

Acts Chapter 2

Welcome back to our Monday Night Bible Study. It seems like it has only been a few weeks since we completed our last study, and here we are again in 2026.

I have studied and read the Book of Acts for many years – it was my Dad’s favorite Book to preach and teach, and it is among my very favorites too. It is a Trinitarian Book, as we know from Acts 2:33 (CSB): “Therefore, since he has been exalted to the right hand of God and has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit, he has poured out what you both see and hear.”

And it is from the love and wisdom of the Godhead and the baptism and fire of the Spirit that we will grow through this amazing Book together. It is a Book focused on the works of the Spirit in the lives of His Church. It is a book of miracles and triumph; it is also a Book of trials and persecution.

Acts Chapter 2, which we will discuss tonight, is easily the most iconic chapter of the entire Book: it is so rich in Spirit, purpose, and theology that entire books have been written just to uncover its vast understandings and importance for the Church. To attempt to cover it in

one night is to give you the most high-level understanding – please devote much time after our teaching this evening to this chapter: you will be amazed at what the Holy Spirit will further teach you. For the purposes of grasping this chapter well, we will divide it tonight into five sections.

So, let's pray and dive right in!

Advent of the Spirit

Acts 2:1-13

Pentecost

2 When the day of Pentecost had arrived, they were all together in one place.² Suddenly a sound like that of a violent rushing wind came from heaven, and it filled the whole house where they were staying. ³ They saw tongues like flames of fire that separated and rested on each one of them. ⁴ Then they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in different tongues,^[a] as the Spirit enabled them.

⁵ Now there were Jews staying in Jerusalem, devout people from every nation under heaven. ⁶ When this sound occurred, a crowd came together and was confused because each one heard them speaking in his own language. ⁷ They were astounded and amazed, saying,^[b] “Look, aren't all these who are speaking Galileans? ⁸ How is it that each of us can hear

them in our own native language? ⁹ Parthians, Medes, Elamites; those who live in Mesopotamia, in Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia,¹⁰ Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome (both Jews and converts), ¹¹ Cretans and Arabs—we hear them declaring the magnificent acts of God in our own tongues.” ¹² They were all astounded and perplexed, saying to one another, “What does this mean?” ¹³ But some sneered and said, “They’re drunk on new wine.”

Okay, we see here in our first passage several amazing and miraculous events. Pentecost, which was also called the Festival of Weeks, and which celebrated the giving of the Law on Mount Sinai, took place fifty days following Passover and the Festival of Unleavened Bread. Fifty days previously, Jesus had said, “This is my body” and “this is my blood” to His closest friends. Fifty days previously, Jesus had sweat drops of blood as He agonized in prayer before His Father. Fifty days previously, Jesus had been betrayed by one who walked with him for years. And fifty days previously, the Apostles had fled from Jesus’s presence.

Since that time, however, Jesus had died for the sin of all humankind, He had risen from the grave, He had appeared before five hundred people, and He had ascended to Heaven – but not before giving His

friends instructions to wait in Jerusalem for the baptism of the Holy Spirit for the purpose of being His witnesses to the end of the earth.

And they did exactly as He said. Approximately 120 believers of Jesus waited together, praying in the Upper Room where they stayed, although some scholars believe they were in the Temple by the time the Holy Spirit fell on them. In any case, these faithful men and women may not have understood everything Jesus had told them, but they prayed – expectantly – together as one people of God.

We will discuss tonight different belief systems regarding this section of Scripture, but before we do, please do not overlook the significance of the event itself. Jesus had promised during His ministry on Earth that He and the Father would pour out the Holy Spirit on His People, and this happened here in huge and dramatic fashion. The Holy Spirit arrived in power and in fire!

The word “Advent” is defined by the Cambridge Dictionary as “the fact of an event happening, an invention of being made, or a person arriving.” Within the Church, we generally think of Advent as a season in which we celebrate the birth of Christ. Here, we should note that the Holy Spirit, like Christ, has always been (the Spirit of God hovered over the surface of the waters even on the initial day of Creation) but the special *age* of the Holy Spirit for the purpose of empowering the Church occurred just as Christ promised – with *power*.

Several manifestations of the Holy Spirit's arrival on the 120 believers include two which seem unique to this one experience in the *New Testament*: 1) the sound like that of a violent wind; 2) the flames of fire that appeared first collectively, and then separately above each of them. However, we *previously* saw in Exodus 19:18 a similar event – it is the same God, after all – when the Israelites stood at the foot of the mountain: “Mount Sinai was completely enveloped in smoke because the LORD came down on it in fire. Its smoke went up like the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mountain shook violently.”

- Wind is a symbol of God's divine manifestations in the Old Testament, as we know from Job (38:1, 40:6); Exodus (14:21); and Ezekiel (37:9-10, 37:14). Jesus also referred to the wind of the Spirit in John 3:8.
- Fire, too, is a divine manifestation of God – both literally and figuratively – in the Old Testament. We know of the burning bush (Exodus 3:2), the fire on Mount Sinai that I have already mentioned (Exodus 18:19), the charring of the ropes which held Samson (Judges 15:14), and the fire which consumed Elijah's sacrifice, and the stones and soil around it too (1 Kings 18:38).

Here at Pentecost, this Holy Spirit – God – poured out upon and within the believers. They began to speak in other tongues as they were enabled by the Spirit! As Horton notes, this fiery speech is indicative of the

prophetic nature and witness that the Spirit offered, and still offers, regarding Jesus Christ!

As much as I do not want to draw your attention away from this miraculous event, there are a couple of theological conundrums for you to consider in this passage. These differences of understanding have resulted in different denominations and schools of thought, so let's take a quick glance at what causes such variances of belief.

First, there are different beliefs regarding the baptism of the Holy Spirit and what that term even means.

- Some scholars believe that the terms “baptism” and “filling” of the Spirit are synonymous; that is, this is an event that happens at conversion and equips the Christian for ministry.
- Other Christian scholars believe the terms “baptism” and “filling” to be separate terms. The “baptism” would be sudden events such as those found here in Acts 2:4 and in Acts 11:15-16 in which the Holy Spirit overwhelms the believer and inaugurates the Spirit's ministry within a person.
 - Charles Finney, a well-known and respected Presbyterian (and later Congregationalist) revivalist in the 1800's said this about his Spirit-baptism: “But as I turned and was about to take a seat by the fire, I received a mighty baptism of the Holy Ghost. Without any expectation of it, without having

the thought in my mind that there was such a thing for me, without any recollection that I had ever heard the thing mentioned by any person in the world, the Holy Spirit descended upon me in a manner that seemed to go through me, body and soul...It seemed like the very breath of God.”

- Finney’s baptism in the Spirit seems to be in line with that of most Pentecostals today; that is, it is a separate event in which the Holy Spirit overwhelms and fills the Christian with His presence. All Christians have the Holy Spirit within them, but this Spirit-baptism constitutes an extraordinary event – or events – in which the Christian is filled and re-filled in miraculous ways.
- Again, to many non-Pentecostal believers, this filling happens at conversion, but a constant filling remains possible for the believer to continue in a walk of sanctification.

A second belief disparity within the Christian community has to do with the use (or uses) of tongues. Within the Scriptures, there seem to be multiple distinct uses of tongues that the Spirit provides: 1) Here in Acts 2 and then later in Acts 10 and Acts 19, the gift of tongues is used as evidence of being filled with the Holy Spirit; 2) Here in Acts 2, the gift of tongues was used to reach multiple people from various regions in their own languages; 3) In 1 Corinthians 12:10, Paul says that the gift of tongues edifies the Church; 4) In 1 Corinthians 14:22, the gift of tongues

is a sign to unbelievers; 5) In 1 Corinthians 14:2, 4, and 18, the gift of tongues offers praise to God; 6) In 1 Corinthians 14:5, there seems to be a correlation to prophesy and tongues when an interpretation is offered. 7) Finally, some scholars believe the use of tongues indicates Apostolic authority. This is especially so among those scholars who believe the gift of tongues went away at the end of the New Testament Canon (known as Cessationists). I personally believe that cessationism is an incorrect teaching that is not consistent with the Scriptures.

While all these considerations are vital to our theological understanding, please do not miss the importance of what happened at Pentecost: The Spirit of God Himself filled His disciples with power, presence, and purpose and they, in turn, shared the “magnificent acts of God” in the languages of all the people.

And people being people, some of the listeners there casually dismissed the very works of God, supposing the disciples to be drunk, but others asked a question that we should *all* ask of the Holy Spirit, “What does this mean?” And Peter, being raised by Christ as a leader of the Apostles, *but now Spirit-empowered*, answered this question well:

Evidence of the Spirit

Acts 2:14-21

Peter’s Sermon

¹⁴ Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice, and proclaimed to them, “Fellow Jews and all you residents of Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and pay attention to my words. ¹⁵ For these people are not drunk, as you suppose, since it’s only nine in the morning.^[c] ¹⁶ On the contrary, this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel:

**¹⁷ And it will be in the last days, says God,
that I will pour out my Spirit on all people;
then your sons and your daughters will prophesy,
your young men will see visions,
and your old men will dream dreams.**

**¹⁸ I will even pour out my Spirit
on my servants in those days, both men and women
and they will prophesy.**

**¹⁹ I will display wonders in the heaven above
and signs on the earth below:
blood and fire and a cloud of smoke.**

**²⁰ The sun will be turned to darkness
and the moon to blood
before the great and glorious day of the Lord comes.**

**²¹ Then everyone who calls
on the name of the Lord will be saved.^[d]**

Peter, under the direct inspiration of the Holy Spirit, expounded upon Joel 2:28-32, quoting the passage but noting this central additional truth,

“And it will be in the last days...” This entire passage is astounding to me for several reasons: 1) The Holy Spirit was demonstrated in evidence with the tongues being understood by each person there – this was a truly miraculous and powerful event! 2) The Holy Spirit’s works were being manifested at that very time: in Christ there were and are no demographics of people that cannot be overcome and filled with the Spirit (as we also know from Galatians 3:28-29). 3) Peter immediately recognized that the last days – the Church Age itself – had begun in that moment and that the fullness of the last days would take place, with signs accompanying them, later at the Day of the Lord. 4) Peter then spoke the truth of John 14:6: that *everyone* who sincerely calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. There is no distinctive of person and no work to be done – this salvation is based on and in Christ.

What did Peter say that would initially happen because of the Spirit?

- First, that sons and daughters and servants will prophesy.
- Second, that young men will see visions.
- Third, that old men will dream.

Further acts of the Spirit will occur during the Day of the Lord – or the last days of the Tribulation including signs in the Heavens and the Earth. But in that moment, as we will see in the remainder of Peter’s message, Christ remains the focus.

Message of the Spirit

Acts 2:22-36

²² “Fellow Israelites, listen to these words: This Jesus of Nazareth was a man attested to you by God with miracles, wonders, and signs that God did among you through him, just as you yourselves know. ²³ Though he was delivered up according to God’s determined plan and foreknowledge, you used^[e] lawless people to nail him to a cross and kill him. ²⁴ God raised him up, ending the pains of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by death. ²⁵ For David says of him:

**I saw the Lord ever before me;
because he is at my right hand,
I will not be shaken.**

**²⁶ Therefore my heart is glad
and my tongue rejoices.**

Moreover, my flesh will rest in hope,

**²⁷ because you will not abandon me in Hades
or allow your holy one to see decay.**

**²⁸ You have revealed the paths of life to me;
you will fill me with gladness
in your presence.^[f]**

²⁹ “Brothers and sisters, I can confidently speak to you about the patriarch David: He is both dead and buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. ³⁰ Since he was a prophet, he knew that God had sworn an oath to him to seat one of his descendants^[g] on his throne. ³¹ Seeing what was to come, he spoke concerning the resurrection of the Messiah: **He^[h] was not abandoned in Hades, and his flesh did not experience decay.**^[i]

³² “God has raised this Jesus; we are all witnesses of this. ³³ Therefore, since he has been exalted to the right hand of God and has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit, he has poured out what you both see and hear. ³⁴ For it was not David who ascended into the heavens, but he himself says:

The Lord declared to my Lord,

‘Sit at my right hand

³⁵ until I make your enemies your footstool.’^[i]

³⁶ “Therefore let all the house of Israel know with certainty that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah.”

Peter again references the Old Testament in his arguments to the Jews here. The term “systematic theology” was likely unknown as this time, but that is exactly what Peter, led by the Holy Spirit, gave the people – a systematic understanding that everything that has happened was the plan of God. He began this teaching by reminding them that they had seen

Jesus, and that God had proven Jesus's worthiness and Personhood by the evidence of the miracles, wonders, and signs exhibited during Jesus's earthly ministry. John 20:30-31 also notes the "signs" of Jesus and for the same purpose: "...that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name."

Note here, however, that although Jesus's crucifixion was God's sovereign plan for His Son, Peter did not give the people an "out," *per se*, but rather laid the blame directly on them and the "lawless" people they used – the Romans – in their disobedience and in their failure to recognize the Savior for He who was (and still is of course – the very Messiah of God). Paul said it clearly to the Corinthian Church (1 Corinthians 2:2): "I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified."

Peter quotes David who was led by the Spirit to write about the then-future Messiah in Psalm 16:8-11. Peter identified David as a prophet who foretold of the Messiah and who subsequently reminded us that Jesus would be born in the lineage of David's family. This was a fulfillment of the Scriptures that these Jews would have known quite well. Don't miss this: the Word of God is sure and trustworthy and the Spirit inspired Peter to offer convincing arguments *based on the Scriptures!*

Peter reminds the listeners that Jesus did not experience decay – He was, instead, raised by God from the dead and he and his fellow apostles were all witnesses of this. Then he again explains what the audience of that day was experiencing in their very presence: Jesus is exalted at the right hand of God, and He is pouring out the Holy Spirit upon His Church.

And what did the Spirit do when He fell on His Church? He pointed right back to the resurrected Christ. All life points to this moment. There *is* no life outside this moment.

Lee Strobel, now a pastor and well-known author, was once an atheist who attempted to disprove Jesus. Instead, he found eyewitness evidence, documentary evidence, archaeological evidence, and profile evidence, among much other evidence, that *all* point to Jesus Christ as both Savior and Lord. Similarly, Josh McDowell wrote the book, *Evidence that Demands a Verdict*, an almost 800-page tome which extols the *truth* of Jesus Christ. Norman Geisler says it like this: “The truth of Christianity is based on the bodily resurrection of Christ.”

Then Peter doubled down, if you will, regarding the fact that *these* people were among those who crucified Jesus, and that with certainty they had crucified the One designated by the Father as both Lord and

Messiah. And they heard him well – as we will see in the following verses:

Conviction of the Spirit

Acts 2:37-41

Call to Repentance

³⁷ When they heard this, they were pierced to the heart and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Brothers, what should we do?”

³⁸ Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, each of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹ For the promise is for you and for your children, and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call.” ⁴⁰ With many other words he testified and strongly urged them, saying, “Be saved from this corrupt^[k] generation!” ⁴¹ So those who accepted his message were baptized, and that day about three thousand people were added to them.

Finally, the people were impressed upon by the Holy Spirit, and they responded in what I believe to be genuine fear and conviction, asking, “...Brothers, what should we do?” Then notice Peter’s response – as true for us as it was true for his audience of that day – Repent, believe in Christ, and be baptized. This baptism is *evidence* of belief and

conversion, identifying ourselves with the death, burial, and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Repentance, as we see in Acts, is a turn-around, a 180-degree opposite direction, from how we *were* living and viewing life. It is faith in the completed work of Christ and the power of His resurrection.

Accompanied by baptism, it is an outward confession of an inward change. Repentance accompanies the Spirit's work within us that allows us to change: *He* enables us to rightly repent and to live for Jesus Christ. It is within *His* power that we can be changed and that we continue to change. As Peter said, it is a *gift* of the Holy Spirit upon our salvation.

Conviction is also a major work of the Holy Spirit. It is not a bad thing – it is something the Holy Spirit does before we are saved and continues to do after we are saved. He convicts us of sin. He convicts us towards righteousness and sanctification; in other words, we grow because of His conviction. He convicts us of judgment to come for the purpose of avoiding such judgment – we can have complete victory in Jesus Christ because of His work, and complete victory in our Christian Walk because of the Spirit's work! We cannot do it on our own – it is *only* through the blood of Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit that we are able to do *anything* well for God.

Interestingly, we see in this passage that Peter offers many other words to this audience that are not recorded for us to review, but these words were obviously affective as they were anointed by the Holy Spirit. The results are astounding and miraculous – about three thousand were converted and baptized and added to the Church that day. Think about this! Peter, who fifty days prior, along with his fellow disciples, denied Christ in word or action, is now fully empowered by the Holy Spirit to preach one of the greatest messages in history. Here is Peter, the impulsive disciple, being used by God to preach Christ. How amazing is the Holy Spirit! How loving and compassionate and forgiving is our Great God!

And how dramatic are the results of the Spirit's work in the Church:

Church of the Spirit

Acts 2:42-47

A Generous and Growing Church

⁴² They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread, and to prayer.

⁴³ Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and signs were being performed through the apostles. ⁴⁴ Now all the believers were together and held all things in common. ⁴⁵ They sold their possessions

and property and distributed the proceeds to all, as any had need. ⁴⁶ Every day they devoted themselves to meeting together in the temple, and broke bread from house to house. They ate their food with joyful and sincere hearts, ⁴⁷ praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. Every day the Lord added to their number^[1] those who were being saved.

Now *this* is what a Spirit-filled and -empowered Church looks like. This description is the section I use to base our Groups Ministry, because it is the very description of what the Church is to be about. One of the sources I consulted has an entire *chapter* based on these six short verses – I would contend that entire dissertations or books could derive from this passage as well. So, what does a Spirit-led Church look like? Well, let's see:

First, they devoted themselves to the Apostles' teaching. Did you know that teaching is one of the few Spiritual gifts found in all three major listing of Spiritual gifts in the Bible (Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12, Ephesians 4)? Under the power of the Holy Spirit, these early disciples were hearing the very words of God. They dedicated themselves to the Scriptures as taught by those who knew the Word best. Knowing and applying the Word of God is the backbone of all other ministry, of all service to the Lord Jesus Christ. *Nothing* we do should conflict with God's Word. If it does, then we are wrong in our endeavors.

Second, they devoted themselves to fellowship. We *all* need community. Our tendencies as human beings are to isolate ourselves when we are struggling, to separate ourselves from those who love us. That is the opposite of what we should do. Those in the Early Church were honest with each other, and they *determined in their hearts* that they would be together.

Third, they ate together. This is more than just eating meals in groups or homes – they also celebrated Communion together (which we know from Paul’s writings to the Corinthians). They *remembered* the Lord they knew and served, and they celebrated His body and His blood.

Lastly, they committed to praying together. Churches that pray together tend to love each other. Churches that pray together are made up of stronger families. Churches that pray together are empowered by the Spirit to be who He wants them to be.

Look at the results! They:

- Were filled with awe for God. They worshiped the One they served. It is a response to God for the works He does in our lives.
- Signs and wonders accompanied their prayers through the Apostles.
- They fulfilled needs within the Church – no one went without necessities.

- They went to the Temple daily – can you imagine beings so in love with God that you want to worship Him in the Church *every* day?!
- They were in each other's homes.
- They were thankful to God for all that He was giving them. It wasn't a casual blessing at dinner time – it was a sincere understanding that God supplies all our needs.
- They were sincere and joyful.
- They continued to grow.

You know, I enjoy Church Growth books and leadership principles and visiting churches that just seem to do things well for God as much as any pastor. But here is the truth – if we just do the four things the early church did under the blessing and power of the Holy Spirit, we will grow. Any church. Anywhere.

The key is that this Church was filled with Spirit-filled people doing Spirit-filled and Spirit-led and Spirit-inspired and Spirit-empowered things. When you read the Book of Acts, it is vital to understand that these ordinary people do extraordinary things for God *because they are Spirit-filled*. This Book may describe the Church, but it is about the work of the Spirit who leads us to Jesus Christ.

They are no different than us – *if* we ask for the Spirit’s filling and work in our lives, then we can do all things through Christ who strengthens us. God still does miracles. God still empowers His people. God’s Word is still true. God still answers our prayers. God still strengthens us: “And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead lives in you, then he who raised Christ from the dead will also bring your mortal bodies to life through his Spirit who lives in you” (Romans 8:11).

As you pray for the Spirit to fill you and re-fill you again and again, study Acts 2 and Romans 8. The Holy Spirit loves you and He desires to fill and move you in power and in purpose.

Pray.

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