

Jesus Sends Power From God

Acts 2:1-21

Fifty days after the Passover celebration, the Jews celebrated the Feast of Weeks, also known as Pentecost. However, the celebration described in this passage from Acts was a very special one. Jerusalem was crowded with Jews from many surrounding areas who had gathered in the holy city for the feast. Many of them spoke languages other than the Aramaic and Greek that were most common in Palestine at that time. God had set the stage for a miraculous display of his power through the Holy Spirit.

We could take a long time discussing the sound, the tongues of fire, and who was present for all this as described in Acts 2:1-3, but we would probably not gain much from the discussion. One can gain a basic understanding of it from reading the Bible text. What is important to glean from this passage is that the Holy Spirit came upon Christians in a new and powerful way, enabling them to better spread the good news about Jesus. They were filled with God's Holy Spirit.

We could also take a long time trying to sort out exactly what the term "speak in other tongues" (Acts 2:4) means, but instead we'll simply examine the event described in this passage. Somehow the disciples were able to speak so that people from several different ethnic groups could hear them in their own languages. Speaking in a language that the speaker had never learned does not necessarily mean that what is spoken is a message from God. We must remember that the Enemy is a great imitator. In this passage, however, we're given the evidence we need to verify God as the source of the message: The disciples were "declaring the wonders of God."

Why did some accuse the disciples of being drunk (Acts 2:13)? In every crowd there are doubters. When they heard uneducated men speaking in other languages, they concluded that their utterances must be nonsense. They hardened their hearts and missed out on a miracle!

Notice who takes the lead in verse 14 and the powerful message he gives. Could this be the same Peter who, only seven weeks earlier, had three times denied even knowing Jesus? The same Peter who had hidden with the other disciples behind locked doors for fear of the Jews? Indeed it

is. Peter's experience with the risen Christ and the filling of the Holy Spirit made Peter a new man!

Peter had no delusions about the source of the power he exhibited. He readily pointed out that the crippled man (described in Acts 3:1-10) was not healed by any power of Peter's, but by the power of faith in Jesus.

God sent the Holy Spirit to empower his people to further his kingdom. Although Jesus had risen several weeks earlier and had spent time with the disciples after the resurrection, nothing is recorded in the Bible of any witnessing efforts prior to the events at Pentecost. In fact, Jesus had told his followers before he ascended to heaven that they were to wait in Jerusalem for the Holy Spirit to come upon them. God knew that they needed the power of the Holy Spirit to spread the good news.

We can learn an enormous lesson from this event: When God has something big for us to do for him, he'll empower us to do it. And he may use us in remarkable ways if we're willing to follow the leading of the Holy Spirit and let him work in our lives.

Devotion for Teachers

The One Thing: When you have a relationship with Jesus, you're never alone. The Holy Spirit is always with you! Morning, noon, or night, you can grow in your friendship with God.

Weaving Faith Into Your Life: Read Acts 3:12-20. Talk about a makeover! Is this the same guy who repeatedly denied Christ? The power of the Holy Spirit radically changed Peter. How has the Holy Spirit changed you? How will you rely on the Spirit's power to live daringly and speak boldly about your faith? Pray, asking God for a Holy Spirit "makeover" in your lifestyle.