

1. Look at background to Acts
2. Go through the verses – break them down into bite-sized chunks
3. Look at who the Holy Spirit is
4. Go back through the verses – more detail – see what we can apply to our lives.

### **1. Background to Acts**

Written by Luke

Key persons: Peter + Paul

Acts is a very important historic book : bridging from time of Gospels to Apostolic letters

Luke was a doctor and he gives a very honest account: he presents the good and the not so good!  
E.g. An account on sharing: Acts 4:36 – 5:9 [Read]

Acts covers the founding of the church > spread of gospel, the beginning of congregations.

Time period covered in Acts spans 30 years of the church.

Luke probably wrote this book as Paul awaited trial in Rome.

Purpose of book:

1. To present a history
2. To give a defence of Christianity to both Jews + Gentiles
3. To provide a guide – basic principles applied to specific situations in the context of problems and persecutions. [Same principles are relevant today until Christ returns]
4. To depict the triumph of Christianity in the face of bitter persecution.

The Gospel was sent out from Jerusalem to Rome and all the churches across the Roman Empire.

But this was not merely work of man: God was in it [Acts 5:35-39] Read.

Lets turn to Chapter 2 : The Holy Spirit Comes at Pentecost

So what is Pentecost? Jews knew it as: Feast of Weeks, Feast of Harvest, Day of Firstfruits. The feast was to celebrate the giving of the Law by God to Moses and the Israelites on Mount Sinai.

## 2. Go Through Passage

Lets re-visit the bible passage and let's take it a step at a time.

V1 : All together in 1 place – them - apostles were possibly at the Temple precincts

V2: violent wind : breath/wind – symbol of the Spirit of God

Coming of Spirit – audible (wind) / visible (fire)

V3: Tongues of fire – symbol of divine presence (God was here)

Also associated with judgement

V4: Their spirits – completely under the control of the Holy Spirit – their words were His words

In other tongues – The Spirit enabled them to speak in languages not previously learnt.  
These apostles hadn't studied a foreign language at school!

The gift had relevance here – where people of different nationalities and languages were gathered.

V5/6: God-fearing Jews – devout Jews from different parts of the world – assembled now in Jerusalem. [Show map on projector]

V11: We hear them declaring – not a miracle of hearing, but of speaking. The believers were declaring God's wonders in the native language of the various visiting Jews.

They were ***declaring the wonders of God!***

V13: Some of them – made fun of them – didn't like what they were hearing?

### Peter address the crowd

1. He gives an explanation of the events
2. Quotes from the Prophet Joel and what King David wrote in Psalm 16 and Psalm 110
3. Note v17/18 : The Spirit is bestowed on all irrespective of sex/age/rank
4. He talks about the Gospel of Jesus – death/resurrection/exaltation

V23/V36: With the help of wicked men, You put him to death on the cross : very brave thing for him to say

V34 : Not only was Jesus resurrected 31-32, but also exalted 33-35. And His presence there was now being demonstrated by sending of Holy Spirit (V33) John 16v7 [read out]: Notice: Jesus doesn't explain why Holy Spirit would not come until He went away.

V37: Cut to the heart : Why? When the people heard>Word/Truth was preached! They heard the truth – they knew it must be the truth – The Holy Spirit had convicted them that it was indeed the absolute truth. Not some story made up!

**WHEN WE HEAR THE WORD OF GOD WE ARE /OR WE SHOULD BE CUT TO THE HEART**

The faithful preaching of the word is absolutely vital

V38: Repent and be baptised in the name of Jesus – a clear, direct instruction. No mucking around – just do it! YOU WILL RECEIVE THE HOLY SPIRIT – no doubt. It's that simple . . . .

So 2 gifts are given:     1. Forgiveness of sins – now that's a biggy. AND  
                                  2. Holy Spirit is given – another biggy!

V39: For you . . . and all who are far off : This is for Jews and Gentiles (those who are far off)

So: the promise of the indwelling gift of the Holy Spirit is given to all Christians. 1 Cor 12:13 [Read]

If you don't have the Spirit – you don't belong to Christ. Romans 8:9-11 [Read]

***So What did these Believers go on to do??***

V42:   1. Apostles teaching – what's this? (Incidentally : We should never be afraid to ask questions if we're not sure. We have the WWW with the vast range of commentaries/sermons from Godly people who have studied the bible in depth. We have trusted Christian friends whom we can go to for help. Of course we can go direct to God himself and ask him to interpret and explain things to us through prayer. God gave us all a brain and enquiring minds.)

Apostles teaching?     : includes all that Jesus taught – especially the Gospel. Today – available in books of New Testament  
  
                                  : unique teaching – came from God – clothed with the authority, conferred on apostles

V42:   2. Fellowship – corporate fellowship of believers in **worship**

V42:   3. Breaking of bread – Lord's Supper (remembrance of what Christ has done for us)

V42:   4. Prayer – public and private

V44:   **UNITY**

**Had everything in common** – a voluntary sharing to provide for those who don't have enough for the essentials of living.

V46: Broke bread (not communion, but food) – gladness / generosity / sincere hearts

So here we have some essential elements:

**FELLOWSHIP / ONENESS / SHARING / PRAISING GOD / JOY**

These are the lifeblood of any active church fellowship – they are absolutely critical.

This is how God will grow this church – we need to foster these things amongst us – we need to have them branded into our hearts and minds.

We have here the fruits of the Spirit.

Gal 5v22-23 [read] If we are living by the Spirit then these characteristics should become more and more evident in our lives.

JOY – Filled with Joy : This is to be the mood of every believer. Acts 16:34 [Read] Yes life is not a bed of roses, but we should have joy in our hearts in all circumstances. We should worship God – come what may. We have a saviour who has experienced all our temptations, yet without sin. He is trustworthy and faithful and powerful and glorious.

V47: Finally: The Lord added daily. **In other words, the Lord went about saving people.**

Is this your heartfelt desire? To see people daily being re-directed to heaven?

**3. Who Is the Holy Spirit? What does he do in a Christian's life?**

1. Person
2. Points to Jesus
3. Comforter – helps us
4. Guides us in Godly ways – the Spirit working in us enables us to change our ways. To give up habits that don't honour/please God and to take up new behaviours that do please God.

5. Helps us to interpret scripture
6. Gift given when a person becomes a Christian
7. Bestows spiritual gifts as He sees fit (e.g. healing, prophecy, teaching, preaching, etc)
8. Empowers us for worship/service/testimony/witnessing to others
9. He is not at our command and control : he is not a force for us to get hold of and use.

But also note – Yes we are given the Holy Spirit as a gift to dwell within us when we become a Christian. However, Ephesians 5:18 says, "Don't get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead be filled with the Spirit . . ." This means being continually filled with the Holy Spirit – not a one off event, but continually!

If we are filled with the Spirit then we become under God's control. What's the result? A happy mutual encouragement to praise God and a healthy mutual relationship with other people.

Every Christian needs to be filled with the Spirit in order to witness for Christ with power.

If we ask so be filled by the HS: that prayer will be answered.

#### **4. Revisit Act Ch2 – More Detail / Go over again to remind ourselves!**

V1-4

Timing – Holy Spirit came @ solemn feast – lots of people gathered from all over. Very public event – would spread the Gospel sooner and further – help propagate Gospel

Feast of Pentecost – remembrance of law given to Israelites on Mount Sinai. This point in time Jewish church started. [1447 years before Pentecost spoken about in Acts2]

Fitting that Holy Spirit given at Pentecost – fire and tongues for declaration of evangelical law – not just 1 nation, but everyone.

Feast of Pentecost happened on 1<sup>st</sup> day of week (Sunday) Christian Sabbath. So Resurrection and Pentecost on same week day.

All in one place – Jerusalem, where Christ had been crucified.

With one accord – there had been strifes amongst the apostles in the past “Who is the greatest?” but now all strifes had ended.

They had prayed more together of late than usual – this made them love one-another better. By His grace they were being prepared for the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Do we want the H.S. Poured on us from on high?



2000 years later: God divides tongues again

Restores knowledge of himself to nations.

The fire sat on the apostles for some time : strong and visible as now day time. The constant presence of the HS was with them. What effect did this have – all FILLED with HS. More plentifully, powerfully than before : holy, heavenly, spiritual, comforted.

Filled with miraculous powers – for furtherance of the Gospel.

It is probable that there were 120 people – not just 12 apostles.

Spoke with other tongues – probably not just one speaking one other language besides own, but everyone was able to speak diverse languages, eloquently as if their own language, as required. They probably understood not only themselves, but each other also.

The words that were uttered were the word of God and praises to Him.

The Spirit not only enabled them to speak other languages, but also what they were to say.

This was a great miracle – they hadn't learnt foreign languages at school!!

V5-13

There were a great many people Why? There was a great expectation of the appearing of the Messiah – Daniel's weeks had now just expired (prophecy in OT) amongst the Jews.

V7 Speakers were all Galileans – regarded as despicable men from whom nothing learned or polite is expected. Christ was thought to be a Galilean. Here we have God choosing the weak and foolish to confound the wise and mighty. These Apostles were supposedly unlearned and ignorant men.

V8 We each hear one or other of them speaking our own language – Speaking the wonderful works of God. Probably spoke of Christ + redemption by him and grace of the Gospel ---> These are indeed great things of God.

Their language was not only unknown at Jerusalem, but probably despised and undervalued. So this was not only a surprise, but a pleasant surprise!

1 Cor 14:22 [read]: Tongues were a sign for those that don't believe.

The knowledge and worship of God – no longer confined to Jews, but Gentiles also.

V12 They were all amazed

V13 Some scorned : natives of Judea/Jerusalem – probably Scribes and Pharisees, Chief Priests - -> always resisted HS ---> made out they were drunk. They didn't know that they were speaking foreign languages – thought they were speaking gibberish/nonsense. They didn't believe the HS was in Christ's miracles and now didn't believe HS in apostles preaching.

V14 Peter stood up – to show he wasn't drunk + confront those who had contradicted and blasphemed (the scoffing Jews).

Lifted up his voice – self-assured, bold, not ashamed.

He explained that what was happening was the (1) fulfilment of scripture and (2) the fruit of Christ's resurrection/ ascension. What was happening was the proof of these 2 things.

Note: Christians never learn above their bible – the Spirit is given not to supersede the Bible, but to enable us to understand it! God never contradicts himself. We always need to check everything against scripture.

The Spirit will be poured out – irrespective of rank, sex, etc

V21 Call on the Lord – praying people – not saved by merit or righteousness of their own, but purely by favour of God.

V37 When they heard they were cut to the heart. WHAT SHALL WE DO?

Here sinners – eyes opened – broken/contrite heart. Those truly sorry for sins – ashamed of them / afraid of consequences of them. This is how it should be with us. We need to be presented with the truth time and time again!!!

“You will never change what you tolerate.” Joel Osteen

We need to be unhappy with our sin so that we don't ignore it and let it continue – we need to be intolerant of sin.

What shall we do? – Notice the immediacy. Not tomorrow, not next week, not just before we die. WHAT SHALL WE DO.

2 Cor 6:2 “For God says, "At just the right time, I heard you. On the day of salvation, I helped you." Indeed, the "right time" is now. **Today is the day of salvation.**” New Living Translation.

If you haven't given your life to Jesus – NOW IS THE TIME. Don't put it off. Tomorrow often never comes. If not now – when?!

The listeners now need hope:

Peter says:-

1. Repent – turn around. You were once opposed to God – going completely in the wrong direction – do a U-turn and come back to God.
2. Be Baptised in the name of Jesus Christ > Take Jesus as your King > by Baptism, swear allegiance to him.

If we are to walk in righteousness & follow the Saviour, we MUST be led by the Holy Spirit EVERY single day.

This can be our hope / our position before God.

Lets pray :

1. If we have not already made a decision to become a Christian – help us to receive the Gospel, repent, believe and be baptised.
2. Each one of will be continually filled with the HS – so that we can witness effectively to others.

Testimony: Has your life been affected by the power of the Holy Spirit?? If so, how?