

# Bible Study: Acts

## (Part 1—Chapters 1-2)

by Gary T. Panell

I know that a lot of Bibles have the name for this book as “*The Acts of the Apostles*,” however; you need to realize that the titles of the books were not part of the original text; these were added after the books were written. Therefore, I would like to suggest, as many other Christian writers have suggested, that the name should be: “*The Acts of the Holy Spirit*.”

You see Jesus went back to heaven and now He is working in the Church, through the third person of the Holy Trinity, the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is referred to more than fifty times (as “the Holy Ghost” and the “the Spirit” in the KJV). Other than Peter and Paul the other Apostles are hardly even mentioned, so the name “*The Acts of the Apostles*” is not really very appropriate; so, along with many others, I humbly suggest that we call the book, *The Acts of the Holy Spirit*.

We need to give Christ the praise and glory for what He has done in the Church through the Holy Spirit, in the past, and for what He is doing today. Just like when Jesus was physically here on this earth, He did not bring attention to Himself, but to the Father, so too, the purpose of the Holy Spirit in the Church, is to bring glory to Christ.

Really the book of Acts is not yet finished; please do not misunderstand what I am saying here, we are not to add to the Holy Bible, it is complete in the 66 books. What I am saying is that I believe that in heaven God will show us, “*The Rest of the Story of the Church*.” Yes, and it will be better than any movie we have ever seen before! Oh how wonderful it will be to see before our eyes the movement of the Church, as it took the gospel out into all the world, as the Lord Jesus Christ commanded her to do!

The outline of the book comes from the **key verse** of the book: “But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” (Acts 1:8)

**Outline:** I. The Gospel Spreads in Jerusalem, Chapters 1-7  
II. The Gospel Spreads in all Judea and Samaria, Chapters 8-12  
III. The Gospel Spreads to the End of the Earth, Chapters 13-28

**Date:** “Since Acts ends on a positive note, with no hint of the intense persecution and eventual execution which Paul would encounter just a few years afterward, it is evident that Luke must have written Acts soon after the events of the last chapter, probably about A.D. 62 (the great fire of Rome, which Nero used as an excuse to initiate his intense persecution of Christians, occurred in A.D. 64).” (*The Defender’s Study Bible* by Dr. Henry M. Morris)

Those who put Luke at a later date for example: 70 to 90 A.D. ignore the above facts that Paul did not arrive at Rome during a time of intense persecution of Christians, this did not occur until 64 A.D. Paul was still alive and well during his first interment. The book of Luke has already been written before the book of Acts.

“Scholars who assume that Luke used Mark’s Gospel as a source in writing his own account date the third Gospel in the A.D. seventies. Others, however, pointed out that Luke wrote his Gospel prior to Acts, which he wrote during Paul’s first Roman imprisonment, about A.D. 63. Since Luke was in Caesarea during Paul’s two-year incarceration there [Acts] 27:1. He would have had ample opportunity during that time to conduct the investigation he mentions in [Luke] 1:1-4.” (*New Spirit Filled Life Bible*)

“[Acts 27:1] “The ‘we’ narrative...begins again (the last such reference appeared in 21:18). Probably Luke has spent the two years of Paul’s Caesarean imprisonment nearby, and now he joins those ready to sail.” (*The NIV Study Bible*)

**Author:** The Holy Spirit is really the Author, however, He uses human instruments, “*THE ACTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT*,” was written with the personality of Luke (Greek, Loukas; Latin, Lucanus), also author of the book of St. Luke. “Although the author does not name himself, evidence outside the Scriptures and inferences from the book itself lead to the conclusion that the author was Luke.

“The earliest of the external testimonies appears in the Muratorian Canon (c. A.D. 170), where the explicit statement is made that Luke was the author of both the third Gospel and the “Acts of All the Apostles.” (Eusebius 9c. 325) lists information from numerous sources to identify the author of these books as Luke (Ecclesiastical History, 3.4)”. (*The NIV Study Bible*)

“That Luke was of Gentile origin. This is inferred from the fact that he is not reckoned among those “who are of the circumcision” (Colossians 4: 11; compare. 4:14). (*Unger’s Bible Dictionary*)

“...Luke himself was present during a portion of Paul’s travels as described in Acts. This is indicated by his intermittent use of the “we” pronoun in his accounts—first in Acts 16:10, later in 20:5 and again in 27:1, three verses which mark the beginning of his three periods of association with Paul. Thus, he traveled with Paul on his second missionary journey from Troas to Philippi, then again on Paul’s third missionary journey from Philippi to Jerusalem, and finally from Caesarea to Rome. He was later able to be with Paul during his final imprisonment just before Paul’s death (II Timothy 4:11) but presumably had no opportunity to incorporate these later experiences into his book of Acts.” (*The Defender’s Study Bible*)

“The author was a Gentile convert, possibly of the church at Antioch, where Paul served with Barnabas at the beginning of his ministry (Acts 11:25, 26). The writer joined him later at Troas, as his use of the pronoun “we” indicates (Acts 16:10), accompanied him to Philippi, and presumably remained there while Paul visited Jerusalem. When Paul returned to Philippi, Luke went back with him to Jerusalem (Acts 20:5-21:15), where Paul was arrested and placed in protective custody. At the close of Paul’s detention in Caesarea, Luke accompanied him to Rome (Acts 27:1-28:15).

Paul speaks of Luke three times in his epistles, calling him ‘the beloved physician’ [and fellow laborer] (Colossians 4:14; Philemon 24), and indicating later that he was the last friend to remain with him in his second imprisonment (II Timothy 4:11). Paul’s statement that Luke was a physician is corroborated by the language Luke uses and by the interest he shows in disease and in healing.

Luke’s ministry was broad: Doctor, pastor, traveling evangelist, historian, and writer, he was tremendously versatile and active. He had a wide acquaintance with the Christian leaders of the first century, and he seems to

have had important special connections also with Roman officials.

Tradition has preserved a few interesting legends about him, though they may not be authentic. According to these stories, Luke was an artist, who painted a picture of the Virgin Mary. He never married, and in his later years retired to Bithynia, where he died. Other legends say that he was martyred in Greece.” (*The WYCLIFFE BIBLE COMMENTARY*)

“Luke was an educated man. He was a “beloved physician,” and yet a very humble man. He never mentions himself, [in the book of Luke] or in the book of Acts...you will notice that whenever Luke was with the company, he says, *we* or *us*. When he remains behind as Paul and the rest move on, he changes to *they* and *them*. When Luke joins them again he reverts to *we* and *us*. He was with Paul to the end. In his last letter from Rome, Paul writes, ‘Only Luke is with me.’

He was a widely traveled man, highly-educated, and was of a scientific mind and temperament. In all likelihood he was a Gentile. He may have been of Jewish descent, but his name is a Gentile name, and he writes for the information of Gentiles.” (*Addresses on Luke* by H. A. Ironside, Litt.D.)

A closing note about the human author, Luke, we believe Paul is referring to Luke when he comments concerning his brother in Christ: “And we have sent with him the brother whose praise *is* in the gospel throughout all the churches, and not only *that*, but who was also chosen by the churches to travel with us...” (2 Corinthians 8:18-19)

**Purpose for Writing:** “The key to the purpose of Acts is in the first verse, where Luke implies that the book is a continuation of the Gospel of Luke. The Gospel told what ‘Jesus began both to do and teach,’ and Acts tells what the risen Lord continues to do and teach through the Holy Spirit.” (*New Spirit Filled Life Bible*)

“The book of Acts is a book of history as well as a book of missions and evangelism. Its numerous references to cities of the first-century Roman world, to customs of the day, to political officials at various levels, often by name, and to various dates and events, leave the book open to detailed investigation and criticism in respect to accuracy. Contrary to expectations of the higher critics, archaeological research by Sir William Ramsay and others has confirmed its accuracy at every turn and in full detail. There is no longer any legitimate doubt as to its historical accuracy.” (*The Defender’s Study Bible*)

“(Acts 16:10- The change here from “they” (vv. 6-8) to “we” indicates that at Troas Luke, the narrator, joined Paul’s company.) he was the first historian of the early years of the Church...The book is of highest importance because it is the only inspired account of the beginning and early work of the Church. It clarifies some of the historical references in the Pauline Epistles. Its place in the N.T. canon identifies it as the bridge from the Gospels to the Epistles.” (*New Scofield Reference Edition of the Bible* by C.I. Scofield, D.D.)

At the end of the book of Acts we see an interesting closing that helps us understand more why possibly the Lord Jesus Christ allowed a Gentile to write this book of Acts. We see in the book a transition from the Church being mainly Jewish to becoming mainly Gentile... (27:1-28:31) Luke now relates Paul’s journey from Palestine to Italy and his reception in Rome. The fact that Luke tells in detail about this trip shows how important it was for his purpose. The motif of the journey, in Luke’s account, is not the initial evangelization of the Roman capital but the rejection of the Gospel by the Jews in Rome and its acceptance by the Gentiles. This

brings to a climax one of the central motifs of the entire book-the rejection of Israel and the rise of the Gentile church.” (The Wycliffe Bible Commentary)

The book of Acts is summarizing the growth of the Christian church in the first half of the first century, and is universally acknowledged to have been written by Luke, the author of the Gospel of Luke, beloved physician and companion of the Apostle Paul. Like his Gospel, Luke addressed the book of Acts to the ‘most excellent Theophilus,’ (Luke 1:3), and is, essentially, a continuing record of the things that “Jesus began both to do and teach” (Acts 1:1) in the days of His flesh. Although Jesus had returned to heaven, He sent His Holy Spirit to indwell, fill, guide and empower His disciples as they scattered around the world preaching His saving gospel.

Most important of all, we see in the Book of *The Acts of the Holy Spirit* a “**Blueprint**” of what the Church is supposed to be. We dare not vary today from what God, the perfect **Architect**, intended the Church to be. By the time the book of Revelation was written, five out of the seven churches mentioned had seriously deviated from the blueprint of Acts. Even though the Church has often missed God’s plan, in one way or another through the ages because of the free will of its members, the “Blueprint” is still in black and white, and we must follow the plan God has given us! If we deviate in any area, the work will not be accomplished the way it was meant to be. We the Church must follow the “Blueprint” that God gave to us in this book of Acts!

## **Chapter One:**

(1) “The former account (book, treatise) I made” is a reference to the book of St. Luke. “Theophilus” which means ‘lover of God,’ was a Gentile Christian, who held a high position in the Roman Empire, and apparently, Luke was a good friend of his. Luke wrote this book, “*The Rest of the Story*,” to finish explaining what had happened since Jesus went back to heaven. The first book was about the birth, life, death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ. This second book (a sequel, if you wish) is a continuation of what Jesus did and taught while He was on earth. Just like authors today like to dedicate their works to some important person in their lives, Luke dedicated his books to this high Roman leader who had received the Lord. In so doing he also made for us, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, an accurate account of the spread of the early Church.

(2) “...until the day in which He was taken up,” is speaking of Jesus’ ascension back into heaven, which Luke will explain in more detail in verses 9-11. He had given the eleven apostles commands to follow, even after His resurrection, these are seen in: Matthew 28:16-20, Mark 16:14-20; Luke 24:44-53; John 20:19-23. Here is an example of what He commanded them to do: “And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, ‘All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.’ Amen.” (Matthew 28:18-20)

(3) Jesus appeared to the disciples for forty days after His resurrection before His ascension back to Heaven. “‘Infallible proofs’ is one word in the Greek (tekmerion) and occurs only this one time in the New Testament. It emphasizes that the evidences for Christ’s resurrection were not philosophical speculations but certain facts. It is appropriate that the word occurs only once, for no other event of biblical history has been confirmed more certainly than His bodily resurrection.

Not only His ten or more appearances to the disciples, but also the otherwise inexplicable evidence of the empty

tomb, the remarkable change in the disciples, the development and spread of the church as a result of its preaching, the change to worship on the first day of the week, the age-long observance of Easter [the Resurrection] and the Lord's Supper, in addition to the testimonies of the writers of the New Testament, as led and empowered by the Holy Spirit. All these combine to make it certain that Christ died for our sins and rose again for our justification." (The Defender's Bible) We also have a study on this called: (*I Dare You to Disprove the Resurrection of Christ.*)

"speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God" The kingdom of God includes the Church Age and all of God's plans for the future. "**The kingdom of God**, the divine rule in human hearts, lives, and situations, was a prominent theme in Jesus' teaching. Jesus began to do and teach the kingdom through the Spirit's power (Luke 4:18, 19), and He is about to transfer that power and responsibility to His disciples by baptizing them in the same Spirit that had authorized His ministry." (New Spirit Filled Life Bible)

(4) The Father had promised the Holy Spirit in Joel 2:28. Jesus had promised the Holy Spirit in John 14:16-17; 15:26; 16:7-15. He did not tell them the exact day the Holy Spirit would come, they by faith, had to believe and wait, just as we have to do as we wait for Jesus' return. "And what I say to you, I say to all: **Watch!**" (Mark 13:37)

(5) "The power of the Spirit in Jesus' life authorized Him to preach the kingdom of God and to demonstrate kingdom power by healing the sick, casting out demons, and setting the captives free (Luke 4:14-19; Matthew 4:23). The same Spirit power in Acts 2 gave the same authority to the disciples. Jesus is the prototype of the Spirit-filled, Spirit-empowered life (10:38). *The book of Acts is the story of the disciples receiving what Jesus received in order to do what Jesus did.*" (New Spirit Filled Life Bible) John's baptism was one in water and was for the purpose of showing repentance of sins, whereas, this baptism that Jesus is talking about means to be immersed (baptized) in the Holy Spirit, and to be filled with the Holy Spirit Himself!

(6) The disciples wanted to know if Jesus would "at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" This was an expectation of theirs, that right away Jesus would become King on the throne, and fulfill immediately all the Old Testament prophecies about the coming Messiah. They did not yet know that there was to be a period of about two thousand years between Christ's first coming and His second coming. The Church Age is a time that the LORD is reaching out to all the Gentiles in the world, at the end of this time when the Church is taken to heaven, there will be a time of Tribulation and then the thousand year millennial reign of Christ will begin. Right now, though, He wanted them to be concerned about the things at hand, which would happen first.

(7) Because Israel had rejected her Messiah their nation would be taken from them for a time. "Jesus said to them, "Have you never read in the Scriptures: 'The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone. This was the LORD'S doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes'? Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it...Now when the chief priests and Pharisees heard His parables, they perceived that He was speaking of them." (Matthew 21:42-45)

God the Father has set the date for Israel to be restored; the disciples needed to trust that God would reveal these things in His timing, which He has since done in other Scriptures. Even though we do not know the exact date, we see the seasons changing and one day every prophecy concerning Israel will be fulfilled! We need to trust God even more because we have so much more revealed to us than they had at that time. We have seen Israel going back to her land, how can we continue to doubt that all that has been prophesied will come to pass

literally?

There is a teaching today that there is no future for the nation of Israel, that the Church is spiritual Israel (Replacement theology), this just is not correct! (In John Hagee's book *Jerusalem Countdown*, he has a chapter called *Has God Rejected Israel?* Which would be good to read on this subject. There is a future for Israel, but during this time, the Church Age, or Age of Grace as it is often called, is a time that God is reaching the whole world with the Gospel of the Kingdom. "For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: 'The Deliverer will come out of Zion, and He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob; for this is My covenant with them, when I take away their sins.'" (Romans 11:25-27)

This message is not just for Jews but for Gentiles as well. Aren't you glad that God included us in His love? Really, all through the ages this has been true even when He was working specifically with the nation of Israel. In fact, they were supposed to be a light to the Gentiles to bring the good news of salvation to Gentiles, but they didn't do a very good job of it. "For so the Lord has commanded us: 'I have set you as a light to the Gentiles, that you should be for salvation to the ends of the earth.'" (Acts 13:47, Isaiah 42:6) So now, while God is waiting for the nation of Israel to receive her Messiah Jesus, God the Father has His plan, which includes all the peoples of the world, and it is the message of salvation through the Church! (For more on prophecy of Israel look at our Romans Study, Chapter 11, and our article on Prophecy.)

(8) I want to quote this verse since it is such a key verse to this book, "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

The book of Acts starts in the city of Jerusalem (chapters 1-7) moves out to Judea and Samaria (8-12), and ends in the "end of the known earth (13-28)." Of course, the work is continuing now into all the rest of the world. "So he answered and said to me: 'This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,' says the LORD of hosts." (Zechariah 4:6)

So often Christians want to ignore this verse because they believe it was only for the early Church. They say that once the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the different groups, the Jews, Samaritans (half Jew and half Gentile), and Gentiles, there is no longer a need to be baptized by the Holy Spirit. They say we receive the Holy Spirit when we are saved and so we are baptized into the body of Christ and that is that. Oh yes, we do need the filling of the Holy Spirit, some would say, to do Christ's work, but that is more a matter of spiritual growth, they insist.

I can identify with those who have been taught this way, because I was one that was taught this way as well. Is this really what Christ was teaching here, though? Is it true that once the Holy Spirit was poured out on the Jews on the day of Pentecost, was there never a time when individual Jews were baptized by or filled with the Holy Spirit again? These are questions I had to ask myself as I was searching the Scriptures on this subject of the Baptism or Filling of the Holy Spirit.

To answer these questions we need to remember that Paul was a Jew, but he needed the Filling of the Holy Spirit after he was saved (Acts 9:17). How about the twelve in chapter 19: 1-6 of Acts. We will speak of

chapter 19 and what happened there in more detail later. You also have to remember that the disciples were refilled many times through out the book of Acts. So if we really look at this book correctly, not just a history of the early Church, but a **Blueprint** for the Church today, then we must see the importance of the Baptism or Filling of the Holy Spirit for us as well!

(9-11) “*he went up*. Jesus ‘went up’ (as Elijah had long ago-2 Kings 2:11) in His physical [resurrected] body, ascending into heaven, where He then ‘sat on the right hand of God’ (Mark 16:19). Thus, heaven must be a real place in this physical universe created by God, not an ethereal dimension of time and space.” (The Defender’s Bible)

While the disciples were looking up in the sky a cloud came in front of the place where they were looking. This was no usual cloud, but prepared by God to help the disciples understand that Jesus would not be here with them in the same physical sense He was before. However these “men” told them how that one day Jesus would return physically to this earth. This expectation of the bodily return of Christ to this earth is a basic doctrine of the Christian faith, even though many today would deny the clear promise given by the men (angels) in white.

(12) Jesus ascended back into heaven from Mount Olivet, and there are Old Testament prophecies that say that He will return from heaven and land at the same place. “And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which faces Jerusalem on the east. And the Mount of Olives shall be split in two, from east to west *making* a very large valley; half of the mountain shall move toward the north and half of it toward the south.” (Zechariah 14:4)

The Mount of Olives is directly east of Jerusalem, it is about three thousand feet [three fourths of a mile] from the city. This was the distance permitted for a Jew to walk on the Sabbath day without breaking the Sabbath rest. (The Wycliffe Bible Commentary)

(13-14) The eleven apostles and the women went into the upper room. This upper room was also the scene of the Last Supper, “Then he will show you a large, furnished upper room; there make ready.” (Luke 22:12) It was located in the house of Mary, the mother of Mark, “So, when he had considered *this*, he came to the house of Mary, the mother of John whose surname was Mark, where many were gathered together to pray.” (Acts 12:12) Thank God for those who have facilities that the church can meet in, and the willingness to use them for the kingdom of God.

Prayer is an important key to spiritual success, and we see the disciples spending much time in prayer. Remember also, from verse four, Jesus had commanded them to wait in Jerusalem for the Promise of the Father. Notice also that there was Jesus’ mother, his half-brothers, and His half-sisters (no doubt) and other women with them in the upper room.

His half brothers and half sisters are mentioned in Matthew, “Is this not the carpenter’s son? Is not His mother called Mary? And His brothers James, Joses, Simon, and Judas? And His sisters, are they not all with us?...” (Matthew 13:55-56a) Jesus had appeared to James after His resurrection, “After that He was seen by James, then to all the apostles.” (1 Corinthians 15:7)

The women may be the wives of the disciples and other women mentioned in Luke 8:2 and Luke 24:10. “...and certain women who had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities—Mary called Magdalene, out of whom had

come seven demons, and Joanna the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others who provided for Him from their substance." "It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary *the mother* of James, and the other *women* with them, who told these things to the apostles."

We do know that there were about 120 people in all from verse 15. It is interesting that before the resurrection, Jesus' half brothers did not believe in Him ("For even His brothers did not believe in Him." (John 7:5), but now they are there believing!

(15-17) Peter also is a changed man after the resurrection of Christ. Remember after his three denials of Jesus he was asked three times by Jesus, "Do you love me?" He seems to be a natural leader even though he was not filled with the Holy Spirit as yet. Remember in the Gospels it is so often Peter, James and John that were close to Christ. It is only natural now that they are in leadership positions.

Peter points out the Scripture prophecy about Judas (Psalm 69:25; 109:8), showing that the actions of Judas were known by Christ all along and did not take Him by surprise. Everything that happened was in the plan of God the Father from before the world began.

I might mention, it was of Judas' free will that he chose to do what he did in betraying Christ, but God knew he would do this, and it had been prophesied beforehand in Psalms.

(18-19) Some people think that this verse about Judas death is in contradiction to Matthew 27:5 "Then he threw down the pieces of silver in the temple and departed, and went and hanged himself.", but there are no contradictions in the Word of God. It seems that Judas hung himself from a tree branch on the side of a cliff, when the branch broke, he fell to the bottom of the cliff, his intestines burst out, and he died.

"There is no discrepancy with Matthew 27:5-10. The priests, considering the bribe money paid to Judas to be his legal property, purchased the field in his name. After Judas hanged himself, his body fell when the rope broke or was cut by someone. Luke describes the gruesome results of the suicide." (New Spirit Filled Bible)

Akel Dama or "**Aceldama**. An Aramaic word meaning field of blood." (*Wycliffe Bible Commentary*)

(20) Peter wanted the complete number of the apostles to be made up because of what Psalm 69: 25; and 109:8 say. He does a free translation from both to prove his point.

(21-22) The qualifications for Judas' successor were two: He had to have been a companion of Jesus starting from the baptism of John, and secondly he had to be a witness of Jesus' resurrection. These are extremely important qualifications because these are similar requirements for a person who would be allowed to write Scripture. Except in the case of writing Scripture the person could be a close associate of an Apostle such as Luke and Paul (Paul had seen our risen Lord). Mark it seems was with Christ because he seems to be the one who ran away naked when Jesus was arrested. However, he was also qualified to write Scripture because he was an associate of Peter. (See our article *Is there even one mistake in the Bible?*)

(23-25) "**That he might go to his own place.** Judas experienced the fate he deserved for his incredible treachery. Judas' place was filled not because he had died but because he had defected. When James, the brother of John, was executed (Acts 12:2), his place was not filled. The **Lord** to whom prayer was addressed (1:24) was probably the ascended Jesus, for [H]e who had chosen the original twelve (v. 2) was now asked to

choose another. **Lord** is the usual word in the Greek **OT** to designate God; it was used from the earliest days of the Church to designate the ascended Jesus.” (*Wycliffe*)

(26) “Casting **lots** was a provision of the Law (Leviticus 16:8). It may be significant that following the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost there is no more mention of the practice. Notice also that on this occasion the disciples first selected the two men they judged most worthy to fill the vacancy. The final decision was left to the Lord as they prayed (v. 24). To be certain of His will they cast lots. Afterward the Holy Spirit provided the needed guidance.” (*New Spirit Filled Life Bible*)

The only other reference to casting of lots is found in (Proverbs 16:33). In my experience I have asked the Lord to help me in guidance by letting the coin toss go the way that He wants if someone else is doing it. For example our principal was deciding between two of us, as to which one should go to a computer conference, so he said, “Let’s flip a coin.” I shot up a quick, silent, prayer to God, that His will be done in my life, because I was willing to go but not sure if I should. I won the coin toss, but this is not how I normally make my decisions. We always need to ask God for direction in our lives and for the decisions that we have to make. I know He wants us to look to Him at all times for direction in our lives, and we don’t usually put out “fleeces.”

I’m sure both of these men being considered for the office of Apostle were equally qualified, but for one it was God’s will and on the other it was not what God had in mind for his life. That does not mean there was anything wrong in his life, it was just what was best for him. Maybe Joseph called Barsabas, surnamed Justus, had a large family or would have a large family, and it would not have worked out well for him to do so much traveling. The other hand the other Apostles did a lot of traveling it seems, and did take their families with them. Only God knows the reason Matthias was chosen.

I have always wondered what happened to Joseph after this, did he go on to be an elder in the church or what? When we get to heaven we will find out about all these men and women in the early Church. We do know that the names of the twelve Apostles will be on the foundation stones of heaven (Revelation 21:14). Matthias’ name will be there instead of Judas’; this should tell us something about free will and the sovereignty of God. Judas was chosen by Jesus, not by mistake, but because Jesus knew he would betray the Messiah. Jesus could have easily prevented His crucifixion, but He knew it was the only way He could save us from our sins. That is by being a perfect sacrifice for us on the cross.

This was all in God’s plan so that the Church Age could be ushered in and the Gentiles be saved. God chose Judas just like God had chosen Pharaoh of Egypt whom He knew he would harden his heart. This is because God knows the end from the beginning and He is behind the scenes working out His sovereign plan. His plan includes the free will of man. We have a little study on this in the Online Interactive Bible Discussion section, it is this question: (*What does the word destiny mean in the Word of God?*).

We also have a study on Apostleship (*on our search just type in the word Apostleship*), and whether it is for today or not. In a general way it is (we call this person today a missionary, apostle means “sent one”). So in the sense that God calls people to the office of apostle today, as we see in Ephesians chapter 4, this office and gift is still in the Church. “And He Himself gave some *to be* apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers...” (Ephesians 4:11) However, this is not a position that is passed down from one person to another by laying on of hands. God gives this gift, but it is not the same as a person being equal to the first twelve Apostles. Their names are the only ones on the foundation stones in heaven, because they are the

foundation of the Church, Christ being the chief cornerstone!

“Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief *cornerstone*.” (Ephesians 2:19-20)

The foundation of a building is at the bottom or beginning. So there were the twelve apostles especially chosen by God to start the work. That is not to say that there were not other apostles, Paul was one and there are several others who are mentioned. (You could look at our study on the gifted offices from Ephesians 4, Part Two of this same study.)

Just as we are not saying that there are no more prophets today, there are, but there are no more prophets today who are writing Scripture. (See our 1 Corinthians study on gifts, Parts Three and Four, chapters 12-14 and Romans 12). Today we have missionaries (apostles) going to areas that have not had the gospel before, and we have prophets laying a foundation in these same places. They, however, are not the same as the first twelve apostles.

## Chapter 2:

(1) Now we are fifty days after the resurrection of Christ. “**Pentecost** was an annual Jewish festival; also known as the ‘Feast of Weeks,’ or the ‘Day of Firstfruits,’ a celebration of the first buds of the harvest. Jewish men were required by law to go to Jerusalem three times each year to celebrate the major feasts (Deut. 16:16): Passover in the spring; Pentecost (Greek pentekostos, ‘fifty’) seven weeks and a day later (Lev. 23:15, 16); and Tabernacles at the end of the harvest in the fall. Lev. 23 details the dates and rituals of the Jewish festival calendar. Those who became Christians on Pentecost were the Firstfruits of a vast harvest of millions of souls.” (Spirit Filled Life Bible)

It is very interesting to me that God has had important events in history happen on these Jewish feast days. (For more study on this look at, *How many days are between Passover and Pentecost?* You can find this in our Online Interactive Bible study.) However to summarize it here, the death and resurrection of Christ, and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit represent the fulfilling of the types of three of the Jewish feasts. These are Passover (Lev. 23:5), the Feast of the First-fruits (Lev. 23:10-14), and the Feast of Pentecost (Lev. 23:15-21).

“The Passover was typical of Christ’s atoning death. Following the Passover, was the Feast of the Firstfruits, on which feast the first-fruits of the harvest were waved before the Lord. This ceremony was typical of Christ’s resurrection as “the first-fruits” from the dead. From this feast fifty days were counted, and on the last day the Feast of Pentecost was celebrated (hence the name “Pentecost,” meaning fifty). On this feast two loaves—the first loaves of the wheat harvest—were waved before the Lord, this being typical of the consecration of the first members of the church.” (*Through the Bible Book by Book* by Myer Pearlman)

I might mention here that I believe the two loaves mention earlier represent the two people groups in the Church, born again Israelites and born again Gentiles. These would be saved as a result of the gospel going out into the entire world. They “were all with one accord,” (Greek: homothumadon (hom-oth-oo-mad-on) Strong’s #3661: Being unanimous, having mutual consent, being in agreement, having group unity, having one mind and

purpose...) what mighty things can happen in the Church when we are in 'one accord!' (See the article: *The Holy Catholic Church.*)

Before we talk about the new thing God is doing in the Church through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit we need to see the great differences between before the day of Pentecost and after. In the Old Testament times God the Holy Spirit did empower or "came upon" "some" Old Testament believers. "Then the LORD came down in the cloud, and spoke to him, and took of the Spirit that *was* upon him [Moses], and placed *the same* upon the seventy elders; and it happened, when the Spirit rested upon them, that they prophesied, although they never did *so* again. But two men had remained in the camp: the name of one *was* Eldad, and the name of the other Medad. And the Spirit rested upon them. Now they *were* among those listed, but who had not gone out to the tabernacle; yet they prophesied in the camp." (Numbers 11:25-26)

"Then the Spirit of the LORD will come upon you, and you will prophesy with them and be turned into another man." (1 Samuel 10:6) This is about Saul, who later became King Saul, but it speaks of how the Spirit left him later, and I believe he is an example of an Old Testament believer who lost his salvation through turning his back on the LORD.

David was very concerned that this would happen to him when he sinned so he repented of his sin, and we see his prayer of confession in Psalm 51, by the way, which Saul never did.

"Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Your lovingkindness; according to the multitude of Your tender mercies, blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin *is* ever before me...Do not cast me away from Your presence, and do not take Your Holy Spirit from me." (Psalm 51:1-3, 11)

Now, are there examples of people being "filled" with the Holy Spirit before the day of Pentecost? Look at these reference: "For he [John] will be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink. He will also be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb." (Luke 1:15) And it happened, when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, that the babe leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit." (Luke 1:41) "Now his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Spirit, and prophesied..." (Luke 1:67)

What then is the difference between what we see happening in the old dispensation and the new? There are at least two main differences we can see between the two. In the Old Testament times the Spirit was given to only a very few believers. Usually it was for those in offices such as prophet, priest or judge. Now, though, the Holy Spirit is poured out on all believers. "And it shall come to pass afterward that I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions; and also on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days." (Joel 2:28-29)

In the past the Holy Spirit came upon them for a certain task, and it was usually temporary, but now He is in us forever. "But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His." (Romans 8: 9)

(2) "Not a wind, but *like* the sound of a wind; 'The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit,' John 3:8,

suggesting the mighty but unseen power of the Spirit.” (New Spirit Filled Life Bible)

(3) “Not fire, but *like* fire. John the Baptist foretold how Spirit baptism would be accompanied by wind and fire. “I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.” (Matthew 3:11-12) This may also be an allusion to the burning bush (Ex. 3:2-5), which was a symbol of the divine presence. This outward manifestation of the Spirit’s coming was another sign of His power.” (New Spirit Filled Life Bible)

(4) “And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.” In the Old Testament we see all of the gifts at one time or another, with the exception of the gift of the tongues, which was left for the Church Age, and the Tribulation. So at this time there were three manifestations that accompanied the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. They heard something like wind blowing, they saw the tongues like fire, and they spoke in tongues.

After the day of Pentecost when people were filled with the Holy Spirit for the first time, did they have the wind or flames? No, but is it possible today sometimes that this could happen? Yes, you could read of at least one case of this happening in recent times in the book, *Anointed for Burial* by Todd Burkey. Does that mean that we should expect this when a person is Baptized or Filled with the Holy Spirit? No, these are special manifestations of the sovereign Holy Spirit, He does things the way He wants, we should not try to put Him in a box, and say that He always does things this way.

Let’s ask another question: “Does the initial Baptism or Filling of the Holy Spirit always manifest itself today by speaking in tongues? What do the other references on this same subject have to say about how it happened for others? Let’s look at all the main occurrences of the out pouring of the Holy Spirit in the book of Acts.

“And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness.” (Acts 4:31) This verse is important too, because it makes clear that the filling of the Holy Spirit is not a one time occurrence in a Christian’s life, yes, there needs to be the initial Baptism or Filling of the Holy Spirit, but after that there needs to be a continual work of God in our lives as well. In Ephesians 5:18 we are commanded to keep on being “filled” with the Holy Spirit. The Greek here indicates a need to be continually filled (continues action), or “keep on being filled”. We are leaky vessels, someone has said, so we need to be “refilled” often. For more on this subject of the ‘filling’ of the Holy Spirit look at our: (Ephesians Study Part Three on Ephesians 5:18-19).

R. A. Torrey said about this subject: “It has to do with gifts for service rather than with graces of character. The steps by which one ordinarily receives the Baptism with the Holy Spirit are of such a character, and the Baptism with the Holy Spirit makes God so real that this Baptism is in most cases accompanied by a great moral uplift, or even a radical transformation, but the Baptism with the Holy Spirit is not in itself either an eradication of the carnal nature or cleansing from an impure heart. It is the impartation of supernatural power or gifts in service, and sometimes one may have rare gifts by the Spirit’s power and few graces.

“Compare 1 Corinthians 13: 1-3... It is indeed the work of the Holy Spirit to cleanse from sin, and to empower one for and lead one into a life of victory over the world, the flesh and the Devil, but this is not the Baptism with the Holy Spirit. It is, however, more fundamental and important. It is well to remember also that Jesus promised a two fold baptism, ‘with the Holy Ghost *and with fire.*’

“This cannot be interpreted to mean two contrasted baptisms, one of blessing and the other of judgment. The Greek does not permit of this interpretation. It is one twofold baptism. Many seem to get only part of it, ‘the Holy Wind,’ but the ‘fire’ is for us too, if we claim it. And fire searches, refines, consumes, illuminates, makes to glow, energizes, spreads. ‘Fire’ is what many need today, and it is for us.” (*What the Bible Teaches* Torrey)

“Now when the apostles who were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them, who when they had come down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit. For as yet He had fallen upon none of them. They had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.” (Acts 8:14-17) There is no mention of them speaking in tongues or prophesying, but there must have been some sort of evidence because of what the next verses say, “And when Simon saw that through the laying on of the apostles’ hands the Holy Spirit was given, he offered them money, saying, ‘Give me this power also, that anyone on whom I lay hands may receive the Holy Spirit.’” (Acts 8:18-19)

Then we have what happened to Saul. “And Ananias went his way and entered the house; and laying his hands on him he said, ‘Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you came, has sent me that you may receive your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit. Immediately there fell from his eyes *something* like scales, and he received his sight at once; and he arose and was baptized.” (Acts 9:17-18) Again there is no mention of tongues even though we know Paul spoke in tongues because of what he says in his letter to the Corinthians. There is also no mention of prophecy, however he did immediately preach of Christ in the synagogues.

Let’s also look at two other passages in Acts about the Baptism or Filling of the Holy Spirit to see if we can see any patterns here. “While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard the word. And those of the circumcision who believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also. For they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God. Then Peter answered, ‘Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we *have?*’” (Acts 10:44-47)

You get the impression that when people were Baptized or Filled with the Holy Spirit in the early Church that there were signs of this, either speaking in tongues or prophecy. And this is what we see in the next Scripture we want to look at. “And it happened, while Apollos was at Corinth, that Paul, having passed through the upper regions, came to Ephesus. And finding some disciples he said to them, ‘Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?’ So they said to him, ‘We have not so much as heard whether there is a Holy Spirit.’ And he said to them, ‘Into what then were you baptized?’ So they said, ‘Into John’s baptism.’

Then Paul said, ‘John indeed baptized with a baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe on Him who would come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.’ When they heard *this*, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied. Now the men were about twelve in all.” (Acts 19:1-7)

As we look back through these references, usually a person was saved and then Baptized or Filled with the Holy Spirit afterwards. We are not told that they had to speak in tongues or prophecy in order to show that they were truly Baptized or Filled with the Holy Spirit, so it is an argument from silence. However, we do get the definite

indication that the people standing around saw something different about them. Also we can conclude that usually hands were laid on the individuals, but not always, as in the case of the Gentiles.

So we cannot make a doctrine that says everyone has to speak in tongues in order to show that they have been baptized or filled with the Holy Spirit. Nor can we say that hands have to be laid on an individual. And one other thing, sometimes as in the case of the Gentiles they received the Holy Spirit or the gift of the Holy Spirit before they were even baptized. This means that we have to be very careful about being dogmatic. The Holy Spirit is sovereign and He does His work the way He wants. We should not judge others' experiences in this area. And we definitely should not say things like "Tongues are your wings to heaven." As I have heard that some Christians say. Salvation is not an issue in this area of the Baptism or Filling of the Holy Spirit.

The reason I am covering this carefully is because there is so much confusion in the Church over this subject. I also know, from my own experience, that many Christians are not taught anything about the Holy Spirit and His Filling. They could say with the believers in Acts 19, "We have not so much as heard whether there is a Holy Spirit." Then you have those Christians on the opposite extreme that come up to you and say, "Have you had the Baptism of the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues?" This is not our basis of fellowship, our fellowship is not around tongues or an experience, but our fellowship is around the Lord Jesus Christ and the salvation He brings.

We are baptized by the Holy Spirit into one body, even if a Christian does not speak in tongues. "For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—whether Jews or Greeks (Gentiles), whether slaves or free—and have all been made to drink into one Spirit." (1 Corinthians 12:12-13) Some people confuse this verse with the Baptism or Filling of the Holy Spirit, but it is not talking about that Baptism. It is speaking of how that when a person is truly saved or born again they are at that moment baptized by the Holy Spirit into the Church, the body of Christ.

So there are three baptisms, there is the baptism of the Holy Spirit that places us as believers into the body of Christ, there is water baptism, and there is the Baptism or the Filling of the Holy Spirit. It is very important that a person get this clearly in mind or else they will be confused. I say this because I spent many years as a Christian not understanding these very things. Therefore I was not convinced of the need of the Filling until I had been a Christian for many years.

When we say these things I am not contradicting Ephesians 4:5, where it says: "...one Lord, one faith, one baptism..." This "one baptism" is speaking of the fact of what has happened to us in 1 Corinthians 12:13, where we are all at the moment of our salvation baptized into the body of Christ. When Paul says this, he is not denying the other two baptisms, water baptism (which is a picture of dying with Christ and being raised with Him, Romans 6:5) and the baptism with the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:5), he is just reminding Christians that they are all in the "one" body the Church because of what Christ did for them when they were saved.

Now with this background in mind we can get further into the text at hand, but we will revisit this subject in more detail later. The reason we need to revisit this subject is because we still have the issue of this teaching that is so prevalent, and that is the teaching that the Holy Spirit was poured out on the Jews, then on the Samaritans (a mixture of Jew and Gentile), then He was poured out on the Gentiles. This teaching says, that once this had taken place the Holy Spirit no longer baptized or filled believers. I would just like to say by way

of preview of what we will teach on this issue is: that Paul was a Jew and saved, but He still needed the Filling of the Holy Spirit, even though the Holy Spirit had already been poured out on the Jews.

We will cover each occurrence of the out pouring of the Holy Spirit on each group and the reason this happened as we come to it. And, yes, there is a reason the Holy Spirit moved out to the different groups in the order that He did, but that does not prove that once these three groups of peoples were reached, there is no longer a need for the Baptism or Filling of the Holy Spirit. They teach that there is only one Baptism of the Holy Spirit and that was on the day of Pentecost, now they say Christians can only be filled with the Holy Spirit. These same Christians teach that all the “sign” gifts (as they call them) are no longer for today. (For more on this go to our 1 Corinthians Study Chapter 13.)

Now let’s get back to the subject of the Baptism or Filling of the Holy Spirit. In some ways we are arguing over semantics (meaning of words), probably the better term is “Filling” of the Holy Spirit, because it is the term used most often in the New Testament, but if you look at what Peter says about what happened to the Gentiles he says, “And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell upon them, as upon us at the beginning. Then I remembered the word of the Lord, how He said, ‘John indeed baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit.’ If therefore God gave them the same gift as *He gave* us when we believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could withstand God?” (Acts 11:15-17) So here the term “Baptism of the Holy Spirit” is used again.

That brings us into this discussion that has both divided the Church and also expanded the Church; here is a summary of the teaching on this subject today:

“**Began to speak** indicates that they continued in the process (see 11:15). Luke could be indicating that they continued speaking for an extended time; more likely, however, he is indicating that this practice continued in their lives, just as he records the Church’s continuation of what Jesus “began both to do and to teach” (1:1).

“Many contemporary Christians from all denominational backgrounds believe that the phenomenon of “speaking with tongue” (languages not formerly learned or known by the speaker) may accompany the occasion of a person’s initial surrender to the fullness of the Holy Spirit. In classical Pentecostal tradition, this experience is expected and is doctrinally expressed in the words, “The initial physical evidence of the baptism with the Holy Spirit is speaking with other tongues.” Other Christians and many Charismatics who do not accept this doctrinal terminology still apply its fundamental implications in their practice.

This modified view, which is also accepted by some Pentecostals, places less emphasis on the importance of tongues as the evidence of the baptism with the Holy Spirit, either in terms of one’s initial experience or one’s ongoing life of Spirit fullness. These focus more on all the gifts, with speaking in tongues seen as but one of them, since all the gifts are deemed contemporarily operational and any one of them may serve as a sign of one’s baptism in the Spirit. Further, one’s deepened participation in worship is also seen as a fundamental indication of being baptized in the Spirit, with the continual exercise of tongue-speaking as a part of the believer’s private devotional expression (see I Cor. 14:1, 2, 4, 15, 39, 40). [I would fall into this group, comment by G.T. Panell]

Some other Christians who disagree with any of the above views usually explain the baptism with the Holy Spirit in one of the following ways:

(a) As an experience subsequent to salvation, bringing needed divine power for Christian witness and service, but without any expectation of the Holy Spirit's gifts attending this experience.

(b) As exclusively synonymous with one's conversion experience, when the Holy Spirit merges the individual into the body of Christ at the time the believer places faith in Jesus as Lord (see note on 1 Cor. 12:3)

(c) As unique to the Book of Acts; claiming the baptism with the Holy Spirit, including its miraculous manifestations, was solely a single event of a single divine outpouring, first at Pentecost (though repeated at later junctures, when the ethnic barriers of the Samaritans [ch. 8] and Gentiles [ch. 10] were breached). (*New Spirit Filled Life Bible*)

(5) "The disciples had now apparently moved down from the upper room to an open place in the city, possibly within the temple area, where a crowd assembled. The **devout men** were Diaspora Jews, who had been scattered throughout the Mediterranean world but who had returned to the Holy City to live.

(6) "...By a miracle the language of the apostles was translated by the Holy Spirit into many diverse languages without a human translator." (*The Wycliffe Bible Commentary*)

God still does this same miracle today when it is needed. I have heard Doug Bachelor on the radio say that God did this for him one time when he wanted to witness to some unsaved Spanish speakers. I am sure many times throughout the history of missions, when it was needed, God has given this gift.

I know of another example of this happening, and this was related to me by a Christian brother in the Yakima, Washington Stone Church. He said that his mother, who lived in southern Oregon at the time, wanted to witness to her neighbor who was from Mexico and did not speak any English. One day, while this Mexican neighbor was visiting in her home, God gave the Christian sister the ability to speak to this lady in Spanish. As a result the lady came to know Christ as her personal Savior, and related how that she heard this Christian sister give praises to God in a beautiful Spanish, and shared with her, her need of salvation.

Some have thought that because this is what happened on the day of Pentecost that this is how people will go out as missionaries today, and will not have to learn the language of the people, this is not the case. God does on occasion, temporally do this sort of thing, today as mentioned above, but not usually. "Pentecostal historian Vinson Synan candidly documents that a missionary named A. G. Garr put Parham's theory to the test. [His theory was that like on the day of Pentecost missionaries would no longer need to learn languages, but God would always give them the languages they needed.] He moved to India and attempted to preach to the natives in their own language. The result was a "fiasco." Thankfully, Garr did not give up. After learning Chinese he moved to Hong Kong and began a mission in "the more conventional manner." (*Counterfeit Revival* Hank Hanegraaff)

(7) The people were of course surprised because they knew there was no way these apostles could have learned all these languages from many parts of the world. Everyone knew it had to be a miracle from God.

(8) God often uses experiences to get people thinking about Him and salvation, but as we will see later in verse 13, that there are always those who will not believe even when they see miracles, just like they did not all believe when Jesus did miracles in front of them.

(9-11) “These countries formed a circuit around the entire Mediterranean Sea. Most of these peoples could speak the popular Greek of the Hellenistic world, but they also spoke their native tongues (cf. 14:11).

**Strangers of Rome.** Jews and Gentile converts (proselytes) from Rome, who were only temporarily residing in Jerusalem.” (*The Wycliffe Bible Commentary*) I would say that anytime there is a real genuine move of the Holy Spirit it will result in men hearing about the **wonderful works of God!** This is how we will know that a message or sign gift is from God and not a counterfeit, and that is when God is glorified and not man! (Books you might read on this subject are: *Counterfeit Revival* and *Christianity in Crisis* by Hank Hanegraaff, published by Harvest House Publishers.)

(12) What were the effects of these manifestations on the people? It got the people to think about what was happening? Is this of God? This is the question that was going through their minds, no doubt.

(13) And, yes, there were those there who questioned even the miracle of the languages spoken by the disciples. They were saying in effect, this is only gibberish. Then they went on to try to explain the miracle away by saying also that the disciples were drunk with new wine.

(14) For Peter to stand up only some 53 days after his denial that he even knew Christ, when Christ was arrested, is a miracle in itself, and shows what the baptism of the Holy Spirit did for Peter. Before he was afraid for his life, now he is boldly proclaiming Christ, even if it means his life is lost. This is one of the reasons for the baptism or filling of the Holy Spirit, it is to give us boldness to preach, and proclaim Christ as Savior and LORD!

“But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses...” (Acts 1:8)

(15) Peter has to defend what has happened as from God. We are supposed to be able to defend what we believe before unbelievers, but how many Christians are able to do this? “But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always *be* ready to *give* a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear...” (1 Peter 3:15) For a complete answer on this subject of alcohol and whether the disciples of Jesus were drinkers look at our article: *Is it alright for Christians to drink Alcohol?* Here is a short summary of the answer about whether the disciples were drinking:

**“Importance of the Text:** The apostles had scarcely begun their Messianic proclamation when they were accused of drunkenness. On the day of Pentecost the first company of believers received the gift of tongues enabling them to preach the Gospel in the languages of the people gathered for the feast at Jerusalem. While thousands believed in Christ as a result of the miracle, others began mocking the disciples, saying: ‘They are filled with new wine’ (Acts 2:13). “Summing up we can say that Acts 2:13 provides an indirect but telling proof that the apostles abstained from alcoholic beverages. As Ernest Gordon says, ‘There would be no point in referring to unfermented wine as a source of intoxication and the strange actions following, if it were not generally understood that the apostles used no intoxicating wine.’ [For all the reasons why this passage is not an indication that early Christians were drinkers look at this site by Dr. Bacchiocchi.]

(16-28) As you read this section from verse 16-28, we need to ask ourselves, “Did Joel’s prophecy, find its

complete fulfillment at this time?” Then, too, “When will it find its complete fulfillment in relation to Israel?” Let’s look at Zechariah 12:10. “And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only *son*, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn.”

We find also that this is an answer to Moses’ prayer: “Then Moses said to him, ‘Are you zealous for my sake? Oh, that all the LORD’s people were prophets *and* that the LORD would put His Spirit upon them!’” (Numbers 11:29)

In Peter’s sermon he doesn’t declare immediately that Jesus is the Messiah. First he gives proofs that Christ is the Messiah look at verse 22: “Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know--” The second proof is found in verse 24: “whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it.” The third proof being found in verse 33: “Therefore being exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out this which you now see and hear.”

(29-38) The conclusion to Peter’s preaching is a call to repentance because Jesus is Lord and Messiah! “Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ. Now when they heard *this* they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the *apostles*, ‘Men *and* brethren, what shall we do?’ Then Peter said to them, ‘Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call.’” (Acts 2:36-39)

This message of Peter’s inspired by the Holy Spirit is a great outline for preaching the Gospel. Jesus’ death, burial, resurrection, and ascension are all mentioned. Then Peter gives people and opportunity to repent of their sins, be saved and baptized. What a wonderful way to preach, if only more pastors would weave the gospel into their messages like this! Then also give an opportunity for the lost that are visiting the service to be saved and baptized. At our church our pastor does this with great results!

Actually the Jews that knew the Old Testament would have understood that God was speaking to them through the use of tongues. Paul makes this clear in 1 Corinthians 14: 21 “In the law it is written: ‘With men of other tongues and other lips I will speak to this people; and yet, for all that, they will not hear Me, says the Lord.’” “For with stammering lips and another tongue He will speak to this people, to whom He said, ‘This *is* the rest *with which* you may cause the weary to rest,’ and, ‘This is the refreshing’; yet they would not hear.” (Isaiah 28:11-12) Some came to Christ as Savior on the day of Pentecost after Peter’s preaching, but the nation of Israel still rejected its Messiah.

We know from the rest of the passage earlier that the nation will have to go through a time of tribulation before it will turn as a nation to Christ. Between the time that Christ poured out His Holy Spirit on His believers on the day of Pentecost and His return there will be this “Filling of the Holy Spirit.” (By the way from that time forward it would be considered the last days.) Look what it says: “And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, that I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your young men shall see visions, your old men shall dream dreams.

[This is so important that it is repeated.] “And on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days; and they shall prophesy.” (Acts 2:17-18) God doesn’t want anyone to miss the message, this “Baptism or Filling of the Holy Spirit,” will be on both men and women, in contrast to what usually happened in the Old Testament.

The reason we know this will also happen during the Tribulation is because the next events that are mentioned are things that happen in the end of the Tribulation period. “I will show wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath: blood and fire and vapor of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the coming of the great and awesome day of the LORD. And it shall come to pass that whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved.” (Acts 2:19-21)

“And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth: Blood and fire and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the coming of the great and awesome day of the LORD. And it shall come to pass *that* whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved.” (Joel 2:30-32)

This goes right along with what Christ said the end of the Tribulation time would be like. “Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.” (Matthew 24:29-30)

During the Church Age there will always be the Filling of the Holy Spirit, and also afterwards on individuals who receive Christ during the Tribulation. The true believers will not receive the mark of the beast. So they will have to be willing to die for Christ, since they can’t buy or sell without this mark. Also they will be hunted down and executed. Still, true believers, during this time will serve the Lord victoriously right up until Christ’s return.

Even though the Church, which is composed of both Jews and Gentiles, is in heaven during this time, there is still a witness on the earth. However the difference is that it will be a Jewish witness. Those who get saved will become Jews for Jesus. They will be witnessed to by Jews: “After these things I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, on the sea, or on any tree.

Then I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God. And he cried with a loud voice to the four angels to whom it was granted to harm the earth and the sea, saying, ‘Do not harm the earth, the sea, or the trees till we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads.’ And I heard the number of those who were sealed. One hundred *and* forty-four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel *were* sealed...(Revelation 7:1-8 [Then we see many from around the world in heaven, around the throne worshipping Jesus, these have been saved as a result of the message of the 144,000 Jews for Jesus, in verses 9-12]\* My comments, G. T. Panell

“Then one of the elders answered, saying to me, ‘Who are these arrayed in white robes, and where did they come from?’ And I said to him, ‘Sir, you know.’ So he said to me, ‘These are the ones who washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb...’ (Revelation 7:13-17) We see the witnesses as the Jews for

Jesus again in Revelation 14:1-5. These, of course, are not Jehovah's Witnesses, but born again Jews who witness to the world during the Tribulation time.

With the Church in heaven, having the marriage of the Lamb, God is working with the nation of Israel again and it will be much like what it was when Jesus was here on this earth with his twelve disciples. Now for the whole world ministry there are 144,000 Jewish witnesses that can't be killed. While they are preaching to the world multitudes will be saved of both men and women, and they will have also this pouring out of God's Spirit on them that happened on the day of Pentecost. Yes, the Holy Spirit in the Church is in heaven, but the Holy Spirit is still working on this earth bringing people to Christ, and also the nation of Israel to Christ.

We cannot go into the rest of prophecy now, but Lord willing in the book of Revelation study we will. It is enough to say that at the end of this Tribulation time the whole of those left in Israel will turn to Christ as their Messiah. (See our summary on Prophecy.)

(39) Look at how this fits with what Jesus said as recorded in the book of St. John, "On the last day, that great day, that great *day* of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, 'If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.' But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet *given*, because Jesus was not yet glorified." (John 7:37-39)

"John interprets the words of Jesus to refer to the pouring out of the Holy Spirit that was still to come. The Holy Spirit existed from all eternity, but was not yet present in the sense indicated. Soon the fullness of the Spirit would be a blessing that all of God's people could experience (see Acts 2:33 and ...Acts 2:4; 1 Corinthians 12:13).

"**The promise** of the Holy Spirit (see v. 33; 1:4, 5; Luke 24:49) is a gift for every believer in every generation. **All who are afar off** includes Gentiles (see Is. 57:19; Eph. 2:13, 17). Peter's words clearly extend to every believer in every era and everywhere, full reason to expect the same resource and experience that was afforded the first believers who received the Holy Spirit at the birth of the church." (New Spirit Filled Life Bible)

(40) We do not have the whole message here that Peter preached, but it must have been so powerful as the Holy Spirit was giving Peter the message and doing a work in the hearts and lives of those who witnessed and heard the message. We need this same power today in our preaching and teaching. The power of the Holy Spirit, then we too will see mighty results. Our nation is as perverse as Israel was if not more so.

(41) There were about three thousand saved and baptized the same day. We have let so much tradition rule the Church that it would be a real miracle to actually baptize people the same day that they were saved. I wonder if so many would make "professions" of salvation if they were asked to be baptized the same day. These people gladly received the message and were glad to be baptized, even though in some cases it meant that they would be martyred for Christ.

(42) Notice that they were not just saved and went merrily on their way, no they continued studying with the apostles learning all they could learn about God's Word, so that they could lead others to Christ. They also fellowshiped together, by eating together, had the Communion or the Lord's Supper together, and they were praying. "And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling

of ourselves together, as *is* the manner of some, but exhorting *one another*, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.” (Hebrew 10:24-25)

(43) It was an amazing time as the Holy Spirit did special signs through the believers so that many could hear and believe the message. I believe as the gospel goes out all over the world there are those times when believers are in prayer and unity and God does special signs. If you were to look at any mission work where people were sincerely in prayer, God has done these things for the believers. I know the Gospel for Asia missionaries are experiencing this even today, and I am confident that many other missionaries are seeing the same thing, as they move out in the power of the Holy Spirit! (You might want to check out Gospel for Asia on our links.)

(44-45) People that love the Lord don't think of things as just their own, they are glad to share with the body of Christ and others in need. Does that mean that every Christian should sell their home and so on? No, in fact we will see in the fifth chapter that some would do it for the wrong motive. Also, God uses homes for the church to meet in sometimes. I do think that believers should be cheerful givers, and support missions the way it was intended to be. A good book to read on this is *Revolution in World Missions* by K. P. Yohannan.

(46-47) “The believers were still Jews continuing daily worship of God in the Temple in accordance with the Jewish practice. There was no thought of withdrawing from Judaism and establishing a separate movement. Their Christian fellowship manifested itself particularly in fellowship meals, conducted in various homes. Joyfulness and generosity of heart were two of the outstanding characteristics of the early Christians. Not all the Jews received the witness to the Messiahship of the resurrected Jesus, but even those who rejected it looked upon the early Christian fellowship with great favor. The result was that the Lord was daily adding to the new fellowship those who received the witness, and the Christian community received them as fellow believers.”  
(*The Wycliffe Bible Commentary*)

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