

# The Majestic Testimony, Part 1

## Acts 2:1-13

- 1 When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place.
- 2 And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting.
- 3 And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them.
- 4 And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.
- 5 Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven.
- 6 And at this sound the multitude came together, and they were bewildered, because each one was hearing them speak in his own language.
- 7 And they were amazed and astonished, saying, "Are not all these who are speaking Galileans?"
- 8 And how is it that we hear, each of us in his own native language?
- 9 Parthians and Medes and Elamites and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia,
- 10 Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome,
- 11 both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians—we hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God."
- 12 And all were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "What does this mean?"
- 13 But others mocking said, "They are filled with new wine."

### Sermon Outline:

Pentecost is the great conspiracy of love by the Spirit that proves that we cannot fail in serving our Lord.

I. **The Father's Gift (2:1).** The Greek sentence in v.1 begins with the word "and" indicating that Christ's ascension and Pentecost are to be linked (Kistemaker 75). Christ ascended to receive the gift of the Spirit promised to him. The Father is ultimately to be credited with the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:4,5) just as he is the one who gave his Son for us (Jn. 3:16).

A. **For the Son.** From the very beginning of Jesus' ministry, it is obvious that the Spirit is directing and enabling Jesus' ministry.

B. **For you.** When Jesus tells the disciples that the Father would baptize them with the Spirit as he had been baptized, he did not say they would also be baptized with fire. The fire which came with their baptism by the Spirit was not the fire of judgment on them; that judgment had already been borne by Jesus. The fire with which they were baptized was a gracious message to them and for the world. It was in the form of tongues to symbolize that they were given a message empowered by the Spirit, which would bring life to those who believed it and judgment to those who rejected it.

II. **The Son's Gift (2:2-4).** Upon receiving the gift of the Spirit from the Father, the Son gave the Spirit to the Church in order to create a new community.

A. For the church. After Luke records that each person heard the Gospel in his own language (2:4), he provides a table of nations indicating that the Gospel spread far beyond the rather localized focus of the book of Acts (2:8-12).

1. Love. This new community is characterized by love for one another.
2. Life. This new community is also characterized by new lives.

B. For You. The Son is for you. By giving his Spirit to you the Church, the Son reveals that he is for you to become who you were created to be by living for others rather than yourself.

**III. The Spirit's Gift (2:5-13).** The Father and the Son give the Spirit for the Church's good and the Spirit gives himself specifically to empower us to reach the world.

A. **Wind.** The biblical images of wind and spirit convey the unparalleled power to create out of nothing. The wind of God created worlds out of nothing, life out of death, lawkeepers out of stony hearts, thousands of new believers out of a dead religion, and evangelists who would turn the world upside down out of cowardly disciples. The Spirit has come to the Church with the same amount of power used to create the world and raise the dead, and that power lives in you!

B. **Fire.** The other image used to indicate the Spirit's arrival is fire. His presence is making people holy. He is in the process of justly cleansing the world of sin. His showing up has put the devil and his minions on the run. And his people are being more and more overwhelmed with the realization of his mercy and grace which will eventually explode into a never-ending chorus of praise to the Savior. And that transforming presence is with you!

C. **Filling.** Specifically the Spirit is said to fill his people. Jim Boice once did an interesting study of the occurrences of the phrase "filled with the Spirit." He discovered that the phrase occurs fourteen times in the New Testament. Four of them occur before Pentecost and there is one reference in Ephesians. The other nine occur in Acts and in each case when someone is filled with the Holy Spirit, he testifies powerfully to Christ. Therefore, the proof that one is filled with the Spirit is that he testifies regularly and effectively to Christ such that people come to him.

### Discussion Questions

1. Read Acts 2:1-13 and imagine that you were there on the Day of Pentecost in Jerusalem. What would it have been like for you in the crowd observing these events?
2. In what way is Jesus' promise (1:5,8) fulfilled in Acts 2:1-13?
3. Describe the physical manifestations of the Holy Spirit's coming?
4. How does the Holy Spirit empower these men to be witnesses to the whole world (locate the countries on a map) at this time? Here is a link to a website that shows these countries: [Map of Countries @ Pentecost](#)
5. Describe the reactions of the crowd. In essence, some flock and others mock. How should this encourage us today as followers of Jesus?
6. What is the disciples' message? What message does the book of Joel have for the perplexed crowd?
7. What message do you share as you witness to others?

8. How has your life been affected by the gift of the Holy Spirit?
9. How would you counsel someone asking you about their need for greater delight and power in serving as an effective witness for Christ?
10. What would you do for the Lord Jesus if you really believed that you are profoundly and securely loved by your God and that you cannot fail? What should we do as a church family?

### Going Deeper

1. How would you use this passage to explain the biblical nature of the gift of speaking in tongues? What is it? What isn't it?
2. Why do you think the Lord had this original group of disciples speak in tongues? Here is one answer: The Lord on Pentecost shows the world that the gospel of Jesus Christ is for every tongue, tribe, people, and nation. This first Christian "worship service" is multi-lingual, multi-cultural, multi-racial in the extreme.
3. What do you make of the following contrast between Babel (Genesis 11) and Pentecost (Acts 2)?
  - At Babel, human languages were confused and the nations were scattered. At Pentecost, the language barrier was supernaturally overcome as a sign that the nations would now be gathered together in Christ. This prefigures the great day when the redeemed will be drawn from every nation, tribe, people and language.
  - At Babel, a miracle of cursing breaks people apart through division despite original linguistic sameness. At Pentecost, a miracle of blessing brings people together through understanding despite linguistic and cultural barriers. "The multitude came together and they were bewildered because each one was hearing them speak in his own language" (2:6).
  - At Babel, the people of the earth unite to "make a name for themselves" (v.4), and this leads to the disunity of racial and cultural alienation. At Pentecost, people unite "to call on the name of the Lord" (Acts 2:21) and the result is racial and cultural healing.
  - At Babel, earth proudly tried to ascend to heaven. At Pentecost, heaven humbly yet powerfully descended to earth.