



I. Introduction

Good morning! Today we will see how the disciples were dramatically baptized with the Holy Spirit in Acts 2. It is a powerful passage with an important message for us. But before we read it, let's remember that the Holy Spirit is at work throughout the Bible. Acts 2 records a very special outpouring of the Holy Spirit, but it is neither the beginning nor the end of the work of the Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is introduced in the very second verse of the Bible, in **Genesis 1:2**, where it says, **"Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters."** Genesis doesn't give us a lot of details about the work of the Spirit in creation, but it is clear that the Spirit is there from the beginning, active and powerful, creating and renewing, bringing order and form to the world.

Often, the Holy Spirit is in the background, working quietly and almost anonymously. But whether we notice Him or not, the Spirit is always active doing the work of God. The Holy Spirit is introduced on the first page of the Bible, and He is still active on the last page of the Bible, where we see the Holy Spirit leading an invitation for all to come into relationship with God. **Revelation 22:17**, **"The Spirit and the bride say, 'Come!' And let him who hears say, 'Come!' Whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life."**

The Holy Spirit is at work throughout the Bible and throughout history. His work begins at the time of creation and continues in the church today. The Spirit often works quietly in the background, but on a few occasions, such as in today's passage, the Spirit is center stage. With these things in mind, let's go ahead and read Acts 2:1-21.

II. Scripture Reading Acts 2:1-21, NIV 1984

1 When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. 2 Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. 3 They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. 4 All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them. 5 Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. 6 When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard them speaking in his own language. 7 Utterly amazed, they asked: "Are not all these men who are speaking Galileans? 8 Then how is it that each of us hears them in his own native language? 9 Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, 10 Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome 11 (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs--we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!" 12 Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, "What does this mean?" 13 Some, however, made fun of them and said, "They have had too much wine. "

14 Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd: "Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say. 15 These men are not drunk, as you suppose. It's only nine in the morning! 16 No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: 17 "'In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. 18 Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy. 19 I will show wonders in the heaven above and signs on the earth below, blood and fire and billows of smoke. 20 The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord. 21 And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.'

III. Teaching

Our Lord Jesus was crucified at the time of Passover, and now Acts 2:1 tells us the Holy Spirit came at the time of Pentecost, the fiftieth day after Passover, a time known on the Jewish calendar as Shavuot, the Harvest Festival, also called the Festival of Weeks and the Festival of First Fruits. This Festival was one of the three Jewish Festivals that all adult men were required to attend in Jerusalem. So, at this time, Jerusalem would have been full of Jews from many nations. The Passover commemorates the Exodus, the time when the nation of Israel was freed from slavery in Egypt. And, Shavuot, which we call Pentecost, is the anniversary of when Moses brought the Ten Commandments down from Mount Sinai.



When we consider these things, we can understand that the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus marks a new Passover through which we are lead out from slavery to sin and death. And Pentecost marks the giving of a new Law, written not on stone tablets, but on the hearts of believers everywhere. Pentecost brings to fulfillment the words of Jeremiah (**Jeremiah 31:33**), **"This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time," declares the LORD. "I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people."**

The disciples were all gathered together in one place, a house, very likely, the same place where the Last Supper and events of Acts 1 occurred. Acts 1:14 told us that they were constantly in prayer, so they were certainly in prayer when the Holy Spirit was poured out on them. A violent wind came, then what seemed like tongues of fire came on each of them, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in tongues. This was unmistakably the Baptism of the Holy Spirit that they had been waiting for.



Do you remember the time when some of the people thought John the Baptist might be the Messiah? Notice how John responded to them in **Luke 3:16**, **"John answered them all, 'I baptize you with water. But one more powerful than I will come, the thongs of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.'"** John spoke prophetically about the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, confidently proclaiming that Jesus the Messiah would come and give this baptism to the disciples. Jesus reaffirmed this promise in **Acts 1:4-5**, **"On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.""**

When the Holy Spirit came, the disciples began to speak in tongues and declare the wonders of God. People came running to see what was going on and they heard the disciples speaking in many languages, and each of them heard about the wonders of God in their own home language. This proclamation of Good News to the representatives of the nations gathered in Jerusalem was the beginning of the fulfillment of the Great Commission. Jesus had spoken of this also, saying in **Acts 1:8**, **"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."**

Already in Acts 2, the disciples are proclaiming the Good News with boldness and power to representatives of the nations gathered in Jerusalem. But that was only the beginning, after this the disciples went out to the nations and preached. However, we can easily understand that it would not be possible for these first 120 disciples to reach every nation and people all the way to the ends of the earth. The task of preaching the gospel to the ends of the earth was begun at Pentecost, but we know it is still continuing even today. And, if the task the Holy Spirit empowers believers for is not yet finished, then surely the Holy Spirit is continuing to empower disciples for this work still today.

Some theologians say that the Baptism of the Holy Spirit was a one-time event, but take a look at

what Peter says in Acts 11 about his experience preaching to the gentiles. **Acts 11:15-17**, “**As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit came on them as he had come on us at the beginning. Then I remembered what the Lord had said: ‘John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.’ So if God gave them the same gift as he gave us, who believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I to think that I could oppose God?**” Peter clearly tells us that the gentiles also received the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, so it seems impossible to claim that it occurs only in Acts 2.

Other theologians say that the Baptism of the Holy Spirit is the same as receiving the Holy Spirit when we first believe in Jesus. But prior to Acts 2, Scripture shows that the apostles were already believers and that they had already received the Holy Spirit. **John 20:21-22** records this event. “**Again Jesus said, ‘Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.’ And with that he breathed on them and said, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit.’**”

Now, if the apostles had already believed in Jesus and received the Holy Spirit before Acts 2, then Acts 2 records a second, very powerful experience of the Spirit that the disciples had. Some theologians do not accept the idea that there can be second experience of the Holy Spirit after we come to faith, but Acts seems to clearly teach this. And it is my personal experience as well.

In the spring of 1988, at Calvary Chapel of Oceanside, California, I trusted in Jesus as my Lord and Savior. At that time I experienced a tremendous sense of the Lord’s grace and I knew my sins were forgiven. But I still had a lot of questions, and one of my questions was whether God was still doing miracles in the church today. I especially wanted to know whether the Holy Spirit was still giving the gifts of the Spirit, such as tongues and prophecy, to believers today. So, a few weeks after I was baptized I called up Pastor Ralph Wood and asked if I could meet him to talk about these things. He said okay, and he invited me to come to the church office. But he also said, “*Before you come and ask me about these things, pray and ask the Lord directly.*”

Now, I don’t talk about this next part very often, partially because it is very personal, and partially because I don’t want people to think I am totally crazy. But it is an important part of my testimony, so I do want to share it, and now seems to be the right time. Well, I have always tended to leave things to the last minute, a fault I am still struggling with. As a result, I was in my car, on the way to the church office, driving down Highway 78, when I remembered that I was supposed to ask the Lord about these things before meeting Pastor Ralph. So I thought, no problem, I can pray and drive at the same time. Do you ever pray while driving? That’s okay. But be careful.



I was rolling along and praying, asking the Lord whether He was still doing miracles and baptizing people in the Holy Spirit. After a few minutes, I began to feel a very strong presence, the Holy Spirit and maybe an angel also, I don’t know. And with the presence, I started to hear a voice – not in my ears, just straight in my brain. And, the voice said, “*Repeat after me, ‘Sole-mon bison peppon sali, ashtilemon peppon sali alemon anshang...’*” And, as soon as I started, words started flowing out of me. I wasn’t just repeating; I was saying a long prayer in a language I didn’t know. As I prayed, I started to cry tears of joy and I had to stop the car on the side of the road. I wasn’t out of control; I could have closed my mouth and stopped anytime. But I didn’t want to stop, I just wanted to keep on praying and praising the Lord. Then, I realized that I had just been baptized in the Holy Spirit and I had received a gift of tongues. When I finally got to the church office, maybe an hour later, Pastor Ralph and I had a great talk. But the Lord had already answered my main question. Yes, He is still doing miracles today, including giving the gifts of the Spirit.

This is one of several supernatural experiences I have had with God. These experiences are not the foundation of my faith. The foundation of my faith is in the Good News of Jesus Christ, revealed in the Word of God. But the supernatural experiences I have had definitely strengthen my faith and give me a measure of peace and joy that I would not have without these experiences.

It is my prayer that many of you will also have supernatural experiences with the Holy Spirit of God during the coming weeks. I think it is good to pray and seek the gifts of the Spirit, but I also think that divine encounters mainly come when we seek God, not when we seek miracles. Our focus should be on knowing God and drawing near to Him in prayer and in our daily lives. And, as we draw near to God, He will also draw near to us. Then we will naturally have supernatural experiences just from bring with Him.

Let's take another look at **Acts 2:3-4**, "**They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.**" Those are not actual tongues of fire, they are just something that seemed like tongues of fire – something the author cannot explain in any other words. They were all filled with the Spirit and spoke in tongues. When I was filled with the Spirit, I also spoke in tongues, but that doesn't mean that everyone who is filled with the Holy Spirit speaks in tongues.

Take a look at **1 Corinthians 12:7-11**, "**Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. To one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, to another the message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues. All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines.**"

There are many kinds of gifts, and the Spirit gives gifts to each one, just as He determines. So we cannot expect that everyone will speak in tongues. And we cannot think that those who have a gift of tongues are somehow special or better than other Christians; it is only one gift out of many. Some of the most Spirit-filled Christians I know don't speak in tongues; the Holy Spirit gives the just gifts as He determines in His divine wisdom.

On the other hand, I do think that the filling of the Holy Spirit is available to all Christians who seek it. To some it comes all at once. To others, it may come gradually. If I wanted to fill a glass with water, I could do it suddenly and dramatically, or, I could do it slowly and quietly. In the same way, The Spirit can fill one believer suddenly and dramatically, while another believer may be gradually filled with the Spirit as they walk with Jesus. But, whether it happens slowly or suddenly, if we want to be effective Christians, we need to be filled with the Spirit of God.



The Gospel is universal; it is available to all. **Acts 2:21** says, "**And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.**" I think the filling of the Holy Spirit is also available to all. In **Acts 2:17-18**, Peter quotes from Joel chapter 2 and says, "**In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy.**" Like the gospel, that also sounds pretty universal.

IV. Conclusion

We need more and more of the Holy Spirit in our hearts and in our lives. But we have a problem. Our hearts and lives are so full of the things of this world that we don't leave room for the Holy Spirit. Together, let's turn away from the temporary things of this world, things that don't satisfy and don't last, and let's seek the Lord and draw near to Him. Then I think the Spirit will come and fill us as well. Let's close with these words from the prophet Jeremiah (**Jeremiah 29:11-13**), "**For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.**" Let's pray.

V. Prayer

Heavenly Father, Loving Lord,

We come before you this morning in confession; we are sinners who need to be forgiven daily. Renew Your mercy among us and pour out Your wonderful grace on Your people. We come before you with thanksgiving, for all that you provide for us, and most especially for the forgiveness of sins; this wonderful salvation that you have provided through the cross of Jesus Christ. Lord, help us to get rid of the ungodly and worldly things in our hearts and lives that prevent us from drawing near to you. We praise Your Holy Name and give thanks for Your unending love. We come before you admitting that we desperately need Your power, Your wisdom, and Your presence among us. Lord, we are dry and cold, slow and dull. Send the wind and the fire of Your Holy Spirit and renew our faith. Fill us with Your Spirit so that we might be renewed, refreshed, and reenergized for Your work. In the Holy Name of Jesus I pray. Amen.