

Acts 2:1-12 NASB**“The real miracle of Pentecost”**

“When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. ²And suddenly there came from heaven a noise like a violent rushing wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. ³And there appeared to them tongues as of fire distributing themselves, and they rested on each one of them. ⁴And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit was giving them utterance.

“⁵Now there were Jews living in Jerusalem, devout men from every nation under heaven. ⁶And when this sound occurred, the crowd came together, and were bewildered because each one of them was hearing them speak in his own language. ⁷They were amazed and astonished, saying, ‘Why, are not all these who are speaking Galileans?’ ⁸And how is it that we each hear *them* in our own language to which we were born? ⁹Parthians and Medes and Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, ¹⁰Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the districts of Libya around Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, ¹¹Cretans and Arabs—we hear them in our *own* tongues speaking of the mighty deeds of God.’ ¹²And they all continued in amazement and

great perplexity, saying to one another, ‘What does this mean?’”

Pentecost marks a major event in history.

Who were all these folks gathered in Jerusalem?

They didn’t fly in to watch a rock or gospel concert or to protest.

They didn’t travel to see the Super Bowl.

Why were those people there?

What was with the violent wind and tongues as of fire?

Why the perplexity and amazement?



At a play, you read or hear a brief explanation of the setting.

A few details help you get the picture.

Yet this was no stage play; it actually happened.

Here’s the concise story:

A group of 120, Jesus’ followers, prayed and waited in a Jerusalem upper room just as he had instructed them.

The 120 included the 12, Jesus’ mother, Mary, and her four other sons, many disciple-followers of Jesus, and some prominent women, who had helped support Jesus’ ministry (See *Luke* 8: 1-3; 18:35-42).

Remember that Jesus spent 40 days proving to his disciples and his family that he came back from the dead.

He wanted them to be resurrection witnesses—to testify that he was alive after his death.

Jesus instructed them to wait in Jerusalem for the Holy Spirit’s baptism and power.

This is what he told them months before:

“If you love me, obey my commandments. ¹⁶ And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, who will never leave you. ¹⁷ He is the Holy Spirit, who leads into all truth.” ¹

In coming weeks, the Lord willing, we’ll speak more about the Holy Spirit.

For now, we need to recall that Jesus was crucified on Passover weekend and that he arose on the first day of the week (Sunday).

In addition to Passover, God expected Jewish people to observe other special holidays.

Pentecost was a popular one.

Note this Old Testament command for Israel:

“From the day after the Sabbath, (Passover) the day you brought the sheaf of the wave offering, count off seven full weeks. ¹⁶ Count off fifty days up to the day after the seventh



Sabbath, and then present an offering of new grain to the LORD. ¹⁷ From wherever you live, bring two loaves made of two-tenths of an ephah of the finest flour, baked with yeast, as a wave offering of firstfruits to the LORD.”²

The Lord told Israel to bring this new grain offering to the Temple fifty days after the Passover Sabbath.

Pentecost is a Greek term referring to fifty. From wherever they lived, Israelites brought two loaves made from new grain to the Jerusalem Temple.

They called Pentecost the Feast of First Fruits.

In many ways, it resembled a Homecoming.

Pentecost became special to Jews.

If you count fifty days from a Sabbath day, which is the seventh day, you arrive at the first day of the week—Sunday.

This first day of the week celebration was well attended because it followed harvest, as does our Thanksgiving.

Acts 20:16 states that Paul hurried because he wanted to be in Jerusalem by Pentecost.

¹ John 14: 15-17 NLT

² Leviticus 23: 15-17 NIV If they lived a great distance from Jerusalem, worshipers could purchase a replacement offering of equal value in Jerusalem. Corrupt priests in Jesus’ time allowed merchants and money changers to set their tables on the Temple grounds (The Court off the Gentiles). Jesus cleared the area twice.

As best I can determine, two tenths of an ephah likely equals about two quarts.

As a result of wars and other factors, first century Jews lived all over the world.

Many resided long distances from Jerusalem and spoke the language of the area where they lived.

Factor in one additional "minor" detail.

In the first century, Israel consisted of two major sectors:

- **a southern region known as Judea, where Jerusalem and the Temple were located;**
- **a northern part known as Galilee. Fishing on the Lake or Sea of Galilee provided an important source of commerce.**

Differences in northern and southern speech patterns were distinct as they are in this country.

Recall after Jesus' arrest, some thought Peter was an accomplice and kept accusing him?

Bystanders noticed that Peter's Galilean accent evidenced he was a follower of Jesus:

"Surely you are one of them; your accent gives you away."³

We must add one more intriguing detail.

Chap. 2:1 in The King James Version (see following) has a word most translations don't include: **"And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place."**

³ Matthew 26:73 NIV

For good reason, Luke, the author of Acts, used an important descriptive word here and I'm thankful the King James Version conveyed it.

Unless you are an ant fan or entomologist, you may not have heard of a plerergate.

The Wiktionary definition of plerergate states:

"EnglishEdit. EtymologyEdit. From Ancient Greek πλήρης (plérēs, **"full"**) + ergate. Noun Edit. **plerergate** (plural **plerergates**). honey-pot ant."⁴



As you see in the pic, the honey-pot ant's stomach is about as full as I felt the first time my parents took me to a cafeteria in Kansas City.

Note below: the Greek word translated "was fully" contains the same four letter stem as the Greek word behind *plerergate*, *pler* = *full*, *ergate* = *worker (ant)*. **συνπληροῦσθαι -The Acts 2:1 word in Greek.**

πλήρ in *wiktionary* - a very full honey-pot ant.

The importance of Pentecost **"fully come"** seems to say: God wants His people to do things openly.

The Jewish day begins at sundown and goes to the next sundown.

⁴ <https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/plerergate>

Roman days began at midnight as do ours. Had the Holy Spirit come on people as shadows grew and darkness approached on what we and the Romans would have considered Saturday evening, many Pentecost facts would have been suspect. **As it was, some accused the disciples of being drunk, which Peter quickly dismissed by saying: "It's 9AM. The bars haven't even opened yet."**

Similar to Jesus' resurrection, the Holy Spirit came after dawn; Pentecost had fully come:

"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."



Most Midwesterners know the sound of violent wind; it's quite familiar.

Yet this wind didn't come from the west or east.

This wind sound originated from above.

At the same time, tongues as of fire split off and the Holy Spirit rested on each person.

Now, to the miracle of Pentecost:

To celebrate Pentecost, God-fearing Jews had come from everywhere on earth.

Referring to those in the upper room: "And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues (languages), as the Spirit was giving them utterance."

Jesus fulfilled his promise of the Holy Spirit.

God's Spirit enabled the disciples to speak in tongues.

What does to "speak in tongues" mean?

"⁵Now there were Jews living in Jerusalem, devout men from every nation under heaven. ⁶And when this sound occurred, the crowd came together, and were bewildered because each one of them was hearing them speak in his own language. ⁷They were amazed and astonished, saying, 'Why, are not all these who are speaking Galileans?' ⁸And how is it that we each hear *them* in our own language to which we were born? ⁹Parthians and Medes and Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, ¹⁰Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the districts of Libya around Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, ¹¹Cretans and Arabs—we hear them in our *own* tongues speaking of the mighty deeds of God.' ¹²And they all continued in amazement and great perplexity, saying to one another, 'What does this mean?'"

The above text and the attached map help us identify the miracle of Pentecost.

The disciples likely talked in Aramaic, which most Jews spoke at the time, but with their own peculiar Galilean (northern) accent.

Yet the listeners remarked: "How is it that we each hear *them* in our own language to which we were born? Parthians and Medes and Elamites . . .?" "We hear them in our *own* tongues speaking of the mighty deeds of God."

These were not "unknown tongues."⁵

On Pentecost, people heard in their "own language;" the Greek term in v.8 is *dialect*.

Far more important is the message folks heard: "The mighty deeds of God."⁶

Have you lately heard about God's mighty deeds? You hear about athletes, politicians, T.V. and movie actors, royalty, prices, scientists, and cures.

Heard anyone talk about God's greatness or even suggesting prayers to God?

See a preacher in the media; he's either complaining or asking for money.

- God created the Universe and sustains it.
- He sent his Son to help us avoid mistakes.
- People crucified Jesus, but God raised him.
- He defeated the dreaded event that haunts us.

⁵ The Lord willing we'll look more closely at that phenomenon in the future Paul described in 1 Corinthians 12-14.

⁶ The English word *mega* comes from the Greek term for "mighty deeds."

Recall the *Genesis 11* story of folks who spoke one language? In the plains of Babylonia ages ago,

people said: "Come, let's build a great city for ourselves with a tower that reaches into the sky. This will make us famous and keep us from being scattered all over the world."⁷



Folks glorify human effort with halls of fame, tall buildings, museums, statues, foundations, etc.

The Lord knew the extents that human pride, lust for power, and greed take humans.

So He confused the people with different languages and He scattered them.

On Pentecost God reversed Babel's confusion.

The Word and Spirit of God in Christ enable us to be one.

But we must exalt, glorify, and thank God for his mighty deeds in nature, and for all of us.

And believe the Apostles' witness that God raised Jesus His Son from death after his crucifixion.

We trust that He will raise us, too, when he returns to Judge all people, holding them all accountable for the conduct of their lives.

Bob Blair **He has done and will do mighty deeds!**

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⁷ Genesis 11:4