

Lesson 2
POWER FROM HEAVEN
Acts 2

Memory Verse: “They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.” (Acts 2:42 NIV)

During His earthly ministry, Jesus Christ prepared for the creation of the church. He instructed His disciples with *truth* they did not fully understand at the time, and He demonstrated for them *life* that they did not fully appreciate at the time (John 14:6). We have this record in the Gospels.

After His ascension, Christ poured out His Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. This was the birthday of the church. The baptism of the Spirit did something God had never done before in history. It united believers with Christ in a new relationship: as fellow members of the spiritual body of Christ (John 14:17: "He abides with you and will be in you."). Believers then shared the life of Christ in a way never before experienced. God united them with Him. The same Spirit of God that indwelt Him now indwells us. The unity of the church is not external: what we believe (creeds), how we organize ourselves (polity), or where and how we meet (culture). It is internal: through Him who indwells us. The basis of our unity in the church goes back to the origin of the church. It began when the Holy Spirit first baptized believers on the day of Pentecost (1 Cor. 12:13; Rom. 8:9). The "church" is not just a new name for Israel.

Luke had introduced the beginning of Jesus' earthly ministry with His baptism with the Spirit (Luke 3:21-22). He now paralleled that with the beginning of Jesus' heavenly ministry with the Spirit baptism of His disciples in this chapter. The same Spirit who indwelt and empowered Jesus during His earthly ministry would now indwell and empower His believing disciples. John the Baptist had predicted this Pentecost baptism with the Spirit (Matt. 3:11; Luke 3:16), as had Jesus (Acts 1:8). Jesus had already done the baptizing, and now the Spirit "came upon" the disciples. “We are not going to move this world by criticism of it nor conformity to it, but by the combustion within it of lives ignited by the Spirit of God.”

Vance Havner made that statement and he was right. The early church had none of the things that we think are so essential for success today - buildings, money, political influence, social status - and yet the church won multitudes to Christ and saw many churches established throughout the Roman world. Why? This was because the church had the power of the Holy Spirit energizing its ministry. They were a people who “were ignited by the Spirit of God.”

That same Holy Spirit power is available to us today to make us more effective witnesses for Christ. The better we understand His working at Pentecost, the better we will be able to relate to Him and experience His power. The ministry of the Spirit is to glorify Christ in the life and witness of the believer (John 16:14), and that is what is important. Acts 2 helps us understand the Holy Spirit by recording the experiences in the life of the church.

Scriptural Reading: Acts 2: 1 -13, 29-46.

Things to learn: 1) The Church, Holy Spirit and Worship 2) The Church Witnessing 3) Church life in the Spirit

Questions:

Q1. How should we treat Pentecost and the workings of the Holy Spirit on the church found in verses 1 to 13?

Q2. How did Peter in his sermon (representing the apostles) explain the phenomenon that happened about Jesus and salvation to the lost Jews from verses 14 to 41?

Q3. What were the four key areas that undergird life in the early state of the church in Acts 2:42-47?