

Acts 2:1-13
CBBC
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Introduction—Training/equipping/orientation

The Spirit fills all followers of Christ. We are told that they had gathered together on the day of Pentecost, which was also known as the Feast of Weeks. According to Leviticus 23:15, you had the Passover, then immediately following was the feast of unleavened bread, and during that, you had the feast of the first fruits. Pentecost, otherwise known as the Feast of Weeks, was 50 days after the wave offering that was part of the Feast of the First Fruits. So it is roughly two months after Passover, and what do we know happened around the time of Passover? Jesus was crucified, and three days later, He rose again. He teaches for 40 days, and then he ascends into heaven, telling them to wait until He gives them the Holy Spirit. So, they have not had to wait long. They were all in one place at Pentecost. What happened?

There was this sound of a rushing wind, and that sound filled that room. We have no reason to doubt that this is the same 120 that we saw earlier in Chapter 1. That sound fills the room. Have you all been around a tornado at all, or have you watched any footage of one? It sounds like a freight train. Some huge and powerful, and invisible, and it shakes everything it touches. It transforms the landscape. The same goes for this wind, but it is a transformation that we have never seen before.

You have what appear to be tongues of flame over the heads of the believers. Let's pause for a moment, because I want us to consider what they are seeing. They are hearing the wind. They are seeing fire. Time and time again in the Old Testament, we see God's presence associated with fire. We have the fire of the burning bush. You

have the pillar of fire in Exodus 13:21. You have the fire of the Lord descend from heaven in I Kings 18:38. But there is one I want us to mark especially, and that is back in Exodus 19:18, and Exodus 24:17. The Exodus passages are important because this is happening at Sinai where God descends, making a covenant with the nation of Israel, and giving them the Law. God came down, making a relationship with them, and equipping them to serve and know Him.

1500 years later, there is wind and fire, as the Holy Spirit comes. God is coming down in a special way that He has never done before to change and equip His people.

Filling with the Spirit—there are different definitions of being filled with the Spirit. We are filled with the Spirit when we first become believers, and that filling never goes away, But then we are also commanded to continue to be filled with the Spirit—Ephesians 5:18. We will discuss what that is at another time but not now. This filling comes to every believer when they come to Christ, and we are transformed/changed radically.

Titus 3:5 tells us that we are washed, regenerated, and made to be born again by the Holy Spirit, through Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit could not indwell us this way unless we were first declared righteous through Jesus Christ.

God calls us to do things that we cannot do well. So we have already seen in the Old Testament and even in a bit of the New Testament that God Himself, as the Holy Spirit, equips His people to do these tasks. (theocratic anointing, the craftsman who made the tabernacle) John the Baptist is born with the Holy Spirit. So, the Holy Spirit comes with the wind and fire as God has descended before, and rather than being separated from the people or over them. He enters into each believer individually.

We have God coming down at Sinai and telling people the Law. They can't stand it. Then you have Jesus coming, which is closer, but it is still not enough. It is not transformational than you have the Holy Spirit actually entering into the hearts of the people.

This filling at this moment is going to be different than the future commands for filling we see from Paul and from others. Whenever we first become believers, we are filled with the Spirit. That means we are regenerated, we are united with Christ, and we are equipped. That equipping includes giftedness.

He has commanded them to go into all the world and preach the Gospel. Part of their identity of being a believer is that they will go into a hostile world. They will not have Google Translate. They will not have all of the tools and time that we have. The world hates them, and the world will try to destroy them in whatever way possible. So they are filled with the Holy Spirit. All of us who are believers in Christ have been filled with the Spirit.

The Spirit transforms believers, showing God's power. (4b-12) They began to speak in other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. They start to speak in other languages. "The Spirit's work is cross-cultural. The fire cleanses their lips, as it does with Isaiah and Jeremiah, and ignites their tongues so they can bear testimony to the risen Christ."

An audience gathers to hear what is going on. Who is this audience? They are Jews who are there from every known nation. That is, they are Jewish in culture and confession, but they have lived long enough in other nations that they speak other languages. Why are they in Jerusalem? It could be that they are there for Pentecost, or

the Feast of Weeks. Others think that they are there because they are at the end of their lives and have come to Jerusalem to live their last years in the Holy City. I think the first is more likely.

They have heard the wind, and now they are hearing 120 people speaking different languages. First of all, they are all Galileans, and Galileans are not known for being cosmopolitan or sophisticated. Second of all, this crowd of Jews is hearing known languages. How could these “hicks,” these locals, be speaking all of these different languages? If you read through the list of languages represented by these 120 people and you laid them out geographically, you would see that these languages represent lands to the north, to the south, to the east, and to the west.

The Holy Spirit, being God, who is also Creator, somehow, in His divine power, stepped into the minds of all of these people and rewrote their brains so that they were able to not only speak a language. He didn't just download a vocabulary list into their mind, but He put in grammar and syntax, and he put it in such a way that they were able to actually think in that language. (Illustration—David Flinck) In mere moments, the Holy Spirit did what it normally takes years to accomplish.

He equipped them. He equipped them for the task which the Son had laid before Him, to go into all the world and preach the Gospel. Soon, these Jewish believers were going to be pushed out of Jerusalem

I will pause for a second to address the idea of “angel tongues”, glossa, or call it whatever you will. There is no indication in this text that there were unknown languages spoken, or rather heavenly languages. These are all known languages. This is

incredibly fitting when we consider what God is doing. By filling them with the Holy Spirit, He equipped them to do the task He has been laying before them.

The witnesses were hearing the people all talking in their various tongues, and they were talking about God's incredible works. Let's pause and consider the tumult itself. You have 120 people who have been waiting several days for this to happen. The rushing wind and the tongues of fire showed them that God had entered into the situation. They are aware that they are receiving the Holy Spirit, so they start praising God. As they start praising God, they become aware that they are not speaking in their original language. They are aware that it is connected to being filled with the Holy Spirit. Think of everything flashing through their mind in just a few seconds or even minutes. They know that Jesus has kept His Word. They understand it is somehow connected to His death and resurrection. They know that they are being blessed in a way that no one else has. They are in the middle of a miracle. How could you not be praising God at that moment? Everyone is praising God in different languages, and they are all hearing this.

So these Jews are asking one another, "What does it mean?" There is a portion of the crowd that understands that something supernatural has taken place. They don't know what or why; they just know it is supernatural. This is otherworldly. They need to have it interpreted for them, which Peter is going to do next. But some of them are skeptical. They have been drinking "new wine." Its five o'clock somewhere.

We have been equipped to disciple. We have been equipped by the Holy Spirit to serve the church. This was a supernatural work done because of the grace shown to us by the Gospel work of Jesus Christ.

