularity: it came at a time of the year when it was safer to travel by water and since there was a great dispersion of the Jews in many lands, and many had to cross the ocean to get there, the feast of weeks was attended by multitudes from other lands as Acts 2:5-11 shows. After an initial "wave offering," seven Sabbaths were counted, and the day following that seventh Sabbath was the day the feast was kept. This always occurred on the first day. Since 7 weeks of 7 days equals 49 days with an additional day, the number came to 50, which is the meaning of "Pente." The counting for this feast occurred about the time of Jesus' crucifixion and since he had spent 40 days after his resurrection with the apostles, there were about 10 more days until Pentecost.

The chapter begins, "And when the day of Pentecost was now come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly there came from heaven a sound as of the rushing of a mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them tongues parting asunder, like as of fire; and it sat upon each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance" (Acts 2:1-4).

Filled with the Spirit = Baptized in the Spirit?

There are instances in which "filled with the Spirit" and "Baptism of the Holy Spirit" are not equivalents. John the Baptist was "filled with the Spirit from his mother's womb," yet he was not baptized in the Holy Spirit (Lk. 1:15; Jn. 7:39). The Ephesians were urged to "be filled with the Spirit," but this has reference to allowing the Word to indwell them as the two parallel passages from Ephesians and Colossians show (Eph. 5:18f;

Col. 3:16). Still, in Acts 2, "Filled with the Spirit" and "Baptized in the Spirit" are the same. The baptism of the Spirit was promised to the Apostles "not many days hence," and Peter later refers to the events of Pentecost as the promise which Jesus had made regarding the apostles being baptized in the Spirit (Acts 1:16f; 11:15f).

### Who Was Baptized In the Spirit?

Was Holy Spirit Baptism a universal promise to all believers or to just the apostles? How one answers this question will determine his thinking about "tongue speaking" and modern day "miracles." While we understand that others aside from the twelve shared in the miraculous spiritual gifts, we are convinced that Holy Spirit Baptism came in but three instances: the twelve (Acts 2); the Gentiles (Acts 10, 11) and Saul. Determining that only the twelve were baptized in the Holy Spirit in Acts 2 is the next item of our discussion.

Jesus had promised that the Holy Spirit would come and so He did. Nevertheless, many questions arise regarding the Spirit's descent, primarily about upon whom the Spirit fell. The passage says, "They were all together...". Who are the "they", the 120 of Acts 1:15 or only the Apostles? It is true both the 120 and the 12 are mentioned in Act's first chapter, but it seems clear that the "they" of Acts 2:1 is a reference to the Apostles for the following reasons:

1. According to the rules of grammar, the pronoun "they" is a reference to the last noun in text which in this case would be "apostles" (Acts 1:26). This is not a "hard and fast" rule, but there is nothing in the text that prohibits that application here.
2. The context after Acts 2:1 deals with the twelve, not the 120. It is the twelve apostles who are the ones who are speaking and to whom questions are addressed; indicating that it was the twelve upon whom the Holy Spirit fell (Acts 2:14, 37).
3. Those who spoke were all Galileans (Acts 2:7). Jesus had many disciples both in Judaea and Jerusalem and, since the assembly place of Acts 1:12f was in Jerusalem of Judaea, it would seem incredible that the 120 included none from Judaea when many of those from Judaea had been active in the last days of Jesus (the supper in Bethany), had witnessed His crucifixion and to whom He had appeared after his resurrection (Luke 24:13). But this is what would have to be if the "they" of Acts 2:1 were the 120.

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