

ADVENTURING WITH GOD: Following in the Apostles' Footsteps

Birthing the Church

Acts 2:1–13, 37–47



LET'S BEGIN HERE

Acts 2 marks the successful delivery of more than three thousand “baby” Christians! It was the miraculous, Spirit-fueled birth of the church. What an adventure! A large gathering of people witnessed the incredible, supernatural power of the Holy Spirit and heard the life-changing gospel message preached by Peter and the other apostles. *Birthday*: Pentecost.



LET'S DIG DEEPER

1. The Sending of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:1–4)

A band of believers gathered in the Upper Room in Jerusalem, waiting for the power that Jesus promised would come (Acts 1:8). Suddenly, in the midst of their prayerful petitions, God delivered those people out of fear and apprehension and into a new kind of community.

They heard something: a noise like a violent rushing wind.

They saw something: tongues of fire.

They said something: filled with the Holy Spirit, they began to speak in languages and dialects otherwise foreign to them.



Quotable

*If we only have
teaching and
no fellowship,
we have a school,
not a church.*

— Charles R. Swindoll



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GETTING TO THE ROOT

The Significance of Pentecost

In Greek, the word *Pentecost* literally means “fiftieth.”¹ The Feast of Weeks (another name for Pentecost) was a festival that the Jewish people celebrated on the fiftieth day after Passover. Traditionally, this holiday was set aside as a time to express gratitude to God and bring to the temple the first fruits of the wheat harvest.

This harvest celebration was the perfect day for the Lord to anoint His believers with the Holy Spirit!

2. The Response of the Crowd

Though we don't know exactly what was spoken in the different languages by the apostles and other believers, we do know their words were filled with the gospel as the crowd of three thousand heard, were convicted, repented, and believed in Jesus that day. This harvest of souls marked the birth of the church.



LET'S LIVE IT

Acts 2 is the earliest reference to what happened in the church as it began. This nascent church, like a newborn baby, needed attention, care, feeding, and instruction. After being baptized, the first great task for these new members of the body of Christ was learning how to worship and fellowship together in a unified way. Acts 2:42 identifies four of the primary purposes of the early church, which also serve as a great way for you to evaluate a church today.

Teaching. Be sure you're in a church that's teaching the Word of God. If you are not, you are less likely to grow spiritually.



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Fellowship. The Greek word is *koinonia*, from which we get the word, “communion.” The believers in the first-century church shared their resources, came together, and blended their lives like teeth on gears.

Ordinances. Two rites—the Lord’s Table, or communion, and baptism—were a constant in the foundational church.

Prayer. Prayer preceded Pentecost. When the Lord moved in their midst, the believers responded, because they were already praying, submissively waiting, and anticipating His answer.

Like the members of the crowd in Acts 2, have you ever felt the conviction of the Holy Spirit piercing your heart? If so, what happened, and what was your response?

ENDNOTE

1. Walter Bauer and others, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature*, 3. ed., rev. and ed. Frederick William Danker (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 796.



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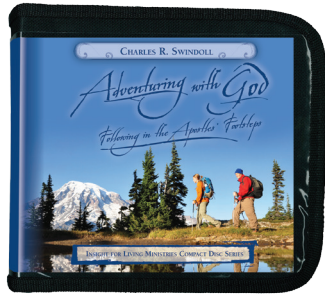
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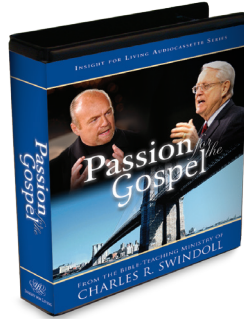
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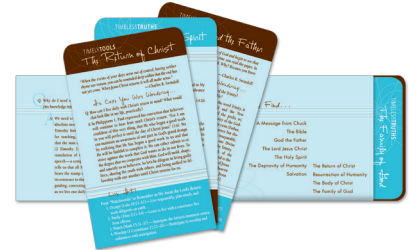
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