

# Gamma - Leaders

## Acts 2

### Study 2 Preparing for Missions

#### Case 1

*Nathaniel went to a church at the airport called the Vines Tabernacle of Jerusalem and the leaders there found out that he had not been baptised with the Holy Spirit because he did not speak in tongues. They told him that was why he was never very fruit ful in his ministry. That was why he was not doing well in his bussiness nor his love life. The victory can only come when he is baptised with the Spirit. Nathaniel accepted Christ at the age of 21 years and received water baptism and fully trusted Jesus as His Lord and believed that Jesus rose from the dead and is the Son of God. They insisted to be complete he must speak in tongues and be baptised. They derived their theology from the book of Acts in Acts 2 where the gift of tongues accompanied the impartation of the Spirit.*

- 1. Nathan is very troubled so how would you explain to him whether there was a need for this second baptism or had he already have the Holy Spirit in him. Look at Acts 8:14-17 the conversion of the Samaritans, 1 Cor 12:13, 12:7-11; 14 :1-5**

Firstly not all occasions of the outpouring of the Spirit is like that in Acts 2, there are two other occasions in the conversion of Gentiles in Acts 10 and in Acts 19 involving John's disciples and in each case it was a historically significant people group where the tongues and even prophesy was seen deomonstrated. However in the conversion of Samaritans there was no manifestation of tongues at all. If we are to say true Spiritual experience must mimic the Acts 2 event then each time a person is baptized with the HS then we would also expect miraculous and extraordinary phenomenon like earthquakes, wind-sounds, and fire . So we cannot agree with some that speaking in tongues is the necessary or even the normal sign of the fullness of the Spirit.

In the Corinthian passages it is clear that not everyone has the

gift of tongues which is certainly one of the many manifestations of the Spirit those who do not have are urged in Cor 14 to desire them.

- Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him (Romans 8:9 ESV) clearly states that every single Christian has the Holy Spirit.
- For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body — Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:13 ESV)
- This last verse in 1 Cor 12 makes it very clear all believers have the One spirit and one becomes a believer on profession of faith and not at a second experience.

**2. Nathan is now concerned about this idea of the filling of the Holy Spirit of fullness of the Spirit what is it and is it different from what happens at conversion? Luke 1:41; 1:67; Acts 7:55-56 and Acts 13:9**

If we look at Luke's descriptions of the "fullness of the Spirit" in his gospel, we see Elizabeth (Luke 1:41) and her husband Zechariah (Luke 1:67) becoming filled with the Holy Spirit. In both cases they immediately begin to declare the redemptive works of God with joy and power. [This is identical to Acts 2:11, for the "*wonders*" that the apostles declare is the word *megaleia* — "the mega- deeds of God". They are talking about the redemptive acts of God in history — the gospel.] Next in the gospel of Luke we see the Spirit descending on Jesus (3:21) so that he too goes off "*full of the Holy Spirit*". In Jesus' case, there are two characteristics. First, he received with the Spirit a strong assurance of his sonship and the Father's love for him: "*You are my Son, whom I love*". Second, he received the Spirit in order to endure a major confrontation with Satan, which he met by declaring the Word of God (see Luke 4:1-13). [Note: Maybe he received the Spirit so he could confront Satan. But maybe he got confronted by Satan because he had received the Spirit. Probably,

both are true!] Again, we see that the fullness of the Spirit equipped Jesus to declare the Word of God.

In summary, what do all these incidents have in common? 1) We see that the “fullness of the Spirit” Luke speaks of is episodic. It does not occur continuously. Paul was “filled with the Spirit” in order to speak to the sorcerer. That means it came upon him, and later left. 2) We see that the “fullness” is repeatable. It may happen frequently or infrequently. 3) We see that the “fullness” always consists of a) a powerful assurance that God loves us and is with us, and b) an ability to effectively witness. The fullness is “assurance for service”. 4) Finally, we see that the “fullness” seems sometimes to be connected to a) prevailing prayer, and b) persecution or confrontation and temptation.

What do these incidents not have in common? Though speaking in tongues is attached to the experience of fullness of the Spirit in Acts 2:4, and also in Acts 10:46 and Acts 19:6, tongues is not connected in these other incidents. Also, miraculous and extraordinary phenomenon like earthquakes, wind-sounds, and fire are not necessary. So we cannot agree with some that speaking in tongues is the necessary or even the normal sign of the fullness of the Spirit.

The unique phenomena of Pentecost show that in some ways it was unique and unrepeatable. Jesus gave his Spirit to his church on that day as the newly ascended Lord. Now he proceeds to minister in the world through his Spirit-filled church. Perhaps, we can even say that it was on that day that the church was “baptized with the Holy Spirit”. Jesus had promised in Acts 1:5 that Pentecost would be Spirit-baptism. On that day, it says that they were “filled with the Spirit”. But then the repeatable series of “Spirit-filled” experiences is not called “Spirit-baptisms”. Rather, the baptism of the Spirit was their once and for all inauguration into a new realm of spiritual experience. In the repeated episodes of spirit-filledness the disciples were drawing on their Spirit-baptism. So in one sense, Pentecost was a once for all crossing into a new realm and era. In another way, it was repeatable. In the same way, we are baptized once with the Spirit (I Cor.12:13) when we enter the Body of Christ at conversion. But the baptism of the Spirit now provides us with potential for multiple and deepening experiences of assurance and power.

**3. What is the significance of the multi-lingual proclamation of the gospel on the day of Pentecost? Why do you think God did it that way?**

Pentecost means that the unity of the Spirit transcends all racial, national, and linguistic barriers. For centuries, commentators have noted that Acts 2 is a reversal of the curse of Babel. Acts 2 provides a “Table of the Nations” as does Genesis 10. But in Acts 2, a miracle of blessing brings people together through understanding despite linguistic barriers. While in Genesis 11, a miracle of cursing breaks people apart through division despite original linguistic sameness. In Genesis 11, the people of the earth unite to “make a name for themselves” (v.4), and this leads to the disunity of racial and cultural alienation. In Acts 2, when people unite “*to call on the name of the Lord*” (Acts 2:21) and the result is racial and cultural healing.

The practical ramifications for the church have never been completely worked out. The next few chapters of Acts will show that the disciples themselves did not understand the implications. They continued to erect racial barriers between Christians. What Pentecost means is that the church must work to the greatest degree possible to show unity of Christians across racial barriers. It is a mark of the Spirit-filled church that people get along inside the church who

**Q. 4. From the passage in Acts 2 what are some of the strategies we might learn for us as witnesses individually and as a church corporately?**

There are many things that participants will probably notice — far more than we can enumerate here. Here are some of the many possibilities.

As individuals:

We need to allow people to come in a process. There were three stages here. First, the seekers had interest created (“what do these things mean”?) Only when that happened were they open, second, to a full gospel presentation. And even that was fairly general. And only when they came under personal conviction (“what should we do?”) is direct statement made on how they can become Christians.

We need to know the Bible. We need to know the evidence for the gospel.

We need to really know where the listeners “are” religiously. Peter appealed at several points to “what they themselves knew”. We need to know what they do believe — what their worldview is, and so on. We have to spend a lot of time listening to be able to “scratch where they itch”.

We need to have a joy and power about us, which is what attracted the crowd to the disciples in the first place.

As a church:

Churches need to have “evangelistic worship” which a) knocks non-believers out of their complacency, b) gives some basics of the truth, c) shows the personal relevance of the truth to human life, d) gains credibility for the gospel.

Churches need to have “after meetings”. Since you can’t lay out the “big picture” of the gospel and Christian truth in every worship service, we need to do what Peter does. After each service, some people will want to know “what these things mean”. And there should be classes or meetings where we show why we believe and what the truth is. We need to show how it all fits together.

Churches need to have people who are skilled in “counseling into Christ”. After the after meetings and services, there will be people who need personal counsel about how to take hold on Christ. We need to provide counsel for them.

# THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

## **Introduction: The Holy Spirit's Coming**

Before His death, Jesus told all those who were *spiritually* thirsty to come to Him and drink. He promised that rivers of living waters would flow out of them, speaking symbolically of the Holy Spirit who hadn't been given, because Jesus had not yet been glorified (John 7:37-39). Jesus later said it was for our good that He was going away and He promised to send *the Counselor, the Spirit of truth*, to guide us into all truth and to tell us what is yet to come (John 16:7,13). Then, Christ's last words before His ascension assured believers that they would receive power when the Holy Spirit came, that would result in their being bold witnesses of His death and resurrection (Acts 1:8). Pentecost was fifty days after Christ was resurrected and just 10 days after His ascension. It is here, in Acts 2:1-36, that we see Jesus' promises about the Holy Spirit fulfilled. On that day all the Christians were filled with the Holy Spirit. Peter was empowered to explain what was happening. He describes David's prediction of Christ's resurrection and exaltation as fulfillment of prophecy and God's foreordained plan. And he points to the gift of the Holy Spirit as proof of Christ's Lordship.

Today we have the gospels, the book of Acts and the epistles to teach us about the Holy Spirit's ministry in our lives and in the life of Christ's church. We are inseparably linked to this *Person* as believers, yet many believers are confused about or ignorant of His ministry in our lives. Ask yourself — "Theoretically, if the Holy Spirit left my life today, would it make any difference in the way I respond to things?" (Leader: 10 min. #I; 10 min. #IIA; 10 min. #IIB; 15 min. for prayer.)

## **I. The Holy Spirit's Ministry**

A. The Holy Spirit came to *convict the world* of sin, righteousness

and judgment, according to John 16:8-11. What has been *the world's response*, from Old Testament times until now, according to **Acts 7:51-53**?

B. Assign these verses. Discuss how the Holy Spirit relate to *all believers*.

1. **I Corin. 6:19, 20. Eph. 1:13. Rom. 8: 11, 16 & 26**

4. In I Corin. 12:7-13 we see that there is both diversity and unity in the body of Christ, for the common good. Everyone profits as the spiritual gifts are exercised that the Holy Spirit bestowed. He gives 'severally, as He wills, we receive.

C. Once we better understand the theology of God's Spirit at work in the church and in us, what should be the implications in our walk with God and the life of the church?

## **II. How Christians relate to the Holy Spirit**

A. What potential *problems* are exposed in the following verses? 1. **Eph. 4:30** (What *solutions* are offered in v.31,32?) 2. **I Thes. 5:19** (What *solutions* are offered in verses 20-24?) 3. **Gal. 5:17** (What *solutions* are offered in verses 16,18 & 25?)

4. I John 1:5-10 once again shows us problems, or *hindrances*, that can keep us from the Spirit's fullness. How can these verses help us follow through on obeying the solutions offered in the verses above *and what's at stake if we don't*?

B. Eph. 5:18 is a command for believers to be filled with the Holy Spirit. **It's not an option**, but He doesn't tell us to do something beyond our grasp. Eph. 5:19-21 and Col. 3:15,16 describe evidences of the Spirit's fullness in our hearts and in the church. We speak to one another with songs, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and making music in our hearts to the Lord, being thankful for everything and submitting ourselves one to another. Do you see the Spirit's fullness being manifested in our church?

## **III. Pray together about:**

A. Where you need deeper understanding, confessing obstacles to obedience in your walk and your desire to experience the Spirit's

work in yourself and in our church.

**B. ALTAR Accountability.** In the whole group, or in smaller groups of 2 or 3, share how you are doing in the 3-5 things that you resolved to do in order to ‘build an altar’ and have a life more useful to God’.