Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

Pentecost…Every Sunday?
Scripture: Acts 2
Code: BQ8411

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. (Acts 2:1–4)

The events of Christ's life, death, and resurrection, according to Paul, were not held in a quiet corner (Acts 26:26) but out in the open before all the people. The same could be said of the birth of the church. It did not begin in an obscure manner in some out of the way place. Rather, it was born with a startling, dramatic event in the very heart of Jerusalem.

The coming of the **day of Pentecost** found the believers **all together in one place,** undoubtedly the same upper room described in 1:13. That room was located just inside the Eastern Gate, probably in the vicinity of the temple. There is no reason to restrict all to the twelve apostles. It encompasses the entire gathering of 120 believers (1:15).

It was on the **day of Pentecost** that God's sovereign timetable called for the Spirit to descend. It should be noted that the Spirit was not induced into coming because the believers prayed, tarried, or met certain spiritual requirements. Luke's account points only to the sovereign timing of God as the cause of the Spirit's descent.

Luke describes this sovereignly designed event by taking us to the upper room, where the believers were gathered. **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). Those gathered in the upper room could not have expected the dramatic signs that accompanied the Spirit's coming.

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). That they were **sitting** offers further proof that they were not praying for the Spirit's coming. Standing and kneeling were the postures for prayer.

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.

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).

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