

DOCTRINE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Holy Spirit at Pentecost

Lesson 5

The Holy Spirit's coming was predicted by the Old Testament prophets and by Jesus in the upper room before His death. The Jews eagerly anticipated this event, but did not understand that the Holy Spirit would be given at the birth of the Church. In this study we will be looking at the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. We will purposely avoid discussing the related issues like the gift of tongues, the filling of the Spirit, and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Those topics will be addressed in other lessons. What we want to focus on in this lesson are the predictions, fulfillments, and the purpose of the Holy Spirit's coming at Pentecost.

1 When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. 2 And suddenly there came from heaven a noise like a violent rushing wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. 3 And there appeared to them tongues as of fire distributing themselves, and they rested on each one of them. 4 And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit was giving them utterance. 5 Now there were Jews living in Jerusalem, devout men from every nation under heaven. 6 And when this sound occurred, the crowd came together, and were bewildered because each one of them was hearing them speak in his own language. . .

12 And they all continued in amazement and great perplexity, saying to one another, "What does this mean?" 13 But others were mocking and saying, "They are full of sweet wine." 14 But Peter, taking his stand with the eleven, raised his voice and declared to them: "Men of Judea and all you who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you and give heed to my words. 15 "For these men are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only the third hour of the day; 16 but this is what was spoken of through the prophet Joel: 17 'And it shall be in the last days,' God says, 'That I will pour forth of My Spirit on all mankind;. . .

21 'And it shall be that everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.' . . .

32 "This Jesus God raised up again, to which we are all witnesses. 33 "Therefore having been exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He has poured forth this which you both see and hear'. . .

*36 "Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ—this Jesus whom you crucified." 37 Now when they heard this, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brethren, what shall we do?" 38 Peter said to them, "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." **(Acts 2:1-6, 12-17, 21, 32-33, 36-38)***

While the Holy Spirit was first poured out upon believers to indwell them permanently at Pentecost, in several other instances, the Holy Spirit was also poured out on different groups **(See Acts 8:14–17; 9:17; 10:44f.; 11:15–17; 18:25; 19:2, 6)**. The reason for the physical manifestations and gift of tongues was to let the Apostles know that the promises made by the prophets and Jesus were now being fulfilled. Later Samaritans, Gentiles, and disciples of John the Baptist also experienced similar outpourings. This was not God's way of saying all believers will experience a supernatural manifestation of the Spirit, but that the Holy Spirit was to be given to Jews, Samaritans, Gentiles, and John's disciples in response to the gospel of Jesus Christ. It was to let all know they were now one in Christ's spiritual body, the Church.

I. DEFINITION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT'S COMING AT PENTECOST

- A. *The Holy Spirit*: "The public advent of the Spirit, for the purpose of ushering in and administering the new covenant, was second in importance only unto the incarnation of our Lord, which was in order to the winding up of the old economy and laying the foundations of the new. When God designed the salvation of His elect, He appointed two great means: the gift of His Son for them, and the gift of His Spirit to them; thereby each of the Persons in the Trinity being glorified. Hence from the first entrance of sin, there were two great heads to the promises which God gave His people: the sending of His Son to obey and die, the sending of His Spirit to make effectual the fruits of the former."¹
- B. *Tyndale Bible Dictionary*: "Since the coming of Christ and Pentecost, the Holy Spirit has been poured out on every believer. He has come not only to internalize the law of God (Jer 31:33) but also to help us develop Christian maturity by giving the fruits of godliness in greater fullness (Gal 5:22–24). Whereas maturity and freedom were experienced by some OT saints, it is God's gift to all His children in Christ (Acts 2:39; 1 Cor 12:13)."²
- C. *The New Bible Dictionary*: "In Acts the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost is the time when the disciples first experienced 'the last days' for themselves (the free dispensing of the eschatological Spirit being the hallmark of the new age), the time when their 'fully Christian' faith began (Acts 11:17). So in Acts 2:38 (and following) the promise of the gospel to the first enquirers centers on the Spirit, and in other evangelistic situations it is the reception of the Spirit which is evidently seen as the crucial factor manifesting the respondents' acceptance by God (8:14–17; 9:17; 10:44f.; 11:15–17; 18:25; 19:2, 6)."³
- D. *Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Dictionary*: "The pouring out of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost depended on the finished work of Christ in His death and resurrection. This was a certain sign of the new age brought by Christ and the mark of the new people of God, the church. The ministry of the Spirit guarantees that the results of Christ's work are experienced in the believer's life until Jesus returns to earth."⁴

¹ A. W. Pink, *The Holy Spirit*, pg. 31.

² Walter A. Elwell and Philip Wesley Comfort, *Tyndale Bible Dictionary*, (Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers, 2001), 805.

³ D. R. W. Wood, *New Bible Dictionary*, (InterVarsity Press, 1996, c1982, c1962), 1128.

⁴ Ronald F. Youngblood, F. F. Bruce, R. K. Harrison and Thomas Nelson Publishers, *Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, (Nashville: T. Nelson, 1995).

II. THOUGHTS TO PONDER

- A. *The Holy Spirit*: “At Pentecost the Holy Spirit came as He had never come before. Something then transpired which inaugurated a new era for the world, a new power of righteousness, a new basis for fellowship. On that day the fearing Peter was transformed into the intrepid evangelist. On that day the new wine of Christianity burst the old bottles of Judaism, and the Word went forth in a multiplicity of Gentile tongues. On that day more souls seem to have been truly regenerated, than during all the three and one half years of Christ’s public ministry. What had happened? It is not enough to say that the Spirit of God was given, for He had been given long before, both to individuals and the nation of Israel (Neh. 9:20; Hag. 2:5); no, the pressing question is, *in what sense* was He then given?”⁵
- B. *Tyndale Bible Dictionary*: “Christ stated that when the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, came, the disciples would pray to the Father in the name of Christ (Jn 16:23–25). Accordingly, we find that after the coming of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost, the early church is characterized by prayer (Acts 2:42) under the leadership of the apostles (6:4). The church praises God for the gift of his Son and his Spirit, and petitions God in times of difficulty (4:24; 12:5, 12).”⁶
- C. *New Dictionary of Theology*: “The great spiritual vitality in the church that the outpouring of the Spirit at and after Pentecost produced recurs in measure at times of revival, when the renewing ministry of the Spirit is sought and found (Lk. 11:13).”⁷
- D. *Nelson’s New Illustrated Bible Dictionary*: “Pentecost was a reversal of the Tower of Babel, where language became confused and nations were separated by misunderstanding (Gen. 11:1–9). At Pentecost, the Holy Spirit gathered persons from every nation into one united fellowship. From Pentecost onward, the Holy Spirit directs the unfolding drama of the growth of the church.”⁸
- E. The same Holy Spirit that brought many to Christ at Pentecost, and the weeks and months following, is the same Holy Spirit working in the Church and believers today. What implications does this have to evangelism?
- F. Why was the Holy Spirit’s coming at Pentecost accompanied by the sound of a rushing wind and tongues of fire?

⁵ A. W. Pink, *The Holy Spirit*, pgs. 33-34.

⁶ *Tyndale Bible Dictionary*, 1069.

⁷ Sinclair B. Ferguson and J.I. Packer, *New Dictionary of Theology*, electronic ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000, c1988), 319.

⁸ *Nelson’s New Illustrated Bible Dictionary*.

- G. Why did people from many nations each hear the apostles speak in their own language at Pentecost?
- H. Why did God choose to pour out the Holy Spirit on a religious holiday and the pilgrim festival of Pentecost?
- I. Why isn't the Holy Spirit working today like He did back then? Or is He?
- J. As we look back in history, what were some of the results of the Spirit's outpouring at Pentecost?
- K. How can the Holy Spirit "come upon" someone since the Holy Spirit is omnipresent?
- L. How could the apostles receive the gift of the Holy Spirit if Jesus already gave them the Holy Spirit earlier in **Jn. 20:22**?

III. **SCRIPTURAL PROOF OF THE HOLY SPIRIT'S COMING AT PENTECOST**

A. **Scriptures Predicting the Holy Spirit's outpouring:**

- 1. **Ezek. 11:19** "And I will give them one heart, and put a new spirit within them. And I will take the heart of stone out of their flesh and give them a heart of flesh,
- 2. **Ezek. 36:26-28** "Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. 26 "Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. 27 "I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances. 28 "You will live in the land that I gave to your forefathers; so you will be My people, and I will be your God.
- 3. **Joel 2:28** "It will come about after this That I will pour out My Spirit on all mankind; And your sons and daughters will prophesy, Your old men will dream dreams, Your young men will see visions.
- 4. **Luke 3:15-16** Now while the people were in a state of expectation and all were wondering in their hearts about John, as to whether he was the Christ, 16 John answered and said to them all, "As for me, I baptize you with water; but One is coming who is mightier than I, and I am not fit to untie the thong of His sandals; He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.

5. **Luke 24:49** “And behold, I am sending forth the promise of My Father upon you; but you are to stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.”
6. **John 7:38-39** “He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, ‘From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.’ ” 39 But this He spoke of the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive; for the Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.
7. **John 14:15-17, 26** “If you love Me, you will keep My commandments. 16 “I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; 17 that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you. . . 26 “But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you.
8. **John 15:26** “When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, that is the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify about Me,
9. **John 16:7-15** “But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you. 8 “And He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment; 9 concerning sin, because they do not believe in Me; 10 and concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father and you no longer see Me; 11 and concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged. 12 “I have many more things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. 13 “But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come. 14 “He will glorify Me, for He will take of Mine and will disclose it to you. 15 “All things that the Father has are Mine; therefore I said that He takes of Mine and will disclose it to you.
10. **Acts 1:4-5, 8** Gathering them together, He commanded them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for what the Father had promised, “Which,” He said, “you heard of from Me; 5 for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”. . . 8 but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.”
11. Since the Holy Spirit is God, is everywhere present, has always caused people to be born again, and has assisted the Saints throughout the Old Testament era, why do all the texts above speak of the Holy Spirit being “given” or “poured out?” What is the difference?

B. References to the Holy Spirit being given:

1. **John 20:22** And when He had said this, He breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit.
2. **Acts 2:38-39** Peter said to them, "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 "For the promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself."
3. **Acts 10:45** All the circumcised believers who came with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also.
4. **Rom. 5:5** and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

"At Pentecost, the Holy Spirit came on the people with great power (Acts 2:1-13), leading to conversions (Acts 2:41). When Philip went to Samaria, the Spirit of God anointed him with power (Acts 8:4-40), and the same happened with Peter and Cornelius (Acts 10:1-48). These powerful wonders were designed to convince the apostles and the Palestinian church that other cultures were to be part of the church." *(Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Dictionary)*

Some Purposes of the Holy Spirit's Coming at Pentecost			
Ezek. 36:25	To help Israel walk in and obey God's Word.	Ezek. 37:14	To impart spiritual life to those who are spiritually dead.
Ezek. 39:29	To reveal God to those who believe.	Joel 2:28-32	Spirit displays miraculous gifts through believers leading to the salvation of many.
Zech. 12:10	To bring sinners to repentance.	Luke 24:49	To empower the saints.
John 14:15-17; 26	To help, teach, encourage, bring to remembrance the words of Christ for evangelism, bear witness of God.	John 16:7-15	To convict the world concerning sin and judgement, to reveal truth, to glorify the Son.
Gal. 5:22-23	Produces godly character in those who have faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.	Eph. 1:13-14	Given as a pledge of our inheritance.
II Thess. 2:13	Helps in the process of sanctification.	Titus 3:5	Helps in the process of salvation.
II Tim. 3:16; II Pet. 2:20-21	To inspire men to write the Word of God.	I John 3:24	To give us assurance of salvation.

IV. ERRORS CONCERNING THE HOLY SPIRIT'S COMING AT PENTECOST

- A. Error – The sign gifts at Pentecost produced by the out pouring of the Holy Spirit should be a normal occurrence for the church today.
- B. Error – Before Pentecost believers didn't have the Holy Spirit.
- C. Error – The Church established by the Holy Spirit existed before Pentecost.
- D. Error – Some argue that Christians need to have a "second filling" of the Spirit. They argue that the Apostles were believers before Pentecost. The Holy Spirit was already "with them" (**Jn. 14:17**) and they had already "received" the Holy Spirit (**Jn. 20:22**), but though this was true, at Pentecost they received a "second filling" and this second filling is to be the normal experience for all believers and it is to be accompanied by speaking in tongues.
- E. Error – The outpouring of the Holy Spirit is synonymous with the Second Coming of Christ. When the Spirit was poured out at Pentecost, Christ began His spiritual reign on earth.

V. APPLICATION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT'S COMING AT PENTECOST

- A. God keeps His promises.
- B. At Pentecost God created a new entity called the Church of which every believer is now a part as those permanently indwelt by the Holy Spirit.
- C. Jesus said the Holy Spirit's coming at Pentecost is to every believer's advantage. The gift of the Holy Spirit is better than having Christ physically present!
- D. We must not forget that the Holy Spirit that inaugurated the church and brought thousands to Christ at Pentecost is the same Holy Spirit who can do the same thing today through faithful Christians who share the gospel.

*The law and gospel of the Lord
Deep in his heart abide;
Led by the Spirit and the word,
His feet shall never slide.*

*When sinners fall, the righteous stand,
Preserved from every snare;
They shall possess the promised land,
And dwell for ever there.⁹*

⁹Isaac Watts, *The Psalms and Hymns of Isaac Watts* "Psalm 37 Part 2, (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1998)