

“Empowered”

Acts 2:1-13

January 25, 2015

INTRO: **Video** – *“Acts 2:1-13... multi-lingual”*

WELCOME TO ACTS CHAPTER 2... ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT CHAPTERS IN ALL THE BIBLE... ACTS 2 RISES TO THE IMPORT OF GENESIS 1, ISAIAH 53, MATTHEW 5-7, JOHN 17, REVELATION 22...

In chapter 1 the disciples were to wait for the coming of the Holy Spirit; in chapter 2 He comes. In chapter 1 the disciples were equipped; in chapter 2 they are empowered. In chapter 1 they were held back; in chapter 2 they are sent forth. In chapter 1 the Savior ascended; in chapter 2 the Spirit descends.

- John MacArthur

See in the passage:

- A. *EVIDENCE* of the Spirit's coming
- B. *EFFECT* of the Spirit's coming
- C. *EXPLANATION* of the Spirit's coming

REVIEW: ***God has a power-filled people***
&
a purposed-plan... called Church!

- A. Acts 1-11 = Vision, Fusion, Mission, Tension
- B. Acts 12-26 = **Unified!** (in faithful obedience)
 - > Praise & Prayer
 - > Koinonia is key!
 - > Mathias & Joseph/Justus

T/S: So this is where we find ourselves in Acts....

***Waiting worshipfully for the Wonder-Working power of
the promised "Paraclete" (Holy Helper)***

***1When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all
together in one place.***

Pentecost means "fiftieth" because this feast was held fifty days after the Feast of Firstfruits (Lev. 23:15-22). The calendar of Jewish feasts in Leviticus 23 is an outline of the work of Jesus Christ. Passover pictures His death as the Lamb of God (John 1:29; 1 Cor. 5:7), and the Feast of Firstfruits pictures His resurrection from the dead (1 Cor. 15:20-23). Fifty days after Firstfruits is the Feast of Pentecost, which pictures the formation of the church. At Pentecost, the Jews celebrated the giving of the Law, but Christians celebrate it because of the giving of the Holy Spirit to the church.

Christians assemble and worship on Sunday, the first day of the week, because on that day our Lord arose from the dead, but it was also the day on which the Holy Spirit was given to the church.

VIDEO: *"When God's Spirit Moves" #1 (6:55)*

- *Religious "places" & gatherings are empty...*
- *Church is impossible without the Spirit...*
- *Where the Spirit is... the Church IS the PEOPLE!*
- *Christianity is hopeless without the Holy Spirit.*
- *The Holy Spirit is God's only Agent on earth today*
- *God in His people > people in God's places - JDP*

The POWER is in the Paraclete,
(not a place or Pentecostalism...)

2And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting.

“Suddenly”

“The Spirit’s ‘suddenly’ = the Savior’s Sovereignty”

“from heaven” = critical contextual truth!

3And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. 4And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.

The prediction of John the Baptist, "He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire," (Matthew 3:11,) would probably be recalled at once to their memory.

The Spirit filled (v. 2:4)

The filling of the Spirit has to do with power for witness and service (Acts 1:8). We are not exhorted to be baptized by the Spirit, for this is something God does once and for all when we trust His Son. But we are commanded to be filled with the Spirit (Eph. 5:18), for we need His power constantly if we are to serve God effectively.

The baptism of the Spirit means that I belong to His body;

the fullness of the Spirit means that my body belongs to Him.

The baptism is final; the fullness is repeated

The baptism involves all other believers, for it makes us one in the body of Christ (Eph. 4:1-6); while the fullness is personal and individual.

These are two distinct experiences and they must not be confused.

(Baptized vs. Fill-with the Holy Spirit)

Being filled with the Spirit must be distinguished from being baptized with the Spirit. The apostle Paul carefully defines the baptism with the Spirit as that act of Christ by which He places believers into His body (Rom. 6:4-6; 1 Cor. 12:13; Gal. 3:27). In contrast to much errant teaching today, the New Testament nowhere commands believers to seek the baptism with the Spirit. It is a sovereign, single, unrepeatable act on God's part, and is no more an experience than are its companions justification and adoption. Although some wrongly view the baptism with the Spirit as the initiation into the ranks of the spiritual elite, nothing could be further from the truth. The purpose of the baptism with the Spirit is not to divide the body of Christ, but to unify it. As Paul wrote to the Corinthians, through the baptism with the Spirit "we were all baptized into one body" (1 Cor. 12:13; cf. Gal. 3:26-27; Eph. 4:4-6).

Unlike the baptism with the Spirit, being filled with the Spirit is an experience and should be continuous.

(Eph. 5:18) The grammatical construction of that passage indicates believers are to be continuously being filled with the Spirit.

As believers yield the moment by moment decisions of life to His control, they "walk by the Spirit" **(Gal. 5:16)**.

*The baptism with the Spirit grants the power
that the filling with the Spirit unleashes.*

- MacArthur

The ministry of the Spirit is to glorify Christ in the life and witness of the believer **(John 16:14)**

The Spirit came (vv. 2-3).

The Holy Spirit had been active prior to Pentecost and had worked in Creation (Gen. 1:1-2), in Old Testament history (Judges 6:34; 1 Sam. 16:13), and in the life and ministry of Jesus (Luke 1:30-37; 4:1, 14; Acts 10:38). However, now there would be two changes:

1. The Spirit would dwell in people and not just come on them, and
2. His presence would be permanent, not temporary (John 14:16-17).

Combine wind & fire and you have—a blaze!

5Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven. 6And at this sound the multitude came together, and they were bewildered, because each one was hearing them speak in his own language. 7And they were amazed and astonished, saying, "Are not all these who are speaking Galileans?"

Pentecost was a reversal of the judgment at the **Tower of Babel** when God confused man's language (Gen. 11:1-9).

Another reason for this gift of tongues was to let the people know that the Gospel was for the whole world.

VIDEO: *"When God's Spirit Moves" #2 (8:57)*

- God both *meets AND makes* devout men...
- Churchmen & Christians are NOT synonymous
- God on the outside vs. God on the inside!
- Learning does not guarantee loving & living!
- Outward teaching can't replace inward transforming
- Christians = "the holy of Holies inner Temple"
- Devout Christians are DEVOTED Christians!
- The Holy Spirit changes everything!

8And how is it that we hear, each of us in his own native language?

“We are not going to move this world by criticism of it nor conformity to it, but by the combustion within it of lives ignited by the Spirit of God.”

- Vance Havner

“The early church had none of the things that we think are so essential for success today—buildings, money, political influence, social status—and yet the church won multitudes to Christ and saw many churches established throughout the Roman world. Why? Because the church had the power of the Holy Spirit energizing its ministry. They were a people who "were ignited by the Spirit of God." That same Holy Spirit power is available to us today to make us more effective witnesses for Christ.”

- Warren Wiersbe

9Parthians and Medes and Elamites and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, 10Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, 11both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians—we hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God.”

12And all were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, “What does this mean?”

The Power of the Holy Spirit

June 17, 1855

C. H. Spurgeon (1834-1892)

“The power of the Holy Spirit. ” - Romans 15:13

Power is the special and distinctive prerogative of God, and God alone.

We will look at the power of the Holy Spirit in three ways:

I. First, the OUTWARD AND VISIBLE DISPLAYS of the power of the Holy Spirit.

There are four works which are the outward and visible signs of the power of the Holy Spirit: creation works; resurrection works: works of testimony; and works of grace. I will briefly speak on each of these works.

II. THE INNER SPIRITUAL POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

What I have already spoken of may be seen; what I am about to speak of must be felt, and no one will understand the truth of what I say unless they have felt it.

But the inner spiritual power of the Holy Spirit is what the unbeliever and blasphemer will laugh at as being nothing but emotion and the invention of our confused minds.

We know it is the truth, and we are not afraid to speak of the spiritual power of the Holy Spirit.

VIDEO: *“When God’s Spirit Moves” #3 (4:30)*

We should beware of both charismania and charisphobia

Jonathan Edwards: (Quoted from: *The Experience that Matters*)

The most crucial question for the human race is this, what are the distinguishing marks of the people who enjoy God's favor, *those who are on their way to heaven?*

So much good and so much bad are mixed up in the church!

This mixture of false religion with true religion has been Satan's greatest weapon against the cause of Christ. This is why we must learn to distinguish between true and false religion, between emotions and experiences which really come from salvation, and imitations which are outwardly attractive and plausible.... but FALSE.

A failure to distinguish produces terrible consequences.

- Satan deludes people into thinking they are holy, when they really are hypocrites.

- False teaching deceives even the friends of Christianity into doing the work of its enemies. They destroy Christianity far more effectively than outright enemies can do, under the illusion that they are advancing it.

- When false religion passes for true religion, the minds of Christians become unsettled. Many doubt whether there is anything real in Christianity at all. Heresy, (deceit), unbelief and atheism begin to spread as a result.

13 But others mocking said, "They are filled with new wine."

(Theology of REJECTION)

Rejection of the gospel is a theme found throughout Acts. Beginning with the story of Judas's defection in the chapter 1, this theme appears in all but chapters 3 and 10—two chapters that give incomplete stories completed in chapters 4 and 11 respectively and which contain the rejection theme. Therefore, it is important for us to anticipate rejection and not be disillusioned when it comes. If everyone is pleased with what we do, we have probably not been truly faithful to God.

(NOTE: Had the apostles been proclaiming a humanistic, materialistic, or flesh-gratifying version of the "mighty works of God," they would not have been met with mocking resistance. - JDP)

VIDEO: *"When God's Spirit Moves" #4 (5:58)*

- I have seen Roma-like fillings of the Spirit...
 - My wife Kim... "a weight was lifted off..."
 - Erik in China... "YES! I KNEW... God"
 - Chaplain/Elder Mike... "a bag of nails"

God will treat men as they treat him!

Psalms 18:26.

CLOSE:

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF Pentecost. The experience of Pentecost is the key that unlocks the book of Acts. But what does it say to us today? Pentecost made religion into much more of a personal experience with Christ through the Holy Spirit than before.

1 Corinthians 2:4

*My message and my preaching were not with
wise and persuasive words, but with a
demonstration of the Spirit's power*

(NIV)

Let's Pray

Acts chapter Two: Waiting, Worshipping, Witnessing, & Walking!

Power from Heaven!

“We are not going to move this world by criticism of it nor conformity to it, but by the combustion within it of lives ignited by the Spirit of God.”

- Vance Havner

“The early church had none of the things that we think are so essential for success today—buildings, money, political influence, social status—and yet the church won multitudes to Christ and saw many churches established throughout the Roman world. Why? Because the church had the power of the Holy Spirit energizing its ministry. They were a people who "were ignited by the Spirit of God." That same Holy Spirit power is available to us today to make us more effective witnesses for Christ.”

- Warren Wiersbe

The better we understand His working at Pentecost, the better we will be able to relate to Him and experience His power. **The ministry of the Spirit is to glorify Christ in the life and witness of the believer (John 16:14), and that is what is important.**

The Church Waiting for the Spirit (Acts 2:1)

Pentecost means "fiftieth" because this feast was held fifty days after the Feast of Firstfruits (Lev. 23:15-22). The calendar of Jewish feasts in Leviticus 23 is an outline of the work of Jesus Christ. Passover pictures His death as the Lamb of God (John 1:29; 1 Cor. 5:7), and the Feast of Firstfruits pictures His resurrection from the dead (1 Cor. 15:20-23). Fifty days after Firstfruits is the Feast of Pentecost, which pictures the formation of the church. At Pentecost, the Jews celebrated the giving of the Law, but Christians celebrate it because of the giving of the Holy Spirit to the church.

The Feast of Firstfruits took place on the day after the Sabbath following Passover, which means it was always on the first day of the week. (The Sabbath is the seventh day.) Jesus arose from the dead on the first day of the week and "became the firstfruits of them that slept" (1 Cor. 15:20)... Pentecost also took place on the first day of the week. Christians assemble and worship on Sunday, the first day of the week, because on that day our Lord arose from the dead, but it was also the day on which the Holy Spirit was given to the church.

On the Feast of Firstfruits, the priest waved a sheaf of grain before the Lord; but on Pentecost, he presented two loaves of bread. Why? Because at Pentecost, the Holy Spirit baptized the believers and united them into one body. The Jewish believers received this baptism at Pentecost, and the Gentile believers in the home of Cornelius ([Acts 10](#)). This explains the presence of two loaves of bread (see [1 Cor. 10:17](#)). The fact that there was leaven (yeast) in the loaves indicates the presence of sin in the church on earth. The church will not be perfect until it gets to heaven.

We must not conclude that this ten-day prayer meeting brought about the miracles of Pentecost, or that we today may pray as they did and experience "another Pentecost." **Like our Lord's death at Calvary, Pentecost was a once-for-all event that will not be repeated. The church may experience new fillings of the Spirit, and certainly patient prayer is an essential element to spiritual power, but we would not ask for another Pentecost any more than we would ask for another Calvary.**

[The Church Worshiping the Lord \(Acts 2:2-13\)](#)

As we study the events of Pentecost, it is important that we separate the accidentals (or incidentals - JDP) from the essentials.

(Great chapter Summary)

The Spirit *came* and the people heard the sound of rushing wind and saw tongues of fire. The Spirit *baptized* and *filled* the believers, and then *spoke* as they praised God in various languages. The Spirit *empowered* Peter to preach, and then He *convicted* the listeners so that 3,000 of them trusted Christ and were saved.

The Spirit came (vv. 2-3).

The Holy Spirit had been active prior to Pentecost and had worked in Creation (Gen. 1:1-2), in Old Testament history (Judges 6:34; 1 Sam. 16:13), and in the life and ministry of Jesus (Luke 1:30-37; 4:1, 14; Acts 10:38). However, now there would be two changes:

3. **The Spirit would dwell in people and not just come on them, and**
4. **His presence would be permanent, not temporary (John 14:16-17). The Spirit could not have come sooner, for it was essential that Jesus die, be raised from the dead, and return to heaven before the Spirit could be given (John 7:37-39; 16:7ff). Remember the Jewish calendar in Leviticus 23: Passover, Firstfruits, and then Pentecost.**

Three startling signs accompanied the coming of the Spirit:

1. the sound of a **rushing wind**,
2. **tongues of fire**, (and)
3. the believers **praising God in various languages**.

The word *Spirit* is the same as "wind" in both the Hebrew and the Greek (John 3:8).

The people did not *feel* the wind; they heard *the sound* of a mighty wind. It is likely the believers were in the temple when this occurred (Luke 24:53). The word *house* in Acts 2:2 can refer to the temple (see Acts 7:47).

The tongues of fire symbolized the powerful witness of the church to the people. Campbell Morgan reminds us that our tongues can be set on fire either by heaven or by hell! ([James 3:5-6](#))

Combine wind & fire and you have—a blaze!

The Spirit baptized ([1:5](#)). The Greek word *baptizo* has two meanings, one literal and the other figurative. The word literally means "to submerge," but the figurative meaning is "to be identified with." The baptism of the Spirit is that act of God by which He identified believers with the exalted Head of the church, Jesus Christ, and formed the spiritual body of Christ on earth ([1 Cor. 12:12-14](#)). Historically, this took place at Pentecost; today, it takes place whenever a sinner trusts Jesus Christ and is born again.

When you read about "baptism" in the New Testament, you must exercise discernment to determine whether the word is to be interpreted literally or symbolically. For example, in [Romans 6:3-4](#) and [Galatians 3:27-28](#), the reference is symbolic since water baptism cannot put a sinner into Jesus Christ. Only the Holy Spirit can do that ([Rom. 8:9](#); [1 Cor. 12:13](#); see [Acts 10:44-48](#)). Water baptism is a public witness of the person's identification with Jesus Christ, while Spirit baptism is the personal and private experience that identifies the person with Christ.

It is important to note that historically, the baptism of the Spirit took place in two stages: the Jewish believers were baptized at Pentecost, and the Gentiles were baptized and added to the body in the home of Cornelius ([Acts 10:44-48](#); [11:15-17](#); and see [Eph. 2:11-22](#)).

The Spirit filled (v. 4)

The filling of the Spirit has to do with power for witness and service ([Acts 1:8](#)). We are not exhorted to be baptized by the Spirit, for this is something God does once and for all when we trust His Son. But we are commanded to be filled with the Spirit ([Eph. 5:18](#)), for we need His power constantly if we are to serve God effectively. At Pentecost, the Christians were filled with the Spirit and experienced the baptism of the Spirit; but after that, they experienced many fillings ([Acts 4:8, 31; 9:17; 13:9](#)) but no more baptisms.

Quote:

Occasionally someone says, "What difference does it make what words we use? The important thing is that we have the experience!" I doubt that they would apply that same approach to any other area of life such as medicine, cooking, or mechanics. What difference does it make if the pharmacist uses arsenic or aspirin in the prescription, just so long as you get well? Or if the mechanic installs an alternator or a carburetor, just so long as the car works?

The Holy Spirit has revealed God's truth to us in *words* ([1 Cor. 2:12-13](#)), and these words have definite meanings that must not be changed.

Regeneration must not be confused with justification, nor propitiation with adoption. Each of these words is important in God's plan of salvation and must be defined accurately and used carefully.

***The baptism of the Spirit means
that I belong to His body;***

***the fullness of the Spirit means
that my body belongs to Him.***

***The baptism is final; the fullness is repeated as we trust
God for new power to witness.***

***The baptism involves all other believers, for it makes us
one in the body of Christ ([Eph. 4:1-6](#)); while the
fullness is personal and individual.***

***These are two distinct experiences
and they must not be confused.***

The Spirit spoke (vv. 5-13). Note that the believers were praising God, not preaching the Gospel, and that they used known languages, not an "unknown tongue" ([Acts 2:6, 8](#)). **Luke named fifteen different geographical locations and clearly stated that the citizens of those places heard Peter and the others declare God's wonderful works in languages they could understand.**

The Greek word translated "language" in [Acts 2:6](#) and "tongue" in [Acts 2:8](#) is *dialektos* and refers to a language or dialect of some country or district ([Acts 21:40](#); [22:2](#); [26:14](#)).

Unless we are instructed otherwise in Scripture, we must assume that when "speaking in tongues" is mentioned elsewhere in Acts, or in 1 Corinthians, it refers to an identical experience: believers praising God in the Spirit in languages that are known.

Why did God do this? For one thing, **Pentecost was a reversal of the judgment at the Tower of Babel when God confused man's language ([Gen. 11:1-9](#))**. God's judgment at Babel scattered the people, but God's blessing at Pentecost united the believers in the Spirit. At Babel, the people were unable to understand each other; but at Pentecost, men heard God's praises and understood what was said. The Tower of Babel was a scheme designed to praise men and make a name for men, but Pentecost brought praise to God. The building of Babel was an act of rebellion, but Pentecost was a ministry of humble submission to God. What a contrast!

Another reason for this gift of tongues was to let the people know that the Gospel was for the whole world. God wants to speak to every person in his or her own language and give the saving message of salvation in Jesus Christ.

The emphasis in the Book of Acts is on worldwide evangelization,
"unto the uttermost part of the earth" ([Acts 1:8](#)).

"The Spirit of Christ is the spirit of missions, and the nearer we get to Him, the more intensely missionary we must become."

- Henry Martyn

Apparently the sound of the wind drew the people to the temple where the believers were gathered, but it was the praise by the believers that really captured their attention. The careless listeners mocked and accused the believers of being drunk, but others were sincerely concerned to find out what was going on. The people were perplexed ([Acts 2:6](#)), amazed ([Acts 2:7, 12](#)), and they marveled ([Acts 2:7](#)).

It is interesting that the mockers should accuse the believers of being drunk, for wine is associated with the Holy Spirit ([Eph. 5:18](#)). Paul relates the two *in contrast*, for when a man is filled with strong drink, he loses control of himself and ends up being ashamed; but when a person is filled with the Spirit, he has self-control and glorifies God. Strong drink can bring a temporary exhilaration, but the Spirit gives a deep satisfaction and a lasting joy.

- Bible Exposition Commentary

The [second chapter](#) of Acts marks a turning point in the history of God's kingdom. A new phase of His redemptive plan unfolds as the church is born.

In chapter 1 the disciples were to wait for the coming of the Holy Spirit; in [chapter 2](#) He comes. In chapter 1 the disciples were equipped; in [chapter 2](#) they are empowered. In [chapter 1](#) they were held back; in [chapter 2](#) they are sent forth. In chapter 1 the Savior ascended; in chapter 2 the Spirit descends.

- John MacArthur

PRETEXT: (ETERNAL CONTEXT!)

God's eternal redemptive plan began to unfold in human history in the Garden of Eden after man's sin. In [Genesis 3:15](#), He promised a savior, who would one day redeem the human race from the effects of that sin. The unfolding continued throughout the patriarchal age, past the giving of the Mosaic Law, to a small hill outside Jerusalem called Calvary. There the incarnate Son of God gave His life for the sins of the world. After rising victorious over sin and death, He promised to send the Holy Spirit to indwell believers. As we have seen, that event of necessity had to wait until Jesus' ascension to the Father. [John 7:37-39](#) reads,

Now on the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If any man is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, 'From his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water.'" But this He spoke of the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive; for the Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

Though the assembling of the redeemed in God's kingdom has gone on since the Fall, the coming of the Spirit marks the beginning of the unique church age. That there would be an intervening age between the two advents of Messiah was not foreseen in the Old Testament. Nor was the unity of Jew and Gentile in one body. Paul called that concept a mystery in [Ephesians 3:3-10](#). The word "church" translates *ekklēsia*, which means "called-out ones." The church is the bride of Christ; the branches of the Vine; the flock of the Good Shepherd; the kingdom of God's dear Son; God's household, consisting of His adopted children; a spiritual temple, of which Jesus Christ is the cornerstone; but, uniquely, the body of Christ.

Within the body, there is a unity, since all are indwelt by Jesus Christ, and all possess the same Spirit ([Rom. 8:9](#), [Galatians 3:28](#))

See in the passage:

D. ***EVIDENCE*** of the Spirit's coming

E. ***EFFECT*** of the Spirit's coming

F. ***EXPLANATION*** of the Spirit's coming

The Evidence of the Spirit's Coming

And when the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly there came from heaven a noise like a violent, rushing wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them tongues as of fire distributing themselves, and they rested on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit was giving them utterance. ([2:1-4](#))

(Understanding “Pentecost”)

Pentecost means "fiftieth." It is the New Testament name for the Feast of Weeks ([Ex. 34:22-23](#)), or Harvest ([Ex. 23:16](#)), which was celebrated fifty days after Passover. In post-exilic Judaism, it also celebrated the giving of the Law to Moses. The Spirit's coming on that day was linked to the pattern of feasts in the Old Testament.

(Element of Surprise)

Suddenly there came from heaven a noise like a violent, rushing wind. Luke's use of the word **suddenly** emphasizes the element of surprise. Even though the believers knew the Spirit's coming to be imminent (cf. [1:5](#)), they were nevertheless caught by surprise. The same will be true when the Lord returns to earth. Believers will know from the signs that His coming is imminent. Yet He will still come unexpectedly, like a thief in the night ([1 Thess. 5:2](#); cf. [Matt. 24:44](#)).

By describing the **noise** as emanating **from heaven**, Luke emphasizes that this was a supernatural action. That it was not a weather phenomenon, a physical **violent, rushing wind** is evident from the use of the term **like**. The supernatural

activity of God is so utterly beyond the grasp of humans that the Bible writers have to employ similes to describe His manifestations to men (cf. [Ezek. 43:2](#); [Rev. 1:15](#)).

In both Hebrew and Greek, the words for wind and spirit are the same. Wind is frequently used as a picture of the Spirit (cf. [Ezek. 37:9ff.](#); [John 3:8](#)). Although the sound of the heavenly wind may have attracted the crowd that soon gathered, the Spirit's presence **filled only the whole house where the believers were sitting**. They alone received the promised baptism with the Spirit ([Acts 1:4-5](#); [11:15-17](#)).

After the auditory manifestation of the Spirit's arrival came a visual one (cf. [Luke 3:22](#)). **There appeared to them tongues as of fire distributing themselves, and they rested on each one of them**. That these were not flames of literal **fire**, any more than the wind was moving air, is clear from the use of the phrase **as of**.

Some have tried to link the **fire** here with that of [Matthew 3:11](#). As the context of that passage indicates, however, the fire in view there is the fire of eternal judgment (cf. [Matt. 3:12](#)). That the **tongues rested on each one of them** shows that all who were present received the Spirit in that moment. It was a uniform, sovereign work of God on all collectively, not something sought individually. At this point, by the baptism with the Spirit, they were all made into one spiritual body—the body of Christ.

(Baptized vs. Fill-with the Holy Spirit)

Being filled with the Spirit must be distinguished from being baptized with the Spirit. The apostle Paul carefully defines the baptism with the Spirit as that act of Christ by which He places believers into His body

(Rom. 6:4-6; 1 Cor. 12:13; Gal. 3:27). In contrast to much errant teaching today, the New Testament nowhere commands believers to seek the baptism with the Spirit. It is a sovereign, single, unrepeatable act on God's part, and is no more an experience than are its companions justification and adoption. Although some wrongly view the baptism with the Spirit as the initiation into the ranks of the spiritual elite, nothing could be further from the truth. The purpose of the baptism with the Spirit is not to divide the body of Christ, but to unify it. As Paul wrote to the Corinthians, through the baptism with the Spirit "we were all baptized into one body" (**1 Cor. 12:13; cf. Gal. 3:26-27; Eph. 4:4-6**).

Unlike the baptism with the Spirit, being filled with the Spirit is an experience and should be continuous.

Although filled initially on the Day of Pentecost, Peter was filled again in Acts 4:8. Many of the same people filled with the Spirit in Acts 2 were filled again in Acts 4:31. Acts 6:5 describes Stephen as a man "full of faith and the Holy Spirit," yet Acts 7:55 records his being filled again. Paul was filled with the Spirit in Acts 9:17 and again in Acts 13:9.

While there is no command in Scripture to be baptized with the Spirit, believers are commanded to be filled with the Spirit (Eph. 5:18). The grammatical construction of that passage indicates believers are to be continuously being filled with the Spirit.

Those who would be filled with the Spirit must first empty themselves. That involves confession of sin and dying to selfishness and self-will. To be filled with the Spirit is to consciously practice the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ and to have a mind saturated with the Word of God.

Colossians 3:16-25 delineates the results of "letting the word of Christ richly dwell" in us. They are the same ones that result from the filling of the Spirit (Eph. 5:19-33).

As believers yield the moment by moment decisions of life to His control, they "walk by the Spirit" (Gal. 5:16). (For a further discussion of the filling with the Spirit, see [Ephesians, MacArthur New Testament Commentary](#) [Chicago: Moody, 1986].)

*The baptism with the Spirit
grants the power that
the filling with the Spirit unleashes.*

(For a further discussion of the difference between the baptism and the filling with the Spirit, see my book *Charismatic Chaos*, 1992, 191-93.)

After being **filled with the Spirit**, they **began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit was giving them utterance**. There has been much dispute in recent years over what it meant **to speak with other tongues**. The text, however, is not ambiguous. Far from being ecstatic speech, the **tongues** spoken on the Day of Pentecost were known languages. The term *glōssa* is the word for languages, and the context allows for no other interpretation

Those who spoke the languages at Pentecost did not have to be taught how to do so by reading a book, attending a seminar, or being coached by other people. Nor did they have to develop the gift through repeated practice on their own. Rather, they spoke **as the Spirit was giving them utterance**. He was in total control of the situation. They simply received what He gave.

The Effect of the Spirit's Coming

Now there were Jews living in Jerusalem, devout men, from every nation under heaven. And when this sound occurred, the multitude came together, and were bewildered, because they were each one hearing them speak in his own language. And they were amazed and marveled, saying, "Why, are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we each hear them in our own language to which we were born? Parthians and Medes and Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the districts of Libya around Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs—we hear them in our own tongues speaking of the mighty deeds of God. ([2:5-11](#))

KEY CONTEXT...

Pentecost was one of the three major feasts of the Jewish calendar, and all Hebrew males were expected to celebrate it in Jerusalem. Consequently, there were Jews living in Jerusalem at the time of Pentecost, devout men, from every nation under heaven. Those who went to the trouble to make the pilgrimage were obviously devout men. The phrase from every nation under heaven is an idiomatic expression meaning "from many lands," or from all of the nations where Jews had been dispersed.

When they heard the sound of the rushing wind (rather than the sounds of the languages), the multitude came together in the vicinity of the upper room. What they found when they arrived astonished and bewildered them, with each one hearing his own language being spoken.

The supernatural signs had their desired effect, and the attention of the crowd was riveted on Peter and the others. What amazed them the most was that all those who were speaking were Galileans. That was shocking to the sophisticated city dwellers, who viewed rural Galileans as ignorant and uneducated.

When Philip excitedly told Nathanael that he had found the Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth (a city in Galilee), Nathanael replied in disdain, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" ([John 1:45-46](#)). Nicodemus's attempt to defend Jesus met with the scornful reply, "You are not also from Galilee, are you? Search, and see that no prophet arises out of Galilee" ([John 7:52](#)).

(Rich socio-geo-theological context)

The sight of the supposedly ignorant Galileans speaking so many languages caused the astonished crowd to exclaim, **how is it that we each hear them in our own language to which we were born?** That this supernatural communication was known human languages, not ecstatic speech, becomes clear as the list of the specific tongues is enumerated. **Parthians** lived in what is modern Iran. They had never been conquered by the Romans and remained their bitter enemies. **Medes**, partners in empire with the Persians in Daniel's time, were now part of the Parthian Empire. **Elamites** lived in what is now southwestern Iran. They, too, were part of the Parthian Empire. The **residents of Mesopotamia** lived between the two great rivers, the Tigris and the Euphrates (**Mesopotamia** means "between the rivers"). Great numbers of Israelites had been deported to that region by the Assyrians and Babylonians. Not all had returned to Palestine at the time of Cyrus's decree ([2 Chron. 36:22-23](#)). **Judea** should probably be construed in the broadest sense as all the region once controlled by David and Solomon. That would explain the absence of Syria from the list. **Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia** were all regions in Asia Minor. They had a large Jewish population, as did **Egypt**, particularly in the city of Alexandria. It was in that city that the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament, had been produced. **The districts of Libya around Cyrene** were west of Egypt on the African coast of the Mediterranean Sea. Josephus mentions a Jewish population there. That there were Jews in **Rome**, as well as Gentile **proselytes**, is obvious from the Emperor Claudius's expulsion of them some years later ([Acts 18:2](#)). **Cretans** were from the island of Crete, off the southern coast of Greece. **Arabs** were Jews living in the kingdom of the Nabatean Arabs, located south of Damascus (cf. [Gal. 1:17](#)).

speaking of the mighty deeds of God. Having used the sound of the wind to gather the crowd, the Spirit now convinces them that these believers in Jesus Christ were devoted to praising the one true God. Blasphemers, as many thought them to be, could not be extolling the greatness of God. All that recitation of what God had done prepared the way for Peter's proclamation of the gospel beginning in [verse 14](#). The good news of salvation in Jesus Christ was the climax toward which the Holy Spirit was building.

The Explanation of the Spirit's Coming

*And they all continued in amazement and great perplexity, saying to one another, "What does this mean?" But others were mocking and saying, "They are full of sweet wine."
([2:12-13](#))*

As is regularly the case when God's truth is presented, some in the crowd accepted it, while others rejected. The former **continued in amazement and great perplexity, saying to one another, "What does this mean?"** They would soon understand when Peter proclaimed the gospel in his sermon.

At the same time the **others were mocking and saying, "they are full of sweet wine."** Like the Pharisees who heard Jesus' claims and saw the confirming miracles, but concluded He was of the devil ([Matt. 12:24ff.](#)), these scoffers rejected the evidence that this was a work of God. Instead, they proposed the ridiculous hypothesis that the apostles were **full of sweet wine**. They tried to explain away the miracle of speaking in languages as a drunken frolic. Tragically, their skepticism was to harden into full-fledged opposition toward the message and the messengers (cf. [4:7ff.](#); [5:17-18](#), [40](#); [7:58-60](#)). However, no amount of opposition could stop the work of God that began at Pentecost.

- MacArthur New Testament Commentary

WELCOME TO ACTS CHAPTER 2... ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT CHAPTERS IN ALL THE BIBLE... ACTS 2 RISES TO THE RANKS OF GENESIS 1, ISAIAH 53, MATTHEW 5-7, JOHN 17, EVEN REVELATION 22... - JDP

THE SECOND CHAPTER OF ACTS introduces three of the most important keys to the entire book: the fullness of the Spirit ([vv. 1-13](#)), the evangelistic ministry of the church ([vv. 14-41](#)), and the community life of the believers ([vv. 42-47](#)).

The fulfillment of Christ's promise of the Holy Spirit appropriately takes place during a Jewish harvest festival, Pentecost (v. 1). This term (derived from the Gk., *pentecoste*, fiftieth) comes from the fact that the festival is celebrated on the fiftieth day after the Passover. It was one of the three Jewish pilgrimage festivals, when individuals were to appear before the Lord with gifts and offerings ([Ex. 23:14-17](#)); it celebrated the end of the barley harvest and the beginning of the wheat harvest. It is appropriate that the event that was going to propel the gospel to the ends of the earth took place at a time when people from the ends of the earth were in Jerusalem.

The wind and fire that accompanied the gift of the Spirit ([vv. 2-3](#)) are common biblical symbols for the activity of the Spirit. The Greek and Hebrew words for "Spirit" can also mean "wind" and "breath." In the valley of dry bones, wind and breath come and give life to dried-up bones. After that the Lord said, "I will put my Spirit in you and you will live" ([Ezek. 37:1-14](#)). According to Jesus, the blowing of the wind "illustrates the mysterious operation of the Spirit in effecting new birth" (cf. [John 3:7-8](#)). In both cases the wind was a symbol of regeneration.

In the prediction of baptism with the Holy Spirit by John the Baptist, the wind (by implication) blows the chaff away ([Luke 3:16-17](#)). This is a symbol of judgment. Similarly, fire in this same prediction, which burns up the chaff, is a symbol of judgment. In other words, like the coming of the gospel message ([2 Cor. 2:15-16](#)), the coming of Spirit means life to some and judgment to others (as we will see with Ananias and Sapphira, [Acts 5:3, 9](#)).

Moreover, fire is also a symbol of the powerful presence of God, as both the fire at the burning bush ([Ex. 3:2-5](#)) and the pillar of fire at night ([Ex. 13:21-22](#)) indicate.

The separation of the tongues of fire "to rest on each of them" ([v. 3](#)) "seems to suggest that, though under the old covenant the divine presence rested on Israel as a corporate entity and upon many of its leaders for special purposes, under the new covenant, established by Jesus and inaugurated at Pentecost, the Spirit now rests on each believer individually."

This does not negate the importance of the corporate relationship with God, as Paul's letters amply demonstrate. But from now on, the corporate arises out of a personal relationship with God through the Holy Spirit. This is in keeping with the prediction through Jeremiah that in the new covenant the law will be written on the hearts ([Jer. 31:33](#)).

Two things happened to the disciples after the Spirit came: They "were filled with the Holy Spirit" and "began to speak in other tongues" ([v. 4](#)).

The "tongues" are different from those described in [1 Corinthians 12-14](#) because, unlike there, "God-fearing Jews" from the Diaspora were able to understand what was being said. They exclaimed, "We hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!" ([Acts 2:11](#)). The gift of tongues generally seems to have been used for praising God (see [1 Cor. 14](#)). But this particular manifestation of the Spirit, in languages understood by the people, was most appropriate here since those who heard it were eager to listen to the preaching of the gospel.

At the start of what may be called "the era of the Spirit," he assisted in the work of witness in a way that depicts the gospel going to the ends of the earth.

*The sign fit in with the Spirit's role
in enabling the church's worldwide witness
(Acts 1:8).*

*As a result, about three thousand people
were "added to their number that day"
(2:41).*

Three times we are told that the disciples spoke in the people's "own language" (cf. vv. 6, 8, 11).

Verses 12-13 give the two reactions of those who heard the faithful proclamation of God's word by the apostles. Some were touched and wanted to know more, asking, "What does this mean?" (v. 12). Others rejected the message and ridiculed what was said, indicated by the allegation, "They have had too much wine" (v. 13).

It is surprising that, in the face of such a spectacular miracle, some should mock what they saw. But as we will see below, this is in keeping with the theology of rejection that is clearly present in Scripture.

BRIDGING CONTEXTS...

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF Pentecost. The experience of Pentecost is the key that unlocks the book of Acts. But what does it say to us today? Pentecost made religion into much more of a personal experience with Christ through the Holy Spirit than before.

Pentecost also signaled that we as believers have a new power for ministry... [1:1-11](#) revealed the importance of the Holy Spirit for Christian ministry.

NOTE: There are many parallels between Luke's description of the beginning of Christ's public ministry in [Luke 4](#) and the beginning of the church's public ministry in [Acts 2](#).

The rest of the New Testament gives other ways in which the Spirit's power is manifested in our lives (e.g., [Rom. 8](#), which describes how the Spirit gives us victory over sin and life to our mortal bodies). But the great emphasis of Acts is the power we receive to proclaim the gospel.

Pentecost reverses what happened at Babel. In fact, as Conrad Gempf has shown, something greater happened.

In a reversal of the scattering that took place at Babel, the Jewish pilgrim festivals, like Pentecost, brought people from the far corners of the earth to worship God. What is new here is that from now on, people would not need to come back to some central place to worship God—and in the Hebrew tongue. Rather, they could go to the far corners of the earth and worship God in their own languages.

Pentecost, then, tells us that we, today, can have an intimate experience of God and can manifest power in ministry. Moreover, the barriers that divided the human race have been broken...

(Speaking in Tongues...)

In light of its three occurrences in settings where people received the Spirit, it is not surprising that many consider tongues to be the necessary sign of the baptism with the Holy Spirit. Yet the fact that many who give obvious evidence of being filled with the Spirit have not spoken in tongues should make us wary of insisting on tongues as the necessary sign, especially since **nowhere in the Bible is it clearly stated that tongues must accompany Spirit baptism.** Note that the tongues many refer to as the sign of their experience in the Spirit is of the unintelligible type described in [1 Corinthians 12-14](#), not the understandable tongues described in [Acts 2](#).

Unfortunately, tongues has been the focal point of much division in the church, especially since the Pentecostal movement burst onto the scene at the turn of this century. Far too many have taken one of two extreme positions: that all Christians should practice this gift, or that no members of their group or church should practice it.

We should beware of both charismania (an overemphasis on charismatic gifts) and charisphobia (a fear of charismatic gifts)

We must leave it to God to give us what gifts he desires for us.

(Theology of REJECTION) [\(v. 13\)](#)

Rejection of the gospel is a theme found throughout Acts. Beginning with the story of Judas's defection in the chapter 1, this theme appears in all but chapters 3 and 10—two chapters that give incomplete stories completed in chapters 4 and 11 respectively and which contain the rejection theme.

Therefore, it is important for us to anticipate rejection and not be disillusioned when it comes. If everyone is pleased with what we do, we have probably not been truly faithful to God.

The gospel and God's truth are so radically different to the thinking of the world that those who follow him should expect some to oppose them. The form the rejection takes in our passage is significant, because it presents a common approach to God's message.

The Bible contains an advanced theology of this type of rejection, especially relating to Jewish rejection of God's message. When God called Isaiah, he told him that not only would some reject his message, but some would also be confirmed in their chosen path of blindness and rebellion because of his message ([Isa. 6:10](#)):

Make the heart of this people calloused;
make their ears dull
and close their eyes.
Otherwise they might see with their eyes,
hear with their ears,
understand with their hearts,
and turn and be healed.

Jesus himself indicated that some would respond to his parables in this way ([Matt. 13:11-15](#)). According to Paul, the apostles are "the smell of death" to some and "the fragrance of life" to others ([2 Cor. 2:16](#)). Thus, when rebellious people in [Acts 2](#) see the Pentecostal phenomena and hear Peter preach, their rebellion is intensified. Their mocking response reminds us that whenever we follow God faithfully, we will face rejection.

(NOTE: Had the apostles been proclaiming a humanistic, materialistic, or flesh-gratifying version of the "mighty works of God," they would not have been met with mocking resistance. – JDP)

CONTEMPORARY SIGNIFICANCE:

INTIMACY WITH GOD and joy in worship. **Pentecost has opened the door for us to have an intimate and supernatural experience of God.** To many, however, even within the evangelical fold, Christianity is restricted to entering the kingdom through a rational acceptance of the truth of the gospel, followed by their labor to live according to the Bible. This is indeed an important ingredient to Christianity. But Pentecost and its working out in Acts tells us that there is "something more."

At Pentecost, when the disciples were filled with the Spirit, they began "declaring the wonders of God"

(v. 11). When we sense, through experience, that "God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us" (**Rom. 5:5**), our hearts are filled with joy, and this joy expresses itself in praise.

QUOTE:

"Singing is as much the language of holy joy as praying is of holy desire."

- John Wesley

(The Spirit & Praise in Worship)

Paul connects singing directly with the fullness of the Spirit in [Ephesians 5:18-20](#), presenting it as an outflow of such fullness: "Be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord" (NASB). "Speaking," "singing," and "making melody" are participles in the Greek related to the imperative, "be filled." Christians, then, must constantly seek to recapture what Pentecost signified: vibrant intimacy with God and joyous worship that ensues from it.

(Counter-balance to subjective worship)

One danger of an emphasis on subjective experience in worship, however, is that it can satisfy people so much that they neglect important Christian disciplines of day-to-day life, such as striving after personal and social holiness and mastering the Scriptures. It is possible for Christians to worship God with what seems to be deep intimacy on Sunday, and then to behave in unchristian ways in their workplaces on Monday (e.g., adopting unethical business methods and exploiting labor). They concentrate so much on subjective experience that they neglect the hard work of pursuing a Christian mind that informs their lives and vitally influences the decisions they make and the way they behave. (cf: Apostle Paul offers great example of both/and – head & heart!)

QUOTE:

“While quality can be an expression of spirituality, it can never be a substitute for it.” - NIV

We must ensure that the Holy Spirit has ample opportunity to fill the service with the sense of God's presence and to lead the people to a deep experience of God. I fear that sometimes what we aim at is to entertain people through our quality. This can be an effective means of attracting people in our entertainment-oriented society, but it should never so consume our efforts that it becomes a substitute for seeking God's fullness in worship...

"Is there a power that can unify the divided nations of the earth without subjugating them? Is there a way of making people one, without at the same time making them all the same?" To which he answers: "It is precisely that sort of unity which the Holy Spirit brings.

SUMMARY OF PURPOSE!

The Spirit created "a new kind of social identity altogether"—the "fellowship of the Holy Spirit." Thus, in the book of Acts we see the growth of "one church in diverse cultures." All of this looks forward to the day when there will be a "a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb" (Rev. 7:9).

Pentecost, then, gives us a hint of how the revolutionary breaking of social and other barriers by the gospel will work out in practical life. The implications are immense. As we take the gospel to the peoples of the world, we should not expect people to subject themselves to a language like English (which is today what Greek was in the first century). We need to learn the heart language of people and to share the gospel with them in that language. All the advances in technology are no substitute to the hard work of identifying with a culture and learning to understand and appreciate its distinctives—hard work indeed in a culture that values efficiency so highly and tries so hard to eliminate frustration.

Yet while we work hard to present the gospel in culturally appropriate ways, we should never isolate any Christians from the church in the rest of the world. We must show them that they are part of a large worldwide family, who share a deep unity in diversity that will outlast all human barriers until we go to our heavenly home, where people from all cultures will be at home.

Responding to rejection. There can be no doubt that if we proclaim God's truth today, we too, like Jesus and the first disciples, should expect rejection and misrepresentation. Jesus said, "*Remember the words I spoke to you: 'No servant is greater than his master.' If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also*" ([John 15:20](#)).

When people reject what we say, we must try to not permit such reactions to deprive others of the life-giving message of Christ that I am presenting.

- NIV Application Commentary

MATTHEW HENRY:

Acts chapter 2

Between the promise of the Messiah (even the latest of those promises) and his coming many ages intervened; but between the promise of the Spirit and his coming there were but a few days; and during those days the apostles, though they had received orders to preach the gospel to every creature, and to begin at Jerusalem, yet lay perfectly wind-bound, incognito-concealed, and not offering to preach. But in this chapter the north wind and the south wind awake, and then they awake, and we have them in the pulpit presently. Here is, I. The descent of the Spirit upon the apostles, and those that were with them, on the day of pentecost ([v. 1-4](#)). II. The various speculations which this occasioned among the people that were now met in Jerusalem from all parts ([v. 5-13](#)) III. The sermon which Peter preached to them hereupon, wherein he shows that this pouring out of the Spirit was the accomplishment of an Old-Testament promise ([v. 14-21](#)), that it was a confirmation of Christ's being the Messiah, which was already proved by his resurrection ([v. 22-32](#)), and that it was a fruit and evidence of his ascension into heaven ([v. 33-36](#)). IV. The good effect of this sermon in the conversion of many to the faith of Christ, and their addition to the church ([v. 37-41](#)). V. The eminent piety and charity of those primitive Christians, and the manifest tokens of God's presence with them, and power in them ([v. 42-47](#)).

The Descent of the Spirit Upon the Apostles, and Those That Were with Them, On the Day of Pentecost

[2:1-4](#)

We have here an account of the descent of the Holy Ghost upon the disciples of Christ. Observe,

I. When, and where, this was done, which are particularly noted, for the greater certainty of the thing.

1. It was when the day of pentecost was fully come, in which there seems to be a reference to the manner of the expression in the institution of this feast, where it is said ([Leviticus 23:15](#)), You shall count unto you seven sabbaths complete, from the day of the offering of the first-fruits, which was the next day but one after the passover, the sixteenth day of the month Abib, which was the day that Christ arose. This day was fully come, that is, the night preceding, with a part of the day, was fully past.

(1.) The Holy Ghost came down at the time of a solemn feast, because there was then a great concourse of people to Jerusalem from all parts of the country, and the proselytes from other countries, which would make it the more public, and the fame of it to be spread the sooner and further, which would contribute much to the propagating of the gospel into all nations. Thus now, as before at the passover, the Jewish feasts served to toll the bell for gospel services and entertainments.

(2.) This feast of pentecost was kept in remembrance of the giving of the law upon mount Sinai, whence the incorporating of the Jewish church was to be dated, which Dr. Lightfoot reckons to be just one thousand four hundred and forty-seven years before this. Fitly, therefore, is the Holy Ghost given at that feast, in fire and in tongues, for the promulgation of the evangelical law, not as that to one nation, but to every creature.

(3.) This feast of pentecost happened on the first day of the week, which was an additional honour put on that day, and a confirmation of it to be the Christian sabbath, the day which the Lord hath made, to be a standing memorial in his church of those two great blessings-the resurrection of Christ, and the pouring out of the Spirit, both on that day of the week. This serves not only to justify us in observing that day under the style and title of the Lord's day, but to direct us in the sanctifying of it to give God praise particularly for those two great blessings; every Lord's day in the year, I think, there should be a full and particular notice taken in our prayers and praises of these two, as there is by some churches of the one once a year, upon Easter-day, and of the other once a year, upon Whit-sunday. Oh! that we may do it with suitable affections!

2. It was when they were all with one accord in one place. What place it was we are not told particularly, whether in the temple, where they attended at public times ([Luke 24:53](#)), or whether in their own upper room, where

they met at other times. But it was at Jerusalem, because this had been the place which God chose, to put his name there, and the prophecy was that thence the word of the Lord should go forth to all nations, [Isaiah 2:3](#). It was now the place of the general rendezvous of all devout people: here God had promised to meet them and bless them; here therefore he meets them with this blessing of blessings. Though Jerusalem had done the utmost dishonour imaginable to Christ, yet he did this honour to Jerusalem, to teach his remnant in all places; he had this in Jerusalem. Here the disciples were in one place, and they were not as yet so many but that one place, and no large one, would hold them all. And here they were with one accord. We cannot forget how often, while their Master was with them, there were strifes among them, who should be the greatest; but now all these strifes were at an end, we hear no more of them. What they had received already of the Holy Ghost, when Christ breathed on them, had in a good measure rectified the mistakes upon which those contests were grounded, and had disposed them to holy love. They had prayed more together of late than usual (ch. [1:14](#)), and this made them love one another better. By his grace he thus prepared them for the gift of the Holy Ghost; for that blessed dove comes not where there is noise and clamour, but moves upon the face of the still waters, not the rugged ones. Would we have the Spirit poured out upon us from on high? Let us be all of one accord, and, notwithstanding variety of sentiments and interests, as no doubt there was among those disciples, let us agree to love one another; for, where brethren dwell together in unity, there it is that the Lord commands his blessing.

II. How, and in what manner, the Holy Ghost came upon them. We often read in the old Testament of God's coming down in a cloud; as when he took possession first of the tabernacle, and afterwards of the temple, which intimates the darkness of that dispensation. And Christ went up to heaven in a cloud, to intimate how much we are kept in the dark concerning the upper world. But the Holy Ghost did not descend in a cloud; for he was to dispel and scatter the clouds that overspread men's minds, and to bring light into the world.

1. Here is an audible summons given them to awaken their expectations of something great, [v. 2](#). It is here said,

(1.) That it came suddenly, did not rise gradually, as common winds do, but was at the height immediately. It came sooner than they expected, and startled even those that were now together waiting, and probably employed in some religious exercises.

(2.) It was a sound from heaven, like a thunder-clap, [Revelation 6:1](#). God is said to bring the winds out of his treasuries ([Psa. 135:7](#)), and to gather them in his hands, [Proverbs 30:4](#). From him this sound came, like the voice of one crying, Prepare ye the way of the Lord.

(3.) It was the sound of a wind, for the way of the Spirit is like that of the wind ([John 3:3](#)), thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it comes nor whither it goes. When the Spirit of life is to enter into the dry bones, the prophet is told to prophecy unto the wind: Come from the four winds, O breath, [Ezekiel 37:9](#). And though it was not in the wind that the Lord came to Elijah, yet this prepared him to receive his discovery of himself in the still small voice, [1 Kings 19:11, 12](#). God's way is in the whirlwind and the storm ([Nahum 1:3](#)), and out of the whirlwind he spoke to Job.

(4.) It was a rushing mighty wind; it was strong and violent, and came not only with a great noise, but with great force, as if it would bear down all before it. This was to signify the powerful influences and operations of the Spirit of God upon the minds of men, and thereby upon the world, that they should be mighty through God, to the casting down of imaginations.

(5.) It filled not only the room, but all the house where they were sitting. Probably it alarmed the whole city, but, to show that it was supernatural, presently fixed upon that particular house: as some think the wind that was sent to arrest Jonah affected only the ship that he was in ([Jonah 1:4](#)), and as the wise men's star stood over the house where the child was. This would direct the people who observed it whither to go to enquire the meaning of it. This wind filling the house would strike an awe upon the disciples, and help to put them into a very serious, reverent, and composed frame, for the receiving of the Holy Ghost. Thus the convictions of the Spirit make way for his comforts; and the rough blasts of that blessed wind prepare the soul for its soft and gentle gales.

2. Here is a visible sign of the gift they were to receive. They saw cloven tongues, like as of fire ([v. 3](#)), and it sat-*ekathise*, not they sat, those cloven

tongues, but he, that is the Spirit (signified thereby), rested upon each of them, as he is said to rest upon the prophets of old. Or, as Dr. Hammond describes it, "There was an appearance of something like flaming fire lighting on every one of them, which divided asunder, and so formed the resemblance of tongues, with that part of them that was next their heads divided or cloven." The flame of a candle is somewhat like a tongue; and there is a meteor which naturalists call ignis lambens—a gentle flame, not a devouring fire; such was this. Observe,

(1.) There was an outward sensible sign, for the confirming of the faith of the disciples themselves, and for the convincing of others. Thus the prophets of old had frequently their first mission confirmed by signs, that all Israel might know them to be established prophets.

(2.) The sign given was fire, that John Baptist's saying concerning Christ might be fulfilled, He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire; with the Holy Ghost as with fire. They were now, in the feast of pentecost, celebrating the memorial of the giving of the law upon mount Sinai; and as that was given in fire, and therefore is called a fiery law, so is the gospel. Ezekiel's mission was confirmed by a vision of burning coals of fire (ch. [1:13](#)), and Isaiah's by a coal of fire touching his lips, ch. [6:7](#). The Spirit, like fire, melts the heart, separates and burns up the dross, and kindles pious and devout affections in the soul, in which, as in the fire upon the altar, the spiritual sacrifices are offered up. This is that fire which Christ came to send upon the earth. [Luke 12:49](#).

(3.) This fire appeared in cloven tongues. The operations of the Spirit were many; that of speaking with divers tongues was one, and was singled out to be the first indication of the gift of the Holy Ghost, and to that this sign had a reference.

[1.] They were tongues; for from the Spirit we have the word of God, and by him Christ would speak to the world, and he gave the Spirit to the disciples, not only to endue them with knowledge, but to endue them with a power to publish and proclaim to the world what they knew; for the dispensation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.

[2.] These tongues were cloven, to signify that God would hereby divide unto all nations the knowledge of his grace, as he is said to have divided to them by his providence the light of the heavenly bodies, [Deu.](#)

[4:19](#). The tongues were divided, and yet they still continued all of one accord; for there may be a sincere unity of affections where yet there is a diversity of expression. Dr. Lightfoot observes that the dividing of tongues at Babel was the casting off of the heathen; for when they had lost the language in which alone God was spoken of and preached, they utterly lost the knowledge of God and religion, and fell into idolatry. But now, after above two thousand years, God, by another dividing of tongues, restores the knowledge of himself to the nations.

(4.) This fire sat upon them for some time, to denote the constant residence of the Holy Ghost with them. The prophetic gifts of old were conferred sparingly and but at some times, but the disciples of Christ had the gifts of the Spirit always with them, though the sign, we may suppose, soon disappeared. Whether these flames of fire passed from one to another, or whether there were as many flames as there were persons, is not certain. But they must be strong and bright flames that would be visible in the day-light, as it now was, for the day was fully come.

III. What was the immediate effect of this?

1. They were all filled with the Holy Ghost, more plentifully and powerfully than they were before. They were filled with the graces of the Spirit, and were more than ever under his sanctifying influences-were now holy, and heavenly, and spiritual, more weaned from this world and better acquainted with the other. They were more filled with the comforts of the Spirit, rejoiced more than ever in the love of Christ and the hope of heaven, and in it all their griefs and fears were swallowed up. They were also, for the proof of this, filled with the gifts of the Holy Ghost, which are especially meant here; they were endued with miraculous powers for the furtherance of the gospel. It seems evident to me that not only the twelve apostles, but all the hundred and twenty disciples were filled with the Holy Ghost alike at this time-all the seventy disciples, who were apostolic men, and employed in the same work, and all the rest too that were to preach the gospel; for it is said expressly ([Ephesians 4:8, 11](#)), When Christ ascended on high (which refers to this, [v. 33](#)), he gave gifts unto men, not only some apostles (such were the twelve), but some prophets and some evangelists (such were many of the

seventy disciples, itinerant preachers), and some pastors and teachers settled in particular churches, as we may suppose some of these afterwards were. The all here must refer to the all that were together, [v. 1](#); ch. [1:14,15](#).

2. They began to speak with other tongues, besides their native language, though they had never learned any other. They spoke not matters of common conversation, but the word of God, and the praises of his name, as the Spirit gave them utterance, or gave them to speak *apophthengesthai*-apophthegms, substantial and weighty sayings, worthy to be had in remembrance. It is probable that it was not only one that was enabled to speak one language, and another another (as it was with the several families that were dispersed from Babel), but that every one was enabled to speak divers languages, as he should have occasion to use them. And we may suppose that they understood not only themselves but one another too, which the builders of Babel did not, [Genesis 11:7](#). They did not speak here and there a word of another tongue, or stammer out some broken sentences, but spoke it as readily, properly, and elegantly, as if it had been their mother-tongue; for whatever was produced by miracle was the best of the kind. They spoke not from any previous thought or meditation, but as the Spirit gave them utterance; he furnished them with the matter as well as the language. Now this was,

(1.) A very great miracle; it was a miracle upon the mind (and so had most of the nature of a gospel miracle), for in the mind words are framed. They had not only never learned these languages, but had never learned any foreign tongue, which might have facilitated these; nay, for aught that appears, they had never so much as heard these languages spoken, nor had any idea of them. They were neither scholars nor travellers, nor had had any opportunity of learning languages either by books or conversation. Peter indeed was forward enough to speak in his own tongue, but the rest of them were no spokesmen, nor were they quick of apprehension; yet now not only the heart of the rash understands knowledge, but the tongue of the stammerers is ready to speak eloquently, [Isaiah 32:4](#). When Moses complained, I am slow of speech, God said, I will be with thy mouth, and Aaron shall be thy spokesman. But he did more for these messengers of his: he that made man's mouth new-made theirs.

(2.) A very proper, needful, and serviceable miracle. The language the disciples spoke was Syriac, a dialect of the Hebrew; so that it was

necessary that they should be endued with the gift, for the understanding both of the original Hebrew of the Old Testament, in which it was written, and of the original Greek of the New Testament, in which it was to be written. But this was not all; they were commissioned to preach the gospel to every creature, to disciple all nations. But here is an insuperable difficulty at the threshold. How shall they master the several languages so as to speak intelligibly to all nations? It will be the work of a man's life to learn their languages. And therefore, to prove that Christ could give authority to preach to the nations, he gives ability to preach to them in their own language. And it should seem that this was the accomplishment of that promise which Christ made to his disciples ([John 14:12](#)), Greater works than these shall you do. For this may well be reckoned, all things considered, a greater work than the miraculous cures Christ wrought. Christ himself did not speak with other tongues, nor did he enable his disciples to do so while he was with them: but it was the first effect of the pouring out of the Spirit upon them. And archbishop Tillotson thinks it probable that if the conversion of infidels to Christianity were now sincerely and vigorously attempted, by men of honest minds, God would extraordinarily countenance such an attempt with all fitting assistance, as he did the first publication of the gospel.

The Various Speculations Which This Occasioned Among the People That Were Now Met in Jerusalem From All Parts

[2:5-13](#)

We have here an account of the public notice that was taken of this extraordinary gift with which the disciples were all on a sudden endued. Observe,

I. The great concourse of people that there was now at Jerusalem, it should seem more than was usual at the feast of pentecost. There were dwelling or abiding at Jerusalem Jews that were devout men, disposed to religion, and that had the fear of God before their eyes (so the word properly signifies), some of them proselytes

of righteousness, that were circumcised, and admitted members of the Jewish church, others only proselytes of the gate, that forsook idolatry, and gave up themselves to the worship of the true God, but not to the ceremonial law; some of those that were at Jerusalem now, out of every nation under heaven, whither the Jews were dispersed, or whence proselytes were come. The expression is hyperbolical, denoting that there were some from most of the then known parts of the world; as much as ever Tyre was, or London is, the rendezvous of trading people from all parts, Jerusalem at that time was of religious people from all parts. Now,

1. We may here see what were some of those countries whence those strangers came ([v. 9-11](#)), some from the eastern countries, as the Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and dwellers in Mesopotamia, the posterity of Shem; thence we come in order to Judea, which ought to be mentioned, because, though the language of those in Judea was the same with that which the disciples spoke, yet, before, they spoke it with the north-country tone and dialect (Thou art a Galilean, and thy speech betrays thee), but now they spoke it as correctly as the inhabitants of Judea themselves did. Next come the inhabitants of Cappadocia, Pontus, and that country about Propontis which was particularly called Asia, and these were the countries in which those strangers were scattered to whom St. Peter writes [1 Peter 1:1](#). Next come the dwellers in Phrygia and Pamphylia, which lay westward, the posterity of Japhet, as were also the strangers of Rome; there were some also that dwelt in the southern parts of Egypt, in the parts of Libya about Cyrene; there were also some from the island of Crete, and some from the deserts of Arabia; but they were all either Jews originally, dispersed into those countries; or proselytes to the Jewish religion, but natives of those countries. Dr. Whitby observes that the Jewish writers about this time, as Philo and Josephus, speak of the Jews as dwelling every where through the whole earth; and that there is not a people upon earth among whom some Jews do not inhabit.

2. We may enquire what brought all those Jews and proselytes together to Jerusalem at this time: not to make a transient visit thither to the feast of pentecost, for they are said to dwell there. They took lodgings there, because there was at this time a general expectation of the appearing of the Messiah;

for Daniel's weeks had just now expired, the sceptre had departed from Judah, and it was then generally thought that the kingdom of God would immediately appear, [Luke 19:11](#). This brought those who were most zealous and devout to Jerusalem, to sojourn there, that they might have an early share in the kingdom of the Messiah and the blessings of that kingdom.

II. The amazement with which these strangers were seized when they heard the disciples speak in their own tongues. It should seem, the disciples spoke in various languages before the people of those languages came to them; for it is intimated ([v. 6](#)) that the spreading of the report of this abroad was that which brought the multitude together, especially those of different countries, who seem to have been more affected with this work of wonder than the inhabitants of Jerusalem themselves.

1. They observe that the speakers are all Galileans, that know no other than their mother tongue ([v. 7](#)); they are despicable men, from whom nothing learned nor polite is to be expected. God chose the weak and foolish things of the world to confound the wise and mighty. Christ was thought to be a Galilean, and his disciples really were so, unlearned and ignorant men.

2. They acknowledge that they spoke intelligibly and readily their own language (which they were the most competent judges of), so correctly and fluently that none of their own countrymen could speak it better: We hear every man in our own tongue wherein we were born ([v. 8](#)), that is, we hear one or other of them speak our native language. The Parthians hear one of them speak their language, the Medes hear another of them speak theirs; and so of the rest; [v. 11](#), We do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God. Their respective languages were not only unknown at Jerusalem, but probably despised and undervalued, and therefore it was not only a surprise, but a pleasing surprise, to them to hear the language of their own country spoken, as it naturally is to those that are strangers in a strange land.

(1.) The things they heard the apostles discourse of were the wonderful works of God, *megaleia tou Theou*-Magnalia Dei, the great things of God. It is probable that the apostles spoke of Christ, and redemption by him, and

the grace of the gospel; and these are indeed the great things of God, which will be for ever marvellous in our eyes.

(2.) They heard them both praise God for these great things and instruct the people concerning these things, in their own tongue, according as they perceived the language of their hearers, or those that enquired of them, to be. Now though, perhaps, by dwelling some time at Jerusalem, they were got to be so much masters of the Jewish language that they could have understood the meaning of the disciples if they had spoken that language, yet,

[1.] This was more strange, and helped to convince their judgment, that this doctrine was of God; for tongues were for a sign to those that believed not, [1 Corinthians 14:22](#).

[2.] It was more kind, and helped to engage their affections, as it was a plain indication of the favour intended to the Gentiles, and that the knowledge and worship of God should no longer be confined to the Jews, but the partition-wall should be broken down; and this is to us a plain intimation of the mind and will of God, that the sacred records of God's wonderful works should be preserved by all nations in their own tongue; that the scriptures should be read, and public worship performed, in the vulgar languages of the nations.

3. They wonder at it, and look upon it as an astonishing thing ([v. 12](#)): They were all amazed, they were in an ecstasy, so the word is; and they were in doubt what the meaning of it was, and whether it was to introduce the kingdom of the Messiah, which they were big with the expectation of; they asked themselves and one another *ti an theloi touto einai*; -Quid hoc sibi vult? -What is the tendency of this? Surely it is to dignify, and so to distinguish, these men as messengers from heaven; and therefore, like Moses at the bush, they will turn aside, and see this great sight.

III. The scorn which some made of it who were natives of Judea and Jerusalem, probably the scribes and Pharisees, and chief priests, who always resisted the Holy Ghost; they said, *These men are full of new wine, or sweet wine; they have drunk too much this festival-time*, [v. 13](#). Not that they were so absurd as to think that wine in the head would enable men to speak languages which they never learned; but these, being native Jews, knew not, as the others did, that what was

spoken was really the languages of other nations, and therefore took it to be gibberish and nonsense, such as drunkards, those fools in Israel, sometimes talk. As when they resolved not to believe the finger of the Spirit in Christ's miracles, they turned it off with this, "He casteth out devils by compact with the prince of the devils;" so, when they resolved not to believe the voice of the Spirit in the apostles' preaching, they turned it off with this, These men are full of new wine. And, if they called the Master of the house a wine-bibber, no marvel if they so call those of his household.

- **Matthew Henry's Commentary**

BARNES New Testament Notes:

From heaven. Appearing to rush down from the sky. It was fitted, therefore, to attract their attention no less from the *direction* from which it came, than on account of its *suddenness and violence*. Tempests blow, commonly, horizontally. This appeared to come from above; and this is all that is meant by the expression, "from heaven."

As of a rushing mighty wind. Literally, "as of a violent wind or gale," borne along-[φερομενης](#)-, *sweeping along like a tempest*. Such a wind is sometimes borne along so violently, and with such a noise, as to make it difficult even to hear the thunder in the gale. Such appears to have been the sound of this remarkable phenomenon. It does not appear that there was any wind; all might have been still; but the sudden sound was *like* such a sweeping tempest. It may be remarked, however, that the *wind* in the sacred Scriptures is often put as an emblem of a Divine influence. It is *invisible, yet mighty*; and thus represents the agency of the Holy Spirit. The same word in Hebrew, ([רוח](#),) and in Greek, [πνευμα](#) is used to denote both. The mighty power of God may be denoted also by the violence of a mighty tempest, [1 Kings 19:11](#), [Psalms 29](#), [104:3](#), [18:10](#). And thus

Jesus by *his breath* indicated to the apostles the conferring of the Holy Ghost, [John 20:22](#).

And it filled. Not the *wind* filled, but the *sound*. This is evident,

(1.) because there is no affirmation that there was any wind.

(2.) **The grammatical structure of the sentence will admit no other construction. The word "filled" has no nominative case but "the sound."** And suddenly there was a sound as *of* a wind, and (the sound) filled the house. In the Greek, the word "wind" is in the genitive or possessive case. It may be remarked here, that this miracle was *really* far more striking than the common supposition makes it to have been. A *tempest* might have been terrific. A mighty *wind* might have alarmed them. **But there would have been nothing unusual or remarkable in it. Such things often occurred; and the thoughts would have been directed of course to the *storm* as an ordinary, though perhaps alarming occurrence. But when all was still-when there was no storm, no wind, no rain, no thunder, such a rushing sound must have arrested their attention; and directed all minds to so unusual and unaccountable an occurrence.**

The appearance of *fire*, or *flame*, has always been regarded as a most striking emblem of the Divinity. Thus, (Exodus 3:2,3) God is said to have manifested himself to Moses in a bush which was *burning*, yet not consumed. Thus, (Exodus 19:16-20,) God descended on Mount Sinai in the midst of thunders, and lightnings, and smoke, and *fire*-striking emblems of his presence and power. See

also [Genesis 15:17](#). Thus, ([Deuteronomy 4:24](#),) God is said to be "a consuming fire." Comp. [Hebrews 12:29](#), [Ezekiel 1:4](#), [Psalms 18:12-14](#).

The prediction of John the Baptist, "He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire," ([Matthew 3:11](#)), would probably be recalled at once to their memory.

Verse 4. *Were all filled with the Holy Ghost.* Were entirely under his sacred influence and power. [Luke 1:41,67](#). **To be filled with anything is a phrase denoting that all the faculties are pervaded by it, engaged in it, or under its influence.** [Acts 3:10](#), "Were *filled* with wonder and amazement;" [Acts 5:17](#), "Filled with indignation;" [Acts 13:45](#), "Filled with envy;" [Acts 13:52](#), "Filled with joy, and with the Holy Ghost."

As the Spirit gave them utterance. As the Spirit gave them power to speak. This language implies plainly that they were now endued with a faculty of speaking languages which they had not before learned. Their native tongue was that of Galilee, a somewhat barbarous dialect of the common language used in Judea, *the Syro-Chaldaic*. It is possible that some of them might have been partially acquainted with the Greek and Latin, as both of them were spoken among the Jews to some extent; but there is not the slightest evidence that they were acquainted with the languages of the different nations afterwards specified. Various attempts have been made to account for this remarkable phenomenon,

without supposing it to be a miracle. But the natural and obvious meaning of the passage is, that they were endowed by the miraculous power of the Holy Ghost with ability to speak foreign languages, and languages to them before unknown. It does not appear that *each one* had the power of speaking *all* the languages which are specified, ([Acts 2:9-11](#).) but that this ability was among them, and that together they could speak these languages; probably some one, and some another. The following remarks may perhaps throw some light on this remarkable occurrence:

(1.) This ability was predicted in the Old Testament, ([Isaiah 28:11](#)), "With another tongue will he speak to this people." Comp. [1 Corinthians 14:21](#), where this passage is expressly applied to the power of speaking foreign languages under the gospel.

(2.) It was predicted by the Lord Jesus that they should have this power. [Mark 16:17](#), "These signs shall follow them that believe-they shall speak with *new tongues*."

(3.) The ability to do it existed extensively and long in the church. [1 Corinthians 12:10,11](#), "To another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: but all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit;" [1 Corinthians 12:28](#), "God hath set in the church—diversities of tongues;" [1 Corinthians 12:30](#), [14:2,4,5,6,9,13,14,18,19,22,23](#), [1 Corinthians 14:27,39](#). From this it appears that the power was well known in the church, and was not confined to the apostles. This also may show that, in the case in the Acts, the power was conferred on other members of the church as well as the apostles.

(4.) It was very important that they should be endowed with this power in their great work. They were going forth to preach to all nations; and though the Greek

and Roman tongues were extensively spoken, yet their use was not universal; nor is it known that the apostles were skilled in those languages. To preach to all nations, it was indispensable that they should be able to understand their language. And it was necessary that they should be endowed with ability to speak them without the slow process of being compelled to learn them.

(5.) One design was to establish the gospel by means of miracles. Yet no miracle could be more striking than the power of conveying their sentiments at once into all the languages of the earth. When it is remembered what a slow and toilsome process it is to learn a foreign tongue, this would be regarded by the heathen as one of the most striking miracles which were ever wrought in the establishment of the Christian faith, [1 Corinthians 14:22,24,25](#).

(6.) The *reality* and *certainty* of this miracle is strongly attested by the early triumphs of the gospel. That the gospel was early spread over all the world, and that, too, by the apostles of Jesus Christ, by men of Galilee, is the clear testimony of all history. They preached it in Arabia, Greece, Syria, Asia, Persia, Africa, and Rome. Yet how *could* this have been effected without a miraculous power of speaking the languages used in all those places? *Now*, it requires the toil of many years to speak in foreign languages; and the *recorded success* of the gospel is one of the most striking attestations to the fact of the miracle that could be conceived.

(7.) The corruption of language was one of the most decided effects of sin, of pride and ambition, and the source of endless embarrassments and difficulties, [Genesis 11](#). It is not to be regarded as wonderful if one of the effects of the plan of recovering men should be to show the power of God over *all* evil; and thus to furnish striking evidence that the gospel *could* meet all the crimes and calamities of men. And we may add,

(8.) that from this we see the necessity now of *training* men who are to be the missionaries to other lands. The gift of miracles is withdrawn. The apostles, by that miracle, simply were *empowered* to speak other languages. That power must still be had if the gospel is to be preached. But it is now to be obtained, not by miracle, but by slow and careful study and toil. If possessed, men must be taught it. They must labour for it. And as the church is bound ([Matthew 28:19](#)) to send the gospel to all nations, so it is bound to provide that the *teachers* who shall be sent forth shall be qualified for their work. Hence *one* of the reasons of the importance of training men for the holy ministry.

Devout men. ἄνδρες ἐυλαβεῖς. Literally, **men of cautious and circumspect lives, who lived in a prudent manner.** The term is applied to **men who were cautious about offending God; who were careful to observe his commandments.** It hence is a general expression to denote pious or religious men. [Acts 8:2](#), "And *devout* men carried Stephen to his burial." [Luke 2:25](#), "And the same man (Simeon) was just and devout." The word *devout* means, "yielding a solemn and reverential attention to God in religious exercises

Verse 7. Galilaeans. Inhabitants of Galilee. It was remarkable that they should speak in this manner, because

(*) **they were proverbially ignorant, rude, and uncivilized,** [John 1:46](#). Hence the term **Galilaeans was used as an expression of the deepest reproach and contempt,** [Mark 14:70](#); [John 7:52](#).

(2.) Their dialect was proverbially barbarous and corrupt, [Mark 14:70](#), [Matthew 26:73](#). They were regarded as an outlandish people...

The native weakness and inability of Christian ministers makes the grace and glory of God more remarkable in the success of the gospel.

Verse 11: *The wonderful works of God.* ταμεγαλειατουθεου. **The great things of God; that is, the great things that God had done, in the gift of his Son; in his raising him from the dead; in his miracles, ascension, etc. Comp. [Luke 1:49](#), [Psalms 71:19](#), [26:7](#), [66:3](#), [92:6](#), [104:24](#), etc.**

Verse 13. *Others mocking* said. The word rendered "mocking" means *to cavil, to deride*. It occurs in the New Testament but in one other place: [Acts 17:32](#), "*And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked.*" **This was an effect that was not confined to the day of Pentecost.** There has been seldom a revival of religion, a remarkable manifestation of the power of the Holy Spirit, that has not given occasion for profane mockery and merriment. **One characteristic of wicked men is to deride those things which are done to promote their own welfare.**

Hence the Saviour himself was mocked; and the efforts of Christians to save others have been the subject of derision. *Derision*, and *mockery*, and *a jeer*, have been far more effectual in deterring men from becoming Christians than any attempts at sober argument.

God will treat men as they treat him!

[Psalms 18:26.](#)

And hence He says to the wicked,

"To escape the absurdity of acknowledging their own ignorance, they adopted the theory *that strong drink can teach languages.*"

- Dr. McLelland

And hence He says to the wicked,

*"Because I have called, and ye refused—
but ye have set at nought all my counsel—
I also will laugh at your calamity;
I will mock when your fear cometh,"*

[Proverbs 1:24-26.](#) - Barnes' Notes on the New Testament.

JOHN PIPER:

The lessons of history give a strong support for this—namely, that crucial breakthroughs for the gospel have come because of periodic extraordinary outpourings of the Spirit. **Jonathan Edwards**, the leader of the Great Awakening 200 years ago in this country, put it like this:

From the fall of man to our day, the work of redemption in its effect has mainly been carried on by remarkable [i.e., extraordinary] communications of the Spirit of God. Though there [is] a more constant influence of God's Spirit always in some degree attending his ordinances, yet the way in which the greatest things have been done towards carrying on this work, always have been by remarkable effusions [i.e., outpourings], at special seasons of mercy. (A History of Redemption, Works, vol. 1, p. 539)

In other words, from time to time, God has moved in extraordinary ways in the history of the Christian movement. He has poured out his Spirit in fresh, new, uncustomary, dramatic ways. These times have been called times of revival or awakening or reformation.

Pentecost was the 1st of these great outpourings on the Christian church.

"Pentecost"

It's a shame that the term "Pentecostal power" has for many people become more associated with speaking in tongues than with the harvest of world evangelization. I'll come back to the miracle of tongues in a few minutes, but just be sure at this point that you see the main focus: it is a feast of harvest in Jerusalem, and on this very day, Jesus pours out the Spirit in extraordinary power and 3,000 people are harvested from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God.

“Suddenly”

“The Spirit’s ‘suddenly’ = the Savior’s Sovereignty”

- JDP

*When the Spirit comes in power, He comes suddenly—
on His own terms and in His own time—and He comes
for harvesting.*

- John Piper

“Wind and Fire”

Next, notice the wind and the fire in verses 2 and 3: *"And suddenly a sound came from heaven like the rush of a mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them tongues as of fire, distributed and resting on each one of them."* **At times the Holy Spirit makes himself known with visible, audible, touchable manifestations. In the Old Testament there was the pillar of cloud and the pillar of fire. At Jesus' baptism there was the dove. In Acts 4 the building shakes. In chapter 6 Stephen's face was like the face of an angel. In chapter 16 there is an earthquake. At times the Spirit stoops to give us visible, audible, touchable demonstrations of his presence and power.**

Why he does this for some and not others, and at some times and not other times is part of his sovereign wisdom. He is not fire. He is not wind. He is not a dove. He is not a warm glow. So he will not use these manifestations in a way that allows us to confuse him with them. He is free. But when he pleases, there may be fire and there may be sound.

verse 11: "We hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God." Luke calls this the fullness of the Holy Spirit in verse 4: "And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." Being filled with the Holy Spirit here is being overwhelmed with the greatness of God. The literal translation of verse 11 is that they were speaking "the greatnesses of God." Since the Spirit was giving them utterance, and since the utterance was of God's greatness, I take the fullness of the Spirit to mean that the Spirit's experience of the greatness of God becomes our experience of the greatness of God.

The flames on their heads had set fire to the knowledge of God, and turned it into passion.

The Experience That Counts!

by
Jonathan Edwards

Highlighted for Leadership Training

by
Jeffrey Pearson
Lead Pastor,
THE BRIDGE

Preface

The most crucial question for the human race is this, what are the distinguishing marks of the people who enjoy God's favor, those who are on their way to heaven?

It is hard to give an objective answer to such a controversial question. *It will probably hurt many of my readers to find that I have criticized so many religious emotions and experiences in this book. Others may be angry about the things that I have defended and approved in this book.* It is not easy to support what is good about religious revivals, and at the same time, to see and reject what is bad in them. **Yet, we have to do both, if we want Christ's kingdom to prosper.**

So much good and so much bad are mixed up in the church!

It is as mysterious as the mixture of so much good and bad in an individual Christian. It is no new thing for false religion to flourish at a time of revival, or for hypocrites to appear among true believers. See Jeremiah 3:10 and Jeremiah 4: 3-4. Also read John chapter 5:35. It was the same again when Christ himself preached. **Many admired Christ for a time, but few were faithful to the end.** The same was true again when the apostles preached, we know from the heresies and divisions that troubled churches during the apostle's lifetime.

This mixture of false religion with true religion has been Satan's greatest weapon against the cause of Christ. This is why we must learn to distinguish between true and false religion, between emotions and experiences which really come from salvation, and imitations which are outwardly attractive and plausible, but false.

A failure to distinguish produces terrible consequences. Here are some examples:

- Many offered to God a false worship which he rejects.
- Satan deceives many about the state of their souls.
- **Satan deludes people into thinking they are holy, when they really are hypocrites.**
- Satan spoils the faith of true believers. He mixes deformities and corruptions into it, and so causes believers to grow cold in their spiritual emotions. He also confuses others with great difficulties and temptations.
- Enemies of Christianity are encouraged, when they see the church corrupted and distracted.
- *Men commit sin under the illusion that they are serving God.* So they sin without restraint.
- False teaching deceives even the friends of Christianity into doing the work of its enemies. **They destroy Christianity far more effectively than outright enemies can do, under the illusion that they are advancing it.**
- Satan divides Christ's people & sets them against each other. Christianity degenerates into empty disputes. The quarreling parties rush off into opposing extremes, until the right path becomes almost totally neglected.

- When false religion passes for true religion, the minds of Christians become unsettled. Many doubt whether there is anything real in Christianity at all. Heresy, unbelief and atheism begin to spread as a result.

It is vital that we do all we can to understand true religion.

My plan is to contribute what I can in this book to an understanding of true religion. I aim to show the nature and signs of the Holy Spirit's work in converting sinners. I will also try to show how we can distinguish the Spirit's work from everything which is not a true experience of salvation.

- *Jonathan Edwards*

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- Chapter Eight:** True spiritual emotions differ from false ones, in promoting a Christ-like spirit of love, humility, peace, forgiveness and compassion.
- Chapter Nine:** True spiritual emotions soften the heart, and exist alongside a Christian tenderness of spirit.
- Chapter Ten:** True spiritual emotions, unlike false ones, have a beautiful symmetry and balance.
- Chapter Eleven:** True spiritual emotions produce a longing for deeper holiness, but false emotions rest satisfied in themselves.
- Chapter Twelve:** The fruit of true spiritual emotions is Christian practice.
- Chapter Thirteen:** Christian practice is the chief sign to others of a convert's sincerity.
- Chapter Fourteen:** Christian practice is a sure sign of conversion to a person's own conscience.
- Chapter Fifteen:** Conclusion.

PART ONE:

1. The nature of emotions and their importance to Christianity

Peter singles out the spiritual emotions of love and joy when he describes the experience of these Christians. Their sufferings were purifying their faith, causing it to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

2. What are emotions?

*Emotions are the more lively and intense actions
of the soul's inclination and will.*

Every act of will is concerned either with approving or liking, or else with disapproving and rejecting. So our emotions are of 2 kinds. There are emotions which carry us towards what we see, clinging to it or seeking it. These emotions include: love, desire, hope, joy, gratitude, and pleasure. By contrast, emotions that turn us away include: hatred, fear, anger, & grief.

3. True religion consists mainly in emotions.

*Every true Christian's emotions towards God are stronger than his
natural or sinful emotions.*

*Every genuine disciple of Christ loves him above all else.
(Luke 14:26)*

4. The different emotions.

*Scripture everywhere places true religion mainly in our emotions,
in fear, hope, love, hatred, desire, joy, sorrow, gratitude,
compassion, and zeal.*

5. True religion is summed up in love.

“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the 1st and great commandment. The second is like it: you shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.” (Matthew 22:37-40)

6. David, Paul, John, and Christ as examples of holy emotion.

The religion of the most outstanding saints in Scripture was a religion of holy emotions.

Note that Paul's spiritual zeal was evident in everything he did. Clearly, Paul's religion was a religion of emotion.

7. Emotions in heaven.

God prepares us for heaven by conforming us to it here.

8. Emotions and our religious duties.

God uses the energy of the spoken word to apply his truth to our hearts in a more lively way.

9. Emotions and hardness of heart.

A hard heart is a heart which is not easy to move or impress with spiritual emotions. It is a stone - a cold, insensitive "unfeeling" towards God and holiness.

10. What lessons about emotion can we learn from all this?

The right way is neither to reject all emotions, nor to approve all, but to distinguish between them. We should approve some, and reject others. We must separate between the wheat and the weeds.

*How great is our shame to be,
that these things do not affect us more!*

PART TWO: Things which do NOT prove that our emotions come from a true experience of salvation.

1. ...if they are strong and lively.

Is there any Christian who can say, I am quite satisfied with the amount of love and gratitude I feel towards God, and the amount of hatred and sorrow I feel towards sin?

All Orthodox theologians agree that feelings about Christianity can be very lively without any genuine experience of salvation.

2. ...if they produce great effect on the body.

Bodily effects do not prove that the emotions which produced those effects are spiritual.

3. ...if they produce a great warmth & readiness to talk about Christianity

4. ...if we did not produce them by our own efforts.

It is the Spirit of the Almighty God who produces salvation in our hearts. Why, then, should we not feel that it is the Spirit working within us?

An experience which does not come from ourselves might have come from a false spirit.

5. ...if they come to us accompanied by a Bible verse.

People persuade themselves that their emotions and experiences are from God,
and that they are truly saved.

6. ...if there seems to be love in them.

Unfortunately, love can be imitated.

7. ...if we experience many kinds of them.

Unsaved people can have all sorts of false emotions that resemble true spiritual emotions.

8. ...if comfort and joy seem to follow in a certain order.

Satan can produce a false conviction of sin, a false fear of hell, and a false humility before God. Why should he not then produce a false joy in the gospel, as we have seen that he can do?

9. ...if they cause us to spend much time in the outward duties of Christian worship.

On the other hand, it is no sure sign of conversion if we are enthusiastic in the outward duties of true religion.

10. ...if they cause us to praise God with our mouths.

No Christian will condemn another person for enthusiasm and praising God.

Nevertheless, such enthusiasm is not a sure sign of conversion.

11. ...if they produce assurance of salvation.

It is very unreasonable, then, to criticize a Christian just because he or she feels a deep assurance of his own or her own salvation.

True Christian assurance is humble, not boastful.

A faith lacking spiritual light is not the faith of the children of light, but the delusion of the children of darkness.

(John 6:40; 2 Corinthians 3:18 and 4:6)

12. We cannot know that someone's emotions are spiritual or unspiritual just because they give a moving account of them.

How great the resemblance can be, then, between a false and true Christian!

PART THREE: The distinguishing signs of TRUE spiritual emotions.

1. True spiritual emotions arise from spiritual, supernatural, & divine influences on the heart.

The Holy Spirit within Christians produces results which are in harmony with the Spirit's own true nature.

The effects which the Holy Spirit produces in true Christians are different from anything men can produce by natural human powers. True spiritual emotions arise from supernatural influences.

Emotions arising out of ideas in the imagination are not spiritual.

The Holy Spirit gives us evidence that we are God's children, by dwelling in us, leading us, and inclining us to behave towards God as children of the Father.

2. The object of spiritual emotion is the loveliness of spiritual things, *not* our self interest.

Men may love a God of their own imaginations, when they have no love at all for the One true God!

*Anything is lovely to a selfish person...
if it advances his or her self-interest.*

*In all the joys of false Christians, their eyes are on themselves.
Their minds are occupied with their own experiences, not the
glory of God or the beauty of Christ.*

3. Spiritual emotions are based on the moral excellence of spiritual things.

*What a true Christian loves about spiritual things is their holiness.
He or she loves God for the beauty of God's holiness.*

It is holiness that makes qualities lovely.

4. Spiritual emotions arise out of spiritual understanding.

*We need to understand Scripture intellectually, and taste
the holy beauty of that meaning with our hearts.*

Spiritual understanding sees what is actually in Scripture;
it does not make a new meaning for it!

*The true spiritual meaning of Scripture is
the meaning it originally had when the Spirit first inspired it.*

Church leaders must be constantly on their guard against these delusions, especially during times of revival.

*Keep this distinction in mind:
Imaginary ideas can arise out of spiritual emotions,
but spiritual emotions can not arise out of imaginary ideas.*

Spiritual emotions can only arise out of spiritual knowledge...

5. Spiritual emotions bring a conviction of the reality of divine things.

Only when God's Spirit enlightens our minds to understand spiritual realities, can we have a spiritual conviction of that truth.

Only when God's Spirit enlightens our minds to understand spiritual realities, can we have a spiritual conviction of that truth.

6. Spiritual emotions always exist alongside spiritual humiliation.

Spiritual humiliation is the essence of Christian self-denial.

7. Spiritual emotions always exist alongside a change of nature.

A person who says he has experienced conversion, but whose religious emotions soon die away, has his actions speak against him much louder than any religious experiences or claims may speak for him.

8. True spiritual emotions differ from false ones, in promoting a Christ- like spirit of love, humility, peace, forgiveness and compassion.

Holiness and all its aspects belong to the Christian character.

Scripture is quite clear about the absolute necessity of forgiveness, love, and mercy, as qualities in the character of every Christian.

9. True spiritual emotions soften the heart, and exist alongside a Christian tenderness of spirit.

False emotions may seem to melt the heart for a time, but in the end they harden it.

*Such people do not accept Christ as their Savior FROM sin.
They trust in him as the savior OF their sins!*

*They think Christ will allow them the quiet enjoyment of their sins... and protect them from God's displeasure.
(Jude 4 & Ezekiel 33:13)*

A true Christian resembles a little child. In spiritual things, the tallest and strongest saint is the smallest and tenderest child.

10. True spiritual emotions, unlike false ones, have a beautiful symmetry and balance.

A Christian's love must be universal!

Christ's compassion for the people's souls moved him to teach them, and his compassion for their bodies moved him to feed them.

11. True spiritual emotions produce a longing for deeper holiness, but false emotions rest satisfied in themselves.

The best sign is a longing for a holier heart and a holier life.

12. The fruit of true spiritual emotions is Christian practice.

This commitment to total obedience does not mean a mere negative avoidance of evil practices. It also means positively obeying God's commands.

The sign of the genuine Christian is that he perseveres through these problems and difficulties, and remains true to Christ.

*“Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life.”
(Revelation 2:10)*

Christ is not in the heart of the Christian as a dead Savior, but as a risen and living Savior in His temple.

People have a defective Christianity because they are seeking their own interests and not God's.

Humility before God inspires obedience, just as pride inspires rebellion.

Until the tree is good, the fruit will not be good.

If an unconverted person tries to live a Christian life, it is like throwing a stone upwards. Nature finally prevails, and the stone comes down again.

The softened heart & tender spirit of the true Christian make him painfully sensitive to sin, creating a profound influence & impact on the way he lives his life.

Christian practice is the most important of all the marks and signs of conversion, both to the believer and to others.

13. Christian practice is the chief sign to others of a convert's sincerity.

Words are cheap.

It is by costly, self-denying, Christian-practice that we show the reality of our faith.

No outward appearances are infallible signs of conversion.

We cannot be certain how far an unconverted person can go in an outward appearance of Christianity.

14. Christian practice is a sure sign of conversion to a person's own conscience.

The Christian has to judge his own practice, not just by what he does outwardly with his body, but by the inward motives of his soul.

Holy motives produce an obedient lifestyle.

Christian practice includes both the inward motives and the outward actions!

Our practical obedience perfects our love for God.

Christian practice perfects faith and love.

We have lost our biblical balance if we major on feelings and experiences which do not express themselves in practical & faithful obedience.

If we ignore God's clear emphasis on Christian practice, and stress other things as tests of sincerity, we are on our way to delusion and hypocrisy.

The evidence on which the Judge will accept or reject us will be our practice!

Christian practice is spiritual practice. It is the action of soul and body together... the soul moving and governing the body.

True religious experience is where we love God, and our love makes us choose him, and obey him, and stand by him in all difficult in testing situations.

I have not said that our practice is the price of God's favor. It is the sign of God's favor.

God accepts us as righteous because of Christ's obedience, not ours.

We are united to Christ by faith alone.

Holy practice is the sign of faith, just as activity and movement are the signs of life.

15. Conclusion.

What a lot of trouble the church would have escaped if Christians had kept to what Scripture teaches about a true experience of salvation!

If our emotions do not have their basis in an enlightened grasp of God's truth, those emotions are not spiritual in nature, no matter how powerful the emotions may be.

The Holy Spirit's biblical titles/names

1. Breath of the Almighty Job 33:4
2. Comforter John 14:16 John 14:26 ; 15:26
3. Eternal Spirit Hebrews 9:14
4. Free Spirit Psalms 51:12
5. God Acts 5:3 Acts 5:4
6. Good Spirit Nehemiah 9:20 ; Psalms 143:10
7. Holy Spirit Psalms 51:11 ; Luke 11:13 ; Ephesians 1:13 ; 4:30
8. Lord, The 2 Thessalonians 3:5
9. Power of the Highest Luke 1:35
10. Spirit, The Matthew 4:1 ; John 3:6 ; 1 Timothy 4:1
11. Spirit of the Lord God Isaiah 61:1
12. Spirit of the Lord Isaiah 11:2 ; Acts 5:9
13. Spirit of God Genesis 1:2 ; 1 Corinthians 2:11 ; Job 33:4
14. Spirit of the Father Matthew 10:20
15. Spirit of Christ Romans 8:9 ; 1 Peter 1:11
16. Spirit of the Son Galatians 4:6
17. Spirit of life Romans 8:2 ; Revelation 11:11
18. Spirit of grace Zechariah 12:10 ; Hebrews 10:29

19. Spirit of prophecy Revelation 19:10
20. Spirit of adoption Romans 8:15
21. Spirit of wisdom Isaiah 11:2 ; Ephesians 1:17
22. Spirit of counsel Isaiah 11:2
23. Spirit of might Isaiah 11:2
24. Spirit of understanding Isaiah 11:2
25. Spirit of knowledge Isaiah 11:2
26. Spirit of the fear of the Lord Isaiah 11:2
27. Spirit of truth John 14:17 ; 15:26
28. Spirit of holiness Romans 1:4
29. Spirit of revelation Ephesians 1:17
30. Spirit of judgment Isaiah 4:4 ; 28:6
31. Spirit of burning Isaiah 4:4
32. Spirit of glory 1 Peter 4:14
34. Seven Spirits of God Revelation 1:4

Key Contextual Verses: (application oriented)

Acts 1:8

Zechariah 4:6 = *Then he said to me, "This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel saying, 'Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,' says the LORD of hosts.*

Acts 1:14

Ephesians 5:18

Colossians 3:16-18

John 14:21

Romans 12:1ff

Isaiah 66:2

1 Corinthians 6:6ff

Philippians 4:13

2 Corinthians 5:17

Ezekiel (new heart/Spirit)

“in the power of my Spirit...”

Genesis 1:2

Revelation 22

Romans 8:9

Revelation 3:20

1 Corinthians 2:4 = *My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power* (NIV)

The Power of the Holy Spirit

June 17, 1855

C. H. Spurgeon (1834-1892)

“The power of the Holy Spirit.” - Romans 15:13

Power is the special and distinctive prerogative of God, and God alone. Power belongs to God. God is God: and power belongs to him. If he delegates a portion of it to his creatures, yet it still is *his* power. The sun in the heavens, although it is “...like a bridegroom coming forth from his pavilion, like a champion rejoicing to run his course” [Psalm

19:5], yet it has no power to move through the universe except as God directs it. The stars, although they travel in their orbits and no one can stop them, yet they have neither power nor force except that which God daily infuses into them. The tall archangel, near God's throne, who outshines a comet in its brilliance, and who excels in strength and listens to the voice of the commands of God, still has no strength except that which his Creator gives to him. As for Leviathan, who causes the sea to boil like a pot that one would think the ocean was white: as for Hippopotamus, who could almost drink up the Jordan in one swallow, and boasts that he can inhale rivers; as for those majestic creatures that are found on earth, they owe their strength to him who formed their bones of steel and made their muscle of brass. And when we think of man if he has might or power, it is so small and insignificant, that we can scarcely call it such; yes, when it is at its greatest-when he waves his scepter, when he commands vast armies, when he rules nations-still the power belongs to God.

This exclusive prerogative of God is to be found in each of the three persons of the glorious Trinity. The Father has power: for at his word the heavens were made, and by his strength all things continue, and through him they fulfill their destiny. The Son has power: for like his Father, he is the Creator of all things; "Without him nothing was made that has been made" [John 1:3], and "in him all things hold together" [Colossians 1:17]. And the Holy Spirit has power.

It is concerning the power of the Holy Spirit that I will speak this morning; and may you gain a practical example of that attribute in your own hearts, when you sense that the influence of the Holy Spirit is being poured out on me, so that I am speaking the words of the living God to your souls, and the power bestowed on you when you feel the effects of it in your own souls.

We will look at the power of the Holy Spirit in three ways this morning.

First, the outward and visible displays of his power, second, the inward and spiritual manifestations of his power, and third, the future works of his power. I trust that the power of the Spirit will be clearly presented to your souls.

I. First, the OUTWARD AND VISIBLE DISPLAYS of the power of the Holy Spirit.

The power of the Spirit has not been dormant; it has exerted itself. Much has been done by the Spirit of God already; more than could have been accomplished by any being except the Infinite, Eternal, Almighty Jehovah, with whom the Holy Spirit is one person.

There are four works which are the outward and visible signs of the power of the Holy Spirit: creation works; resurrection works: works of testimony; and works of grace. I will briefly speak on each of these works.

1. First, the Holy Spirit has demonstrated the omnipotence of his power in *creation works*; for sometimes creation is ascribed to the Holy Spirit, as well as to the Father and the Son.

The creation of the heavens above us is said to be the work of God's Spirit. This you will see at once by referring to the sacred Scriptures, **Job, chapter 26, and verse 13, "By his Spirit he has [adorned] the heavens, and his hand has formed the crooked serpent" [KJV]**. All the stars of heaven are said to have been placed there by the Holy Spirit,

and one particular constellation called the “crooked serpent” is especially pointed out as his handiwork. He loosen the cords of

Orion and he joined the beautiful Pleiades. He made all the stars that shine in heaven. The heavens were adorned by his hands, and he formed the crooked serpent by his power.

In addition, the Holy Spirit’s power is displayed in those continued acts of creation which are still performed in the world; such as the creation and birth of men, women, and animals. These are also ascribed to the Holy Spirit. If you look at **Psalm 104, verses 29 and 30, you will read, “When you [God] hide your face, they are terrified; when you take away their breath, they die and return to the dust. When you send your [Holy] Spirit, they are created, and you renew the face of the earth.”** Therefore the creation of every man and woman and angel is the work of the Holy Spirit: and the creation of all life and all flesh in this world is as much to be ascribed to the power of the Holy Spirit as the creation of the heavens. But if you will look in the 1st chapter of Genesis, you will see even more clearly presented that special act of power on the universe which was done by the Holy Spirit; you will discover what his special work was. In the

2nd verse of the 1st chapter of Genesis, we read, “The earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.” We don’t know for certain how long it has been since the universe was first created. Our planet has passed through various stages of existence, and different kinds of creatures have lived on its surface, all of which have been created by God. But before that time came, when man became its principal tenant and monarch, the earth was formless, and empty; and darkness was over the surface of the deep. The Holy Spirit came, commanded the darkness to separate, and as he moved over it, all the different pieces of matter came into their places, and it was no longer “formless and empty;” but became round and began to move, singing the high praises of God-not out of tune as it had done before, but as one

great note in the vast scale of creation. This was done by the power of the Holy Spirit. If we could have seen that earth in all of its confusion, we would have said, “Who can make a world out of this?” The answer would have been, “The power of the Holy Spirit can do it. He can make all the things come together. There will be order where there was nothing but confusion.”

Nor is this the only power of the Holy Spirit. We have seen some of his works in creation. But there was one particular instance of creation in which the Holy Spirit was more particularly concerned, namely, the creation of the body of our Lord Jesus Christ. Though our Lord Jesus Christ was born of a woman and made in the likeness of sinful flesh, yet the power that conceived him came entirely from God the Holy Spirit-as the Scriptures reveal, the Angel Gabriel said to Mary, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God” [Luke 1:35]. The physical body of the Lord Jesus Christ was a masterpiece of the Holy Spirit. I suppose his body would have excelled all others in beauty; to have been like that of the first man, the very pattern of what the body is to be in heaven, when it will shine forth in all its glory. That body, in all of its beauty and perfection, was formed by the Holy Spirit. He created and shaped the body of Jesus, thus here again we have another instance of the creative energy of the Spirit.

2. A second demonstration of the Holy Spirit’s power is to be found in the *resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.*

If you have ever studied this subject, you have perhaps been rather perplexed to find that sometimes the resurrection of Christ is ascribed to Jesus. By his own power and divinity he could not be held by the chains of death, for just as he willingly gave up his life he also had the power to take it back again. In another section of Scripture you will find the resurrection of Christ attributed to God the Father: “He [the glorious

Father] raised him from the dead” [Ephesians 1:20]:” “God exalted him” [Acts 5:31], and many other similar passages. But, again, it is said in Scripture that Jesus Christ was raised by the Holy Spirit. Now all these things are true. Jesus was raised by the Father because the Father said, “Let the prisoner go. Justice is satisfied. My law does not require any more compensation-vengeance has had its day, let him go.” Here the Father gave an official message which delivered Jesus from the grave. And yet, Jesus still was raised by his own majesty and power because he had a right to come out of the grave and he knew that he had, and therefore he “broke the chains of death: he could no longer be held by them.” But, the actual power that raised his body was the power of the Holy Spirit. **It was the power of Holy Spirit by which the body of Jesus was raised from the grave after having laid there for three days and nights. If you want proofs of this you must turn in your Bibles to 1 Peter 3:18, “Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit.”**

And you can find further proof in **Romans 8:11, “If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you.”**

The resurrection of Christ, then, was achieved by the activity of the Holy Spirit, and here we have a good illustration of his omnipotence. If you could have stepped, as angels did, into the grave of Jesus, and seen his dead body, you would have found it as cold as any other corpse. Lift up the hand, it falls by the side. Look at the eye: it is glazed. There the gash in his side, which was to ensure that all life is destroyed. See his hands; the blood does not drip from them,

They are cold and motionless. Can that body live? Can it rise up again? Yes; it can and will be an illustration of the power of the Holy Spirit. For when the power of the Holy Spirit came on Jesus, as it was when it fell on the dry bones of the valley [Ezekiel 37:4-5]: “He arose in the majesty

of his divinity, and bright and shining, astonished the guards so that they ran away, yes, he arose no more to die, but to live forever, King of kings and Prince of the kings of the earth.”

3. The third demonstration of the Holy Spirit’s power, is *testimony works*. I mean by this-works of witnessing.

When Jesus Christ was baptized in the river Jordan, the Holy Spirit descended on him like a dove, and proclaimed him to be God’s beloved son. That was what I call a testimony work. And later when Jesus Christ raised the dead, when he healed the leper, when he spoke to diseases and they fled away, when demons by the thousands were cast out from those who were possessed by them, it was done by the power of the Holy Spirit. **The Holy Spirit lived in Jesus without limit, and by that power all those miracles were accomplished.** These were testimony works. **And after Jesus Christ ascended into heaven, you will remember the greatest testimony of the Holy Spirit when he came like a mighty rushing wind upon the assembled apostles, and tongues of fire came to rest on each of them; and you will remember how the Holy Spirit testified to their ministry by giving them the ability to speak with tongues, as he gave them utterance; and how, also, miraculous works were produced by them, how they taught, how Peter raised Dorcas, how he breathed life into Eutychus, how great works were done by the apostles just like they were done by their Master.** Thus, Paul could say, **“I will not venture to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me in leading the Gentiles to obey God by what I have said and done-by the power of signs and miracles, through the power of the [Holy] Spirit.”** Who will doubt the power of the Holy Spirit after that? Ah! those Socinians who deny the existence of the Holy Spirit and his absolute personality, what will they do when we reveal to them the Holy Spirit’s work in creation, resurrection, and testimonies? They must rush

in the very teeth of Scripture. But note this! it is a stone on which if any man falls he will be bruised; but if it falls on him, as it will do if he resists it, it will grind him to powder. The Holy Spirit has omnipotent power-the power of God.

4. Once more, if we want another outward and visible sign of the power of the Holy Spirit, we can look at the *works of grace*.

Remember the city where there lived a sorcerer named Simon who boasted of divine power and that he was someone great. Philip then enters that city and preaches the Word of God, and right away Simon loses all of his power and seeks that the power of the Holy Spirit be given to him, even believing that it might be purchased with money.

Now move to modern times, to a pagan country where the inhabitants live in gloomy tents, feeding on reptiles and other wretched creatures; observe them bowing down before their idols and worshipping their false gods, and therefore plunged in superstition, so degraded and debased, that it was questionable whether they had souls or not; Now observe that a Scottish missionary, named Robert Moffat, goes with the Word of God in his hand to these lost people, listen to him preach as the Holy Spirit gives him the words, and accompanies that Word with power. They throw away their idols-they hate and abhor their former lusts; they begin to build houses, where they live; they become clothed, and in their right mind. They destroy their bows, and break their spears in two; the uncivilized become civilized; the savage becomes polite; he who knew nothing begins to read the Scriptures, thus out of the mouths of savages God shows the power of his mighty Spirit.

Now, coming back to our country-go to a household in this city-and we could guide you to many where the father is a drunkard; he has been the most desperate

of characters; see him in his madness, and you might just as well meet an unchained tiger as to meet such a man. He seems as if he could tear a man to pieces who would offend him. Note his wife. She, too, has a spirit in her, and when he treats her badly she can resist him; many fights have been seen in that house, and often has the neighborhood been disturbed by the noise created there. As for the poor little children-see them in their rags and nakedness, poor untaught little ones. Untaught, did I say? They are taught and well taught in the devil's school and are growing up to be the heirs of damnation. But then someone whom God has blessed by his Spirit is guided to the house. Perhaps, he may only be a humble city missionary but he speaks to the wicked man: "Sir," he says, "come and listen to the voice of God." Whether it is his own witnessing, or a minister's preaching, the Word, which is quick and powerful, cuts to the sinner's heart. The tears run down his cheeks such as never been seen before. He shakes and shudders. The strong man bows down-the mighty man trembles-and those knees that never shook begin to knock together. That heart which never trembled before, now begins to shake before the power of the Holy Spirit. He bends his knees, while his lips utter a child's prayer, but, although it is a child's prayer, a prayer of a child of God. He becomes a new creation. Note the reformation in his house! His wife becomes a respectable woman. Those children become obedient and well-

mannered, and in due time they grow up like olive branches around his table, adorning his house like polished stones. Walk pass the house-no noise or fights, but rather we hear songs of Zion. Look at him-no more drunkenness; he has drank his last drink; and now renouncing it, he comes to God and is his servant. Now, you will not hear at midnight the drunken shout; but should there be a noise, it will be the sound of the solemn hymn of praise to God. And, now, let me ask you, is there such a thing as the power of the Holy Spirit? Yes, there is, and these persons, just mentioned, have witnessed it and seen it.

I know a village, once, perhaps, the most wicked in England-a village inundated by drunkenness and wickedness of the worst kind, where it was almost impossible for an honest traveler to stop in the city without being annoyed by blasphemy; a place noted for arsons and robbers. One man, the ringleader, listened to the voice of God. That man's heart was broken. The whole gang came to hear the gospel preached, and they sat and seemed to reverence the preacher as if he were a god, and not a man. These men were changed and reformed; and every one who knows the place affirms that such a change had no other explanation than that it had been accomplished by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Let the gospel be preached and the Holy Spirit poured out, and you will see that it has the power to change the conscience, to improve the conduct, to raise the debased, to chastise and to curb the wickedness of men and women. The change will be so noticeable that you must give the glory to God. I say, there is nothing like the power of the Holy Spirit. Only let that come, and, indeed, everything can be accomplished.

II. Now, for our second major point this morning, THE INNER SPIRITUAL POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

What I have already spoken of may be seen; what I am about to speak of must be felt, and no one will understand the truth of what I say unless they have felt it. Even the unbeliever must confess, and the greatest blasphemer, if they would be honest, cannot deny the outward and visible manifestations of the Holy Spirit. **But the inner spiritual power of the Holy Spirit is what the unbeliever and blasphemer will laugh at as being nothing but emotion and the invention of our confused minds.** However, no matter what they say, we have a clear testimony. We have a witness within. **We know it is the truth, and we are not afraid to speak of the spiritual power of the Holy Spirit.**

Let us now notice three ways the inner spiritual power of the Holy Spirit is easily seen and thus worthy of our praise.

1. First, we note that the inner spiritual power of the Holy Spirit has power over the hearts of men and women.

Normally, it is very hard to affect a person's heart. However, if you want to get at them for any worldly purpose you can do it. **A cheating world can win the hearts of men and women, a little gold can win their hearts, a bit of fame and a little applause can win their hearts.** But there is not a minister alive, who by himself, can win the hearts of men and women. He can win their ears and make them listen; he can win their eyes, and cause those eyes to look at him; he can win their attention, but their hearts are very slippery. **Yes, the heart is like a fish that all gospel**

fishermen find difficult to hold on to. You may sometimes almost pull it out of the water; but slippery as an eel, it slips between your fingers, and evades capture. Many a minister has imagined that he has caught the heart but has been disappointed. It would need a strong hunter to overtake the deer on the mountains. It is too fast for a human on foot to approach.

Only the Holy Spirit has power over the hearts of men and women.

Did you ever try your power on a heart? If any person thinks that a minister can convert the soul, I wish they would try. Let them go and become a Sunday-school teacher. They will take their class, they will have the best books that can be obtained, they will have the best rules, they will draw their lines of defenses around their fortified spiritual city, they will take the best child in their class, and if they are not tired in a week I will be very much surprised. Let them spend four or five Sundays in trying, and in the end they will say, “The young person is incorrigible.” Let them try another. And they will have to try another, and another, and another, before they will manage to convert one. They will soon find it is **“Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,' says the LORD Almighty.” [Zechariah 4:6]**

Can a minister convert anyone? Can he touch the heart? David said, your “...hearts are callous and unfeeling.” [Psalm 119:70] Yes, that is very true; and we cannot break through such a hard heart. Our sword cannot get at the heart, for it is so calloused and unfeeling, it is harder than a millstone. Many a sharp blade has been blunted by the hard heart. Many pieces of the true steel that God has put into the hands of his servants has had the edge dulled by being used against the sinner’s heart. We cannot reach the soul; but the Holy Spirit can. He can give a sense of blood-bought pardon that will dissolve a heart of stone. He can,

“Speak with that voice which wakes the dead, And commands the

sinner to rise: And makes the guilty conscience dread The death that never dies.”

He can make Sinai’s thunders audible; yes, and he can make the sweet whisperings of Calvary enter into the soul. He has power over the hearts of men and women. And here is a glorious proof of the omnipotence of the Holy Spirit that he has rule over the heart.

2. But if there is one thing more stubborn than the heart it is *the will*.

“My lord; Will-be-will,” as John Bunyan calls him in his book “Holy War,” is a fellow who will not easily be convinced. The will, especially in some men and women, is a very stubborn thing, and in all men and women, if the will is once stirred up in opposition, there is nothing that can be done with them.

Some believe in *freewill*. Many dream of *freewill*. Freewill! Where is that to be found? Once there was freewill in Paradise, and freewill made a terrible mess there, for it spoiled all of Paradise and turned Adam and Eve out of the garden. Freewill once existed in heaven, but it turned the glorious archangel out and a third part of the angels of heaven fell into the abyss. I want nothing to do with freewill, but I will try to see whether I have a free will within me. And I find that I have. I have a very free will to commit evil, but a very poor will to do that which is good. I demonstrate my freewill when I sin, but when I want to do good evil is present with me, and I cannot carry it out. Yet some boast of freewill. I wonder whether those who believe in freewill have any more power over other person’s wills than I have. I know I have no power. I find the old proverb is very true, “One man can bring a horse to the water, but a hundred cannot make him drink.” I find that I can bring all of you to the water, and a great many more than can

fit into this church; but I cannot make you drink; and I don’t think a hundred ministers could make you drink. I have read all about the great

preachers, Rowland Hill, and George Whitfield, and several others to see what their secret was; but I cannot discover from them any plan that would work in turning your wills. I cannot coax you; and you will not yield by any other means. I don't think any man has power over his fellow creature's will, but the Spirit of God has. "I will make them willing in the day of my power." He makes the unwilling sinner so willing that he is eager for the gospel; he who was obstinate, now runs to the cross. He, who laughed at Jesus, now begs for his mercy; and he who would not believe, is now made by the Holy Spirit to do it, not only willingly, but eagerly; he is happy, he is glad to do it, rejoices in the sound of Jesus' name, and delights to obey God's commands. The Holy Spirit has power over the will.

3. And yet there is one thing more which I think is worse than the will. The will is somewhat worse than the heart to bend but there is one thing that exceeds the will in its wickedness, and that is the *imagination*.

I hope that my will is managed by Divine Grace, but I am afraid that at times, my thoughts are not. Those who have a fair share of imagination know what a difficult thing it is to control. You cannot restrain it. It will break the reins. You will never be able to manage it. The imagination will sometimes fly up to God with such a power that eagles' wings cannot match it. It sometimes has such power that it can almost see the King in his beauty, and the land which is very far off. With regard to myself, my imagination will sometimes take me over the gates of iron, across that infinite unknown, to the very gates of pearl, and discovers the blessed home of the glorified. But if it is powerful one way it is also powerful in another; for my imagination has taken me down to the vilest gutters and sewers of the earth. It has given me thoughts so dreadful, that while I could not avoid them, yet I was thoroughly horrified at them. These thoughts will come, and when I feel in the holiest frame of mind, the most devoted to God, and the most earnest in prayer, it often happens

that that is the very time when the plagues breaks out the worst. But I rejoice and think of one thing, that I can cry out to the Holy Spirit when these thoughts come upon me. I know it is said in the Book of Deuteronomy, when an act of rape was committed, that if the girl cried out against it, then her life was to be spared. So it is with the Christian. If they cry out there is hope. Can you chain your imagination? No; but the power of the Holy Spirit can. Yes, he will do it, and He does it throughout all of eternity; He does it even on earth today.

III. Lastly this morning, I want us to look at the FUTURE WORKS of the Holy Spirit--for although the Holy Spirit has done so much already he cannot say, "It is finished."

Jesus Christ could cry out concerning his own work of salvation-"It is finished." But the Holy Spirit cannot say that. He still has more to do: and until the fulfillment of all things, when the Son himself becomes subject to the Father, it will not be said by the Holy Spirit, "It is finished." What, then, are the future works of the Holy Spirit?

1. First, the Holy Spirit has to perfect us in holiness.

There are **two kinds** of perfection which a Christian needs-one is the **perfection of justification** in the person of Jesus; and the other is, the **perfection of sanctification** worked in them by the Holy Spirit.

Presently corruption still resides even in the hearts of the regenerate. At present the heart is partially impure. At present there are still lusts and evil thoughts. But, Oh! my soul rejoices to know that the day is coming when God will finish the work which he has begun; and he will present my soul, not only perfect in Christ, but, perfect in the Spirit, without spot or blemish, or any such thing. And is it true that this poor depraved heart is to become as holy as that of God? And is it true that my spirit, which often cries, "O wretched man that I am, who will deliver me from the body of this sin and death!" will get rid of sin and death-I will have no evil things to bother my ears, and no unholy thoughts to disturb my peace? Oh! Joyful hour! May it soon come! At the moment of my death,

sanctification will be finished; but not till that moment will I ever claim perfection in myself. But at that moment when I depart, my spirit will have its last baptism in the Holy Spirit's fire. It will be put in the crucible for its final refinement in the furnace; and then, free from all impurities, and fine like a wedge of pure gold, it will be presented at the feet of God without the least degree of impurities or contamination. O glorious hour! O blessed moment! I think I would still long to die even if there were no heaven, if I might but have that last purification, and come up from Jordan's stream pure white from the washing. Oh! To be washed white, clean, pure, perfect! No angel will be more pure than I will be-yes, as holy as God himself! And I will be able to say, in a double sense, "Great and Glorious God, I am clean-through the blood of Jesus I am clean, through the Holy Spirit's work I am clean too!" We must praise the power of the Holy Spirit for making us fit to stand before our Father in heaven!

2. Another great work of the Holy Spirit which is not yet accomplished is *the bringing on of the latter-day glory.*

In a few more years-I don't know when, I don't know how-the Holy Spirit will be poured out in a far different way than the present. There are diversities of ministries; and during the last few years it has been the case that the diversified ministries have consisted in very little pouring out of the Spirit. Ministers have gone on in a dull routine, continually preaching-preaching-preaching, and little good has been accomplished. I do hope that perhaps a fresh era has begun, and that there is a better pouring out of the Spirit even now. For the hour is coming, and it may be that it now is, when the Holy Spirit will be poured out again in such a wonderful manner that many will go here and there to increase knowledge-the knowledge of the Lord will cover the earth just as the waters cover the surface, when his kingdom will come, and his will, will be done on earth even as it is in heaven. We are not going to be dragging on forever. My heart praises and my eyes sparkle with the thought that very likely I will live to see the out-pouring of the Spirit when "the sons and the daughters of God again will prophecy, and the young men will

see visions, and the old men will dream dreams.” Perhaps there will be no miraculous gifts—for they will not be required; but yet there will be such a miraculous amount of holiness, such an extraordinary fervor of prayer, such a real communion with God and so much true religion, and such a spread of the doctrines of the cross, that every one will see that truly the Holy Spirit is poured out like water and the rains are descending from above. For that let us pray: let us continually labor for it, and seek it from God.

3. One more future work of the Holy Spirit which will clearly show his power is *the general resurrection*.

We have reason to believe from Scripture that the resurrection of the dead, while it will be effected by the voice of God and of his Word, (the Son) will also be brought about by the Holy Spirit. That same power which raised Jesus Christ from the dead, will also cause your mortal bodies to come alive. The power of the resurrection is perhaps one of the finest proofs of the works of the Spirit. Oh! my friends, if this earth could have its crust torn away for a little while, if the green sod could be pulled back from it, and we could look down about six feet into its heart, what a world it would seem! What would we see? Bones, carcasses, rottenness, worms, and decay. And you would say, “Can these dry bones live? Can they rise up?” “Yes! in a moment! in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet, the dead will be raised.” He speaks: they are alive! See them scattered: bone comes to his bone! See their bare skeletons: flesh comes on them! See them still and lifeless: “Come from the four winds, O **breath**, and breathe into these slain!” When the wind of the Holy Spirit comes, they live, and they stand up on their feet a very great army of saints.

Thus I have attempted to speak of the power of the Holy Spirit, and I trust I have shown it to you. We must now have a moment or two for practical application. Oh, my dear brothers and sisters in Christ, the Holy Spirit is very powerful! What do you infer from that fact?

Why, that you never need to distrust the power of God to carry you to heaven.

The power of the Holy Spirit is your protection, and all his omnipotence defends you. Can your enemies overcome omnipotence? If they could then they can conquer you. Can they wrestle with Deity, and throw him to the ground? If they could then they might be able to conquer you. But we are safe because the power of the Holy Spirit is our power; the power of the Holy Spirit is our strength.

Once again, dear Christians, if this is the power of the Holy Spirit, *why should you doubt anything?*

There is your son. There is that wife of yours for whom you have prayed for so frequently: don't doubt the Holy Spirit's power. "Though he delays with an answer, wait for him." There is your husband, O holy woman! And you have wrestled in prayer for his soul. And though he is ever so hardened and desperate a wretch, and treats you badly there is power in the Holy Spirit. And, you who have come from weak churches with scarcely a bit of truth. Don't doubt the power of the Holy Spirit to raise you up. For it will be a "pasture for flocks, a den of wild donkeys," open, but deserted, until the Holy Spirit is poured out from on high. And then the parched ground will be made a pool, and the thirsty land will be covered with springs of water.

And, you who are members of our church! And especially you who remember what your God has done for you, never distrust the power of the Spirit. You have seen the wilderness blossom like Carmel, you have seen the desert blossom like the rose; trust him for the future. Then go out and labor with this conviction, that the power of the Holy Spirit is able to do anything. Go to your Sunday-school; go to your tract distribution; go to your missionary enterprise! Go to your witnessing, with the conviction that the power of the Holy Spirit is our great help.

And now, lastly, to you sinners, to you who are not saved-What is

there to be said to you about this power of the Holy Spirit?

Why, to me, there is some hope for some of you. I cannot save you: I cannot convince you. I make you cry sometimes-you wipe your eyes, and it is all over. But I know my Master can. That is my consolation. Chief of sinners, there is hope for you! This power can save you as well as anybody else. It is able to break your heart, though it is made of iron; to make your eyes run with tears though they have been like rocks before. His power is able this morning, if he is willing to change your heart, to turn the current of all your ideas, to immediately make you a child of God, to justify you in Christ. There is enough power in the Holy Spirit. You are not weak in him, but in your own hearts. He is able to bring sinners to Jesus: he is able to make you willing in the day of his power. Are you willing this morning? Has he gone so far as to make you desire his name, to make you wish for Jesus? Then, O sinner! while he draws you, say, "Draw me, I am wretched without you." Follow him, follow him, and while he leads, follow in his footsteps, and rejoice that he has begun a good work in you, for there is evidence that he will continue it even to the end. And, O desponding one! put your trust in the power of the Holy Spirit. Rest in the blood of Jesus, and your soul is safe, not only now, but throughout eternity. God bless all of you who have listened to this sermon. **Amen.**