

Unit Theme: Pentecost

**May 19, 2024 (Lesson 12)**

## **PENTECOSTAL EXPERIENCE CONTINUES (Pentecost)**

1. Converts Receive the Spirit (Acts 8:4-8, 12, 14-17)
2. Gentiles Receive the Spirit (Acts 10:44-48; 11:15-18)
3. Disciples Receive the Spirit (Acts 19:1-7)

Central Truth: God's will is that every believer in Christ be baptized in the Holy Spirit.

Focus: Acknowledge that God still gives the Holy Spirit and invite the Spirit into our lives.

Evangelism Emphasis: God desires all people to believe in Christ and receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Golden Text: "Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost" (Acts 11:16).

Today is Pentecost Sunday on the Christian calendar, and we often focus on Acts 2, which relates the initial outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the disciples of Jesus. The Holy Spirit came upon the first Christians at the time of the Jewish festival of Pentecost, which is also called the Feast of Weeks. Jesus had instructed His disciples to remain in Jerusalem until they received the promised Holy Spirit, which would give them "power from on high" (Luke 24:49). Therefore, they prayed and worshiped expectantly, until the Day of Pentecost. (The festival is called *Pentecost* because it means "fiftieth," and it comes fifty days after the Passover.) "When the day of Pentecost was fully come," the Spirit descended upon them and "they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance" (Acts 2:1, 4).

Their baptism in the Spirit enabled them to fulfill the mission Jesus had given them. Jesus had promised, "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth" (1:8 NKJV). The remainder of the Book of Acts (chs. 2-28) relates the spread of the Gospel throughout the Roman Empire. The 120 believers who had been in the Upper Room went everywhere, witnessing to the saving power of Jesus Christ, the resurrected Lord.

This week's lesson examines three outpourings of the Spirit that occurred after Pentecost (Acts 8; 10; 19). These events demonstrate the initial giving of the Spirit on the Day of Pentecost was not a once-and-for-all manifestation. On the contrary, God continued to manifest His Spirit in the early church and throughout history. Even now, in the twenty-first century, the world is experiencing a great outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

## **1. CONVERTS RECEIVE THE SPIRIT**

### **A. Salvation Comes to Samaria (Acts 8:4-8, 12)**

**4 Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word. 5 Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them. 6 And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did. 7 For unclean spirits, crying with loud voice, came out of many that were possessed with them: and many taken with palsies, and that were lame, were healed. 8 And there was great joy in that city.**

**12 But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.**

In the first five years following Pentecost, the early church enjoyed rapid growth. The success of the Jesus movement angered the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem, and they began to persecute the Christians. The stoning of Stephen was an example of the rising opposition to the message of the Gospel (Acts 6:8—7:60). Hoping to escape persecution, the believers were scattered; and they “went every where, preaching the word” (8:1-4).

One of the early converts in Jerusalem was named Philip, who became a leader in the early church. Philip and six others had been chosen as the first deacons because they were “full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom” (6:3). After Stephen's death, Philip traveled to the city of Samaria and

began to preach there (8:5). The people were very receptive, partly because of the “miracles” that accompanied Philip’s preaching (v. 6). The miracles included many healings of serious illnesses and the casting out of “unclean spirits” (v. 7). Healings included those “taken with palsies,” meaning they were paralyzed. In our time, we would call these sufferers paraplegics, and they would be confined to wheelchairs. Therefore, a modern equivalent would be to say “many were healed and came out of their wheelchairs.”

The miracles, the deliverances, and the conversions to Christ created a mood of “great joy” in Samaria (v. 8). We can imagine the joy that would result from a revival where many of our friends and relatives were delivered from bondages and healed of major illnesses.

The phrase “when they believed” (v. 12) signifies a point in time when people exercised saving faith. The verb *believe* and the noun *faith* come from the same root word in the original Greek (*pistis*). A great number of converts, “both men and women” (v. 12), were baptized. The baptism of new converts continued the ordinance instituted by Jesus (Matt. 28:19) and practiced by the apostles (Acts 2:41).

### **Supernatural Impartation**

In the classic TV show *The Six Million Dollar Man*, astronaut Steve Austin received robotic implants to replace both of his legs, an arm, and an eye that had been severely damaged in a test-flight accident. These “bionic” body parts made Steve a super-human. *The Six Million Dollar Man* was fiction; but there is a way for humans to receive genuine supernatural abilities. The Holy Spirit bestows the power of God upon otherwise weak human vessels—giving believers gifts of knowledge, wisdom, healings, prophecy, miracles, and more.

#### **B. Pentecost Comes to Samaria (Acts 8:14-17)**

**14 Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the**

**word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: 15 Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost: 16 (For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.) 17 Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost.**

The apostles in Jerusalem heard about Philip's successful evangelism, and they sent Peter and John to oversee the new work there. When Peter and John arrived, they learned the Samaritans had not yet been baptized in the Holy Spirit, even though they had "received the word of God" and had been baptized in water (8:14, 16). Therefore, the Samaritan revival demonstrates it is possible to be "born of the Spirit" (John 3:5-6) but not be "filled with the Spirit" (Eph. 5:18; Acts 2:4). Everyone who is born again is indwelt by the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:9), but not every believer has been baptized (or filled) with the Holy Spirit.

It is important that we clarify our terminology regarding the work of the Holy Spirit. The terms "baptized with" the Spirit and "filled" with the Spirit refer to the same dynamic work. We know they are the same because Jesus told His disciples they would be "baptized" with the Spirit in a few days (Acts 1:5); but when that event happened, it is said they were "filled" with the Spirit (2:4). The distinction in terms is that *baptism* refers to the initial experience of being filled, and the initial experience can happen only once. This first-time experience of Spirit-baptism may also be called "receiving" the Spirit, as it is here in 8:15. However, a believer can be "filled" with the Spirit over and over, even daily. The disciples who were filled at Pentecost were filled again just a few days later (4:31). A person who is continually filled with the Spirit is said to be "full" of the Spirit (6:3). Because the coming of the Spirit in power is such an extraordinary experience, it can also be described as the Spirit "falling" upon believers (8:16; 10:44; 11:15; see also Ezek. 11:5).

Philip's converts were indwelt by the Spirit because they had received Jesus, but they had not

received Spirit-baptism as an endowment of power. However, when the apostles Peter and John “laid their hands” (Acts 8:17) on the new Christians, the Holy Spirit came upon them. The laying on of hands was an ancient custom that symbolized the transferring of authority from one person to another. By the laying on of hands, Moses bestowed the Spirit on Joshua (Num. 27:23; Deut. 34:9). The Israelites laid hands on the Levites to authorize them in ministry (Num. 8:10). When Ananias laid his hands on Saul, Saul was healed and filled with the Spirit (Acts 9:17). Timothy received gifts of ministry when Paul (1 Tim. 4:14) and the elders laid hands on him (2 Tim. 1:6).

The coming of the Spirit on the Day of Pentecost was evidenced by speaking in tongues, and apparently the same sign took place in Samaria. Acts 8:18 says a man named “Simon saw” the Spirit had been given; therefore, the reception of the Spirit was accompanied by some visible or audible sign. Throughout the books of Luke and Acts, the filling of the Spirit normally resulted in some kind of inspired speech; therefore, we can assume the same was true of the Samaritans’ experience (Luke 1:41-42, 67; Acts 2:4; 4:8, 31; 13:9-10).

We might ask why Peter and John thought it necessary to go to Samaria and pray for the new Christians to be filled with the Holy Spirit. They “believed” on the Lord, and they were baptized. Was that not good enough? Did the Samaritans really need to be baptized in the Holy Spirit? Is the Spirit-filled life meant for every Christian, or is it only for ministers, missionaries, and other leaders? The Apostle Peter answered that question earlier in his Pentecost sermon with a resounding, *Yes, the Spirit-filled life is for every believer*. He declared, “For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call” (Acts 2:39).

Earlier that same day in Jerusalem, when the Holy Spirit invaded the Upper Room, “all” (not just a few) of them were filled with the Spirit (v. 4). On a later occasion, the early church was gathered for prayer; and, once again, “all” of them were filled with the Holy Spirit (4:31). Still later,

Peter preached at the house of Cornelius; and the Spirit came upon “all” who heard Peter’s preaching (10:44). According to the Book of Acts, Spirit baptism is for you, me, and everyone who receives Jesus Christ as Savior.

§ *Why is it still important for Christians to be filled with the Holy Spirit?*

## **2. GENTILES RECEIVE THE SPIRIT**

### **A. The Gentile Pentecost (Acts 10:44-48)**

**44 While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. 45 And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. 46 For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter, 47 Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? 48 And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days.**

The Holy Spirit was given first to the 120 disciples in Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost and then to all of the converts who came to Jesus through the preaching of the apostles (Acts 2:38). These new converts in Jerusalem were Jews; but as the preaching of the Gospel expanded from Jerusalem into Samaria and beyond, the Spirit was poured out on non-Jews as well.

The first significant outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Gentiles happened in Caesarea about seven years after Pentecost, at the home of Cornelius, a Roman centurion. Cornelius was not a Christian, but he “feared God,” cared for the poor, and “prayed to God always” (10:2). As he prayed one morning, an angel came to him in a vision in which God instructed him to bring the Apostle Peter to his home, and Peter would tell him what he must do (vv. 5-6). Although Peter was hesitant to go into the home of a Gentile, he had received a vision in which God instructed him to go to

Cornelius' house and preach the Gospel. While Peter preached, "the Holy Spirit came down on all those who heard the message" (v. 44 CSB).

Without warning and without planning, the Holy Spirit descended upon the people in a sudden, forceful, and miraculous way. We cannot schedule the moving of the Holy Spirit, but we can pray for it and expect it. As everyone in Cornelius' household was filled with the Spirit, they all spoke in tongues (v. 46), replicating what had happened at Pentecost (2:4).

"Those of the circumcision" were the Jewish believers who had come with Peter, and they were "astonished" the Spirit had been given to the Gentiles (10:45 NKJV). At that time, the Jewish Christians believed Christ was King of the Jews only; therefore, if a Gentile wished to become a Christian, they must also become a Jew and practice Judaism.

Peter, remembering his dream in which God had told him not to reject anyone as unclean (vv. 15, 28), offered water baptism to these Gentiles. He reasoned God's filling them with the Spirit was sufficient proof they had been accepted by God; so they should be baptized and accepted by the church.

Unlike the converts at Samaria, the new believers in Cornelius' house did not receive the Spirit by the laying on of hands. Also, the order of spiritual experiences at Cornelius' house was different from the order at Samaria. The Samaritans accepted Jesus; they were baptized in water; then, they received the Spirit. In contrast, Cornelius' group received the Gospel message; they received the Spirit; and then, they were baptized.

§ *How does Acts 10:44 demonstrate the power of the preached Word?*

#### **B. The Gentile Pentecost Recounted (Acts 11:15-18)**

**15 And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning. 16 Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with**

**water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost. 17 Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; what was I, that I could withstand God? 18 When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.**

Peter's fellowship with Gentiles did not go unnoticed by his Jewish friends in Jerusalem, and they did not approve. Peter, however, defended his actions by explaining he had followed the directive of the Holy Spirit (Acts 11:12).

Peter recounted how the Spirit had fallen on everyone in Cornelius' house. The entire group of people had received Jesus as Savior and were filled with the Spirit. Peter pointed out, further, that the experience at Cornelius' house was the same as Jesus' disciples experience on the Day of Pentecost. Peter said, "God gave to them the same gift as He also gave to us also" (v. 17 NASB). The Jewish Christians believed Peter's testimony, and they "glorified God," realizing God was reaching out to the Gentiles (v. 18).

Despite Peter's testimony, the Jewish Christians did not change their approach to evangelism. They continued their practice of preaching only to the Jews (v. 19). The mission to the Gentiles, however, was picked up by Paul and Barnabas (13:42, 46) about ten years later and was officially approved by the church when the apostles and elders met in Jerusalem to decide the question (15:6-29). The decision of the Jerusalem Council rested partly on Peter's experience at Cornelius' house, which he recounted in front of all the apostles and elders (vv. 7-11).

### **The Holy Spirit Baptizer**

John the Baptist was the forerunner of the Christ, and he cried out two great declarations concerning Jesus: (1) "Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29 NKJV) and (2) "He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire" (Matt. 3:11 NKJV). What was



John saying? *Everyone should have an encounter with Jesus as Savior and everyone should have an encounter with Jesus as the Holy Spirit Baptizer.*—Chris Sustar

### **3. DISCIPLES RECEIVE THE SPIRIT**

#### **A. Baptism of Repentance (Acts 19:1-4)**

**1** And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples, **2** He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. **3** And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism. **4** Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.

After the Jerusalem Council of chapter 15, the Book of Acts is devoted almost entirely to the ministry of the Apostle Paul. About six years after the council, which would be about twenty-four years after Pentecost, Paul traveled to Ephesus—a major city in Asia Minor (on the western coast of what is today Turkey). There he encountered a group of “disciples” (v. 1) who had been baptized by followers of John the Baptist. These disciples had experienced a baptism of repentance; so, Paul asked them if they had received the Holy Spirit since they “believed” (v. 2). He would not have asked this question if he did not consider them to be born again. They knew nothing about the Holy Spirit; therefore, Paul explained the full Gospel to them.

§ *How would you answer Paul's question in verse 2?*

#### **B. Baptism in the Spirit (Acts 19:5-7)**

**5** When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. **6** And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with

**tongues, and prophesied. 7 And all the men were about twelve.**

Paul baptized the Ephesian believers in the name of the Lord Jesus. After their baptisms, he laid hands on each of them; and they were baptized in the Holy Spirit. Once again, the sign of Spirit-baptism was speaking in tongues; and, on this occasion, they also were given words of prophecy in fulfillment of Acts 2:17.

A major message of the Book of Acts is the Holy Spirit is not an optional add-on to the Christian life; rather, Spirit-fullness is essential and normal for all believers. The four major outpourings of the Holy Spirit in the Book of Acts happened (1) in Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost (ch. 2); (2) in Samaria during Philip's revival (ch. 8); (3) at Cornelius' house when Peter preached (ch. 10); and (4) in Ephesus when Paul prayed for the believers there (ch. 19). Each of these outpourings came upon large groups of people, and each event had significance for the expansion of the early church.

As important as these four examples are, we should not regard them as models of how Spirit-baptism must occur in every church or in every revival. On most occasions, the Spirit will come upon an individual when he or she receives Jesus Christ and subsequently seeks to be filled with the Spirit. Individual Spirit-baptism is the norm, and the New Testament provides many examples of individuals who were filled with the Spirit apart from anyone else, including John the Baptist, Elizabeth, Zacharias, Simeon, Jesus, Saul, the Ethiopian eunuch, and Apollos. In fact, the believers in Samaria and in Ephesus did not receive the Spirit all at once, because the Spirit came upon each of them individually as Peter, John, and Paul laid hands on them. Obviously, the apostles could not lay their hands on everyone at once. Therefore, there were only two times the Spirit came upon a whole group of people at one time—on the Day of Pentecost and when Peter preached at Cornelius' house. The event at Cornelius' house was necessary to demonstrate to Peter and the other

Jewish believers that the Gentiles were not required to become Jews in order to be saved.

### **Where's Our Reliance?**

The danger in Christendom today is to rely on men, money, and methods, instead of relying on the power of the Holy Spirit. Christians have become so filled with activity—most of it legitimate activity—and their hands are so full that their hearts are empty. They are so busy that they have no time to do anything. They have so much to do that they get nothing done.—Ray H. Hughes

### **CALLED TO CONTINUE CHRIST'S MINISTRY**

We need the power of the Spirit in our lives and in the church because we are called to continue the ministry of Jesus Christ to the lost world. Jesus inaugurated His earthly ministry by stating His own dependence on the Holy Spirit. Reading from the prophet Isaiah, Jesus declared, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised” (Luke 4:18).

Jesus Christ was the Son of God; yet, His work on earth was accomplished through the Spirit's anointing (see also Matt. 3:11-17; John 1:32-34). If Jesus needed the Holy Spirit, then so do we. In this week's lesson, we observed repeated outpourings of the Holy Spirit throughout the Book of Acts; and we learned God is continuing to pour out His Spirit on hungry souls today!

#### **Daily Devotions**

- M. Spirit-Inspired Judge (Judges 6:34-40)
- T. Spirit-Inspired Levite (2 Chronicles 20:14-19)
- W. Spirit-Inspired Prophet (Ezekiel 11:1-5)
- T. Spirit-Inspired Mother (Luke 1:39-45)
- F. Spirit-Inspired Father (Luke 1:67-79)

S. Spirit-Inspired Martyr (Acts 7:54-60)