

Bi134 Acts

Lesson Bi134-9 A Second Outpouring in Jerusalem

Some Christians think that once they have been filled with the Holy Spirit, they have arrived, and there is nothing more they need to do but to bask in the blessings of God. This is foolish thinking, as our lesson today will reveal. It is the story of a second outpouring of the Spirit in Jerusalem.

Following the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost, the church in Jerusalem became a powerful evangelistic force. The disciples witnessed with power, and God performed miracles to confirm the word. As a result, many were turning to Christ. This angered the Jewish leaders. So they arrested the apostles Peter and John and commanded them to stop preaching in Jesus' name. Then they let them go.

Peter and John returned to the company of believers and told them how the chief priests and elders had threatened them. When the believers heard this, they raised their voices to God and began to pray with great fervor.

They prayed a powerful, God-centered missionary prayer. Rather than complain about their troubles, they acknowledged how God ruled over everything. "Sovereign Lord," they prayed, "you made the heavens and the earth and the sea, and everything in them... How foolish it is for men to try to fight against you! The kings of the earth may oppose you and your Christ, but really, they are only doing what you had decided beforehand should happen."

They concluded their prayer with two requests. First, they asked God for boldness to continue telling people about Jesus. Then, they asked him to perform miraculous signs and wonders through the name of Jesus (Acts 4:23-30).

God answered their prayer in a dramatic way. The place where they were meeting began to shake. They knew that God had come in power. Then, just as he had done on the Day of Pentecost, the Spirit rushed inside of them and filled them all, causing them to speak the gospel with great boldness. But they did not speak just one time. They kept on testifying about the resurrection of Jesus with great power and effectiveness. Everyone could see that God's great grace was all over them.

Not only that, they were committed to one another. They were filled with generosity and willingly shared whatever they had. As a result, everyone's need was met. Some even sold their houses or lands and gave the money to the apostles who, in turn, shared it with those in need. One of those who did this was a Levite from Cyprus, an island in the eastern part of the Mediterranean Sea. His name was Barnabas, meaning 'son of encouragement.'

This story from Acts 4 tells of a second powerful outpouring of the Spirit on the church in Jerusalem. It is the second of seven key outpourings that occur in the book of Acts. You will remember that the first outpouring took place on the Day of Pentecost. We will point out the other five outpourings as they occur.

For now, it is important to notice that every time the Spirit is poured out in Acts, it results in powerful missional witness. That's what Jesus had said would happen in Acts 1:8 when he promised his disciples, "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."

This is exactly what is happening during this second Jerusalem outpouring. After the outpouring at Pentecost, the disciples spoke in tongues, and then Peter began to proclaim Christ with power. Three thousand were saved. The same thing happens after this second Jerusalem outpouring. In Acts 4:31 Luke says, "After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly." (You should commit this verse to memory.) From this story of the second Jerusalem outpouring we learn four important lessons:

First, we learn that *one outpouring of the Holy Spirit is never enough*. This is true for an individual seeking to minister in the power of the Spirit. It is also true for a church seeking to impact its community for Christ. We must not make the mistake of thinking that once we have received the Holy Spirit and spoken in tongues, we are set up for life. The empowering of the Spirit must be cultivated and maintained. The work of the Holy Spirit must be experienced again and again in our lives. On the Day of Pentecost the Spirit came powerfully on the Jerusalem church. Now, days later, God pours out his Spirit again on the church. Both times everyone present is filled with the Spirit. Those who had never before been filled with the Spirit were filled for the first time. Those who had been filled in the past were refilled. The result was that "they spoke the word of God with boldness," just as Peter had done on the Day of Pentecost. Today, God wants to pour out his Spirit on his people again and again.

The second lesson we learn from this story is that, *if we are going to be a people of the Spirit, we must also be a people of prayer*. Throughout Acts, Luke connects the receiving of the Spirit with fervent prayer. Before Pentecost the disciples "all joined together constantly in prayer" (Acts 1:14). Now before the Second Jerusalem outpouring "they raised their voices together in prayer to God" (Acts 4:24). The Jewish leaders had threatened them and commanded them "not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus." The disciples' first reaction was to pray and ask for boldness to continue witnessing.

In doing this the disciples were doing what Jesus had told them to do. While he was with them, he had taught them that they should repeatedly ask for the Holy Spirit. Now, they were simply following his instructions. They prayed, "Lord...enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness.... Stretch out your hand to heal and perform miraculous signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus." In Scripture, to ask God to "stretch out" his hand is to ask him to manifest his presence through the power of the Holy Spirit. God answered them by sending his Spirit.

A third lesson we learn from this story is that, *when we are filled with the Spirit, we should expect to witness with power*. This is what happened throughout the book of Acts. Every time the Spirit comes upon someone and fills them, they begin telling people about Jesus. The pattern began at Pentecost. Now it is repeated. Luke says, "They were all filled with the Holy

Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.” The subject of their witness was the story of Jesus’ death and resurrection. Luke continues, “With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and God’s grace was powerfully upon them all.”

We should expect the same today. When the Holy Spirit fills us, we should immediately look for opportunities to tell people about Jesus. And, when we begin to testify, we should do so with power and boldness. Pastors must teach their people these truths.

A fourth and final lesson we learn from this story is that *we must allow the Holy Spirit to work in our lives, making us into generous people*. Not only did the outpouring of the Spirit cause the disciples in Jerusalem to speak in tongues, and to become powerful witnesses to the lost, it further caused them to become a generous caring community. According to Luke, those who received the Spirit during this second Jerusalem outpouring were “one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they shared everything they had.” You will remember that the same thing occurred after the first outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost. Such Spirit-prompted generosity is essential to reaching the nations with the gospel. He is not just the Spirit of power; he is also the Spirit of love and generosity.

This lesson is **important** because it teaches us that we should seek to be repeatedly filled with the Holy Spirit. Such fillings take place only when we earnestly seek God in prayer. They result in Spirit-empowered witness and Spirit-prompted generosity.

The **main truth** of this lesson is that we must seek God for repeated outpourings of the Holy Spirit both in our own lives and in the life of our church. Only then can we remain effective witnesses in our communities and in our world.

Now, let’s **review** some important truths we have learned from this lesson.

1. What important lesson do we learn from a second outpouring on the church in Jerusalem?
A. [PAUSE] If you answered, “we learn that one outpouring of the Spirit on an individual or a church is never enough; we must experience repeated outpourings,” you are correct.
2. What lesson does the book of Acts teach concerning the Holy Spirit and prayer?
A. [PAUSE] If you answered, “it teaches us that if we are going to be people of the Spirit we must also be people of prayer,” you are right.
3. Quote from memory Acts 4:31.
A. [PAUSE] If you said, “*After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly,*” you are correct.

Your **assignment** is to listen to this to this lesson several times until you have memorized Acts 4:31. Then explain to some friends the four important lessons you learned from this study.