

Bible Study June 16, 2021

ACTS 2 (ENGLISH STANDARD VERSION)

SEVEN THEMES IN THE BOOK OF ACTS (JOURNEY INTO GOD'S WORD)	
Holy Spirit	Acts is a record of the acts of the Holy Spirit that are accomplished through the church.
God's Sovereignty	God's sovereignty is demonstrated through the fulfillment of Old Testament promises in the person and work of Jesus and their continued fulfillment through the mission of the church.
The Church	In Acts the church is the chief vehicle by which God accomplishes his will.
Prayer	Prayer is primary practice of the early church.
Suffering	Despite persecution and suffering, because of the Holy Spirit and God's sovereignty the Gospel still advances.
Gentiles	A gentile is any person who is not an ethnic Jew. The true Israel is made up of Jews and Gentiles who have accepted Jesus the Messiah.
Witness	The message of Acts is clear: to be a follower of Jesus is to be a faithful witness to his resurrection.

TRANSITION FROM CHAPTER 1 TO CHAPTER 2	
ACTS 1	ACTS 2
Preparation for the birth of the church	Actual beginning of the church
Disciples were waiting for the coming of the Holy Spirit	Holy Spirit arrives
Equipped for ministry	Empowered for ministry
Held back from declaring the Gospel	Sent out to declare the Gospel

The Holy Spirit Comes

1 When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place.

Held 50 days after Passover, Pentecost was also called the Festival of Harvest. It was one of three major annual festivals (Deuteronomy 16:16), a festival of thanksgiving for the harvested crops. Jesus was crucified at Passover time, and he ascended 40 days after his resurrection. The Holy Spirit came 50 days after his resurrection and ten days after his ascension. Jews of many nations had gathered in Jerusalem for this festival. Thus, Peter's speech (Acts 2:14-37) was given to an international audience, and it resulted in a worldwide harvest of new believers—the first converts to Christianity who had not followed Jesus during his earthly life.

2 And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. 3 And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them

and rested on each one of them. ⁴ And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.

1 Cor 12:12-13 For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. ¹³ For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit. (ESV)

Rom 8:9 You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. (ESV)

This was a fulfillment of John the Baptist's words about the Holy Spirit's baptizing with fire (Luke 3:16) and of the prophet Joel's words about the outpouring of the Holy Spirit (Joel 2:28-29).

- Why tongues of fire? Fire symbolizes God's purifying presence, which burns away the undesirable elements of our lives and sets our hearts aflame to ignite the lives of others. On Mount Sinai, God confirmed the validity of the Old Testament law with fire from heaven (Exodus 19:16-18). On Mount Carmel, God sent fire from heaven to burn up Elijah's sacrifice, signifying God's consuming power (1 Kings 18:22-40). At Pentecost, God confirmed the validity of the Holy Spirit's ministry by sending fire.

God made his presence known to this group of believers in a spectacular way—roaring wind (2:2), fire, and his Holy Spirit. Would you like God to reveal himself to you in such recognizable ways? He may do so but be wary of forcing your expectations on God. In 1 Kings 19:10-13, Elijah also needed a message from God. First came a great wind, then an earthquake, and finally a fire. But God's message came in a gentle whisper. God may use dramatic methods to work in your life—or he may speak in gentle whispers. Wait patiently and always listen.

⁵ Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven. ⁶ And at this sound the multitude came together, and they were bewildered, because each one was hearing them speak in his own language. ⁷ And they were amazed and astonished, saying, "Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? ⁸ And how is it that we hear, each of us in his own native language?

Jesus does not limit his Kingdom to any race or group of people. He offers salvation to all people without regard to nationality. Visitors in Jerusalem were surprised to hear the apostles and other believers speaking in languages other than their own, but they need not have been. God does all kinds of miracles to spread the Good News, using many languages as he calls all kinds of people to become his followers. No matter what your race, color, sex, nationality, or language, God speaks to you. What do you need him to say to you, and in what area of your life would you like to hear his voice? Are you listening?

⁹ Parthians and Medes and Elamites and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, ¹⁰ Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, ¹¹ both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians—we hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God." ¹² And all were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "What does this mean?"

These people were literally speaking in other languages as the Spirit gave them ability—a miraculous attention-getter for the international crowd gathered in town for the festival. All the nationalities represented recognized their own languages being spoken. More than just miraculous speaking drew the people’s attention, however; they saw the presence and power of the Holy Spirit. The apostles continued to minister in the Holy Spirit’s power wherever they went.

Why are all these places mentioned? This is a list of many lands from which Jews had come to the festival in Jerusalem. These Jews were not from Palestine, because their ancestors had been dispersed to other parts of the world through captivities and persecutions. Very likely, some of the Jews who responded to Peter’s message returned to their homelands with God’s Good News of salvation. Thus, God prepared the way for the spread of the Good News. As you read Acts, you will see how the way was often prepared for Paul and other messengers by people who had become believers at Pentecost. The church at Rome, for example, was probably begun by such Jewish believers. Every believer has a story. Be encouraged by asking others to share what God has done in their lives.



13 But others mocking said, “They are filled with new wine.”

Peter’s Sermon at Pentecost

14 But Peter, standing with the eleven, lifted up his voice and addressed them: “Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and give ear to my words.

When the crowd recognized that something supernatural was taking place, they were curious for an explanation. At this point, Peter stepped forward and explained what was happening. This, of course, gave him an opportunity to talk about God and the Good News of Jesus. This should be the pattern in our lives as well. There are events and circumstances in the world and in people’s lives every day that cause them to ask, “What does this mean?” These give us the opportunity to explain our hope of salvation and how these people’s stories fit into God’s greater story (1 Peter 3:15). If our lives are different because of the light of Christ in us, others will be all the more curious about why. What is different about your life? What supernatural evidence about your life story could only be explained by God’s handiwork? Share those stories and you will be sharing the Good News about Jesus!

Peter told the people that they should listen to the testimony of the believers because (1) the Old Testament prophecies concerning Jesus had been entirely fulfilled in him (2:14-21), (2) Jesus is the Messiah (2:25-36), and (3) the risen Christ could change their lives (2:37-40).

Peter had been an unstable leader during Jesus’ ministry, letting his bravado be his downfall and, in the end, even denying that he knew Jesus (John 18:15-18, 25-27). But Jesus had forgiven and restored him (John 21). This was a new Peter—both bold and humble. His confidence came from the Holy Spirit, who made him a powerful and dynamic speaker. Have you ever felt as if you’ve made such bad mistakes that God could never forgive you and work through you in powerful ways? No matter what sins you have committed, God promises to forgive you and make you useful for his Kingdom. Ask God for opportunities to use your gifts to serve him, and when those opportunities come, boldly and confidently step into them. You will be amazed at all he wants to accomplish through you.

¹⁵ For these people are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day.

¹⁶ But this is what was uttered through the prophet Joel:

**¹⁷ “ ‘And in the last days it shall be, God declares,
that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh,
and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,
and your young men shall see visions,
and your old men shall dream dreams;**

**¹⁸ even on my male servants and female servants
in those days I will pour out my Spirit, and they shall prophesy.**

**¹⁹ And I will show wonders in the heavens above
and signs on the earth below,
blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke;**

**²⁰ the sun shall be turned to darkness
and the moon to blood,
before the day of the Lord comes, the great and magnificent day.**

²¹ And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.’

Not everything mentioned in Joel 2:28-29 was happening that particular morning. The *last days* include all the days between Jesus’ first and second comings, and here the words mean “from now on.” The “great and glorious day of the LORD” (Acts 2:20) denotes the whole Christian age. Even Moses yearned for God to put his Spirit on everyone (Numbers 11:29). At Pentecost the Holy Spirit was released throughout the entire world—to men, women, sons, daughters, Jews, Gentiles. Now *everyone* can receive the Spirit. This was a revolutionary thought for first-century Jews.

²² “Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know— ²³this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men.

Everything that happened to Jesus was under God’s control. His plans were never disrupted by the Roman government or the Jewish officials. This was especially comforting to those facing oppression during the time of the early Christian church.

²⁴ God raised him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it.

Peter spoke forthrightly about the Resurrection. As Peter preached, the events of Jesus’ death and resurrection were still hot news, less than two months old. Jesus’ execution had been carried out in public before many witnesses. His empty tomb was available for inspection just a short distance away. If he had not truly died, Peter’s message would have been laughed at or ignored. If he had not been resurrected, authorities could have produced his body and put an end to this new faith. But Peter and the apostles had witnessed the risen Jesus. Changed men, they announced the news with great passion and conviction.

- Our faith and our credibility also rest on the truth of the empty tomb. Why? For a number of important reasons. According to the apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 15, the resurrection of Jesus means that he is the Son of God and that his word can be trusted. It means that

his sacrifice for sin was acceptable to God, so we can be completely forgiven. It means that our Savior is alive and active, able to help us in times of need. It also means that one day we, too, will conquer death. The Christian faith rests on the basic fact of the empty tomb. Don't neglect this essential part of the gospel when you share your faith with others.

25 For David says concerning him,

***“ I saw the Lord always before me,
for he is at my right hand that I may not be shaken;***

**26 therefore my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced;
my flesh also will dwell in hope.**

**27 For you will not abandon my soul to Hades,
or let your Holy One see corruption.**

**28 You have made known to me the paths of life;
you will make me full of gladness with your presence.’**

29 “Brothers, I may say to you with confidence about the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. 30 Being therefore a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that he would set one of his descendants on his throne, 31 he foresaw and spoke about the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption. 32 This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses. 33 Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing.

Peter quoted from Psalm 16—a psalm written by David. He explained that David was not writing about himself, because David had died and was buried. Instead, he was writing as a prophet who was foretelling the Messiah who would be resurrected. Peter was emphasizing that Jesus' body was *not* left to rot in the grave but has, in fact, been resurrected and glorified.

34 For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he himself says,

***“ The Lord said to my Lord,
“Sit at my right hand,***

35 until I make your enemies your footstool.” ’

36 Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified.”

37 Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?”

After Peter's powerful, Spirit-filled message, the people were deeply moved and asked, “What should we do?” We must ask ourselves this same question! To be sorry for our sins is not enough—we

must repent, ask God to forgive us, and then live like forgiven people. Has God spoken to you through his Word or through the words of another believer? Like Peter's audience, ask God what you should do, and then follow through.

38 And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one 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, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself."

Luke 3:3 And he went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.

Luke 5:31-32 ³¹ And Jesus answered them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. ³² **I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance.**"

Luke 13:1-5 There were some present at that very time who told him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. ² And he answered them, "**Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans, because they suffered in this way? ³ No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish. ⁴ Or those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them: do you think that they were worse offenders than all the others who lived in Jerusalem? ⁵ No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.**"

Luke 15:10 "Just so, I tell you, there is joy before the angels of God over one sinner who repents."

Luke 19:8-10 And Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor. And if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I restore it fourfold."

⁹ And Jesus said to him, "**Today salvation has come to this house, since he also is a son of Abraham. ¹⁰ For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.**"

To repent of your sins means to turn from them—to change the direction of your life from selfishness and rebellion against God's laws. At the same time, you must turn to Jesus Christ, depending on him for forgiveness, mercy, guidance, and purpose. We cannot save ourselves—only God can save us. Baptism identifies us with Jesus and with the community of believers. It is a condition of discipleship and a sign of faith.

40 And with many other words he bore witness and continued to exhort them, saying, "Save yourselves from this crooked generation." 41 So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls.

The Fellowship of the Believers

42 And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. 43 And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles.

About 3,000 people became new believers when Peter preached the Good News about Jesus. These new Christians were united with the other believers, taught by the apostles, and included in the prayer meetings and fellowship. New believers need to be in groups where they can learn God's

Word, pray, and mature in the faith. If you have just begun a relationship with Jesus, seek out other believers for fellowship, prayer, and teaching. Engaging with a Christ-following community will help you to grow and mature in your faith.

44 And all the believers met together in one place and shared everything they had.

Recognizing the other believers as brothers and sisters in the family of God, the Christians in Jerusalem shared all they had so that all could benefit from God's gifts. It is tempting—especially if we have material wealth—to cut ourselves off from one another, concerning ourselves with only our own interests, providing for and enjoying only our own little pieces of the world. However, as part of God's spiritual family, we should find every way possible to help one another. God's family works best when its members work together.

44 And all who believed were together and had all things in common. 45 And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. 46 And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, 47 praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

A common misconception about the first Christians (who were Jews) was that they rejected the Jewish religion. But these believers saw Jesus' message and resurrection as the fulfillment of everything they knew and believed from the Old Testament. The Jewish believers at first did not separate from the rest of the Jewish community. They still went to the Temple and synagogues for worship and instruction in the Scriptures. But their belief in Jesus created great friction with Jews who didn't believe that Jesus was the Messiah. Thus, believing Jews were forced to meet in private homes for communion, prayer, and learning about how Jesus was the fulfillment of the Old Testament Scriptures. By the end of the first century, many of these Jewish believers were excommunicated from their synagogues.

A healthy Christian community attracts people to Jesus. The Jerusalem church's zeal for worship and brotherly love was contagious. What are you doing to make your church the kind of place that will attract others to faith in Jesus?

Holy Spirit Worship Melody: <https://youtu.be/tr9VUpXM4kQ>