

SBCOD Bible Study Notes

12-17-25

Acts 2

The Holy Spirit Comes At Pentecost – Verses 1-4

¹ When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. ² Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. ³ They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. ⁴ All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.

2:1 Held 50 days after Passover, Pentecost was also called the Festival of Weeks. It was one of three major annual festivals (Deuteronomy 16:16), a festival of thanksgiving for the harvested crops. Jesus was crucified at Passover time, and he ascended 40 days after his resurrection. The Holy Spirit came 50 days after the resurrection, ten days after the ascension. Jews of many nations had gathered in Jerusalem for this festival. Thus, Peter's speech (2:14-37) was given to an international audience, and it resulted in a worldwide harvest of new believers—the first converts to Christianity.

2:3-4 This was a fulfillment of John the Baptist's words about the Holy Spirit's baptizing with fire (Luke 3:16) and of the prophet Joel's words about the outpouring of the Holy Spirit (Joel 2:28-29). Why tongues of fire? Tongues symbolize speech and the communication of the gospel. Fire symbolizes God's purifying presence, which burns away the undesirable elements of our lives and sets our hearts aflame to ignite the lives of others. On Mount Sinai, God confirmed the validity of the Old Testament law with fire from heaven (Exodus 19:16-18). At Pentecost, God confirmed the validity of the Holy Spirit's ministry by sending fire. At Mount Sinai, fire came down on one place; at Pentecost, fire came down on many believers, symbolizing that God's presence is now available to all who believe in him.

2:3-4 God made his presence known to this group of believers in a spectacular way—violent wind (2:2), fire, and his Holy Spirit. Would you like God to reveal himself to you in such recognizable ways? He may do so, but be wary of forcing your expectations on God. In 1 Kings 19:10-13, Elijah also needed a message from God. First came a great wind, then an earthquake, and finally a fire. But God's message came in a "gentle whisper." God may use dramatic methods to work in your life—or he may speak in gentle whispers. Wait patiently and always listen.

The Phenomenon Of Speaking In Tongues – Verses 5-13

⁵ Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. ⁶ When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard their own language being spoken. ⁷ Utterly amazed, they asked: "Aren't all these who are speaking Galileans? ⁸ Then how is it that each of us hears them in our native language? ⁹ Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, ¹⁰ Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome ¹¹ (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs—we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!" ¹² Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, "What does this mean?" ¹³ Some, however, made fun of them and said, "They have had too much wine."

2:4-6 These people literally spoke in other languages— a miraculous attention-getter for the international crowd gathered in town for the festival. All the nationalities represented recognized their own languages being spoken. More than miraculous speaking drew people's attention, however; they saw the presence and power of the Holy Spirit. The apostles continued to minister in the Holy Spirit's power wherever they went.

2:7-8 Christianity is not limited to any race or group of people. Christ offers salvation to all people without regard to nationality. Visitors in Jerusalem were surprised to hear the apostles and other believers speaking in languages other than their own, but they need not have been. God works all kinds of miracles to spread the gospel, using many languages as he calls all kinds of people to become his followers. No matter what your race, color, nationality, or language, God speaks to you. Are you listening?

2:9-11 Why are all these places mentioned? This is a list of many lands from which Jews had come to the festivals in Jerusalem. These Jews were not from Palestine because their ancestors had been dispersed to other parts of the world through captivities and persecutions. Very likely, some of the Jews who responded to Peter's message returned to their homelands with God's good news of salvation. Thus, God prepared the way for the spread of the gospel. As you read Acts, you will see how the way was often prepared for Paul and other messengers by people who had become believers at Pentecost. The church at Rome, for example, was probably begun by such Jewish believers.

2:12-13 When the gathered crowd recognized that something supernatural was taking place, they naturally wanted an explanation. At this point, Peter stepped forward and explained the truth about God. This should be the pattern in our lives as well. Hopefully we are living in such a way that people will see Christ in us. If we do shine and sparkle (Matthew 5:14; Philippians 2:15) and if we are "salty" (Matthew 5:13), we will get the attention of others. They will surely want to know what is so attractive and different about us. Then we can explain our "hope" (1 Peter 3:15). What is different about your life? What supernatural evidence would cause someone to stop you and say, "What does this mean?"

Peter Addresses the Crowd – Verses 14-15

14 Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd: "Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say. **15** These people are not drunk, as you suppose. It's only nine in the morning!

2:14 Peter had been an unstable leader during Jesus' ministry, letting his bravado be his downfall, even denying that he knew Jesus (John 18:15-18, 25-27). But Christ had forgiven and restored him (John 21). This was a new Peter, humble but bold. His confidence came from the Holy Spirit, who made him a powerful and dynamic speaker. Have you ever felt as if you've made such bad mistakes that God could never forgive and use you? No matter what sins you have committed, God promises to forgive you and make you useful for his kingdom. Allow him to forgive you and use you effectively to serve him.

2:14-15 Peter tells the people that they should listen to the testimony of the believers because the Old Testament prophecies concerning Jesus had been entirely fulfilled in him (2:14-21), because Jesus is the Messiah (2:25-36), and because the risen Christ could change their lives (2:37-40).

Peter Explains The Strange Events At Pentecost – Verses 16-21

¹⁶ No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: ¹⁷ “In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. ¹⁸ Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy. ¹⁹ I will show wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below, blood and fire and billows of smoke. ²⁰ The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord. ²¹ And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.’

2:16-21 Not everything mentioned in Joel 2:28-29 was happening that particular morning. The “last days” include all the days between Christ’s first and second comings and is another way of saying “from now on.” The “great and glorious day of the Lord” (Acts 2:20) denotes the whole Christian age. Even Moses yearned for the Lord to put his Spirit on everyone (Numbers 11:29). At Pentecost the Holy Spirit was released throughout the entire world— to men, women, sons, daughters, Jews, Gentiles. Now everyone can receive the Spirit. This was a revolutionary thought for first-century Jews.

Peter Introduces The Focus Of The Sermon: The Resurrected Messiah, Jesus Of Nazareth – Verses 22-24

²² “Fellow Israelites, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know. ²³ This man was handed over to you by God’s deliberate plan and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross. ²⁴ But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him.

2:22-23 Everything that happened to Jesus was under God’s control. His plans were never disrupted by the Roman government or the Jewish officials. This was especially comforting to those facing oppression during the time of the early Christian church.

2:24 Peter spoke forthrightly about the resurrection. As Peter preached, the events of Christ’s death and resurrection were still hot news, less than two months old. Christ’s execution had been carried out in public before many witnesses. His empty tomb was available for inspection just a short distance away. If Christ had not truly died, Peter’s message would have been laughed at or ignored. If Christ had not been resurrected, authorities could have produced his body and put an end to this new faith. But Peter and the apostles had witnessed the risen Christ. Changed men, they announced the news with great passion and conviction.

2:24 Our faith and our credibility also rest on the truth of the empty tomb. Why? For a number of important reasons. According to the apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 15, the resurrection of Christ means that he is the Son of God and that his word can be trusted. It means that his sacrifice for sin was acceptable to God, so we can be completely forgiven. It means that our Savior is alive and active, able to help us in times of need. It also means that one day we, too, will conquer death. The Christian faith rests on the basic fact of the empty tomb. Don’t neglect this essential part of the gospel when you share your faith with others.

Peter Explains The Resurrected Jesus – Verses 25-33

²⁵ David said about him: “I saw the Lord always before me. Because he is at my right hand, I will not be shaken. ²⁶ Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body also will rest in hope, ²⁷ because you will not abandon me to the realm of the dead, you will not let your

holy one see decay. ²⁸ You have made known to me the paths of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence.’ ²⁹ “Fellow Israelites, I can tell you confidently that the patriarch David died and was buried, and his tomb is here to this day. ³⁰ But he was a prophet and knew that God had promised him on oath that he would place one of his descendants on his throne. ³¹ Seeing what was to come, he spoke of the resurrection of the Messiah, that he was not abandoned to the realm of the dead, nor did his body see decay. ³² God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of it. ³³ Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear.

2:25-33 Peter quoted from Psalm 16:8-11— a psalm written by David. He explained that David was not writing about himself, because David died and was buried (2:29). Instead, he was writing as a prophet (2:30) who spoke of the Messiah who would be resurrected. The emphasis here is that Jesus’ body was not left to rot in the grave but was in fact resurrected and glorified.

Peter Explains The Divine Messiah – Verses 34-36

³⁴ For David did not ascend to heaven, and yet he said, “The Lord said to my Lord: “Sit at my right hand ³⁵ until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.”” ³⁶ “Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah.”

22:34-36 The LORD said to my Lord: This begins the third Old Testament passage Peter used in his sermon, Psalm 110:1. This verse of the Old Testament is quoted in the New Testament more than any other single verse; either quoted or referred to at least 25 times. In this Psalm, David understood and proclaimed the deity of the Messiah. It’s as if Peter said, “You were all wrong about Jesus. You crucified Him as if He were a criminal, but by the resurrection, God proved that He is Lord and Messiah.”

Peter Invites The Multitude To Come To Jesus – Verses 37-40

³⁷ When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?” ³⁸ Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹ The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call.” ⁴⁰ With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, “Save yourselves from this corrupt generation.”

2:37 After Peter’s powerful, Spirit-filled message, the people were deeply moved and asked, “What shall we do?” This is the basic question we must ask. It is not enough to be sorry for our sins— we must repent, ask God to forgive us, and then live like forgiven people. Has God spoken to you through his Word or through the words of another believer? Like Peter’s audience, ask God what you should do, and then obey.

2:38-40 If you want to follow Christ, you must “repent and be baptized...in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins.” To repent means to turn from sin, change the direction of your life from selfishness and rebellion against God’s laws. At the same time, you must turn to Christ, depending on him for forgiveness, mercy, guidance, and purpose. We cannot save ourselves— only God can save us. Baptism identifies us with Christ and with the community of believers. It is a condition of discipleship and a sign of faith.

The Response To Peter's Sermon – Verses 41-43

⁴¹ Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day. ⁴² They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. ⁴³ Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles.

2:40-43 About 3,000 people became new believers when Peter preached the good news about Christ. These new Christians were united with the other believers, taught by the apostles, and included in the prayer meetings and fellowship. New believers in Christ need to be in groups where they can learn God's Word, pray, and mature in the faith. If you have just begun a relationship with Christ, seek out other believers for fellowship, prayer, and teaching. This is the way to grow.

The Christian Family Lived Together And Grew – Verses 44-47

⁴⁴ All the believers were together and had everything in common. ⁴⁵ They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. ⁴⁶ Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, ⁴⁷ praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

2:44 Recognizing the other believers as brothers and sisters in the family of God, the Christians in Jerusalem shared all they had so that all could benefit from God's gifts. It is tempting— especially if we have material wealth— to cut ourselves off from one another, concerning ourselves with only our own interests, providing for and enjoying only our own little piece of the world. But as part of God's spiritual family, it is our responsibility to help one another in every way possible. God's family works best when its members work together.

2:46 A common misconception about the first Christians (who were Jews) was that they rejected the Jewish religion. But these believers saw Jesus' message and resurrection as the fulfillment of everything they knew and believed from the Old Testament. The Jewish believers at first did not separate from the rest of the Jewish community. They still went to the temple and synagogues for worship and instruction in the Scriptures. But their belief in Jesus created great friction with Jews who didn't believe that Jesus was the Messiah. Thus, believing Jews were forced to meet in private homes for communion, prayer, and teaching about Christ. By the end of the first century, many of these Jewish believers were excommunicated from their synagogues.

2:47 A healthy Christian community attracts people to Christ. The Jerusalem church's zeal for worship and brotherly love was contagious. A healthy, loving church will grow in numbers. What are you doing to make your church the kind of place that will attract others to Christ?