

Dr. Jack Cottrell of *Cincinnati Christian University* writes:

This consensus view of the meaning of baptism reigned for 1,500 years, until it was challenged and changed by one man, a contemporary of Luther, the Swiss reformer Huldreich Zwingli. "In this matter of baptism," he decided, "all the doctors have been in error from the time of the apostles" (Zwingli, 130).

And so in the years 1523 to 1525 he completely repudiated any connection between salvation and the time of baptism, and replaced this view with an explanation of baptism hitherto unknown. In essence, he transferred the exact meaning of OT circumcision to baptism and explained it as a covenant sign, i.e., as a public testimony and witness that the recipient of baptism is (already) saved and is a member of God's covenant people. This newly minted understanding was accepted by John Calvin and became what is commonly called the Reformed view of baptism. As an explanation of baptism's meaning and purpose, this Reformed view has been adopted by almost all non-Lutheran Protestants. — *The Faith Once For All*, page 369.

The Churches of Christ hold to the original intent of baptism, so including baptism for salvation is a cornerstone of the church's beliefs.

We reject the "Sinner's Prayer," salvation by "accepting Jesus in your heart," and any other work-around that omits baptism into Christ as a step in becoming a Christian. To say that some other steps are also acceptable puts us in the role of speaking where God has not spoken.

—Charles Dailey

*Acts Series* –

## Acts 2

Written by Luke the beloved physician  
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### Introduction:

The last chapter ended with Matthias being added to the eleven apostles, making a total of twelve.

### THE TWELVE ARE BAPTIZED IN THE SPIRIT

**(Acts 2:1) On the day of Pentecost all the believers were meeting together in one place.**

- The Feast of **Pentecost** always fell on the first day of the week, so the events unfolding here happened on Sunday.
- **Pentecost** was fifty days after the Passover Day. It celebrated the first-fruits of the coming grain harvest, so fitting to picture the church that would be launched on this day.
- We take issue with the translation here. Most translations say "they were meeting together" instead of "all the believers were meeting together." Using "they" points back to the last statement of Acts 1:

**And they cast their lots, and the lot fell on Matthias. And he was numbered with the eleven apostles. Acts 1:26.**

This is true in the *English Standard Version*, the *King James Version*, the *New American Standard Bible*, the *New International Version*, the *New King James Version*, and the *Rotherham Bible*. Hang on and more evidence will appear in the text.

So we are saying that the twelve (and not the 120) were gathered in one place.

**(Acts 2:2) Suddenly, there was a sound from heaven like the roaring of a mighty windstorm, and it filled the house where they were sitting.**

- While Luke wasn't present, he knew a number of believers who were. Using the same techniques that he used to research the life of Jesus, he interviews one or more who were present for the event.
- The Lord has used noise before during these days to get the attention of the people. Earthquake. Now a **windstorm**.

**(Acts 2:3) Then, what looked like flames or tongues of fire appeared and settled on each of them. (4) And everyone present was filled with the Holy Spirit and began speaking in other languages, as the Holy Spirit gave them this ability.**

- In addition to sound, there was the sight of **tongues** like **fire settling on each** of the twelve.
- This was the **filling** of the **Holy Spirit**. They were able to **speak** with languages they had not learned. This miracle could be instantly verified and was not dependent on a story or experience from anyone.
- This is the fulfillment of *power* promised in Mark 9:1 and the *coming upon* the apostles promised in Acts 1:8. It is not the same as the inward presence of the Spirit that every baptized believer was to receive. Acts 2:39.
- These men from Galilee with its limited educational opportunities were now speaking in a number of world languages by the power of the **Holy Spirit**.

### THE SPEAKING IN TONGUES IS VERIFIED

**(Acts 2:5) At that time there were devout Jews from every nation living in Jerusalem.**

- Pentecost was a pilgrimage feast and dispersed **Jewish** people came from **every nation** to worship at **Jerusalem**. Between Passover and Pentecost, the Roman government lifted its restrictions on ocean travel, so more people could attend Pentecost than came for Passover.
- It took someone who really wanted to obey God to make such a trip and Luke calls them **devout men**. They had weeks of travel for a one-day feast.

God's main spokesman for the day was the apostle Peter.

Jesus' ministry was coming into focus and he was the repeater.

The old prophet Joel had looked ahead and seen these events

And now Peter was here to fully explain the contents.

King David, gone a thousand years, knew that Jesus would come

And be like him — but to the tomb he would not succumb.

To be saved the listeners had to repent and be baptized.

Three thousand did and their eternity was revised.

### In the Church's Foundation

Since Acts 2, the church has believed and practiced that baptism is one step in becoming a Christian.

**(Acts 2:38) Peter replied, "Each of you must repent of your sins and turn to God, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. Then you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. Acts 2:38.**

The last line from the Nicene Creed of A.D 325 shows baptism for the remission of sins was universally believed *300 years after Acts 2:38*:

"I acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins; and I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen."

*Thirteen hundred years* later, Martin Luther still held the same belief:

I can boast that Baptism is no human trifle, but instituted by God Himself, moreover, that it is most solemnly and strictly commanded that we must be baptized or we cannot be saved, lest any one regard it as a trifling matter, like putting on a new red coat. For it is of the greatest importance that we esteem Baptism excellent, glorious, and exalted, for which we contend and fight chiefly, because the world is now so full of sects clamoring that Baptism is an external thing, and that external things are of no benefit. But let it be ever so much an external thing, here stand God's Word and command which institute, establish, and confirm Baptism. *Book of Concord on Baptism.*

- They observed the **Lord's Supper**. This was the physical reminder of the agony of the cross.
- They **prayed**, recognizing that God was empowering these wonders and signs.

**(Acts 2:43) A deep sense of awe came over them all, and the apostles performed many miraculous signs and wonders.**

- The **deep sense of awe** was in a class by itself.
- The 12 **apostles** went beyond speaking in tongues to perform other **signs**.

**(Acts 2:44) And all the believers met together in one place and shared everything they had. (45) They sold their property and possessions and shared the money with those in need.**

- As time passed, the travelers from distant lands who stayed over ran low on funds. The local Israelites sold real estate and other possessions so there would not be hardship.

**(Acts 2:46) They worshiped together at the Temple each day, met in homes for the Lord's Supper, and shared their meals with great joy and generosity— (47) all the while praising God and enjoying the goodwill of all the people. And each day the Lord added to their fellowship those who were being saved.**

- Meetings were daily instead of weekly. There was a strong unity among these new believers. They met in the temple area and in private homes.
- The new group was well received by the average citizen of Jerusalem. In the next chapters, we will see the officials were opposed just like they opposed Jesus in person.

## A SUMMARY IN RHYME

BY CHARLES DAILEY

It was on Pentecost, a Jewish day for celebration

That the twelve received the Spirit before the nation.

The baptism of the Spirit was proven by speaking in tongues

Showing the power of God in both brain and lungs.

**(Acts 2:6) When they heard the loud noise, everyone came running, and they were bewildered to hear their own languages being spoken by the believers.**

- Nothing like this had happened before. The crowd was **bewildered**.

**(Acts 2:7) They were completely amazed. "How can this be?" they exclaimed. "These people are all from Galilee, (8) and yet we hear them speaking in our own native languages!**

- The crowd identified the **speakers** as being from **Galilee**. It may have been their clothing that labeled them. The angels said the apostles were all from Galilee. Acts 1:11. We know the Twelve were from Galilee, but it is unlikely that the 120 were all from Galilee, too.
- The significant point is that travelers were *not* hearing in the local Aramaic spoken in Galilee and Judea but their **language** of hearth and home.
- The miracle was not to communicate but to convince. The visitors heard their native languages spoken by men unacquainted with them.
- Learning a language is a slow process and the apostles had it instantly. Such super-human knowledge!

**(Acts 2:9) Here we are — Parthians, Medes, Elamites, people from Mesopotamia, Judea, Cappadocia, Pontus, the province of Asia, (10) Phrygia, Pamphylia, Egypt, and the areas of Libya around Cyrene, visitors from Rome (11) (both Jews and converts to Judaism), Cretans, and Arabs. And we all hear these people speaking in our own languages about the wonderful things God has done!"**

- There were about 15 nations and 10 languages represented.
- The content of the apostles' words were **the wonderful things God has done**. No doubt they spoke of Jesus and His wonderful life.
- **Converts to Judaism speaks** of a man or woman who has left paganism and become a worshiper of the One True God. They attended the synagogues, set in back, and used the Greek Septuagint Scriptures.

- God intends for every person to hear the message of what He has done in their home language. This event pointed to the future of worldwide Scripture translation and worldwide evangelism.

**(Acts 2:12) They stood there amazed and perplexed. "What can this mean?" they asked each other. (13) But others in the crowd ridiculed them, saying, "They're just drunk, that's all!"**

- A rule of effective teaching is to get the listener's attention. God had done this very effectively.
- Each apostle would only be understood by a few people. To the other hearers, the sound seemed like drunks babbling. Some have thought that sweet wine was not fermented (Isaiah 65:8), but Peter responded as if fermented wine were meant.

### PETER IS THE SPIRIT-LED SPOKESMAN FOR THE TWELVE

**(Acts 2:14) Then Peter stepped forward with the eleven other apostles and shouted to the crowd, "Listen carefully, all of you, fellow Jews and residents of Jerusalem! Make no mistake about this.**

- **Peter stepped forward** with the **eleven**, not the 120.
- **Peter** is using his keys to open the door of the Kingdom for these devout Jews. Matthew 16:19. Later in Acts 10, **Peter** would again use his keys to open the door of the Kingdom for Gentiles.
- **"Listen carefully."** Such a change in **Peter** who was afraid to acknowledge Jesus about 50 days before this.

**(Acts 2:15) These people are not drunk, as some of you are assuming. Nine o'clock in the morning is much too early for that.**

- Peter answers the question that has been raised. Being **drunk** does not increase language skills and usually social drinkers are not **drunk** at 9 AM.
- The cause of this upset at the Temple had its roots in the time of the Prophet Joel, about 800 years before.

is not the measure that had fallen on the Twelve, but the **gift** that every believer will have following their **baptism**.

- Be immersed in the **name** (authority) of **Jesus Christ**. There were hundreds of mikvahs, like our baptisteries, near the Temple.
- Conspicuous by its absence is *the Sinner's Prayer*.

**(Acts 2:39) This promise is to you, and to your children, and even to the Gentiles — all who have been called by the Lord our God."**

- Though Peter did not grasp his own words at this time, the **promise** would be extended to Gentiles in a few years.

**(Acts 2:40) Then Peter continued preaching for a long time, strongly urging all his listeners, "Save yourselves from this crooked generation!"**

- It was not "take it or leave it." Peter **urged** his listeners to take action in order to **be saved**.

### 3,000 RESPONDED TO PETER'S WORDS

**(Acts 2:41) Those who believed what Peter said were baptized and added to the church that day—about 3,000 in all.**

- Not all listeners were ready to obey, but the results were substantial.
- The great Ingathering was underway. By contrast, **three thousand** died when the Law of Moses was launched. Exodus 32:28.

**(Acts 2:42) All the believers devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, and to fellowship, and to sharing in meals (including the Lord's Supper), and to prayer.**

- The Holy Spirit had come upon the 12 **apostles** and they were the teachers, not the 120 from chapter 1.
- These new believers were held together in **fellowship** by their common faith in Jesus.

- It is Jesus who is at **God's right hand** and who has **poured out the Spirit** as evidenced by things you can **see and hear**.

(Acts 2:34) For David himself never ascended into heaven, yet he said, 'The LORD said to my Lord, "Sit in the place of honor at My right hand (35) until I humble Your enemies, making them a footstool under Your feet."'

- David did not **ascend into heaven**, but it was Jesus. He remains **until** he will rule over His **enemies**.

### WHAT ISRAEL MUST DO

(Acts 2:36) "So let everyone in Israel know for certain that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, to be both Lord and Messiah!" (37) Peter's words pierced their hearts, and they said to him and to the other apostles, "Brothers, what should we do?"

- Peter was speaking to all his Jewish brethren, **Israel**.
- **Peter** has a new level of courage. He is no longer frightened by a young girl's question.
- **Jesus was made both Lord** (Master) **and Messiah by God, but you crucified Him**. This was a most stinging accusation and there was no way around it.
- The crowd asked the **apostles** what they should do. **Peter** did not say, "You can't do a thing. Its all been done for you." There is no thought here of anyone earning salvation.

(Acts 2:38) Peter replied, "Each of you must repent of your sins and turn to God, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. Then you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

- "Have a change of mind that leads to a change of conduct" — **repentance**. **Each** person must repent. Some things can be done as a family or community, but not **repentance**.
- **Baptism** related the believer to the resurrection of Jesus. It was not optional and could not be delayed.
- **Forgiveness** (which takes place in the mind of God) and the **gift of the Spirit** (who dwells within us) are the results. This

(Acts 2:16) No, what you see was predicted long ago by the prophet Joel:

(17) 'IN THE LAST DAYS,' God says, 'I WILL POUR OUT MY SPIRIT UPON ALL PEOPLE. YOUR SONS AND DAUGHTERS WILL PROPHECY. YOUR YOUNG MEN WILL SEE VISIONS, AND YOUR OLD MEN WILL DREAM DREAMS. (18) IN THOSE DAYS I WILL POUR OUT MY SPIRIT EVEN ON MY SERVANTS—MEN AND WOMEN ALIKE—AND THEY WILL PROPHECY.

- Events were to take place in the **LAST DAYS** and this is what was happening. So these are the last day of what? The nation of Israel was slated for destruction just 40 years from the time Peter was speaking.
- Usually, only one or two prophets of each generation had the Holy Spirit. Here 12 Jewish **sons** were **prophesying**. Some **daughters** had **prophesied** and Luke had already reported their cases: Mary, Elizabeth and Anna in Luke 1:41; 2:36-38. (The fulfillment was not confined to Pentecost Day.)
- Joseph the husband of Mary had dreams from God: Matthew 1:20; 2:13,19; 2:22. **Men prophesied**: Luke 1:57; Acts 11:28; 19:6. **Women prophesied**: Acts 21:9.

(Acts 2:19) AND I WILL CAUSE WONDERS IN THE HEAVENS ABOVE AND SIGNS ON THE EARTH BELOW — BLOOD AND FIRE AND CLOUDS OF SMOKE. (20) THE SUN WILL BECOME DARK, AND THE MOON WILL TURN BLOOD RED BEFORE THAT GREAT AND GLORIOUS DAY OF THE LORD ARRIVES. (21) BUT EVERYONE WHO CALLS ON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED.' [Joel 2:28-32]

- As to **WONDERS** in the **HEAVENS**, residents at Jerusalem had experienced darkness at mid-day. Matthew 27:45. As to **SIGNS ON THE EARTH**, the apostles were performing miracles that very day. Vs. 43.
- The **SUN** and **MOON** probably stand for the government. This was a well-understood figure of speech seen in the story of Joseph. Genesis 37:9-10.
- Joel describes a time when **EVERYONE WHO CALLS ON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED**. Peter now reveals how they are to **call on the name of the Lord**.
- **Being saved** were strange, new words for the Jewish ear.

## JOEL IS TALKING ABOUT US NOW

(Acts 2:22) "People of Israel, listen! God publicly endorsed Jesus the Nazarene by doing powerful miracles, wonders, and signs through Him, as you well know.

- Jesus fulfilled the **Nazarene** (Branch) prophecies of Scripture.
- Not only was he raised in the right village, **God** had enabled him to do **signs and wonders** (vs. 19) in a very public manner. And it was common knowledge.

(Acts 2:23) But God knew what would happen, and His prearranged plan was carried out when Jesus was betrayed. With the help of lawless Gentiles, you nailed Him to a cross and killed Him.

- **God** allowed Jesus to be handed over to the people of Israel by Judas. They, in turn, handed him over to the Romans (**lawless men**) to be put to death. It was part of a **plan**.

(Acts 2:24) But God released Him from the horrors of death and raised Him back to life, for death could not keep Him in its grip.

- It was **God** who **raised** up Jesus, in direct repudiation of how He had been treated by both Israel and the Romans.
- Permanent **death** for Jesus was impossible.

## KING DAVID SPOKE OF JESUS

(Acts 2:25) King David said this about Him:

'I SEE THAT THE LORD IS ALWAYS WITH ME. I WILL NOT BE SHAKEN, FOR HE IS RIGHT BESIDE ME. (26) NO WONDER MY HEART IS GLAD, AND MY TONGUE SHOUTS HIS PRAISES! MY BODY RESTS IN HOPE. (27) FOR YOU WILL NOT LEAVE MY SOUL AMONG THE DEAD OR ALLOW YOUR HOLY ONE TO ROT IN THE GRAVE. (28) YOU HAVE SHOWN ME THE WAY OF LIFE, AND YOU WILL FILL ME WITH THE JOY OF YOUR PRESENCE.' [PSALM 16:8-11]

- King **David** lived several hundred years before the Prophet Joel. He foresaw these events. What he said couldn't have

applied to himself. He was speaking of this coming event in Peter's time.

- Someone would be buried, but not left there.
- Lazarus was decaying on the fourth day. John 11:39. Jesus was raised on the third day.
- In David's presentation, there is **LIFE** and **JOY** following the burial.

(Acts 2:29) "Dear brothers, think about this! You can be sure that the patriarch David wasn't referring to himself, for he died and was buried, and His tomb is still here among us.

- **David died**. His **tomb** is here in Jerusalem.
- The words must fit someone else.

(Acts 2:30) But he was a prophet, and he knew God had promised with an oath that one of David's own descendants would sit on His throne. [PSALM 132:11] (31) David was looking into the future and speaking of the Messiah's resurrection. He was saying that God would not leave Him among the dead or allow His body to rot in the grave.

- While **David** was a king and didn't hold the office of the **prophet**, yet in the Psalms he did prophesy. **David looked into the future** and saw the **resurrection of the Messiah**.

## WE ARE WITNESSES THAT JESUS FULFILLS THE PROMISE

(Acts 2:32) "God raised Jesus from the dead, and we are all witnesses of this.

- Peter refers to his 11 brethren as **witnesses** that God had **raised Jesus** from the grave.

(Acts 2:33) Now He is exalted to the place of highest honor in heaven, at God's right hand. And the Father, as He had promised, gave Him the Holy Spirit to pour out upon us, just as you see and hear today.