



LESSON 26

The Holy Spirit arrives

ACTS 2:1-47



Jesus rules with great power through the Holy Spirit.



“Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing” (Acts 2:33).

Supporting Truths

1. Jesus poured out the Spirit.
2. The Spirit has come with great power.
3. The Spirit brings people to Jesus.
4. The Spirit forms and fills Christ's body.
5. All believers are baptized in the Spirit.

Objectives

1. Explain that the Spirit's coming proves Jesus really is Lord and Christ.
2. Describe how the Spirit came and how the disciples were talking.
3. Describe how the listeners responded.
4. List several traits of the early church.
5. Define baptism in the Spirit.

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Lesson Summary

Just as Jesus had promised, He poured out His Spirit on the disciples. Something was obviously happening because they immediately began speaking in real languages that they did not know. Peter explained that the Spirit had come and therefore the final judgment could also come at any time. It was time to call on the name of the Lord to be saved, and the Spirit's coming proved that the Lord is Jesus. Many responded by repenting and being baptized, and the church was born.

Spotlight on the Gospel

Until Jesus returns, believers are to devote themselves to the spread of the gospel. And God has given believers the Holy Spirit to empower them to do this. As we trust Him and obey His Word, God gives us the ability to live for Him and tell the world about His Son. And as we do that, He gives us great joy in our new community, the church.

LAST WEEK



Jesus returns to heaven
Acts 1:1–11

THIS WEEK



The Holy Spirit arrives
Acts 2:1–47

NEXT WEEK



Peter and John preach the gospel
Acts 3:1–26

THE GOSPEL SPREADS IN JERUSALEM

Lesson Commentary

Jesus rules with great power through the Holy Spirit.

It was Pentecost, 50 days after Jesus had risen from the dead (Acts 2:1). For 40 days, He had appeared and taught His disciples to continue His work on earth (1:3, 8b). But how were so few going to be able to do the work of the Son of God? Only by the coming power of the Holy Spirit (1:5, 8a). So about 10 days after Jesus ascended, the Spirit rushed upon the disciples, proving that Jesus is Lord and giving believers power to call all people to Him.

The Spirit came on the disciples (2:1–13)

The Spirit came like wind and fire (2:2–3). The Spirit is like wind, but also more than wind, since the wind was supernatural, coming from heaven. But His name can mean “wind” or “breath” because like wind, you can sense His life-giving power even though you cannot see Him (John 3:8). Like God’s breath, He breathes life into lifeless people (Ezek 37:9–14). Like a mighty rushing wind, He comes with unstoppable power. He also appeared as fire, because when He is present, God is present (Exod 3:2–5).

The wind and flames show that the 120 disciples (Acts 1:15) were each **baptized in the Spirit, immersed in the Spirit poured out by Jesus** (1:5; Matt 3:11). The disciples had to wait until the day of Pentecost to receive this baptism, but now that the Spirit has come, this baptism happens as soon as a person becomes a Christian (1 Cor 12:13). Now all His work of regenerating, indwelling, and sealing overflow from His baptizing presence. But when the disciples were baptized in the Spirit, they were also **filled with the Spirit** (Acts 2:4a). Unlike baptism, filling is not permanent (4:8, 31; 6:5; 7:55). It is **the Spirit’s control and power in our lives** that varies according to our dependence on Him and obedience to His Word (Eph 5:18; Col 3:16).

The Spirit proved His power by causing Galileans to speak many languages that they did not understand

(Acts 2:4; 1 Cor 14:14).

But the crowd understood (Acts 2:5–11)!

The people had come from hundreds of

miles in every direction to celebrate Pentecost in Jerusalem (Num 28:26). They expected to communicate in Aramaic or Greek, but now they heard their own local languages! This was not just a cool trick. God was warning them (1 Cor 14:21–22). Because Israel rejected Jesus, the blessings of the new covenant were transitioning from Israel to the mostly Gentile church (1 Pet 2:9; Acts 8:14–19; 10:44–47; 19:1–7). The apostles completed that transition in the 1st century; after that, miracles were no longer needed to confirm their ministry, so miraculous languages gradually ceased (Heb 2:3–4). Still, the gift of Pentecost continues as the church today worships in many languages and continues to witness to new language groups.

The Spirit’s coming was explained by Peter (2:14–36)

All this was very strange, so Peter explained that the Spirit’s coming was pointing out a key time and person (1 Pet 1:10–11). As for the time, the Spirit’s coming showed that the last days had begun (Acts 2:16–17). Even though most of Joel’s prophecy has not happened yet (Joel 2:28–32), the last time period has begun (1 Pet 1:20). But Peter still included the future events to warn about judgment (Acts 2:19–20), just as the foreign languages were also a warning. The Spirit’s coming shows that judgment may come at any time. Because of this, it is urgent to turn to the Lord to be saved right away (2:21).

But who is the Lord? The Spirit’s coming pointed out the person who is Lord: Jesus. The Spirit’s coming expanded upon what the Jews had already seen. First, Jesus’ miracles showed that He was

THINK ABOUT IT

At Pentecost, the Spirit began to declare Jesus to the whole world.



THINK ABOUT IT

Pentecost celebrated the first fruits of the harvest (Num 28:26), and the Spirit’s coming on this day showed that more and better blessings were yet to come (2 Cor 1:22).



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God's special Servant (2:22; Isa 52:13). Second, Jesus' resurrection confirmed that He is the **Christ**. As the promised **Messiah**, He is not just Savior but also the King who must be obeyed (2:23–32; Ps 16:8–11; Rom 4:25). Now, third, the coming of the Spirit shows that Jesus is even more! He is even now ruling with the same authority as the Father, for only someone with God's power could pour out God's Holy Spirit (Acts 2:33–35). This leads to the shocking conclusion. Peter had just quoted Joel to urge people to call on the name of the Lord. The "Lord" that Joel was talking about was **Yahweh, the name of the true and only God**. Peter was saying that Jesus is Yahweh, and that He proved it by pouring out the Spirit (2:36)!

The Spirit's coming saved many people (2:37–47)

What happens next is both expected and unexpected. We would expect that the Jews would feel broken-hearted after hearing that they had illegally and shamefully killed their long-expected Savior and King (2:23). Even saying a word against God was blasphemy, but they had done something so much worse: they had crucified their God (2:36). Thus they were **cut to the heart**, experiencing intense, sudden conviction over their sin (2:37). It felt as if their hearts were smashed to pieces. Even so, their conviction is unexpected. They had never responded to Jesus, so why do they respond to Peter? Because Jesus had poured out the Holy Spirit, and the Spirit was doing His job of convicting the world of sin (John 16:8).

Peter's reply was shocking. Instead of receiving terrible wrath, they were being offered **forgiveness** (Acts 2:38)! All their sins, including the crime of killing the Lord, could be washed away. God would not hold any of it against them. And if that weren't enough, the Lord they crucified was offering them the Holy Spirit too! And if that weren't enough, these blessings were also being offered to their children and to all the world (2:39)! How can criminals be so blessed and not punished? Only because the One they killed suffered their

punishment in their place. They were guilty, but even their crime was part of God's perfect plan of salvation (2:23; Isa 53:10). Jesus gave His life to give new life to His enemies by the power of the Spirit (Rom 5:10).

But new life can only be received by repenting and believing (Acts 2:38). To **repent** is to admit that you are wrong, have a complete change of heart, and turn away from sin. To **believe** is to trust and submit to Jesus no matter the cost. This is what baptism symbolizes. In those days, Gentiles who converted to Judaism would be baptized to show that they now identified themselves with Israel. So these Jews needed to be **baptized to publically side with Jesus, declare allegiance to Him as Messiah and God, and find their identity in Him**. This was a decisive act of faith, since they would now be cut off by their fellow Jews and give up their old way of life.

The shocking message had a shocking result. The Holy Spirit used the disciples to do greater work than Jesus had done (2:41; John 14:12; 16:7). In the process, the Spirit created the church, and when the church is Spirit-led, it is a preview of God's perfect kingdom to come. The church is Spirit-led when believers obey His Word (Acts 2:42a), when they choose to make the church their primary community by often gathering together (2:42b), when they remember their salvation through Jesus in the Lord's Supper (2:42c), when they live in awe of God and in dependence on Him through prayer (2:42d–43), and when they selflessly serve each other because they love each other more than themselves (2:44–46). It is good to be humble and obedient like that, because that is how we find great joy, see how amazing God is, and show others that serving God is good (2:46b–47).

THINK ABOUT IT

In baptism, Christians identify themselves with Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection (Rom 6:3–4).



Lesson Outline

Jesus rules with great power through the Holy Spirit.

AGES 3–5 LESSON OUTLINE



1. Jesus poured out the Spirit with power (2:1–13).
2. Jesus poured out the Spirit to show He is Lord (2:14–36).
3. Jesus poured out the Spirit to bring people to Jesus (2:37–41).
4. Jesus poured out the Spirit to bless His church (2:42–47).



AGES 6–11 LESSON OUTLINE

1. The Spirit came on the disciples (2:1–13).
 - On Pentecost, the Spirit came like wind and fire (2:1–3).
 - The Spirit caused the disciples to speak in many languages (2:4–13).
2. The Spirit's coming was explained by Peter (2:14–36).
 - The Spirit's coming shows it is time to turn to the Lord (2:14–21).
 - The Spirit's coming shows that Jesus is the Lord (2:22–36).
3. The Spirit's coming saved many people (2:37–47).
 - The Spirit produced conviction, repentance, and faith (2:37–41).
 - The Spirit created an obedient, unified, and joyful church (2:42–47).



TEACH THE BIBLE LESSON

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Lesson Questions

Use these questions to teach or to review this week's lesson.



Ages 3–5 Lesson Questions

1. **What did the Holy Spirit sound like when He came?**
Like a loud, rushing wind from heaven.
2. **What was strange about the way the disciples talked?**
They were talking in languages they did not even know.
3. **What did Peter call Jesus?**
Lord and Christ.
4. **What did the people need to do?**
Repent and be baptized.



Ages 6–11 Lesson Questions

1. **What day was it when the Spirit came?**
He came on Pentecost—the 50th day from the Sunday after Passover.
2. **What is it called when Jesus pours out His Spirit on believers?**
Baptism in the Spirit.
3. **How did the crowd of Jews know the disciples were speaking many different languages?**
Because these Jews were visiting from many different nations with different languages.
4. **What does the Spirit's coming show about the time we are living in?**
It is the last times, when final judgment could come at any time.
5. **What does the Spirit's coming show about who Jesus is?**
It shows that Jesus really is alive and ruling as God in heaven right now.
6. **Why were the Jews so broken-hearted when they heard this?**
They realized they had crucified their Messiah and God.
7. **What did Jesus offer these Jews instead of judgment?**
He offered them forgiveness for all their sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit.
8. **What was the early church like because of the Spirit?**
It was obedient, united in Christ, united to each other, devoted to serving, delighting in how amazing God is, full of joy, and an attractive witness to unbelievers.

Lesson Activities

Choose from the following ideas to introduce, illustrate, and apply this week's lesson.

AGES 3–5



WALL MURAL OF PENTECOST

Using butcher paper, prepare a mural of the day of Pentecost, outlining what the upper room might have looked like back then without the people. As the children arrive, have the class work together to draw a room filled with people on the mural. Explain that these people are those who would have gathered in the upper room on the day of Pentecost. Then allow the children to color in tongues of fire above each person on the mural. The pouring out of the Spirit looked like tongues of fire resting on each person and sounded like a mighty wind from heaven.

TONGUE LIKE FIRE

Create your own fire-like tongue out of cardstock and mount it to the top of a hat so that it looks like it's resting above your head.



TEACHING OBJECTS

Use the following objects to help you describe what happened on Pentecost: A tongue of fire (have the shape of a flame of fire, colored red and orange), fan (mighty rushing wind), globe (people from every nation), megaphone (Peter's sermon), gift box (the Holy Spirit is a gift to those who repent), U-turn sign (repentance), cup of water and action figure (baptism), Bible (apostles' teaching), handshake (fellowship), bread and grape juice (the Lord's Supper), folded hands (prayer), and coins (selling possessions and sharing with others).

CHURCH GROWTH

Bring a measuring tape to class and measure a few children to see how tall they are. Ask the children what kinds of things help them to grow: nutritious food, milk, good rest, caring for their body and teeth, regular visits to the doctor, etc. Then ask them how the church grows. God causes the church to grow by adding people to it through salvation (Acts 2:47), but He often does this through the faithful witness of those in the church: their obedience to the Bible, kindness to others, celebration of the Lord's Supper, prayer, selfless serving, and joy in the Lord (Acts 2:42–47).



THE HOLY SPIRIT DESCENDS

See Year 3 Craft Book, Book 2.

Materials: Craft sheet, light blue cardstock, white copy paper, yarn, scissor, tape, glue stick.

Directions: Color the images. Cut in half the blue cardstock. Draw some clouds on the white paper, cut them and glue them on the cardstock. Make two hole in the blue cardstock and pass the yarn through them. Tape the two extremities of the yarn in the back of the images.

The Holy Spirit Descends
See Year 3 Craft Book, Book 2



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AGES 6–8



TIMELINE

Create a timeline to help the children remember the events leading up to the day of Pentecost. Write the following events and references on separate index cards and pass them out to the children: (1) God promises the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament (Ezek 36:26–37), (2) Jesus promises His disciples the Holy Spirit (John 16:7), (3) Jesus is arrested (John 18:12), (4) Jesus is crucified (John 19:16), (5) Jesus is resurrected (Mark 16:6), (6) Jesus spends 40 days with the disciples (Acts 1:3), and (7) Jesus ascends into heaven (Acts 1:9). See if the children are able to place them in the correct order on the timeline.

ON THE TEAM

Bring a jersey to class. Have any of the children ever been on a sports team and received a jersey? The jersey shows that you belong; it's a sign that you are a part of the team; everyone on the team gets one. This is similar to something we are going to learn about today: baptism in the Holy Spirit. This is a one-time event that happens at salvation when God places a believer into the body of Christ, making them part of the “team” (Acts 1:5; 1 Cor 12:13).



HELLO, HOLA, HALLO

Before class, give a number of children cards with the word “hello” written on it in a foreign language. Teach each child how to pronounce the word, and then have him or her hide the card in his or her pocket or Bible. Tell the children to stand up and begin shouting their word for “hello” over and over again during the lesson when you give the signal. Explain that the sign gift of tongues given at the coming of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:4) during Pentecost was actually a gift to speak a real foreign language.

ACTUAL LANGUAGE

During the lesson, begin speaking in Pig Latin (ask a child who knows how to do this if you do not). If more than one person in the class knows Pig Latin, talk back and forth while the rest of the class listens in confusion. While speaking in Pig Latin is fun (especially when you want to conceal something from someone who doesn't know it), it is not an actual language. It is really just a form of jargon in which words in English are altered. However, the languages spoken by the disciples were actually real languages.



A WONDERFUL GIFT

See Year 3 Craft Book, Book 2.

Materials: Craft sheets, cardstock, crayons, tape, scissors, yarn.

Directions: Photocopy the craft page on cardstock. Color the three images, and cut them. Tape the images on the yarn as shown in the picture.

*A Wonderful Gift
See Year 3 Craft Book, Book 2*



AGES 9–11



INTRODUCE

COULD ANYTHING BE GREATER?

Ask the children to imagine what it must have been like as one of Jesus' disciples. Jesus was the perfect leader: He always knew where to go and what they should do. He was the perfect provider, able to meet any need they had, physical or spiritual. Could anything this side of heaven be better than following Jesus while He was on earth? Yes! Read John 16:7. In today's lesson, Jesus' promise comes true: the disciples receive the Holy Spirit.

ONE, DOS, DREI

Make cards that each contain a different foreign number. For each foreign language, make three cards: numbers one, two, and three. Pass one card out to each child and tell them how to pronounce their number (the Internet is a good resource). At your command, each child is to say their number out loud. They must continue saying their number (and only their number) until they find the other two children in the class with numbers in their language. The first group of three to do so wins. You may also provide an extra prize for groups that can place themselves in the correct numerical order.



ILLUSTRATE

ACROSTIC: CHARACTERISTICS OF CONVERTS

Write the following acrostic on the board or on half sheets of paper to hand out to the children. Replace the underlined words with blank spaces and fill in the blank spaces as you teach the lesson.

Characteristics of genuine . . .

Cut to the heart (Acts 2:37) & repented of their sins (2:38)

Obeyed God and were baptized (2:38, 41)

Needs of the church met by selling individual possessions (2:45)

Very faithful in prayer (2:42)

Excellent reputation with other people (2:47)

Received the gift of the Holy Spirit (2:38)

Took part in communion (2:42)

Steadfast in the apostle's doctrine (Scripture) (2:42)

PEOPLE FROM EVERY NATION

Show the class flags (or pictures of flags) from many different countries. See if the children can identify the country and language where their flag is from. Explain that people from "every nation under heaven" were gathered in Jerusalem for Pentecost (Acts 2:5).



APPLY

HEALTHY GROWTH

Have a discussion about what makes a healthy church. Can the children identify any characteristics of a healthy church? Our lesson today identified a number of characteristics of a healthy church: obedience to the Bible, kindness to others, celebration of the Lord's Supper, prayer, selfless serving, and joy in the Lord (Acts 2:42–47). It's also highly likely that a healthy church will grow as God blesses it by adding more and more people to it. Does your church do any of the things listed at the end of Acts 2? What about you? Are you a healthy Christian? Healthy Christians do the same things healthy churches do (Acts 2:42–47), for the church is the Christians who gather there, not the building they meet in.