

Acts 2**Lesson 2
The Beginning****Outline****I. The Reception of the Holy Spirit** (vv. 1-13)

- A. *The apostles received the Spirit and spoke in tongues* (vv. 1-4)
- B. *The multitude was amazed* (vv. 5-13)

II. Peter's Sermon (vv. 14-36)

- A. *Explanation of the events* (vv. 14-21)
- B. *Jesus was raised from the dead* (vv. 22-36)
 - 1. The one you crucified was raised (vv. 22-24)
 - 2. David prophesied of this (vv. 25-31)
 - 3. Exalted as both Lord and Christ (vv. 32-36)

III. Response of the Multitude (vv. 37-41)

- A. *They asked what to do* (vv. 37-40)
 - 1. The question (v. 37)
 - 2. The answer (vv. 38-40)
 - a. Repent and be baptized for the remission of sins (vv. 38-39)
 - b. Save yourself (v. 40)
- B. *They gladly received the word and obeyed* (v. 41)

IV. The Disciples Continued in the Apostles Doctrine (vv. 42-47)

- A. *Followed the apostles' authority* (v. 42)
- B. *Were steadfast* (v. 42)
- C. *Worshiped* (v. 42)
- D. *Feared* (v. 43)
- E. *Took care of the needy* (vv. 44-45)
- F. *Served daily* (v. 46)
- G. *Grew* (v. 47)

Key Verse that Summarizes the Chapter**Acts 2:41**

*Then those who gladly received his word were baptized;
and that day about three thousand souls were added to them.*

The apostle Peter later looks back and refers to the events of this chapter as “the beginning” (Acts 11:15). Thus, this becomes a pivotal chapter.¹ In this chapter the gospel is preached for the first time under the Great Commission. The first Christians are found and the church is established in this chapter.

The Reception of the Holy Spirit (vv. 1-13)

The apostles received the Holy Spirit and spoke in tongues (vv. 1-4). The day of Pentecost was one of three annual feasts for the Jews. It was also called the Feast of Weeks (Exo. 34:22; Deut. 16:10), Feast of Harvest (Exo. 23:16), and the day of Firstfruits (Lev. 23:17). Pentecost fell on the first day of the week.²

The apostles were told to wait in Jerusalem until the Holy Spirit fell upon them (Acts 1:5-8). The promise was fulfilled when the Holy Spirit came upon them and they began to speak in tongues. The “they” (vv. 1-4) who were filled with the Spirit refers back to the nearest antecedent, the “apostles” (1:26).³ Furthermore, those who spoke in tongues were all Galileans (v. 7). The apostles were all men of Galilee (Acts 1:11).⁴

The coming of the Spirit was accompanied by the sound as a mighty wind and divided (split) tongues that were like fire upon each of the apostles.

To speak in tongues was to speak in an intelligible language (vv. 6, 8). Those who heard knew the wonderful words of God had been spoken (v. 11). The apostles were able to speak in languages they did not know by the power of the Holy Spirit (v. 4).

The multitude was amazed (vv. 5-13). Those who had gathered (from every nation) were amazed that these men⁵ (of Galilee) were able to speak in their own tongue. They talked among themselves about the meaning of this (v. 12). Some charged that the apostles were drunk (v. 13).

Peter’s Sermon (vv. 14-36)

An explanation of the events (vv. 14-21). Peter reasoned that these men could not be drunk since it was only the third hour (9:00 am). If they were drinking, they would not have had enough to be drunk by this hour.

What they were witnessing is a fulfillment of the prophecy of Joel (2:28-32). The prophet said God would pour out his Spirit in the last days (v. 17).⁶ The prophecy tells of the Spirit’s work in three areas:

1 James D. Bales wrote a book on Acts 2 calling it *The Hub of the Bible*.
2 Leviticus 23:16.
3 It does not refer to the 120 (Acts 1) as those who claim Holy Spirit Baptism today affirm.
4 It is not likely that all the 120 were from Galilee.
5 The plural “these” (v. 7), “them” (v. 11) and “they” (v. 13) tells us that all the Apostles were speaking and not just Peter. Not all would be speaking at the same time (1 Cor. 14:27). They either took turns or were divided into various groups as we would divide for Bible classes.
6 “This is what” (v. 16) shows that the events of Pentecost were included in the “last days.” This refers to the last dispensation (from Pentecost until the end of time). The “last days” do not refer to a short period of time just before the world ends.

1. **Revelation** (vv. 17-18). Prophecy, visions and dreams were means of God revealing His will to man. Thus, the Spirit's work involved the revelation of God's word. As the apostles preached on Pentecost the Spirit was revealing God's will.
2. **Confirmation** (vv. 19-20). "Wonders" and "signs" (v. 19) were miraculous measures that confirmed the revealed will of God (cf. Mark 16:17-20). The "day of the Lord" (v. 20) refers to a day of judgment. Some think it refers to the final judgment. Others think it refers to God's judgment in the destruction of Jerusalem. It probably refers to the destruction of Jerusalem. Similar language is used in the Old Testament to refer to the fall of Babylon (Isa. 13:10).
3. **Salvation** (v. 21). This is how the prophecy related to those who heard Peter preach. This would be a time when men could be saved. Joel's prophecy said that whoever "calls" on the name of the Lord will be saved. At the end of the chapter (vv. 41, 47) three thousand were saved. So, whatever they did between verse 21 and verse 47 was involved in calling on the name of the Lord. They heard the message (v. 22). They were told to believe (v. 36). They were told to repent and be baptized (v. 38). That is what they did (v. 41).

Jesus is raised from the dead (vv. 22-36). Peter now moved to the heart of his sermon affirming the resurrection of Christ. He makes three points:

1. **The one you crucified was raised from the dead** (vv. 22-24). Jesus of Nazareth was proven to be who he claimed to be by the miracles, wonders and signs he performed (v. 22). In spite of that, he was crucified (v. 23). Peter convicted his hearers of being guilty. However, God raised him from the dead (v. 24).
2. **David prophesied of this** (vv. 25-31). Peter quoted from Psalm 16:9-11 where David said the soul would not be left in Hades⁷ nor allow the body to corrupt in the grave (v. 27).⁸ Thus, the body and the spirit would be reunited (a resurrection). David was not talking about himself, because his body is still in the grave (v. 29). He was foretelling of the resurrection of Christ (vv. 30-31). Being raised from the dead, he now sits on the throne of David ruling over his spiritual kingdom.⁹
3. **He is now exalted as both Lord and Christ** (vv. 32-36). The eyewitness account of the apostles serves as further evidence of the resurrection (v. 32). The resurrection means that Jesus is now at the right hand of God (vv. 33-35), is Lord (v. 36, ruler and in authority), and Christ (v. 36, the anointed one). At this point Peter calls upon his listeners to believe (v. 36).

The Response of the Multitude (vv. 37-41)

They asked what to do (vv. 37-40). Being convinced of the resurrection and convicted of their sin, the people asked what to do (v. 37). They were told to repent and be baptized for

7 Realm of the departed spirits where the soul goes after death (cf. Luke 16:19-31).

8 The body and soul are separated at death (Ecc. 12:7; Jas. 2:26).

9 Psalm 89:36-37.

the remission of sins (v. 38).¹⁰ When they did what they were told, they would receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.¹¹

They gladly received the word and obeyed (v. 41). Some 3,000 people believed and obeyed the gospel.

The Disciples Continued in the Apostles' Doctrine (vv. 42-47)

McGarvey observed, "He closes this section of the history with a brief notice of the order established in the new church..."¹²

They followed the apostles' doctrine (v. 42). What the apostles taught was to be accepted as the word of God (1 Thess. 2:13; 1 John 4:1, 6). The teaching of the apostles was their standard of authority, not the prevailing views of the day or their own opinions.

They were steadfast (v. 42). They devoted themselves (ESV) continually (YLT)¹³ to the things found in the apostles' instructions.

They worshiped (v. 42, 47). Breaking bread can mean a common meal (cf. v. 46), but here refers to the Lord's Supper (cf. Acts 20:7).¹⁴ This is the first time disciples are carrying out what the Lord instituted (Matt. 26:26-30). They prayed (v. 42). Fellowship (v. 42) includes the contribution if it is not a specific reference to it.¹⁵ They praised God (v. 47).

They feared (v. 43). Fear (awe ESV) was in the heart of the early Christians and others who witnessed what the apostles did.

They took care of their own needy (vv. 44-45). They divided to all who had need (v. 45b).¹⁶ To be able to do this they sold their possessions (v. 45a). This showed how much they cared about their brethren and how devoted they were to the Lord. The attitude and spirit that drove them was, they had all things common (v. 44). It was an attitude that said "what is mine is yours."

They served daily (v. 46). They were together daily in the temple. Additionally, they shared common meals together.

They grew (v. 47). The Lord added those who were saved to the church.¹⁷ This shows that the church and the saved are the same. This is the first reference to the church being in existence. All prior references to the church point to this day. All references after this day point back.

10 Some argue that "for the remission of sins" means because their sins were already forgiven. The same expression in English and Greek is found in Matthew 26:28 which cannot be so interpreted.

11 Not the Holy Spirit as a gift, but the gift of salvation from the Spirit (cf. John 4:10; Eph. 4:7).

12 J. W. McGarvey, *New Commentary on Acts*, 46.

13 Young's Literal Translation.

14 This is the first day of the week, since Pentecost fell on that day.

15 The same word is translated contribution (Rom. 15:26, KJV). Alexander Campbell rendered this "contribution" (*The Book of Acts according to Alexander Campbell: An Historical Rhetorical Commentary, Book 1, 290*).

16 This is church action as in Acts 4, 6, 11.

17 One is *added* to the church. One does not *join* the church.

Questions

1. What was Pentecost and when did it occur? _____

2. How do we know it was only the apostles who received the Holy Spirit (vv. 1-4)? _____

3. Define speaking in tongues giving evidence from the context. _____

4. What evidence did Peter give that the apostles were not drunk? _____

5. How did Joel's prophecy relate to the events of the day? _____

6. What were the three areas of the work of the Spirit revealed in Joel's prophecy? _____

7. How does the context of Acts 2 explain what it means to call on the name of the Lord? _____

8. How did Peter prove that Psalm 16:8-11 was not talking about David himself? _____

9. Find verses that show the people were told to:

- hear _____
- believe _____
- repent _____
- be baptized _____

10. What does verse 47 teach us about the church? _____
