

Worksheet Zoom Life Group Wednesday 27 May 2020



This Sunday is Pentecost so our bible study will be on Acts 2. Below are some questions and reflections that might be useful to think about before our Zoom Life-Group. You can type in or write your answers, just have them ready! Acts has been called the Gospel of the Holy Spirit, and before we study Acts 2, we will take a general view of what Acts teaches about the Holy Spirit.

1. In the Christian church, Pentecost¹ is often referred to as 'the coming of the Spirit'. Think about what this means.

Now refer Acts 1:16, Acts 28:25 and Acts 7:51. Do you now have a different view?

2. Acts describes how from the moment of Pentecost, the early church relied on and responded to the Holy Spirit. There are more than 40 references to the Holy Spirit in Acts. Look up the following and identify the influences of the Holy Spirit.

Acts 8:20, Acts 10:19, Acts 16:6

Acts 1:8, Acts 4:31, Acts 13:9

Now read Acts 2:1-13

3. At the start of the reading, what do you think the mood was among the disciples?
4. What natural phenomena are described in verses 1-4? What do you think their significance is?

¹ Pentecost is a Jewish feast held 50 days after the Passover, traditionally viewed as the day the Law was given to Moses

A Study For Pentecost

Study Notes : Some Ideas for Answers! (Taken from a variety of commentaries)



Question 1

It is perhaps unfortunate that we so often speak of the events at Pentecost as the coming of the Holy Spirit. The danger is that we may think that the Holy Spirit came into existence at that time. That is not so; God is eternally Father, Son and Holy Spirit. In fact Acts makes that quite clear. The Holy Spirit was speaking in David ([Acts 1:16](#)); the Spirit spoke through Isaiah ([Acts 28:25](#)); Stephen accuses the Jews of having, all through their history, opposed the Spirit ([Acts 7:51](#)). In that sense the Spirit is God in every age revealing his truth to men. At the same time something special happened at Pentecost.

Question 2

Guidance

The Holy Spirit was the source of (all) guidance. The Spirit moves Philip to make contact with the Ethiopian Eunuch ([Acts 8:29](#)); prepares Peter for the coming of the emissaries of Cornelius ([Acts 10:19](#)); orders Peter to go without hesitation with these emissaries ([Acts 11:12](#)); enables Agabus to foretell the coming famine ([Acts 11:28](#)); orders the setting apart of Paul and Barnabas for the momentous step of taking the gospel to the Gentiles ([Acts 13:2](#); [Acts 13:4](#)); guides the decisions of the Council of Jerusalem ([Acts 15:28](#)); guides Paul past Asia, Mysia and Bithynia, down into Troas and thence to Europe ([Acts 16:6](#)); tells Paul what awaits him in Jerusalem ([Acts 20:23](#)). The early Church was a Spirit-guided community

Courage and Power

The Spirit was the source of day-to-day courage and power. The disciples are to receive power when the Spirit comes ([Acts 1:8](#)); Peter's courage and eloquence before the Sanhedrin are the result of the activity of the Spirit ([Acts 4:31](#)); Paul's conquest of Elymas is the work of the Spirit ([Acts 13:9](#)). The Christian courage to meet the dangerous situation, the Christian power to cope with life more than adequately, the Christian eloquence when eloquence is needed, the Christian joy which is independent of circumstances are all ascribed to the work of the Spirit.

Question 3

Despondent, uncertain over the future. Elation of the resurrection fading, bewilderment at the transfiguration.

Question 4

The association of the sound of a rushing mighty wind, filling the whole house, with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit is unusual. But it probably has connection with the fact that in both the Hebrew and Greek languages, the word for spirit as in Holy Spirit is the same word for breath or wind. Here the sound from heaven is the sound of the Holy Spirit being poured out on the disciples.

The divided tongues of fire appearing over each one are also unusual. It probably is connected with John the Baptist's prophecy that Jesus would baptise with the Holy Spirit and fire (Matthew 3:11)

A Study For Pentecost

The idea behind the picture of fire is usually purification, as a refiner uses fire to make pure gold. Or fire can burn away what is temporary, leaving what will last. This is an excellent illustration of the principle that the filling of the Holy Spirit is not just for abstract power, but for purity.



In certain places in the Old Testament, God showed His special pleasure with a sacrifice by kindling the fire for it Himself. Fire from heaven came down and consumed the sacrifice. The experience of the followers of Jesus on Pentecost is another example of God sending fire from heaven to show His pleasure and power, but this time, it descended upon living sacrifices (Romans 12:1)

Under the Old Covenant, the Holy Spirit rested on God's people more as a nation, that is, Israel. But under the New Covenant, the Holy Spirit rests upon God's people as individuals - the tongues of fire sat upon each of them.

A quote from Calvin 'The church can be repaired by no other means, saving only by the giving of the Holy Spirit'.

Question 5

Debate over the meaning of this depending on the tradition of the commentator. Gift for the individual/the church, with many questioning its purpose.

You might like to consider your reaction to this interpretation.

To speak in foreign languages was unnecessary. The crowd was made up of Jews ([Acts 2:5](#)) and proselytes ([Acts 2:10](#)). Proselytes were Gentiles who had accepted the Jewish religion and the Jewish way of life. For a crowd like that at most two languages were necessary. Almost all Jews spoke Aramaic; and, even if they were Jews of the Dispersion from a foreign land, they would speak that language which almost everyone in the world spoke at that time--Greek.

It seems most likely that Luke, a Gentile, had confused speaking with tongues with speaking with foreign tongues. What happened was that for the first time in their lives this motley mob was hearing the word of God in a way that struck straight home to their hearts and that they could understand. The power of the Spirit was such that it had given these simple disciples a message that could reach every hearer.

An idea to note is that the disciples did not preach in tongues - they were overhead, later in the chapter verses 14-21 Peter 'addresses' the crowd. This is generally considered to be the first 'Christian' address.

Questions 6 & 7

Open to debate!

Here is website for further study should you wish, there are others.....

<https://www.wordsoflife.co.uk/bible-studies/study-7-the-day-of-pentecost/>