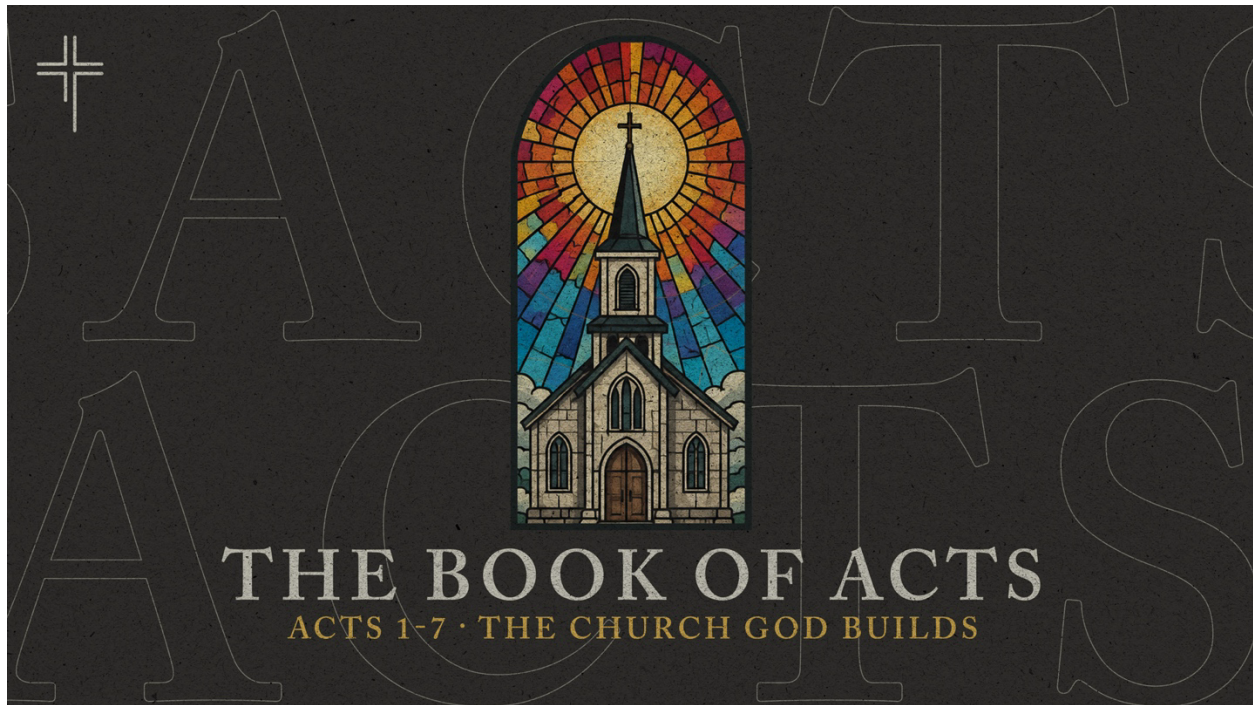




IMMANUEL BAPTIST CHURCH
SERIES: ACTS: THE CHURCH GOD BUILDS
SCRIPTURE: ACTS 2:1-13
DATE: SEPTEMBER 27, 2026

INTRODUCTION

In the biblical story, there are several key moments that stand out. These are moments when the biblical story takes a major shift and moves in a new direction. Some of these events include Creation, the Fall, God's call and promise to Abraham, the giving of the Law on Mount Sinai, God's promise to King David of an eternal King and kingdom to come, and the incarnation, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus.

Our passage today describes an event that should be considered on the same level of importance as these other events. The event we are looking at is the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

This event marks a major shift in how God dwells among His people. No longer will God dwell among His people in the temple; He will dwell within His people through the Holy Spirit. And no longer will God's people be left trying to obey Him through their own strength. God promised that He would give His people a new heart and put His Spirit within them, enabling them to walk in obedience to Him.

Text

Acts 2:1–13

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

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

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

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

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

⁶ And at this sound the multitude came together, and they were bewildered, because each one was hearing them speak in his own language.

⁷ And they were amazed and astonished, saying, “Are not all these who are speaking Galileans?”

⁸ And how is it that we hear, each of us in his own native language?

⁹ Parthians and Medes and Elamites and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia,

¹⁰ Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome,

¹¹ both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians—we hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God.”

¹² And all were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, “What does this mean?”

¹³ But others mocking said, “They are filled with new wine.”

Explanation

The event described above is commonly called Pentecost—the day when the Holy Spirit descended upon the disciples, just as Jesus had promised. The word *Pentecost* means “fifty,” and this event occurred fifty days after Jesus rose from the dead.

Up to this point in the book of Acts, Luke (our author) records that Jesus appeared to His disciples for forty days after His resurrection. While with them, He instructed them not to leave Jerusalem but to wait for the promised Holy Spirit. He reminded them that John the Baptist had baptized with water,

but that Jesus would baptize with the Holy Spirit. Acts 1:8 is a well-known verse where Jesus tells His disciples:

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

After these words, Jesus ascended into heaven before their eyes.

The disciples obeyed and decided to wait. They and many other believers gathered in one accord and devoted themselves to prayer. The only recorded decision they made was to replace Judas Iscariot, restoring the number of apostles to twelve—fulfilling Scripture from the Psalms.

BACKGROUND TO PENTECOST

Today, when Christians refer to Pentecost, they’re usually referring to the events of Acts 2. However, before that, Pentecost was a Jewish name for the Feast of Weeks (also called *Shavuot*). Leviticus 23 outlines several Jewish festivals, the first being Passover, which commemorates God’s deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt. That night included the death of Egypt’s firstborn and the sacrifice of a spotless lamb.

Interestingly, the Feast of Firstfruits followed Passover the next day, and then seven weeks after that came the Feast of Weeks, which expressed gratitude for the harvest. That’s fifty days after Passover—thus *Pentecost*. Additionally, the Israelites’ journey from Egypt to Mount Sinai (where they received the Law) took about fifty days (see Exodus 19:1; Numbers 1:1). At some point in Jewish history, Pentecost also came to commemorate God giving the Law at Sinai.

So in Acts 2, many Jews had traveled to Jerusalem for this festival. As the disciples waited, suddenly, *“there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house.”* This signaled to them that the Spirit was coming.

Then came another phenomenon: *“divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them.”* This is hard to visualize, but the text seems to describe a fiery form that divided and came to rest on each disciple. Then, they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in different tongues.

SYMBOLISM OF WIND AND FIRE

It's not immediately clear why wind and fire accompanied the coming of the Spirit, but there are scriptural connections. One noticeable connection is in Genesis 1:2 when the Spirit of God is described as hovering over the waters. The Hebrew word for *spirit* can also mean *wind*. Another connection comes as Jesus told Nicodemus: "*The wind blows where it wishes... so it is with everyone born of the Spirit*" (John 3:8). Wind is invisible but powerful—much like the Spirit.

The tongues of fire may symbolize the divine enabling of speech. The disciples could now speak in different languages—clearly not of their own ability. This aligns with John the Baptist's words: "*He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire*" (Luke 3:16), and possibly with Isaiah's vision, where a burning coal touched his lips and empowered him to speak for God (Isaiah 6:6–7).

NATIONS GATHERED AND MIRACULOUS TONGUES

Because of the festival, many devout Jews from all over the known world were in Jerusalem, from regions as diverse as North Africa, Rome, Arabia, and Asia Minor. These Jews spoke different languages. The disciples, now filled with the Spirit, began to speak in those languages. This wasn't the same kind of *tongues* described in 1 Corinthians 12–14, which appears to refer to an unknown spiritual language requiring interpretation. These Jews needed no interpreter; they understood the disciples in their own language. Here in Acts 2, the disciples spoke in known languages that their audience could understand. The crowd was amazed—not just at the content but also because they recognized the disciples as ordinary Galileans.

The result? Jews from many nations heard the mighty works of God in their own language. This also gave Peter a powerful platform to preach the gospel.

Discussion Questions:

- Jesus told the disciples to wait for the Holy Spirit. Why do you think this waiting period was important?
- What stands out to you about the disciples in this story?
- In what ways do you see God's sovereignty in this account?

- Why do you think the timing of the Spirit's coming mattered? How was it helpful for building the church?
- Is anything about Pentecost confusing or surprising to you?
- What are some differences between the speaking in tongues in Acts 2 and the type described by Paul in 1 Corinthians 14?
- Why do you think it is significant that people from many different nations heard the gospel in their own languages?
- Pentecost reverses or answers some of the themes associated with Babel in Genesis 11. What similarities and differences do you see between the two events?
- What does it look like practically for a church to depend upon the Holy Spirit while still faithfully preparing, teaching, planning, and working?

Conclusions or Application:

THE HOLY SPIRIT ENABLES POWERFUL WITNESS

As we reflect on Pentecost, the timing of these events stands out. Remember, Jesus died during Passover. That's no coincidence. Passover celebrates God freeing Israel from slavery through the blood of a blameless lamb. Jesus, our Passover Lamb, frees us from sin and Satan.

Again, it's no coincidence that God sent His Holy Spirit during the Feast of Weeks. As mentioned, Jews used this festival as a way to celebrate the giving of the Law on Mount Sinai. But at Pentecost, God gave the law to believers in a new kind of way. God does for believers what the Law could not ultimately do: He gives the law by writing His Law on our hearts through the Spirit.

God had promised this. Ezekiel 36:24–27 says: *“I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you... I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes.”* Similarly, Jeremiah 31:31–34 declares that God will establish a new covenant, writing His law on hearts, not just stone tablets.

Pentecost is a major turning point in salvation history. It marks the indwelling of the Holy Spirit—not just for a few, but for all believers. Through the Spirit, we are empowered to obey God's will. Before, we were slaves to sin. Now, through the Spirit, we are free.

As Paul explains in Romans 8:1–4:

“There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus... For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do... in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk... according to the Spirit.”