

Bible Passage: Acts Chapter 2: v. 1-13.

Theme: A Church born and receiving the Holy Spirit.

When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. <sup>2</sup> And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. <sup>3</sup> Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and *one* sat upon each of them. <sup>4</sup> And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

<sup>5</sup> And there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven. <sup>6</sup> And when this sound occurred, the multitude came together, and were confused, because everyone heard them speak in his own language. <sup>7</sup> Then they were all amazed and marveled, saying to one another, "Look, are not all these who speak Galileans?" <sup>8</sup> And how *is it that* we hear, each in our own language in which we were born? <sup>9</sup> Parthians and Medes and Elamites, those dwelling in Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, <sup>10</sup> Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya adjoining Cyrene, visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, <sup>11</sup> Cretans and Arabs—we hear them speaking in our own tongues the wonderful works of God." <sup>12</sup> So they were all amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "Whatever could this mean?"

<sup>13</sup> Others mocking said, "They are full of new wine."

### **Introduction**

Several weeks ago we left 120 followers of Jesus Christ, praising God during the day at the Temple in Jerusalem and having a prayer meeting every night.

These followers of Jesus were patiently waiting for the promise of the Holy Spirit which Jesus mentioned in Acts 1: v.7.

<sup>7</sup> And He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority.

The day that God chose to birth the Church started on the day of a Jewish Festival.

As the setting of this festival is important, then we need to understand a little about it.

**Pentecost is one of the three main festivals of the Jewish Faith.** (Judaism)

The other two main festivals are Passover and Tabernacles.

The Greek word "pente" is the root word for fifty.

The festival was named Pentecost because it occurred 50 days after Passover.

Originally, Pentecost celebrated the conclusion of the barley harvest.

### **(Lev. 23: v. 15-17 in N.K.J.)**

<sup>15</sup> 'And you shall count for yourselves from the day after the Sabbath, from the day that you brought the sheaf of the wave offering: seven Sabbaths shall be completed. <sup>16</sup> Count fifty days to the day after the seventh Sabbath; then you shall offer a new grain offering to the LORD. <sup>17</sup> You shall bring from your dwellings two wave *loaves* of two-tenths *of an ephah*. They shall be of fine flour; they shall be baked with leaven. *They are* the firstfruits to the LORD.

As time progressed, Pentecost became a festival where the Jewish people celebrated the giving of the 10 commandments to Moses on Mount Sinai.

At this time, the Jewish people remembered the completion of God's work to rescue them from Egypt.

**The Pentecost festival was all about fulfilment, completion and finality.**

Therefore, it is very appropriate that the completion of Jesus Christ's work on this earth should be marked on this special Jewish celebration day.

There is a sense that the day of Pentecost as recorded in Acts Chapter 2 is the beginning of the end.

The Holy Spirit is a foretaste of the "New Age". It is a down payment on the inheritance which is given to every believer.

## **Ephesians 1: v. 13-14. (N.K.J.)**

<sup>13</sup>In Him you also *trusted*, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, <sup>14</sup>who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.

I am going to divide chapter two into two sections.

Today we will cover v. 1-13, and next week we will cover v. 14-46.

I have chosen 4 simple headings to enable us to work through the passage with simplicity and clarity.

These headings are: 1. The Day – v. 1. 2. The Sound and Sight v.2-3. 3. The Languages spoken and the miracle described. v. 4-5. 4. The crowd's response. v. 6,7, 12-13.

### **1. The Day v. 1.**

I have already spoken about the day of Pentecost and the significance of this festival, but we need to notice that **everybody was in one place, with one accord.**

The Greek word that Luke uses here is repeated again at least 10 times in the book of Acts, and it has an important part in the progress of the Church.

This Greek word means a unity of heart, mind, feeling, and purpose.

It refers to **a group acting as "one".**

In this group there are no divisions, no divided interests. They are totally united.

It is very clear that this group of 120 people were totally united in believing the words of Jesus from Acts Chapter 1: v. 8.

They all believed that the **Holy Spirit would come**, and that the Holy Spirit would give them the **power to be witnesses for Jesus.**

The whole purpose of the Holy Spirit coming, was that it would equip the disciples to be a witness for Jesus.

In other words, the work of Jesus would now continue through them.

However, it would still be the work of Jesus.

It wasn't the work of the disciples to interpret how they should use the Holy Spirit. They were told by Jesus that the **purpose of the Holy Spirit was to enable the disciples to be witnesses to Jesus.**

One commentator says that being of one accord is an important key to getting God's work done.

In Psalm 133 we are told that God will command His blessing upon His people when they are united in one purpose and have one mind.

**The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of unity.**

It is up to us to walk in step with the Holy Spirit, according to God's word, and not to try and use the Holy Spirit for our own private little agenda.

When I was at Bible College in Edinburgh, Scotland, over 30 years ago the principal told a story about a Bible College student.

It was a College rule that you could not leave the College during the lunch hour to go shopping. You had to wait for the College day to finish.

One day the principal had to drive home to collect some papers that he had left behind at home.

As he drove towards a parade of shops he noticed one of the College students marching up the road towards the shops.

The Principal wound down his window and challenged the student who was breaking the College rules.

The student replied, "don't worry sir, the Holy Spirit said it was O.K. to come shopping."

The Principal replied, "**It is a pity that the Holy Spirit didn't tell you that today the shops close at 12 noon. Jump in the car and I will take you back to the College.**"

Many Christians attribute guidance from the Holy Spirit to push forward with their own plans and purposes. This usually ends up in disaster and disappointment.

The Holy Spirit is never wrong, and the **Holy Spirit never goes against the teaching of God's word.**

So the first application is very clear. If we at O.I.C. want to be the Church that God will bless, then we need to be united in one purpose.

That purpose must be the same purpose that the early Church was united in.

**The purpose was to be witnesses to Jesus and to rely on the Holy Spirit of God to empower us for that witnessing.**

Our unity is in Jesus, by the Holy Spirit of God, and Jesus is represented throughout the whole Bible. Therefore, our unity must be not only in proclaiming the Gospel message about the death and resurrection of Jesus, but also in believing and applying God's word, the Bible to our lives. We can't live the the life of God without God the Holy Spirit of God.

**Therefore, our dependence is upon God's Holy Spirit for our life and witness.**

## 2. **The Sound and the Sight – v. 2-3.**

We are told by Luke what the disciples heard and saw.

The disciples suddenly heard a sound from Heaven. It wasn't the exact sound of wind but it was **like a rushing mighty wind.**

This sound filled the whole house where they were sitting. It must have been quite a dramatic sound. Although the disciples were waiting for the Holy Spirit, they had no idea what would actually happen. It must have been a shock but also a relief that the Holy Spirit had finally come.

What the disciples saw was also difficult to describe.

It wasn't actually fire, but it was like a portion of fire which rested upon each of them.

**Can we draw out any significance from these two things?**

We can only search the Bible to interpret the Bible.

### **Luke 3: v.15-16 in N.K.J.**

<sup>15</sup> Now as the people were in expectation, and all reasoned in their hearts about John, whether he was the Christ *or* not, <sup>16</sup> John answered, saying to all, "I indeed baptize you with water; but One mightier than I is coming, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to loose. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.

Also we can turn to the testimony of Isaiah.

### **Isaiah Chapter 6: v. 6-7 (in N.K.J.)**

<sup>6</sup> Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a live coal *which* he had taken with the tongs from the altar. <sup>7</sup> And he touched my mouth *with it*, and said:

"Behold, this has touched your lips;

Your iniquity is taken away,

And your sin purged."

Fire in this context speaks of a **purifying fire.**

There is a song that we sometimes sing called **"Purify my heart".**

The opening verse goes like this:

Purify my heart, let me be as gold and precious silver, purify my heart, let me be as gold, **pure gold!**

**Do you know how they produce pure gold?**

Let me tell you.

They put all the gold that they have mined into a steel container.

It looks great and like pure gold. However, there are lots of other things contained in the gold that affect the gold's purity.

They boil the raw gold at an extremely high temperature.

All of the dross and impurities inside the gold are released and rise to the top of the container.

Then men with very long handles and instruments, slowly scoop off the dross on the top of the boiling gold. This is all the rubbish that isn't pure gold.

It is only when the men high up can see their faces reflected in the gold liquid that it is decided that the gold is now pure.

In the same way the Holy Spirit is always seeking to burn out the dross in our lives so that people will see the life of Jesus in us.

Jesus had left His physical life and ministry here on this earth, but He wanted His ministry to continue through His followers.

Therefore, Jesus had to give His followers **a portion of Himself.**

This portion is the third person of the trinity of God which the Bible calls the Holy Spirit.

Of all the things that the Holy Spirit does, the most important thing is to make sinful men and women Holy.

**John 16: v. 5-11. (N.K.J.)**

<sup>5</sup> “But now I go away to Him who sent Me, and none of you asks Me, ‘Where are You going?’ <sup>6</sup> But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart. <sup>7</sup> Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you. <sup>8</sup> And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: <sup>9</sup> of sin, because they do not believe in Me; <sup>10</sup> of righteousness, because I go to My Father and you see Me no more; <sup>11</sup> of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.

Secondly there was something like the rushing mighty wind.

Wind is something that you can’t actually see, but you do notice the effect of wind.

After a typhoon in Japan, if the wind is strong, it can cause lots of damage.

Trees can be blown down and uprooted. Buildings can be damaged, and power lines destroyed. In fact, if the wind is strong enough it can blow ships out of control to damage bridges, as it did last year with the bridge that crosses over to Kansai International Airport.

In the case of the Holy Spirit **we can notice the effects of His work.**

Hearts and lives can be changed by the Holy Spirit.

This work was prophesied by Ezekiel.

**Ezekiel 36: v. 22-27. (N.K.J.)**

<sup>22</sup> “Therefore say to the house of Israel, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD: “I do not do *this* for your sake, O house of Israel, but for My holy name’s sake, which you have profaned among the nations wherever you went. <sup>23</sup> And I will sanctify My great name, which has been profaned among the nations, which you have profaned in their midst; and the nations shall know that I *am* the LORD,” says the Lord GOD, “when I am hallowed in you before their eyes. <sup>24</sup> For I will take you from among the nations, gather you out of all countries, and bring you into your own land. <sup>25</sup> Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. <sup>26</sup> I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. <sup>27</sup> I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do *them*.

If you come to the retreat this year which is being held at the Kansai International Bible Institute in Ikoma on Monday 14<sup>th</sup> October. ( National Holiday) you will hear a testimony, first hand by Hugh Brown.

I have known Hugh for over 30 years and worked with him in Kobe many years ago.

He was serving a prison sentence in N. Ireland for terrorist offences but God, the Holy Spirit changed his heart.

The effects of this change were immediately obvious, and Hugh has gone on to serve God in Japan for over 30 years.

If you come and listen to His testimony in October, you will never doubt that the Holy Spirit is the way in which God changes people’s hearts.

The holy Spirit can change our hearts too!

**3. The Languages spoken and the miracle described. – v. 4-5**

We are told in v. 4 that the 120 people were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages. Some Bible translations use the word tongues as a translation from the Greek word “glossia”.

We need to examine this Greek word and the different forms that are used in this passage.

The Greek language is very specific and can’t be disputed.

In Acts Chapter 2: v. 4 and 11 the word used for tongue is the Greek word that describes a person’s mouth and also the language in which you express yourself.

However, in v. 6 and 8 the Greek word is slightly different.

This Greek word here means **“dialect”** which has variations from area to area.

The district of Phrygia and Pamphylia both spoke Greek, but they spoke it in different local dialects.

The Parthians, Medes, and Elamites all spoke Persian, but they spoke it in different provincial forms. (dialects)

The long list of 14 or so **different language groups** who heard the word of God in their own language or dialect is clearly spelled out by Luke.

#### **Why does Luke do this?**

Luke wants us to have no doubt that the miracle that happened on this day was a communication of God’s word being addressed to **every language group represented on that day.**

It was 100% clear that these were **known languages**, understood by the people at that time.

On this day there were only Jewish people represented at this Pentecost Festival.

However, the **same experience was repeated in Acts 10: v. 44-48.**

Peter declares in Chapter 10 v.47 that the **same experience which they had in Jerusalem was now given to the Gentiles.**

God was declaring that the Holy Spirit was for the **Gentiles as well as for the Jews.**

We will deal with a repeat of two of these experiences when we come to them later.

Concerning the miracle of speaking in a language which has not been learned I must point out the following facts.

- A) There is no record of this type of miracle anywhere in the Old Testament, even though the Holy Spirit was still very active.
- B) There is no single instance of this miracle in the Gospels, that is Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. There were a number of people mentioned in the Gospels who were either filled with the Holy Spirit or were said to be under the direct power and influence of the Holy Spirit. These people were Joseph, The virgin Mary, Zechariah, Elizabeth and John the Baptist.
- C) The miracle of speaking in a language which was never learned only covers a period from **Acts chapter 2 until the writing of 1 Corinthians in Acts Chapter 19.** This only covers a period of **25-27 years.**

Outside of this period in history there is no mention of tongues or any miracle concerning the speaking of a language that has not been learned.

This is more impressive when we remember that four of the great church leaders present at Pentecost, that is Peter, John, James and Jude, wrote seven books of teaching for Christians.

However, in these books there is **not a single reference to speaking in tongues, though they do mention the Holy Spirit and His work 27 times.**

Paul wrote 14 books of the New Testament and only in one of the earliest of these books he mentions tongues **by way of correction for miss-use.**

A very objective social **linguistic investigation** took place in the 1960’s and the conclusion that they reached was that there have been no scientifically confirmed records of glossolalia being an unlearned foreign language.

The books that record these findings are, *Tongues of men and Angels* by William J. Samarins. (Publisher – MacMillan 1972)

And “*The Psychology of Speaking in Tongues*” by John P. Kildahl. (Published by Hodder & Stoughton, and Harper & Row, 1972.)

So to conclude this section, the miracle described was that 120 people spoke in different languages and dialects as the Holy Spirit enabled them to do so.

This confirmed the arrival of the Holy Spirit to empower the Jewish people to continue the work of Jesus.

This one-off event was only repeated twice to include the Samaritans and the Gentiles as being recipients of the Holy Spirit. We will deal with these matters later as we continue in the book of Acts.

#### **4. The Crowd – v. 5-7 & v. 11-13.**

We know from Acts 2: v.41 that there were at least 3,000 people listening to these 120 people speaking in different languages.

The crowd were initially confused about this situation but later we are told that they were **amazed and marvelled** because they heard different languages and dialects being spoken.

They asked the question, **“Whatever could this mean?”**

In v. 13 we are told that some people made fun of the miracle and claimed that these people were drunk.

The crowd are important because Luke tells us in v. 5 that there were **devout Jewish men from every nation under heaven.**

These were not just ordinary people. These were very **devout Jews** who knew the scriptures and had come to celebrate God’s goodness at the Pentecost Festival.

In v.11 we are told that **these Jewish people heard the wonderful works of God.**

**They knew the scriptures, so therefore they knew that they were hearing God’s truth being taught to them.**

The crowd knew that God was doing something special but they didn’t know the meaning of the miracle.

To understand the meaning without actually moving forward to Peter’s explanation we do need to go back to Genesis Chapter 11.

### **Gen. 11: v. 1-9 in N.K.J.**

Now the whole earth had one language and one speech. <sup>2</sup> And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar, and they dwelt there. <sup>3</sup> Then they said to one another, “Come, let us make bricks and bake *them* thoroughly.” They had brick for stone, and they had asphalt for mortar. <sup>4</sup> And they said, “Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower whose top *is* in the heavens; let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth.”

<sup>5</sup> But the LORD came down to see the city and the tower which the sons of men had built. <sup>6</sup> And the LORD said, “Indeed the people *are* one and they all have one language, and this is what they begin to do; now nothing that they propose to do will be withheld from them. <sup>7</sup> Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, that they may not understand one another’s speech.” <sup>8</sup> So the LORD scattered them abroad from there over the face of all the earth, and they ceased building the city. <sup>9</sup> Therefore its name is called Babel, because there the LORD confused the language of all the earth; and from there the LORD scattered them abroad over the face of all the earth.

At Babel human **languages were confused and the nations were scattered.**

For a brief period, God reversed the curse against the previous one language for a purpose.

The purpose was to present the fact that now God wanted a unity of the nations **through the message of the Gospel** which Peter was about to preach.

At the tower of Babel, **proud people tried to reach Heaven.**

But in Jerusalem on that day, **Heaven came down, through the Holy Spirit to change proud hearts, to prepare them for Heaven.**

Before we leave this passage we must not forget that **not everybody recognised that this was a work of God.** In v. 13 we are told that some people mocked the miracle or as we say today, **made fun of the experience.**

There will always be people who try and make fun of what God the Holy Spirit might do in order to change a heart or a situation.

Today people try and explain away the miracle of a changed heart and do not accept it as a work of the Holy Spirit.

The people who mock and make fun do not have any solution to change the human heart from bad or evil to good and Holy. Only God has that solution through His Holy Spirit.

### **Conclusion and Application**

The miracle of speaking in a language which has not been learnt is no longer a gift that God is using today. It is not that He can't do it, but He is now working through hard working missionary Bible translators in order to get the word of God into every language in the world today.

There are over 6,000 known languages where the whole Bible is yet to be translated.

Although these languages don't contain a vast population, they nevertheless account for people groups.

We are told from Revelation 7: v. 9 that all nations, tribes, and languages will be represented in Heaven.

**Therefore, we need to pray for people who translate the Bible into other languages.**

Wycliffe Bible Translators Mission is one of the largest organisations involved in translating the Bible into different languages.

**The second application** is for us to understand that people of all nationalities and tribes are united in the Gospel of Jesus Christ, by the Holy Spirit.

Unity does not come through culture or language, or even social likes or dislikes, it can only come **if you are born again through God's Holy Spirit.**

Unity in Jesus Christ, means unity of purpose, and that is to tell the whole world about Jesus, His life, death and resurrection, and to give people an invitation to come to Him for the forgiveness of their sins.

The question I must ask you today is "**Have you come to Jesus for the forgiveness of your sins, has your heart been changed by God's Holy Spirit?**"

**If not, then today is a day of opportunity for you to come to Jesus.**