

3 STUDY THE PROMISE ARRIVES


Background

Jesus has ascended to heaven. His followers have chosen another apostle to take the place of Judas. They are waiting for the gift of the Holy Spirit. This passage tells how the Holy Spirit arrived and Peter explained what happened.

different languages so that people from different countries hear their own language. Notice how Luke repeats this point (verses 6, 8, 11). God has fulfilled his promise to gather all his people to him again.

(This is a miracle of speech which is not the same as the "tongues" in 1 Corinthians 12 and 14.)

Read

 **READ** Acts 2:1-21 two or three times.

Explain each verse in your own words.

 **READ** Ezekiel 36:24-32

- What did God promise he would do?
- How is this fulfilled in Acts 2?

God promised to gather his people together and give them his Spirit. This is what happens at Pentecost.

Understand

 **READ** Acts 2:1-13

Verse 1: "Pentecost" – a Jewish festival fifty days after the Passover.

Verse 4: "Other tongues" – other languages.

- What is the result of the Holy Spirit filling people?
- How do the crowd in Jerusalem respond?
- Why does Luke tell us where people came from (v9-11)?

In the Old Testament wind and fire are a sign of God or his Holy Spirit. So this is a picture of God coming to his people. This group speak in

 **READ** Acts 2:14-21

- What does Peter say is happening?
- What does verse 21 mean people can now do?

God is keeping his promise to give his Holy Spirit to everyone who believes. In the Old Testament God only gave the Holy Spirit to some people, like kings or prophets. Now God will give his Holy Spirit to all his people. This gift of God's Spirit is joined with God's offer to forgive sin. People can now call on the Lord and they will be saved (verse 21).

Prophecy, dreams and visions were signs of the Spirit's work in the Old Testament. Verse 17 is saying that everyone will know the work of God's Spirit.

Pentecost is a very significant moment. The gift of God's Spirit is to change people so they will follow God (see Ezekiel 36:27). God worked through Jesus' death and resurrection to keep that promise. This means that the "last days" have arrived (v17). They will continue until the "day of the Lord" (v20), when God will judge and re-create the world.

We will see more in the next passage about how people are saved. Here Peter just says we should "call on the name of the Lord".

Some people may have a question:

- Do we have to speak in tongues to receive God's Spirit?

No, we do not. Later, in verse 41, people are baptised but do not speak in tongues. Lots of people in Acts believe in Jesus without speaking in tongues. We will return to this question later in Acts.

Find the main point of the passage

- What is the main lesson from these verses?
- How should we feel because of this passage?

God's plan to rescue sinners was fulfilled by Jesus' death and resurrection. Through Jesus the gift of the Holy Spirit was given. We can call on God to save us. We do that by trusting in Jesus. Then we are saved from God's anger, we become one of God's people, and we receive God's Spirit. The Holy Spirit works in us so that we know God and will live for God.

So the main point of the passage is: God's promise to send his Holy Spirit has come true.



PLAN

Main point of the sermon

What will your sermon try to convince people of? What do they need to know about the Holy Spirit from this passage? What difference will that make?

The main point will be something like this: God kept his promises to bring salvation and give the gift of his Holy Spirit.

Sub-points

- Read the main point again.
- Read the verses again.
- What sub-points will help you teach this passage?

Verses 1-13

This part tells what happens. The Holy Spirit comes. People can speak in different languages. Jews from every nation are amazed.

Verses 14-21

Peter explains what has happened. God's promise in Joel 2 is fulfilled and so his Holy Spirit has come. People can call on God and be saved. If they do, then they will receive the Holy Spirit too.

Think of a heading for each sub-point.

For example:

1. The Holy Spirit comes (v1-13)
2. We can be saved and receive the Holy Spirit (v 14-21)

Illustrate

Use the illustration of making promises. For example, promising your children a special present or a holiday. One day the promise arrives—it's a wonderful day. God has kept his promise and a wonderful day has arrived for us.

Apply

- If you are not a true believer, what should you now do?

You should repent and trust in Jesus for forgiveness.

- If you are a believer, how should you feel about God's promise?

We should rejoice that God's promise of forgiveness is true. We should be glad we have the Holy Spirit in us.

- What will you say to someone who is not sure if they have the Holy Spirit?

As soon as someone trusts in Jesus to forgive them, then God gives them his Spirit as well.

Review

Check the main point is clear and that you keep to THIS passage.



TEACH

Start

Start with your illustration about a promise being made and waiting for it to come.

God made wonderful promises to save people and give his Spirit. This is the day when God kept that promise.

Explain

Use your sub-points to explain the message of these verses. Get people to look at the Bible verses.

The Holy Spirit comes (v1-13)

Remind people about Jesus' promise in 1:4-5. Explain what the wind and fire show. This is God arriving and living in his people in a new way. Explain the miracle of speech. Everyone can understand in their own language. Everyone is amazed and wonders what happened.

Point out that there are Jews from "every nation under heaven" (v5, 9-10). God promised to gather his people from all the nations where they were scattered in exile. When he did, he would give them his Spirit (Ezekiel 36:24-27).

We can be saved and receive the Holy Spirit (v14-21)

Peter says this is what Joel spoke about. Explain God promised there

would be a time when the Holy Spirit would work in a new way. God's Spirit comes so we can know God ourselves, and he can work in us so we obey him.

Everyone who calls on God will be forgiven and receive the Holy Spirit. Everyone who truly believes in Jesus receives the Holy Spirit (v38).

Apply

God has kept his promise to forgive sinners and send his Holy Spirit. If we are not true believers, we must repent and trust in Jesus. Then we will be forgiven and receive God's Spirit ourselves. If we are believers, then we will rejoice! We will thank him for rescuing us from sin and for the Holy Spirit in our lives. We can be sure that if we have repented and believe in Jesus, we have the Holy Spirit and God is at work in us.

End

God has kept his promises. The day of salvation has arrived and the gift of the Holy Spirit is available.

Pray

Pray that you will rejoice in what God has done through Jesus. Thank God for his wonderful gifts of forgiveness and the Holy Spirit.


4 STUDY

IT'S ALL ABOUT JESUS

Background

The Holy Spirit has arrived. Peter explained that God has kept his promise to bring forgiveness and the gift of his Holy Spirit. We stopped halfway through Peter's explanation. This passage looks at the rest of what he said. Peter explains how the arrival of the Holy Spirit connects to Jesus.

Read

 **READ** Acts 2:22-41 two or three times.

Explain each verse in your own words.

Understand

 **READ** verses 22-36

Verse 22: "Accredited" – shown to have authority.

Verse 31, 36: "Messiah" or "Christ" – God's anointed Saviour.

Verse 33: "Exalted" – lifted up to a position of authority.

Verse 37: "Cut to the heart" – very upset.

- What does Peter say about Jesus in verses 22-24?
- How did Jesus fulfil what David

said about him in Psalm 16:8-11 (see v25-31)?

- How are Jesus and the gift of the Holy Spirit connected (v32-33)?
- What is the conclusion about Jesus (v34-36)?

Peter summarises Jesus' life, death and resurrection. Peter says that killing Jesus was wicked or evil, but it was part of God's plan. Jesus now fulfils what David said. David knew God promised that one of David's descendants would rule for ever. But he himself died and stayed dead! So in Psalm 16 he was looking into the future as a prophet. He spoke about Jesus' resurrection.

Because Jesus was raised from death and went back to heaven, the Holy Spirit was given. Through Jesus, God's promises are fulfilled. This is proof that Jesus is God's exalted King (Lord) and Saviour (Messiah or Christ). Verse 36 is the conclusion to all Peter says. Notice the conclusion is about Jesus, not the Holy Spirit.

 **READ** verses 37-41

Verse 38: "Repent" – to change direction, turn around.

- How do people respond to Peter?

- What does Peter tell them to do?
- What does Peter promise them?

People realise their sin and ask what they should do. Peter tells them to turn back to God (repent) and show their faith in Jesus (be baptised). Everyone who does this will be forgiven and will receive the Holy Spirit. Notice that when you repent and believe you immediately receive the Holy Spirit. It does not happen at a later point.

So the main point of the passage is: God has made Jesus Lord and Saviour. Everyone must repent, be forgiven and receive the Holy Spirit.

Find the main point of the passage

- What is the main lesson from these verses?
- What should we do because of this passage?

God's plans of salvation were fulfilled through Jesus' death and resurrection. Through Jesus the gift of the Holy Spirit was given. God has made Jesus "Lord" and "Messiah". Everyone should now turn back to God and believe in Jesus. And they need to show their faith in Jesus. They will be forgiven and receive the Holy Spirit. Notice that people need to respond to what God has done in Jesus—Jesus is the focus.

4 PLAN

Main point of the sermon

A sermon explains the passage, and applies the passage to the hearers. Look at the main point of the passage. Write what this main point will mean for your hearers.

Your main point will be something like this: Jesus is God's King and Saviour, and so we can be forgiven and receive the Holy Spirit.

Sub-points

- Read the main point again.
- Read the verses again.
- What sub-points will help you teach this passage?

Verses 22-36

Jesus' death was part of God's plan. God raised Jesus from the dead. Jesus is exalted as God's King and Saviour. As God's Saviour Jesus now gives the Holy Spirit.

Verses 37-41

The people realise killing Jesus was wrong. Peter tells them to repent and be baptised (v38). They will be forgiven and receive the Holy Spirit.

Think of headings for the sub-points.

1. Jesus is God's King and Saviour (v22-36)
2. So turn back to God (v37-41)
3. Be forgiven and receive the Holy Spirit (v37-41)

Illustrate

The main point is about who Jesus is: He is King and Saviour. That tells us how we should respond to Jesus and what we will receive from him. If someone is very important (for example, a king), it will change how you respond to them. It also changes what they can give you.

Apply

- What does this passage tell us about Jesus?

He is God's King and Saviour. He has brought God's plans for forgiveness.

- What should someone who is not a believer do?

They should turn back to God and trust in Jesus.

- How does this passage help a believer to be sure about God's forgiveness?

It tells us that if we see who Jesus is and trust in him, God forgives us and gives us the Holy Spirit. How should a Christian feel about Jesus? We should be excited about what God has done through Jesus. We will respect Jesus and be so thankful for him.

Review

Check the main point is clear and that you keep to THIS passage.



TEACH

Start

This passage is about Jesus' identity, and what God has done through Jesus. We learn how we should respond to Jesus. If we respond to Jesus rightly, then God will give us the Holy Spirit.

You may start with your illustration about the importance of knowing who someone is (their identity). Or you may begin with different ideas people have about Jesus.

Explain

Jesus is God's King and Saviour (v22-36)

Peter is explaining why the Holy Spirit has come. It is because of what God has done through Jesus.

Explain the verses about Jesus' death and resurrection.

People killed Jesus because they did not accept who he is—the Messiah. But God raised Jesus from the dead. God fulfilled his promise to David. Jesus is exalted as God's King and Saviour. That is why the Holy Spirit has come.

So turn back to God (v37-41)

Explain the people's response.

They realise how wrong they were, and ask what to do. They must turn to God: We must too. We must trust

in what God did in Jesus. We must show our belief by being baptised.

Be forgiven and receive the Holy Spirit (v37-41)

When we turn to God and trust him, we can be sure he will forgive our sin. And we will also receive the gift of God's Spirit. We can be sure that God has truly forgiven us, and that God is at work in us.

Apply

We must understand who Jesus is and what God has done through him. If we have not turned back to God, we must repent and be baptised. If we have done that already, we will rejoice in our forgiveness. We should also be sure that we have the Holy Spirit living in us. We can be thankful and celebrate how good God is to us.

End

Jesus is the King and the one who can save us from our sins. We can be forgiven and receive the Holy Spirit.

Pray

Pray you will clearly see who Jesus is. Pray you will rejoice in what God has done through Jesus. Thank Jesus for his two wonderful gifts—forgiveness and the Holy Spirit.