

## Bi134 Acts

### *Lesson Bi134-5 Lessons from the Day of Pentecost*

In Africa a young man was studying the book of Acts, much like you are doing now. As he studied, he discovered how the apostles preached with power, and how God confirmed their preaching with miracles, signs, and wonders. He also learned about how they planted Spirit-empowered missionary churches and advanced God's kingdom into new regions. He became very excited and said to himself, "I want to be like the apostles and early Christians." He told Jesus, "If you will help me, I will someday do the things they did."

One day he went to his pastor and told him about his desire to be used by God. The pastor reminded him of what he was learning from the book of Acts. If he wanted to do the same works as the apostles in the book of Acts, he would need to be empowered by the Spirit as the apostles were in the book of Acts. The pastor then prayed with the man, and he was wondrously baptized in the Holy Spirit and he began to speak in tongues just like the 120 disciples did on the Day of Pentecost.

The young man's life began to change. His compassion for the lost grew. As time passed the Lord gave him a burden for a nearby village. Again he went to his pastor. This time he asked if he could take a team from the church and go the village and plant a new church. The pastor agreed. The young man and his team went to the village and conducted a church planting campaign. The Lord anointed his preaching and performed miracles to confirm the message. People were saved, and today there is a strong church in that place. In time, teams went out from the new church and started even more churches in the area. This is a wonderful example of how we can put into action the lessons we are studying.

Before we conclude our study of the Day of Pentecost, we need to address three important issues. First, we will discuss how the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost fulfills Jesus' promise in Acts 1:8. Next, we examine the missionary focus of the Day of Pentecost. And finally, we will learn how we can receive the Holy Spirit into our own lives today.

In Acts 1:8 Jesus promised his disciples, "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses *in Jerusalem...*" Remember, the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost occurred in Jerusalem. And, as Jesus had promised, the result was powerful Spirit-empowered witness in the city. Thus, what happened on the Day of Pentecost is the first great example in Acts of the "empowering-results-in-witness" pattern Jesus described in Acts 1:8: "You will receive power...and you will be my witnesses."

It is possible to view the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost in two distinct ways—both of which are true. First, the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost can be viewed as a one-time historical event. Just as there was only one Calvary and one resurrection of Jesus, historically speaking, there was only one Day of Pentecost. However, what happened at Pentecost was more than a historical event. It can also be viewed as a typical outpouring of the Spirit on a local congregation of believers. As such, it can be expected to occur again and again throughout the

book of Acts and church history. At Pentecost the church in Jerusalem was empowered by the Spirit to carry out its task of witnessing for Christ “in Jerusalem.” It is an example of how any church needs to go about reaching its city or village with the gospel. Like those first disciples, they must first commit themselves to God’s mission and then be empowered by the Holy Spirit.

The outpouring of the Spirit on the church in Jerusalem is also the first example of the “empowering-results-in-witness” pattern in Acts as was discussed in Lessons 1 and 2. As we go through Acts, we will point out how this pattern is repeated again and again. This outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost launched what we are calling the Jewish Mission. The Jewish mission involves reaching Jerusalem and continues through Acts chapter 7. Further, as discussed in Lesson 2, it is the first of seven key outpourings of the Spirit in Acts. In order to refresh your memory about these things, you may want to re-listen to Lessons 1 and 2.

Another important lesson we learn about the Day of Pentecost is that it was a missionary event. Everything that happened on that day emphasizes this truth. Notice these six amazing facts about the Day of Pentecost:

*Fact 1: The Promise of Pentecost.* Jesus’ promise concerning Pentecost was a missionary promise. Remember, before the Day of Pentecost he told his disciples, “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

*Fact 2: The Timing of Pentecost.* The outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost occurred on a harvest festival known to the Jews as the Feast of Harvest (Exodus 23:22). Pentecost thus represented the beginning of the worldwide harvest of souls. In his parables, Jesus often spoke of harvest and missions.

*Fact 3: The Sign of Pentecost.* When the 120 Jewish disciples were filled with the Spirit on the Day of Pentecost, they began “declaring the wonders of God” in Gentile languages (Acts 2:11). By choosing the sign of tongues, God was showing his church that he wanted all nations to hear the gospel.

*Fact 4: The Setting of Pentecost.* The Bible says that on Day of Pentecost “there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven” (Acts 2:5). This shows that Pentecost was an international gathering with an international purpose.

*Fact 5: Peter’s Explanation of Pentecost.* Peter explained to the crowd at Pentecost that they were witnessing a fulfillment of Joel’s prophecy that God would pour out his Spirit “on all people” (Joel 2:28; Acts 1:17). In using the term “all people,” the prophet was talking about people from every nation and place in the world.

*Fact 6: The Results of Pentecost.* As a result of the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost, and Peter’s Spirit-empowered witnesses, 3,000 people were saved (2:41) from “every nation under heaven.”

So you see, everything that happened on the Day of Pentecost was about God empowering and preparing his church to take the gospel to the ends of the earth. The same is true today. We seek for a Pentecostal outpouring in our churches, not so we can become more blessed, but so that we can be empowered and prepared to participate in God's final harvest.

An important question we must answer at this point in our study is, "How can we today receive the same empowering experience the disciples received on the Day of Pentecost two-thousand years ago?" In Luke 11:9-13 Jesus answers this question. One receives the Spirit by simply asking in faith. It is helpful to break the process of receiving the Spirit into three simple "faith steps." These three steps are asking in faith, receiving by faith, and speaking in faith. Let's look more closely at each of these steps:

*Step 1: Ask in faith.* To receive the Spirit, simply and sincerely present your request to God. Jesus promised, "Ask and it will be given you" (Luke 11:9). As you ask, believe that God is hearing and answering your prayer. Confidently pray, "Lord, I believe your promise. I believe that if I ask you for the Spirit, you will give me the Spirit. So, right now, in Jesus' name, I ask you, give me the Holy Spirit, and empower me as your witness." As you pray, believe that God is giving you his Spirit. Sense the Spirit's presence as he comes upon you.

*Step 2: Receive by faith.* Once the Spirit comes upon you, you must receive him inside you. You do this by fully believing Jesus' promise: "Everyone who asks receives" (Luke 11:10). In Mark 11:24, Jesus told us how to receive the Spirit, saying, "Whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours." This act of faith can be compared to Peter's step of faith when he stepped from the boat and began to walk on water. His bold step of faith resulted in a miracle! Once you have sensed the Spirit's presence within, pray and truly believe this simple prayer: "I am now full of the Holy Spirit." Consciously sense the Spirit's presence inside you

*Step 3: Speak in Faith.* Now speak as the Spirit enables (see Acts 2:4). Allow the Holy Spirit to gush forth from deep inside, out of your "innermost being." As he does, cooperate with what he is doing. Yield to him your vocal organs and lips. You will begin to speak words in a language you have never learned. When this happens, don't be afraid. This is God's sign to you that he is empowering you to be his witness. Now, yield yourself more and more to the Spirit. Let the words flow. Continue to speak, believing God with all of your heart, holding nothing back, fully trusting God to do his part.

Praise the Lord! You have been baptized in the Holy Spirit and you have been empowered as Christ's Spirit-anointed spokesperson just as Peter was on the Day of Pentecost.

This lesson is **important** because we have learned three important lessons. First, we have learned that God is ready to pour out his Spirit on any local congregation to empower them to be his witnesses in their place. Secondly, we have learned that Pentecost is all about missions. And third, we have learned that we can personally be empowered by the Holy Spirit by asking, receiving, and speaking in faith.

The **main truth** of this lesson is that we all must receive God's power to accomplish God's work.

Let's **review** some significant things we have learned in this lesson.

1. What lesson did we learn about the results of the outpouring of the Spirit on the Day of Pentecost?

A. [PAUSE] If you answered that we learned that the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost is the first example of the "empowering-results-in-witness" pattern Jesus introduced in Acts 1:8, you are right.

2. We also learned that Pentecost was a missionary event. What six facts demonstrate that this is true?

A. [PAUSE] If you answered (1) the promise of Pentecost, (2) the timing of Pentecost, (3) the sign of Pentecost, (4) the setting of Pentecost, (5) Peter's explanation of Pentecost, and (6) the results of Pentecost, you are correct.

3. Finally, we learned about how one may receive the Holy Spirit today. Recite from memory the three steps in receiving the Spirit

A. [PAUSE] If you answered, "ask in faith, receive by faith, and speak in faith," you are correct.

Your **assignment** is to replay this lesson several times until you thoroughly learn the truths it is teaching. Then, if you have not been filled with the Spirit, follow the three steps and receive the Holy Spirit today. Also, share these three steps with other Christians and help them to be filled with the Spirit too.