

# Bible Study | May 23, 2021

## We Believe...the Holy Spirit is Real

### Acts 2:1-21



#### Welcome

The Holy Spirit is God's active presence in the world and in our lives. In Acts 2 the Holy Spirit comes to gathered believers. But, if you read Acts 1, you'll discover that Jesus told them to wait in Jerusalem for God's giving of the Holy Spirit; in other words, the Spirit would come in God's time. God's will shaped the moment—a moment when Jewish believers had gathered from around the Roman world for worship in Jerusalem. The disciples' act of obedience demonstrated their trust that what Jesus had promised would happen. These two combine to explode in the dramatic events of that first Pentecost. If you and I behave as if the Holy Spirit is real, then a number of external and internal truths are ours.

#### Praying the Passage...

Come, Holy Spirit, and fill us in this place; blow through us with the fresh breeze of your love as we gather in the strong name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

Pentecost was originally a feast day that took place fifty days after the Feast of First Fruits. Read about this feast in Leviticus 23:15-21. As W.W. Wiersbe points out in his expository outlines on the New Testament, "Just as Passover is a picture of the death of Christ (1 Corinthians 5:7), and First Fruits a picture of the resurrection of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:20-23), so Pentecost pictures the coming of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:13)" (*Victor Books, Wheaton, Ill., pg. 280*).

There are many places in scripture that reference the Holy Spirit. In spite of rather profound sections in the Acts, the Gospels and Epistles, there continue to be misunderstandings regarding the Holy Spirit.

•*Read the primary passage from Acts 2:1-21 and pay attention to the questions that come up. What stands out for you in this passage?*

**Acts 2:1-21 NLT** On the day of Pentecost all the believers were meeting together in one place. 2 Suddenly, there was a sound from heaven like the roaring of a mighty windstorm, and it filled the house where they were sitting. 3 Then, what looked like flames or tongues of fire appeared and settled on each of them. 4 And everyone present was filled with the Holy Spirit and began speaking in other languages, as the Holy Spirit gave them this ability. 5 At that time there were devout Jews from every nation living in Jerusalem. 6 When they heard the loud noise, everyone came running, and they were bewildered to hear their own languages being spoken by the believers. 7 They were completely amazed. "How can this be?" they exclaimed. "These people are all from Galilee, 8 and yet we hear them speaking in our own native languages! 9 Here we are—Parthians, Medes, Elamites, people from Mesopotamia, Judea, Cappadocia, Pontus, the province of Asia, 10 Phrygia, Pamphylia, Egypt, and the areas of Libya around Cyrene, visitors from Rome 11 (both Jews and converts to Judaism), Cretans, and Arabs. And we all hear these people speaking in our own languages about the wonderful things God has done!" 12 They stood there amazed and perplexed. "What can this mean?" they asked each other. 13 But others in the crowd ridiculed them, saying, "They're just drunk, that's all!" 14 Then Peter stepped forward with the

eleven other apostles and shouted to the crowd, "Listen carefully, all of you, fellow Jews and residents of Jerusalem! Make no mistake about this. 15 These people are not drunk, as some of you are assuming. Nine o'clock in the morning is much too early for that. 16 No, what you see was predicted long ago by the prophet Joel: 17 'In the last days,' God says, 'I will pour out My Spirit upon all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy. Your young men will see visions, and your old men will dream dreams. 18 In those days I will pour out My Spirit even on My servants—men and women alike—and they will prophesy. 19 And I will cause wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below—blood and fire and clouds of smoke. 20 The sun will become dark, and the moon will turn blood red before that great and glorious day of the LORD arrives. 21 But everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved.'

*•What specific questions do you have about the Holy Spirit? (Don't attempt to answer those questions right now, just make a list of the issues that are raised in your group.)*

The Holy Spirit is identified in many ways in this passage. Make a list of the actions of the Holy Spirit and talk together about what those actions mean. Here are some to get you started:

- Sound like the rush of a mighty wind
- Tongues, as of fire
- Gives ability to speak in other languages

The Holy Spirit is God's active presence in the world and in our lives, providing a new way of living our lives.

•Externally, we will be able to enter any circumstance in the confidence that we never enter it alone—God is with us. So, we bring hope with us into the world. We share prayers in the absolute confidence that God will hear our prayers. We see the events of the world, in our lives, as spiritual moments to be shaped by God's loving hand.

•Internally, we experience a growing courage, an experience of the nearness of the Divine and our relationships are touched by the fire of God. We are willing to face our own stuff in order to come clean before God, others and ourselves and that takes a daily courage of the soul. We find ourselves surprised by the unlooked-for tinges of God's Spirit that pulls together seemingly disconnected strands of life and we find ourselves in awe of how God has led us to a miracle moment. We see in our co-workers, neighbors, and loved ones the gentle hand of God or God's opportunity for us to demonstrate God's love in concrete acts of kindness or compassion.

When the Holy Spirit is real in our life, we can't help but act in spiritual boldness just as the disciples on that first Pentecost.

*•Talk together about how you have experienced these indications of the Holy Spirit's presence in your daily life.*

Read Luke 4:1-4. This is the first part of the story of the Temptation of Christ.

•*What does it mean to say that Jesus was “led by the Spirit in the wilderness where...he was tempted by the Devil”?*

•*What does this tell us about the role of the Holy Spirit in difficult times?*

We also learn about the Holy Spirit in the story of the Transfiguration. Read Mark 9:1-13 and notice how the Holy Spirit interacted with Jesus, Peter, James, and John.

When the Holy Spirit “takes up residence” in us, a transformation takes place. We display new characteristics in our daily lives. Read Galatians 5:22-23a and talk about what it means to have Spirit-filled love, Spirit-filled joy, peace, patience, etc.

Begin each day this week by reading Galatians 5:22-23a. As you move through your day, pay attention to those moments when you experience Spirit-filled love, joy, and peace. Be aware, also, of the times when your patience is tested, when you experience unkindness or a loss of self-control. Ask the Holy Spirit to fill you again to help you focus on God’s love and the Spirit’s presence once again.

### **Closing Prayer...**

Holy Spirit, reign down on us today and in the days ahead. Keep us open to the fresh outpouring of your love and power. Give us fresh dreams and visions for ministry; give us prophetic discernment in our walk with you. And when we call on you, save us from all that hinders our growth. In Christ’s name we pray. Amen.