

# WEDNESDAY BIBLE FELLOWSHIP

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No: 22

## Acts Chapter 2: 1-24, 32-41

### INTRODUCTION

Life for the followers of Jesus was full of ups and downs! Shattered by grief and afraid for their lives, the resurrection was the last thing they expected. But it happened! For forty amazing days Jesus appeared to various groups and in different places. Their hopes soared but Jesus spoke only of leaving them with a task. They were to tell the world the Good News that the way to God was through faith in Jesus.

Tell the world! To a band in hiding that must have sounded a most unlikely task but Jesus was depending on them. He had also said, "You must wait in the city until the power from above comes down upon you." (Luke 24:49). They were glad to hear that! So, with mounting anticipation, they must have gathered to pray, to search the Scriptures and to remember together all that Jesus had told them. "When the Holy Spirit comes upon you, you will receive power, and you will be witnesses for me ..." (Acts 1:8) These words echoed God's call to his people through Isaiah, "Listen ... Do not be afraid; you are my servants, my chosen people whom I love. I will give water to the thirsty ... and make streams flow ... I will pour out my power ... One by one people will say 'I am the LORD's' ... I AM the first, the last, the only God Could anyone else have done what I did? ... you are my witnesses." (Isaiah 44:1-8)

### Read Acts 2:1-24, 32-41

### Questions for discussions

- **How do you think of the Holy Spirit? Tick two or three on the list and/or add your own suggestions.**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Spiritual energy     | <input type="checkbox"/> Gentle breeze     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> God at work          | <input type="checkbox"/> Person            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Impersonal influence | <input type="checkbox"/> Power source      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Comforter            | <input type="checkbox"/> Christ's presence |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Guiding conscience   | <input type="checkbox"/> .....             |

- **The believers experienced the Holy Spirit as wind and fire. How do these images help us understand the power of the Holy Spirit? (Exodus 3:1-6 and Ezekiel 37:7-14 give some Old Testament examples of fire and wind as symbols of God’s presence.)**
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- **All 120 believers burst into praise and prayer in ‘other’ languages. What do you think was the significance of this?**
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- **“This is that.” “His gift... poured out on us. “With a flash of spiritual insight and power Peter goes on to proclaim the Good News (vi. 32-36). If you had been one of the disciples which aspects would have excited you most? Choose two of the following or add your own thoughts.**

- a) The evidence of prophecy being fulfilled before their eyes
- b) The ability to forget their fear.
- c) The proof that Jesus was all he said he was
- d) The awe of knowing what was happening was from God.
- e) The feeling of euphoria at being filled with the Spirit
- f) .....

- **“What shall we do?” Deeply troubled by Peter’s words many were desperate to make amends, but how could they? Look at Peter’s answer in verses 38-39 and list the steps you think they needed to take. What was the significance of those steps?**
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- **Which of these things do people find most difficult?**
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- **The Good News was a truth that had to be told and the Holy Spirit moved them to tell it. What holds us back from witnessing today? Answer yes (Y), no (N) or maybe (M).**

( ) Being insufficiently filled with the Holy Spirit.

- ( ) Having little concern for the spiritually lost.
- ( ) Lacking a real experience of Christ.
- ( ) Being afraid of what others may think.
- ( ) Being unwilling to be controlled by the Holy Spirit.
- ( ) .....

• **What difference does it make to have received the Holy Spirit? Which aspects are important to you? Choose the top two, add your own ideas and draw a star against aspects you would like to experience more fully.**

- ( ) Sharpens the conscience ( ) Helps us love the unlovable
- ( ) Makes the Bible speak ( ) Gives us a desire to share our faith
- ( ) Gives assurance of salvation ( ) Helps us pray
- ( ) Brings peace and joy ( ) .....

• **What things prevent us from knowing the presence and power of the Holy Spirit? How can we deal with those things?**

- List ways in which you see the Holy Spirit at work in the church today. Are there ways in which you and your church need to allow God's Spirit to be more active among you? Try to identify one or two things for action and prayer.

- Why do you think Luke made so much of the number of nations represented at Jerusalem? What challenge (and encouragement) does that give?

- Why did the crowd react in the way they did? (w.5-13) What sorts of things provoke a response to Christianity today?

- How did Peter explain what was happening? (w.14-21) What gives us openings to speak about the things God is doing in our lives and in his church?

- What are the facts of the Christian message Peter went on to outline? (It might be helpful to make a summary of them on a sheet of paper.) Are these the things you would see as essentials of the Gospel?
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- What are the basic elements in the response to the Christian message as Peter outlines them? What does God promise to do? (w.37-41) How would you explain this to someone today who asked, "How do I become a Christian?"
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## NOTES

v.4 The disciples experienced the Spirit's presence within them in fulfillment of Christ's promise (1:4-5 & 8). This filling resulted in them speaking in other tongues, which Paul includes in the list of the gifts of the Spirit in 1 Corinthians. There, however, it seems to be speaking in a language no-one present could understand. Here, in Acts, the listeners understood it. Rather than see the two as totally distinct it seems more likely that this was a special use of that gift.

w.5-1 2 The list of nations covers all directions East, West, North, and South (wherever Jews had settled). Special emphasis is given to Rome by Luke who is writing with a Roman readership in mind. This emphasizes that the message of Jesus is for the whole world. Galileans were regarded as countrymen, hence the surprise at their linguistic ability. Obviously, something unusual was happening and so a crowd gathered.

w.1 6-21 Peter explains what is happening in terms of the prophecy of Joel 2:28-32. Peter sees the age between Christ's first and second coming as "the last days", the closing era of history, in which God's Spirit is at work. During this time God's Spirit is given to all God's people not just individual prophets, priests and kings. The signs of w.1 9-20 may be those linked to Christ's crucifixion (Luke 23:44ff) but more likely are the signs of his return (the "day of the Lord" is the day of judgement). Calling on the name of the Lord means turning to Jesus for salvation. God's promise is for everyone. (See 2:38, Romans 10:9-13 etc...)

w.34-35 The quote from Psalm 110 speaks of one at God's right hand who can be called Lord. As this is not David, as he has not ascended into heaven, it is seen as a reference to Jesus. He used this Psalm of himself (Luke 20:41-44) and other writers used it too (e.g. 1 Corinthians 15:25, Hebrews 1:13).