

ANTIOCH BIBLE CLASS

LESSON TOPIC

A PROMISE FULFILLED

SCRIPTURE TEXT: ACTS 2:1-13

MEMORY VERSE. ACTS 2:4. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

INTRODUCTION

The outpouring of the Holy Ghost, recorded, demonstrated, and explained in the second chapter of Acts, is such a momentous event. So much is centered in this world-changing, life-changing and truly historic occurrence. Yet, it seems that so little attention is paid to this divine impartation of God's Spirit in theological arenas and so little importance, significance and purpose is ascribed to this marvelous, essential and beginning work of the redeeming grace of God, purchased through the blood of calvary and guaranteed by the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Without calvary's blood there would be no propitiation for sins; without the resurrection there would be no guarantee of the efficacy of calvary's blood, and without the outpouring (baptism) of the Holy Ghost, there would be no application of this shed blood.

It is here, at this time and by this event, that the church, the kingdom of God was instituted among men. Here the redeeming grace, purchased through calvary's blood, now has a process and power by which it can be applied to the individual heart and life. Think of it like this: the fact of the sacrificial blood of Christ at calvary, as a true historic and love-drenched offering for sin – alone – would save no one. There must be some means of the transfusion of this blood into the human soul. Likewise the phenomenal resurrection of Jesus from the dead – alone – would not provide an eternal hope in the human soul. But because of their provisions we have the possibility of faith in the finished work of Christ and thereby the process of that redeeming work being applied in our individual lives.

This in no way minimizes the absolutely essential sacrifice at calvary or the necessity of the resurrection. What it does say is that these indispensable works of calvary and the resurrection, apart from some specific individual application and reproduction in the human experience, cannot accomplish their divine purpose. If they could, then every human being on earth would automatically be saved, with no conditions of any kind.

The place we must come to in our faith, therefore, is that another event, equally as essential as calvary and the resurrection, must occur within our heart and life. That event is the baptism of the Holy Ghost. To put it another way, there must be a work of redemption in the individual life. Otherwise we would be arguing that there was no need of the Holy Spirit in our lives. That is the

significance of the infilling of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost. Every person in the upper room in Jerusalem were witnesses of and believers in the crucifixion of Christ at calvary and the resurrection. But they had a need of a transforming, empowering work of God in each of their own individual lives. That need was the infilling of the Holy Ghost, otherwise they have no power for inward sanctification and grace. In such case the never-before-occurrence of the out pouring of the Holy Ghost on this wise is no more than a mere religious occurrence. We must answer the questions “if it was individually essential?” and if it is not, then why not?

DAILY SCRIPTURES AND COMMENTS.

MONDAY. ACTS 2:1. THE DAY OF PENTECOST.

SCRIPTURE

2:1. And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord, in one place.

COMMENTS.

Pentecost is Greek for fifty. It represented the feast of a “new meat offering” (Lev. 23:15-16). It was held each year “on the morrow after the seventh Sabbath” following the first fruits offering. All the men of Israel were commanded to go to Jerusalem on this occasion. Thus this verse describes for us that when the day of Pentecost was fully come, the disciples were assembled in one place in a spirit of unity and prayer. They had been tarrying for 10 days since the ascension of Christ. They were tarrying according to his command, until the Holy Ghost should come upon them.

TUESDAY. ACTS 2:2-3. A SOUND FROM HEAVEN.

SCRIPTURE.

V2. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. 3. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them.

COMMENTS.

Suddenly! It is important to get this setting. While they are all together, in one accord, just waiting as the Lord had commanded them to, suddenly something begins to happen. They were not holding church, no one was preaching, a worship team was not leading worship and there was no crescendo or build up of emotions as from praying. (And make no mistake about it, when the Holy Ghost came upon them, their emotions were dynamic and dramatic).

This was God’s work, God’s gift and was not the results of human mechinations or manufacture or any other human instrumentality. Pentecostals and non-pentecostals need to learn this basic fact: that it was God doing something and not men. Suddenly – there was a sound – from heaven. There are two

human dynamics that should not be associated with the baptism of the Holy Ghost. (1) That nothing happens when the Holy Ghost comes, and (2) that it is the product of human effort to make something happen. God commanded Israel to stand still and watch him perform their salvation at the Red Sea. That is a good analogy of God giving the Holy Spirit.

As to “cloven tongues”, this simply means “divided”. Divided upon each of them means that it was not an event separated from the individual, but was applicable to each person present. “Divided” also in the sense that it was not one tongue (language), but different languages of the people from everywhere present in Jerusalem for the feast of Pentecost. It sat upon each of them, that is, these tongues came to each person and “rested” or “stayed” upon them.

WEDNESDAY. ACTS. 2:4. THEY WERE ALL FILLED WITH THE HOLY GHOST.

SCRIPTURES.

V4. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

COMMENTS.

They were all filled with the Holy Ghost which Jesus had told them to tarry in Jerusalem for; which the four gospels had promised; that the O.T. prophets had foretold. This was a specific event and not some theological mysterious, unseen occurrence that resulted automatically by virtue of a nominal “profession of faith in Christ”. They were already believers in Christ. This was the day of the feast of Pentecost, when a new meat offering was to be offered unto the Lord, which was a type under the law of the lives of people being offered up to God as an offering unto him.

And they began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance. What a phenomenal and powerful event! What is happening to these disciples? Never before in all the history of God’s people was there anything remotely like this. What was its purpose? Here are “Galileans”, not the studied and learned rabbis, just ordinary people, who professed no special talent, certainly no knowledge of different languages, and yet they were all filled and were speaking in a language they did not know. They had not been worked up through the dynamics of worship and prayer; yet here they were, as emotionally charged and expressive as they possibly could be. They were not speaking these “tongues” by their own knowledge or initiative. They were under the power of the filling of the Holy Ghost. They were not in a spirit of superlative righteousness; they were humbled mightily by what was happening to and through them. I cannot imagine that there was a single one of them that was not totally overwhelmed, broken, thankful and full of praise to God. This was no “side shoe” being put on by “ignorant believers”. It was front and center, the very origin of the dispensation, the work, the glory of the Holy Spirit. The church was now, by this event, through this power, born, alive and ready to go forward with its great work.

THURSDAY. ACTS 2:5-11. A GUARANTEED CONGREGATION.

SCRIPTURE.

V5. And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven. 6. Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language. 7. And they were all amazed and marveled, saying one to another, behold are not all these which speak Galileans? 8. And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born? 9. Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judea, and Cappodocia, in Pontus, and Asia, 10. Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and Strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes. 11. Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God.

COMMENTS.

God had given the law, which contained the directive concerning the feast of Pentecost, many centuries before. Year after year, Jews from wherever they lived made the trip back to Jerusalem for this grand day. From God's perspective he was laying the ground work for that day when he would fill people with the mighty baptism of the Holy Spirit. God had scheduled and orchestrated it all to come together on his own time table.

So there were dwelling at Jerusalem, Jews, out of every nation under heaven. They had come for the feast day but soon found out that the Lord had a banquet table spread, the likes of which they could never have imagined. When it was noised abroad, they came together to see and hear and were confounded and in doubt, not being able to comprehend it all. Some even thought that the disciples were drunk. The amazing thing to the multitude was that they heard these Galileans speaking in their own languages wherein they were born. How could this be? These people did not know any language except their own and yet they were fluently speaking the language of the various parts of the world from whence they came. A long list of locations is given and it can be seen that they cover the empire.

Soon this multitude of people would return to their own countries with a message, a story and many of them with an experience themselves that was simply amazing. More than that, they would be the means of the initial spread of the great work of the gospel message. No doubt Paul encountered many of them on his missionary journeys to many of these locations.

FRIDAY. ACTS 2:12-13. WHAT MEANETH THIS.

SCRIPTURE.

V12. And they were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another, what meaneth this? 13. Others mocking said, these men are full of new wine.

COMMENTS.

There was reason for amazement. The fact that they were in doubt, can only mean that they could not comprehend what they were witnessing. That would be understandable. The work of God through the gospel may always stir questions to begin with. It is good to be inquisitive.

Others, however, were mocking them, accusing them of being drunk on new wine. Man, with his own intellect and desires, is not capable of comprehending the wonder of God. It is a sign of its authenticity that they were dumbfounded at what they saw and heard. Always there are those who will mock and deride the work of God. The things of God are foolishness to the eyes of this world.

The question in verse 12 is important: what meaneth this? We should always have a seeking heart and spirit about the things of God and never be a mocker.

SUMMARY

For centuries God had promised to put his Spirit in the hearts of his people. From the prophets to John the Baptist, to the ministry of Christ, the promise of the baptism of the Holy Ghost was very real and anticipated. On the day of Pentecost it was fulfilled. Every major event in the life of Christ from his birth, ministry, crucifixion and the resurrection, there was a vast array of views, response and results; some good and some bad. Such was also the case with the baptism of the Holy Ghost. One inescapable fact must be forever kept in mind about it. It is the Lord's work and it is marvelous, amazing, full of wonder, praise and glory to God. Be careful how you handle it.

On this day the church was born; a new heaven and earth (spiritually) was created, and a new nation was formed in a day. God has suddenly filled his temple, the hearts and lives of his people and they are the temples of the Holy Ghost. With all of the debates, arguments and conclusions associated with this remarkable event, the undeniable reality is that the fulfillment of the promise of the Holy Spirit was identified then and for all time by "speaking in other tongues as the Spirit gives the utterance.

First, God dwelt in the eternities where no man could see or approach unto. Then he condescended to earth and dwelt in human form, to bring salvation to the world. Then he filled the hearts and lives of 120 disciples to make them the very first of the human family indwelt by God in this manner.

A multitude has heard and witnessed this great event, so that when they return to their homes, just the telling of this grand experience will become the nucleus of the greatest work and experience the world has ever known. God will see to that.

QUESTIONS

1. Discuss the providential timing of God in bringing to pass this great day and also having a congregation present to hear it.
2. What meaneth this?

