

Acts Part 1 Study Guide

Lesson 2: The Coming of the Holy Spirit – Acts 2

1. The Phenomenon of Baptism with the Spirit – 2:1-13

A. Who are “they” (2:1)? Advocates of modern charismatic “tongue-speaking” (gibberish) reach all the way back to the 120 disciples in 1:15. But is this warranted?

1. Note that 1:15-26 is merely parenthetical to Luke’s main flow of thought: his emphasis is *entirely* on the apostles and the events transpiring relative to them (as they had been chosen, taught, commissioned and now promised that the coming of the Spirit is imminent).
2. Review the pronouns and references in Acts 1 which hearken back to “the apostles” in 1:2: “to whom” (1:3), “witnesses” (1:8), “men of Galilee” (1:11), “the eleven apostles” 1:26 (which is the immediate antecedent of “they” in 2:1.)
3. As we shall see, this same emphasis upon the apostles continues throughout chapter 2 and well into the earlier chapters of Acts as Luke unfolds his narrative of the fledgling kingdom.

B. Note the sensory evidence of what transpires:

1. Audible #1: There was no wind but the *sound* as of a rushing, mighty wind, a roar or a whoosh but no apparent earthly cause for it. But the noise had a location: “*it filled the whole house where they were sitting*” (2:2).
2. Visual #1: The divided tongues were “as of fire,” resembling those of flames. But this, too, was very specific in its manifestation: “*one sat upon each of them.*” Again, what is the antecedent noun of “them”?
3. Audible #2: They “*began to speak with other tongues ...*” (2:4).
4. Visual #2: The crowd that had gathered marveled: “*Look, are not all these who speak Galileans?*” (2:7). What made this event so arresting was that a group of men from a particular district who spoke with a specific dialect were now speaking a multitude of dialects from across the Empire.

C. Thus the miracle was not only the manifestation of the humanly impossible; it also signified the universal nature of what was beginning that day: a singular kingdom for all cultures and peoples for all time.

2. Peter’s Explanation of the Present Events – Acts 2:14-40

A. The prophecy of Joel fulfilled – 2:16-21. Many hundreds of years earlier Joel had foreseen the time when God would inaugurate a final dispensation with mankind (the “*last days*” – 2:17). In this era God would distribute the miraculous manifestations of the Holy Spirit globally (“*all flesh*” – 2:17), not merely upon the fleshly descendants of Abraham. The end result: salvation will be made available to all who seek God and desire fellowship with Him (2:21).

B. The testimony of Christ – 2:22-24. Peter now boldly gives the testimony he was so afraid to give just two months earlier. List the major points covered by Peter:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

C. Messianic prophecy fulfilled – 2:25-35. David is cited twice (Psalms 16:8-11 and 110:1) to indicate that the Messiah would not remain dead but would be resurrected.

1. Jesus would rise to _____
2. Jesus was exalted to _____
3. Jesus received the promise _____
4. As a result Jesus has _____

3. The Conviction of the Audience – Acts 2:36-40

A. The dynamics of this occasion are most interesting. Though Jews from all parts of the Empire are present, there is a sufficient core of scribes, Pharisees and priests (and perhaps regular inhabitants of Jerusalem who believed in Jesus but knuckled under to their leaders) for Peter to refer to Jesus as the one “*whom you crucified*” (2:36). He boldly declares Jesus to be “*both Lord and Christ.*”

B. All of the elements for true conviction are now in place. It took more than just miracle-working to bring the Jews around. This Jesus had done abundantly. It is not until the full impact of His *death* and *resurrection* dawns upon them that they are brought to ask: “*Men and brethren, what shall we do?*” They now realize their guilt and condemnation and beseech the apostles for a solution, if one is available.

C. Peter is succinct and direct in reply. Yes, there *is* a solution; they are not unalterably subject to the wrath of God for this breach of His trust.

1. They must repent of their sins.
2. They must, “*every one of you,*” be baptized for the remission of those sins. (Did John not wonderfully prepare the people for Peter’s message? (cf. Luke 3:3)
3. In so doing they would receive “*the gift of the Holy Spirit.*” Much debate still continues as to the meaning of this phrase. But *contextually*, what would be the sense of this phrase to these people? Previously, Peter had mentioned the

salvation that would come in connection with the pouring out of the Spirit (2:21). It is this very need that the guilty audience has expressed. God has promised this forgiveness to “whoever” (2:21) calls on the name of the Lord, even “*to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call*” (2:39).

4. The Church Takes Root – Acts 2:41-47

- A. There is an instant bonding and camaraderie between these newly committed believers in Jesus. One can only imagine the life-change that takes place as these Jews abandon social, political, family and generational ties for an uncertain future.
- B. Note the continued focus upon *the apostles* (not the previously mentioned 120) – Acts 2:42-43.

Questions:

1. What was the general content of what was being spoken in tongues?
2. Is there anything in the text that suggests the apostles were still in the upper room?
3. What two classes of people were in the audience (cf. 2:5, 13)?
4. Who did Peter stand up with?
5. What kind of language is Acts 2:19-20? What does it generally signify?
6. What does Peter call himself and those with him (Acts 2:32)?
7. What was the nature of Peter’s further exhortations on Pentecost?

8. What relationship did these new converts to Jesus sustain to the apostles?

9. What relationship did they sustain to each other?

10. Describe the activities of their new spiritual lives. How might we fall short of this pattern in our own era?