

May 7, 2023

“The Day of Pentecost”
Lesson 2

Acts 2:1-8, 14-24, 37-39

Intro

Though the Holy Spirit came upon Jesus “like a dove”, John the Baptist said Jesus would baptize His followers with “the Holy Spirit and fire.” This is a reference to the refining work the Holy Spirit will do in the lives of believers. This process began on the Day of Pentecost.

It’s important to remember the calendar significance of the Day of Pentecost. The most important day on the Jewish calendar was Passover, when they remembered deliverance from slavery in Egypt and God’s angel “passed over” Israelite households that had been marked with blood, as instructed. A few weeks later, God gave the people His law at Mt. Sinai. For centuries after that, the nation of Israel celebrated Passover, followed 50 days later with a celebration of God giving them the law. Jesus was crucified during the time of the Passover celebration. Pentecost occurs seven weeks after Passover, plus one day, equaling 50 days.

Read Acts 2:1-8

1. vs. 1: The disciples of Jesus here are about 120 (see vs. 12-15)
 - The fact that they are all together in one place indicates a shared priority
 - They had been instructed by Jesus to wait in Jerusalem—they are doing that
 - They are waiting expectantly for whatever is supposed to come next

2. vs. 2: A miraculous sign occurs
 - “suddenly”—it was not expected
 - “a sound”—it was a sound only, though it is loud and fills the whole house
 - “a wind”—the sound was of the wind. This is fitting for announcing the Holy Spirit
 - The word “pneuma” in Greek can mean wind, breath, or Spirit

3. vs. 3: A second sign follows
 - “seemed”—indicates the sight was visually there but not physically present
 - “tongues of fire”—this image represents the Holy Spirit sent from Jesus
 - “rested on each of them”—the image was on them, but again, not physically there

4. vs. 4: The two signs are followed by an act of empowerment
 - They are filled with the Holy Spirit, and speak in other languages than their own
 - This action is the fulfillment of God’s promise to pour out His Spirit on His people
 - See Is. 44:3-5, Is. 32:15, Ezek. 36:37, Ez. 37:14, and Joel 2:28

5. vs. 5-6: Jews from many nations came to Jerusalem each year to celebrate the Passover
 - This means many different language speakers were present in the city
 - The loud sound of the “wind” (vs. 2) was heard by those outside of the apostles’ house
 - They come together to the place and hear the disciples speaking
 - They hear the words *in their own language* and are bewildered / confused

6. vs. 7-8: The people hearing the disciples are amazed, because of who the speakers are
They recognize them as Galileans, likely because of their accent, but also their dress
There are at least 12 provinces whose languages are spoken by the disciples
How could these unlearned Galileans be speaking so many languages?

Even in the presence of miracles like the ones just mentioned, there are doubters and unbelievers. Some who heard them said they were drunk. Here is Peter's message to them following that comment.

Read Act 2:14-24

7. vs. 14-15: Peter immediately rebukes the accusation of drunkenness
He says to them, "listen carefully"—this is important information
He also notes the time—it's 9 AM! This is not an hour that tends toward drunkenness
8. vs. 16: Peter moves from what this event *isn't* to what it *is*
The prophet Joel had written about this event happening centuries earlier
What the prophet had predicted is now coming to pass
It's not drunkenness, it's fulfillment of God's word
9. vs. 17-18: Peter quotes the prophecy from Joel 2:28-32
The phrase "In the last days" stands out
This refers to the final period of human history
God says He will "pour out" His Spirit on all people at that time
The last days have begun with Jesus' life, death, and resurrection
Another concept of note is the return of prophecy
It has been over 400 years since Israel had a prophet speak to them from God
Joel's words are about people speaking prophecy and having dreams from God
Peter is pointing to this outpouring of the Spirit on them as proof of this fulfillment
10. vs. 19-20: Peter here quotes from a variety of OT writers
Joel, Isaiah, and Ezekiel, as well as things Jesus said, are referred to here
These are further proofs that indicate the initiation of the last days
11. vs. 21: Peter finishes with the promise found in Joel 2:32
"Whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved."
This is the gospel message Jesus has called on them (and us) to pass on to the world
12. vs. 22: Peter brings up things about Jesus that they would know and be familiar with
He refers to Him as "Jesus of Nazareth"—they know who this is
He refers to the various miracles He did—they are all familiar with the stories of these
Peter connects Jesus' miracles to the power of God
Only God can accomplish these kinds of miracles

13. vs. 23: Peter then connects Jesus to the people he is talking to

“This man was handed over *to you*”

They know who He is, because they had connection with Him

“You, with the help of wicked men, put him to death”

Peter doesn't mince words here

The people there participated and/or approved of Jesus' crucifixion

Peter says this happened with “God's deliberate plan and foreknowledge”

14. vs. 24: Peter finishes the gospel message with the resurrection

“God raised Him from the dead”

“It was impossible for death to keep its hold on him”

Many there must have heard stories of Jesus' appearances post-crucifixion

Read Acts 2:37-39

15. vs. 37: Peter's message hits home; the people are “cut to the heart”

This means they accept and believe Peter's words as the truth

This draws the response God wants from all who don't know Him yet:

“Brothers, what shall we do?”

16. vs. 38: Peter gives them the three things they need to do

1) Repent: turning away from sin and toward God

2) Be baptized in the name of Jesus for the forgiveness of your sins

Baptism is God's chosen time when regeneration and renewal happen

(See Titus 3:5 and 1 Peter 3:21)

It is not a work of man, but a work of God

3) “And you will receive the Holy Spirit”

The Spirit is given to all who come to salvation in Christ

This gift is Christ's power in us to put off the works of the flesh

17. vs. 39: Peter then tells them of the greater value and promise coming from this Godly transaction

“The promise is for you and your children *and for all who are far off*”

This forgiveness and reconciliation is for all of Israel

But it's also for all the world, all the Gentiles as well

Jewish believers who left Jerusalem in the following decades took the gospel along

Application: What happened in Acts 2 still happens today. When the gospel is faithfully preached, the Holy Spirit is active in helping hearers to respond to it. Whenever the gospel is proclaimed, God's Spirit is working.

Prayer: Father God, we pray for the Holy Spirit to be working at full power in our lives, and that we might proclaim the gospel faithfully so those who hear might be saved. In Jesus' name, Amen.