



1. Read Leviticus 23:5, 10, 15-17. Why do you think God used the first three annual feasts to prophesy the death and resurrection of Jesus, and the creation of the church? How does this affect your own opinion about the church?
2. What does the noise from heaven signify in verse two? (See Acts 1:4, 5, 8a and John 3:8.) Some would say this signaled that those gathered there were now “saved”. What do you think is happening in this verse?
3. Look at verse 3. What do the “tongues like fire” indicate has happened to the believers? Look up 1 Corinthians 12:12-14. What does it mean in verse 13 that “by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body...”?
4. Why don’t we have visible signs of our salvation today? If we have doubts about our salvation, how should we deal with them? (See also: 2 Corinthians 5:7 and 13:5; 1 John 5:10-13).
5. In verse 4 the believers were “filled” with the Holy Spirit. What does it mean to be “filled”? How can a believer get out from under the control of the Holy Spirit? (See 1 Thess. 5:19; Ephesians 4:30). How can the believer once again be “filled”? (See 1 John 1:9). How have you seen the Holy Spirit work in your life when you were filled with Him?
6. In verses 5-8, what was the purpose of the believers speaking in different languages? What was the reaction of the members of the crowd - how did they feel, what did they say and do? How did the Holy Spirit first get your attention before you were saved?
7. Why do you think the various nationalities of the crowd members were listed out in verses 9-11? How do you think God can use you to reach another part of the world with the gospel?
8. Looking at verse 11, the believers were “speaking of the mighty deeds of God”. Can you think of some of God’s mighty deeds that may have been included in this list? (A Psalm? An answer to prayer? A blessing?) Has there been an occasion lately in which you were able to share about God working in your life with someone else?
9. What were the two different reactions from the crowd in verses 12 and 13? In verse 6, it seems the crowd came together and were all of the same opinion: “What’s going on?” What do you think caused a division of opinion by verse 13? When did your own opinion about Jesus Christ change?



## Introducing: The Church!

### Leader Notes for Acts 2:1-13

Chapter 2 begins with the birth of the church through the coming of the Holy Spirit to indwell the believers and to fill, or empower, them to do the work to which they were called. The birth of the church signals the beginning of a new dispensation, or way in which God works. In the Old Testament, the Spirit of God was *with* somebody temporarily to empower them for a task. Now, in chapter 2, the Holy Spirit permanently indwells the believer forever, and is able to continually enable a believer to love and serve Jesus. God is working in an entirely new way.

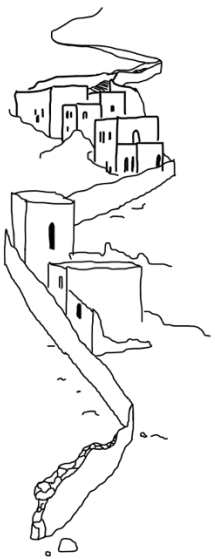
In verse one, we see that the birth of the church occurred according to God's timing, not man's. It was pictorially prophesied in Leviticus 23 where the Feast of Passover (v. 5) pictures the death of the Lord Jesus Christ, who died on Passover Day. Feast of First Fruits (v. 10) was celebrated on the day following the Sabbath after the Passover, or Sunday, and represents the resurrection of the Lord Jesus on the third day (Sunday). Exactly 50 days after the Feast of First Fruits came the Feast of Harvest, or Pentecost (23:15-17). This feast pictured the coming of the church by using two loaves to represent both Jews and Gentiles coming together as one body.

In verse two, those gathered heard the sudden coming of the Holy Spirit as a great sound, like a hurricane, not as a result of prayers or activity by men, but according to God's timetable. In John 3:8, Jesus described the Spirit's work as like the wind. He told the disciples in Acts 1:4, 5, & 8a to expect the Spirit's coming within days, and that they would receive power. The Spirit came with power to show that His power was now available to them. Remember, the 120 people gathered together in 1:15 are already saved (called "brethren") prior to chapter 2. What's new here is the coming of the Holy Spirit.

Verse three: The tongues "like fire" are simply a visual indication of what has just transpired. The Holy Spirit has taken up residence in the believers and placed them into this new entity called the church. We see this idea in 1 Corinthians 12:13, called the baptism of the Spirit. The word baptism refers to full immersion, burial, or placement into something. Upon salvation, the believer is indwelt by the Holy Spirit and, at the same time, is placed into the body of Christ, the church. The new believer now has union with Christ and with every other believer.

The tongues are described as "cloven" or divided. The word is a verb, not an adjective. It means that the whole is divided among the group. The tongues distributed themselves amongst the believers and rested on each one of the believers, indicating that every believer had received the Holy Spirit. There were no doubts about what had happened. God gave these first church members a visible sign that the Holy Spirit was within them, because this was a new thing, never seen before. This sign encouraged the believers and warned the unbelievers to listen to their message. We don't have visible signs of salvation today because we have God's written word and the testimony of many believers. We are instructed to "live by faith, not by sight" (2 Corinthians 5:7), and to test ourselves to see if we are in the faith (2 Corinthians 13:5). What is the test? We see that in 1 John 5:10-13: Do we have the Son of God? Does the Son of God have us?

(continued)



## Leader Notes for Acts 2:1-13, continued

Verse four: In verse three, we see the Holy Spirit indwelling the believers and placing them in the body of Christ. This only happens once in a believer's lifetime. Here in verse four, the Holy Spirit "fills," or controls, the believers so they can live for Jesus. As a believer yields to the Spirit's control, He can empower and guide you. However, if we cease to be yielded, He ceases to be in control. 1 Thess. 5:19 tells us, "Do not quench the Spirit" (suppression by disobedience or willful sin). Ephesians 4:30 says, "Do not grieve the Holy Spirit..." (insensitivity to His work, fleshly living, low standards). To be filled again involves repentance and forgiveness as described in 1 John 1:9. Because they were yielded, the Holy Spirit was able to empower them to speak languages which they did not otherwise know. Note they were speaking languages which were clearly understood by the specific people present.

Verse five: Throngs of Jews came from many nations to celebrate Pentecost in Jerusalem. The term "every nation under heaven" is an idiom which referred to the Jewish world, countries with significant populations of Jews or converts. Some estimate the city population swelled up to 1 million for the celebration. The term "devout men" refers to the fact that they were careful to be present at the feast so they would not offend God.

In verse six, the rushing sound is again mentioned. It was loud, impressive, and came out of the sky ("heaven"). It got the crowd's attention, and they gathered together where the believers were meeting. Apparently, they were familiar with this group of believers and had recognized that they were from the district of Galilee by the dialect of Aramaic with which they spoke. But now the believers were speaking in the foreigners' native languages! Galilee was not known for its levels of education and culture; therefore, it was very impressive to see them speaking in all of these foreign languages. Something amazing was happening here. But was this from God or the devil?

Verses nine and ten map out much of modern-day Middle East, North Africa, the Mediterranean islands and Italy. God's plan has always been to reach the entire world with the message of salvation and eternal life.

Verse 11: The question on everyone's mind is answered. This must be from God, because these people are speaking in our language about the mighty deeds of the God of Israel. The devil wouldn't be speaking about the mighty deeds of God. It is also significant that the bystanders state, "We hear them in our own tongues." These are specific languages used by specific people groups, not random languages or made-up dialects used in personal worship. The believers were following the promptings of the Holy Spirit to speak directly to people the Lord had targeted to hear the gospel!

Verse 12: Many onlookers were drawn to what the believers had to say and what was happening among them. They were open to what God might have to say to them, as indicated by the question, "What does this mean?" Verse 13 shows that others were not willing to listen. They eased their consciences by accusing the believers of being drunk.

Thus the Holy Spirit came and in-dwelt these believers, placed them into the church, and filled and empowered them to supernaturally witness to everyone around them about the mighty deeds of God. As always, the people were faced with a choice to either accept or reject the witness of the believers and the promptings of the Holy Spirit.