

¹ When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place.

When the day of Pentecost- Pentecost was already a significant day to the Jews at this time. A festival called Shavuot or Feast of Weeks commemorates the “fiftieth” day after the second day of Passover. This corresponded to the wheat harvest in Israel. It is also believed to commemorate the giving of the Law on Mount Sinai. God gave the 10 commandments as a guide for life, just as Jesus would send the Holy Spirit as the comforter and paraclete (helper/one who comes up alongside). This is far from the only time that Jesus fulfills and shows the ultimate meaning of a Jewish festival. For example, Jesus serves as the perfect, spotless, ultimate Passover lamb when He dies upon the cross

Arrived- The Greek word has the sense of being “filled up.” Before Pentecost, Jews would do something called the “counting of omer,” where they would verbally count down the days until Pentecost. This was meant to increase anticipation for the giving of God’s Law. In this case, the anticipation was toward the giving of the Holy Spirit.

They- Interpretations vary on whether “they” refers to the twelve or the one-hundred and twenty. Later verses seem to indicate that this was a mass outpouring of the Holy Spirit. However, others think this could have been a smaller gathering.

Were all together- Early believers were keeping up the practice of fellowship by praying, worshipping, and being encouraged by one another. This echoes the practices of the Church for centuries afterward. Pentecost can rightfully be called the Church’s birthday and the first time that they were called Christians.

In one place- We are not sure of the setting for Pentecost. It could have been the Upper Room where the 120 were meeting, but then we are left with the question of how others could hear the message. The Temple courts has been suggested as a likely location for that part of the events.

² And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting.

And suddenly- Although they had been told to expect the Holy Spirit, they were not sure when or how the Spirit would come. Although this encounter was awe-inspiring, the Spirit works today in a variety of ways. The Spirit is not always sudden or dramatic and it is not rare.

There came from heaven- In the Bible, heaven is talked about as the dwelling place of God, although God is omnipresent. At Jesus’ baptism, the Spirit descended like a dove and now, it descends upon believers. It would have been comforting to know that these events were from

God and not a form of Satanic warfare. Often, demons try to imitate God's power, but with God's help, we can test the spirits to see if they are from Him.

A sound like a mighty rushing wind- In the Scriptures, God manifests His power through elements of nature like fire, clouds, and wind. However, these are not the normal versions of these things. When God appeared to Moses, the fire did not consume the bush. Here, they do not outright say that it was wind, but something "like" the sound of a mighty rushing wind. Ultimately, our descriptions of divine activity fall short, but God is trying to relate to us, that we may know Him.

It filled the entire house where they were sitting- In the Old Testament, it talks about how the glory of God filled the temple. This was a sign of God's presence and blessing. On Pentecost, the house could have been the Upper Room or "God's house" i.e. the temple. Remember, we need to account for thousands of people hearing or seeing these events and coming to faith.

³ And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them.

And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them- If you have ever watched a fire, you'll know that the flames move and dance, almost like a tongue when speaking. However, this is not metaphorical, this is divine activity. God was giving each one of them the power to carry out the mission. Here, the emphasis is on the believer's ability to speak the Gospel. After all, faith comes from hearing. How can others believe in Him of whom they have never heard? And just like at other times, fire indicates God's power and presence with them. They would speak in languages they had never learned and be given words that they would have never thought of

And rested on each one of them- In artwork, the tongues of flame are often depicted as resting on the disciple's heads or foreheads. Another theory is that the tongues of flame appeared near where their regular tongues were, emphasizing how they were to use this newfound gift

⁴ And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.

And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit- Paul would later write that our body is a temple of the Holy Spirit. Just as God filled the ancient temple, now the Spirit comes to fill people's hearts. Before, worshipping God was believed to be restricted to the temple only, but Jesus told the woman at the well that those who worship God do so in spirit and in truth. True worship has to do with the Spirit's activity. And no, that doesn't mean you can skip church.

And began to speak in other tongues- Jewish Pentecost was a pilgrimage festival, so there would have been many other languages being spoken in Jerusalem. Having these people understand was a remarkable feat because, although many geniuses exist, no one can pick up an entire language instantly. As Christians, we cannot believe in accidents or coincidences. God planned that the 3,000 would be there to hear the Gospel message.

As the Spirit gave them utterance- Emphasizes that this was a miraculous occurrence and not something that could be credited to the apostles. Today, the Holy Spirit still gives us utterance when we ask God for the words to say in evangelism, comforting, and other forms of loving our neighbor.

5 Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven.

Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem- The temple in Jerusalem was the central location for worship for Jews, so Jews would come from many miles away to celebrate certain feasts. Many Jews had been uprooted by the two exiles/captivities in the 8th and 6th centuries BC, but after that, they often willingly chose to settle in places like Egypt, Crete, and Rome. Later, there would be even more places with pockets of Judaism resulting from persecutions/relocations.

Jews, devout men- Just like Christians, there were observant Jews and non-observant Jews. By virtue of their presence for the feast, we can pretty safely assume that the vast majority were observant Jews who knew the Scriptures. These Jews were natural candidates to come to faith upon hearing that the promised Messiah had come. For many, that's exactly what happened.

From every nation under heaven- Emphasizes that salvation in Christ is for all people. God made the heavens and the earth, as well as all the people under heaven. As we continue in Acts, we will see how true this statement is.