

The book of Acts is about Jesus.

The Jesus who died on the cross on Good Friday, then rose again, ascended to heaven, and sent The Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Christ.

In the Old Testament, the Spirit of God was present, but always temporarily, and limited for special purposes. For example, we read in the Book of Numbers chapter 11, that the Spirit of God temporarily came upon two men, in the camp of Israel, and for one moment, the Spirit enabled these two men to prophesy the Word of God. Compare that with the way that the New Testament speaks about the Holy Spirit. For example, we read in the Gospel of Luke, chapter 1, that God filled John the Baptist and his parents with the Spirit. And another example in John 3:34, we learn that God the Father gave to Jesus the gift of God the Holy Spirit “*without measure.*” Why? Why was Jesus given the Spirit without measure? For a reason. When in Matthew 16:18, Jesus gathered the twelve disciples, Jesus did not say that He was going to build up the nation of Israel, or build up the religion of the Jews known as Judaism. No. Instead, Jesus said in Matthew 16, “I will build _____” Do you remember what Jesus said? What would Jesus build? Jesus said, “I will build My church.” Jesus was given the Spirit without measure in order to build His Church. We learn from John 7:39, that as long as Jesus was not yet glorified, the Holy Spirit would not yet come. Only after Jesus was glorified, would Jesus then breathe on them the Holy Spirit in anticipation of the actual outpouring of the Spirit from heaven on the Day of Pentecost. After Jesus’ resurrection and before His ascension, Jesus breathed on His disciples and said in John 20:22-23 “*Receive the Holy Spirit...*” Then, on the day of Pentecost, the Spirit descended upon the apostles, the women and Mary, the brothers of Jesus, and others, adding up to 120 people in all. Do you see the difference between the OT and NT, with regard to the Holy Spirit’s presence? The Spirit in the OT was present for temporary, limited times, and only for a special assignment. The gift of the Spirit in the NT was permanent, pervasive, and for assigned to constant upbuilding of the church.

Jesus had told His followers to begin building the church in Jerusalem. So, here in Acts chapter 2, the apostle Peter, in harmony with Jesus’ command to begin building the church in Jerusalem, stood up and proclaimed the gospel of Christ in the holy city of Jerusalem, immediately, that very same day. Later, Peter would also go out and preach in Samaria and in Caesarea. In each of these places where Peter preached, the Holy Spirit was poured out. So, from the very start, the gift of the Holy Spirit was given in order to launch and build up the church.

After Christ ascended, He gave us the biggest gift – the Spirit!

1. Know about the grand event, and celebrate. (v.1-4)

What is the basic idea about the grand event that we need to know? That it was an action of God that was as significant as the creation of the world in the first place. In a sense, God was re-creating the world. Let me show you from verses 1-4.

Verse 1 – the day of Pentecost arrived. It was an annual festival set up by God in the Old Testament. God was about to fulfill the Day of Pentecost in a new way and in the biggest way!

Verse 2 – the first thing we were told was something that they had heard. We read about a sound that came from heaven. There are things about the sound that we need to understand. What did it sound like? “...*like a mighty rushing wind...*” Where was the sound? The sound “...*filled the entire house where they were sitting.*”

Now think back to the original creation of the world. What was the first thing we were told about the original creation? In Genesis 1:2, “...*the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.*” This hovering was not some light and airy fluttering, like a butterfly fluttering past our ears. No, this word Spirit can be translated wind, it was the wind of God. The creative, moving, dynamic, life-giving breath of God blowing across the waters. It was the Spirit of God blowing like a mighty wind!

Then, in Genesis chapter 2, God created Adam from the dust. What action did God take related to the nostrils of Adam’s lifeless body made from the dust? God breathed into Adam’s nostrils the breath of life, and the dust-made body of Adam became a what? By God’s breathing into him, Adam became a living being!

In John 3:8, Jesus taught that the wind blows wherever it pleases. We hear its sound, but we cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. Then significantly, Jesus compared the wind with the Spirit, when Jesus said, “So it is with everyone born of the Spirit!” (John 3:8)

Just as God breathed into Adam to give Adam life, so also again, to be born again or born from above, God must breathe into each of us to make all of us spiritually living beings.

So, here in Acts 2, we have the story of God re-creating. Here was the best part. The heavens and the earth formed by the Spirit in Genesis 1 will pass away, but the work done in Acts 2 by the Spirit within the hearts of men is eternal. Each of us must be born from above, in order for us to live forever! In verse 4, the disciples were filled with the Spirit, and began to speak, **AS THE SPIRIT GAVE THEM UTTERANCE**. What was the Spirit having the people say? 2nd point!

2. Learn about the power, and be amazed. (v.5-12)

Verse 5, there were holy people from all around the world gathered in Jerusalem. Verse 6, when they heard this sound from heaven, the people came together, and they were bewildered, because each of them was hearing the

disciples speaking, and yet each one of the visitors heard the message in his own language! Verse 7, they were amazed and astonished!

Verse 8 – how did that work? The Spirit of God used those Galilean disciples to preach, and yet all the nations heard the preaching in their own native languages? How? It was a miracle of God! Why? It seems rather obvious – the miracle showed that this church that just launched, would spread through all the world, and preach God’s Word to all the nations! The miracle of language-speaking at Pentecost showed the best gift would be offered to everyone in every nation!

Verses 9, 10 and 11, we get a sample listing of the nations that were represented that day. Verse 12, they asked what it meant, for they did not yet understand.

Notice verse 13. They already had haters. We already had people who were suspicious, and it was the first day of the church’s existence! We had people who mocked the Galilean disciples of Jesus, and said that the reason they were speaking in a way that everyone could hear in their own language was because they were under the influence of wine! The mockers in the crowd, right there in the context of the miraculous work of the Spirit of God to bring good news of rescue of sinners to all nations, were saying that it was because the disciples were drunk. What do we need to learn from verse 13? We need to learn that there were two categories of reactions to the church from the first moment of the church. The two reactions were for and against! Amazed and skeptical! Believing and not believing!

Some wanted to know more and understand. Others scoffed and accused.

The Holy Spirit brought new life to some, who believed in Jesus.

3. Understand Peter’s explanation, and call on God. (v.14-21)

Look at verse 14 – Peter was standing with the eleven. It does not mean that he arose from a sitting position to a standing position. Rather, it means that he sided with God’s people and joined them in addressing the multitude. In a crowd divided, and in a world divided, Peter took a stand on the side of God and His Kingdom. Peter became an official spokesperson to authoritatively provide the correct interpretation of the momentous events of that incredible day. We could say that Peter took to the podium. We might think of it as Peter calling a press conference. Peter stood, alongside the eleven, representing the church standing before the nations, in front of the representatives of the gathered and watching world, with a message from God to them all about the sound that they had just literally heard, and the events that happened along with the sound.

Notice in verse 14, who was with Peter – the Eleven! The presence of the other apostles, now next to Peter, conveys to the crowd that Peter speaks on behalf of the Twelve. All twelve of them were filled with the Holy Spirit. Peter was preaching, and the Eleven were there with him. Together, they stood in the

presence of the thousands of Jews in the temple area that day. Peter spoke to them boldly and confidently, with the full required number of 120 leaders needed to form a new community, according to Jewish law.

The main point of Peter's sermon was to trace the gift of the Spirit back to Jesus. The Spirit's coming was an act of Jesus, who after His ascension, now lived in heaven. It was Jesus who had sent the Spirit. All of this noise like wind, and the languages being heard, these were actions of Jesus – Jesus was doing something. The same Jesus that had been crucified and buried and rose again and ascended – that Jesus was doing something.

Verse 15, what was the first topic Peter talked about? Peter countered their false accusation about drunkenness, with a remark that would appeal to the common sense of the audience. It was only nine o'clock in the morning.

Verse 16. After refuting that claim about drunkenness, what topic did Peter address next? Peter declared that this event was a fulfillment of prophecies of Scripture, and started quoting from the Old Testament prophet of Joel.

Peter followed the pattern that Jesus had taught the apostles – first open the Scriptures, and second, explain how those Scriptures are fulfilled by Christ, and third, apply it to the people of God. So, Peter read words from the ancient book of Joel, who had predicted the outpouring of the Spirit of God. Then, Peter explained those words from Scripture. Literally in verse 16, Peter said “*THIS IS THAT.*” This is that. You know how Joel prophesied about the Spirit coming down? This event today is that prophecy coming true!

Notice the verb in verse 17 was “*POUR OUT,*” like the pouring rains of a heavy tropical rainstorm. It was a downpour. They were drenched with the Spirit. The generosity of God in giving His Spirit in abundant quantity was clearly an essential part of the message here. Another essential part of the message was the permanence of this action of God. The Spirit's coming was just as final and as irreversible as the resurrection of Jesus was. Jesus would never die again. The Spirit would not be removed again. Peter himself demonstrated for the crowd what it was like to hear a man of God filled with the Spirit of God. That sort of blessing would always be with God's church, all around the world! Because of the biggest gift of the Spirit, Peter was giving them truth about Christ, from the Scriptures.

Verse 18, the mention of servants showed that God granted His Spirit to all classes of society. Every believer, irrespective of their outward status – young or old, male or female, servants or masters, well-educated, or not educated, red and yellow, black and white, – persons from every age, gender, status, privilege, and race received the Spirit, the biggest gift of God! What was the result? At the end of verse 18 we read it plainly, “*And they shall prophesy!*”

The gift of the Spirit to everyone results in everyone speaking about how great was our rescue in the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ! The Old Testament

expectation of Joel was that in the New Testament days the knowledge of God would belong to everyone. All of God's people had become prophets, priests, and kings. It means each of us can pray for others, each of us can share the gospel with others. This is the Reformed position on Pentecost. Martin Luther understood prophesying as the knowledge of God through Christ which the Spirit kindles and makes to burn within us by the word of the gospel. John Calvin wrote that prophesying signifies simply the gift of understanding. In Jeremiah 31:34 God said they will all know Me. 1 Thessalonians 4:9, we read "*you yourselves have been taught by God.*" 1 John 2:27, God's anointing *teaches you about all things.*" Every Christian has both the Spirit of God and the Word of God the Bible!

Verses 19-20, the wonders and signs written here, had been fulfilled at the time of the cross of Jesus. During Jesus' death on the cross, darkness came over the land for three hours (Matthew 27:45). The sun was no longer visible. The signs of that time were an eloquent testimony to Christ's death. On none of the occasions of the outpouring of the Spirit were there reported these signs in the sky as Joel had predicted them. When the Spirit was poured out in Jerusalem (Acts 2:1-4), in Samaria (Acts 8:17), in Caesarea (Acts 10:44), and in Ephesus (Acts 19:6), no one reported that the sun went black. Rather, these signs had been already fulfilled at the cross of Jesus, not to be repeated at the coming of the Spirit.

Verse 21, Peter applied his sermon to each person within the crowd, and to the ends of the world. Peter offered to each listener the gospel of Christ, and Peter instructed everyone to call upon the name of the Lord in order to be saved. We each call on God for our own rescue from our own sins.

Conclusion: Three applications to us:

1) Expect opposition. We need to keep in mind that there always were and there will always be two reactions to the gospel news and to the actions of God. We build the church anyway, knowing that God helps us carry on with His work. Learn the power, and be amazed.

2) Be holy. Remember what adjective is used to describe the Spirit. The Spirit in us is the Holy Spirit. That is a call to us to live holy lives. Of course we cannot, so we run to Christ and His cross to receive forgiveness.

3) Ask for the Spirit of God when you study the Word of God.

The Spirit works to illuminate the Word of God to us.

Years and years ago, at this location where our church building is today, if we go back to the 1800s, there were just a few farms. If they wanted water, they would get it from a well, and then carry it in buckets to their homes and barns.

But then, beginning about 1920 in America, plumbing was added.

Fast forward 100 years and today, what a wonderful convenience that in our homes we can turn on a faucet, and water comes out!

Now, they are building new homes all around our area.

Will they need to spend 120 years carrying water in buckets from a well?
No. Right away, their homes will be connected to the plumbing.

In the same way, when a new person comes to Christ, he or she does not have to seek his own personal repeat of Pentecost, any more than he would need to have his own personal repeat of Calvary. He gets connected to Jesus Christ by faith, and he gets Christ's death at Calvary, Christ's resurrection, and Christ's gift of His Spirit.

Each of us, by faith, receive Christ, and all of His blessings. We each get His Spirit, and His Bible.

Colossians 3:16, *“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God.”*