

# IN THE VALLEY OF DECISION

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Pentecost #7, Acts 2:1-21

May 23, 2021

*“ ‘In the last days,’ God says,  
‘I will pour out my Spirit on all people.’ ”*  
Acts 2:17 (Peter quoting Joel 2:28)

## Celebration of Pentecost

<sup>1</sup> When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. <sup>2</sup> Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. <sup>3</sup> They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. <sup>4</sup> All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.

Acts 2:1-4

- 1) *Shavuot* is the second harvest festival, one of three pilgrimages which celebrates receiving Torah
- 2) At Pentecost God gives his people a new identifying mark, not Torah but the Spirit
- 3) The signs (two out of the three signs from 1 Kings 19) are there to get our attention
- 4) The Spirit's arrival means the wait is over (yes to Acts 1:8, but better Jer. 31 and Hebrews 10:15)

## First lessons from Jerusalem

<sup>15</sup> Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. <sup>6</sup> When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard them speaking in his own language. <sup>7</sup> Utterly amazed, they asked: “Are not all these men who are speaking Galileans? <sup>8</sup> Then how is it that each of us hears them in his own native language? <sup>9</sup> Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, <sup>10</sup> Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome <sup>11</sup> (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs—we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!”

Acts 2

- 1) God brings the world to Jerusalem (Babel in reverse, see Genesis 10-11)
- 2) Being in Jerusalem doesn't mean I'll be in control

## **The beginning of Peter's first sermon**

<sup>14</sup> *Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd: "Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say. <sup>15</sup> These men are not drunk, as you suppose. It's only nine in the morning! <sup>16</sup> No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel:*

<sup>17</sup> " *'In the last days, God says,  
I will pour out my Spirit on all people.  
Your sons and daughters will prophesy,  
your young men will see visions,  
your old men will dream dreams.*

<sup>18</sup> *Even on my servants, both men and women,  
I will pour out my Spirit in those days,  
and they will prophesy.*

<sup>19</sup> *I will show wonders in the heaven above  
and signs on the earth below,  
blood and fire and billows of smoke.*

<sup>20</sup> *The sun will be turned to darkness  
and the moon to blood  
before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord.*

<sup>21</sup> *And everyone who calls  
on the name of the Lord will be saved."*

Acts 2

- 1) "This is that" – God is doing a new work
  
- 2) The GATDOTL is not one future *kairos* but the present messianic age
  
- 3) Peter knows what comes "before" (see Joel 2:28)
  - repentance (Joel 2:12-14)
  
  - restoration (Joel 2:21-25)
  
  - the assurance of God's presence (Joel 2:27)
  
- 4) Joel and Peter both end in the Valley of Decision

## *The Day of the Lord*

- 28 “And afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on all people.  
Your sons and daughters will prophesy,  
your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions.  
29 Even on my servants, both men and women,  
I will pour out my Spirit in those days.  
30 I will show wonders in the heavens and on the earth,  
blood and fire and billows of smoke.  
31 The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood  
before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD.  
32 And everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved;  
for on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there will be deliverance, as the LORD has said,  
among the survivors whom the LORD calls.

- 3** “In those days and at that time, when I restore the fortunes of Judah and Jerusalem,  
2 I will gather all nations and bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat.  
There I will enter into judgment against them  
concerning my inheritance, my people Israel,  
for they scattered my people among the nations and divided up my land.  
3 They cast lots for my people and traded boys for prostitutes;  
they sold girls for wine that they might drink.

4 “Now what have you against me, O Tyre and Sidon and all you regions of Philistia? Are you repaying me for something I have done? If you are paying me back, I will swiftly and speedily return on your own heads what you have done. 5 For you took my silver and my gold and carried off my finest treasures to your temples. 6 You sold the people of Judah and Jerusalem to the Greeks, that you might send them far from their homeland.

7 “See, I am going to rouse them out of the places to which you sold them, and I will return on your own heads what you have done. 8 I will sell your sons and daughters to the people of Judah, and they will sell them to the Sabeans, a nation far away.” The LORD has spoken.

- 9 Proclaim this among the nations: Prepare for war! Rouse the warriors!  
Let all the fighting men draw near and attack.  
10 Beat your plowshares into swords and your pruning hooks into spears.  
Let the weakling say, “I am strong!”  
11 Come quickly, all you nations from every side, and assemble there.

Bring down your warriors, O LORD!

- 12 “Let the nations be roused; let them advance into the Valley of Jehoshaphat,  
for there I will sit to judge all the nations on every side.  
13 Swing the sickle, for the harvest is ripe.  
Come, trample the grapes, for the winepress is full and the vats overflow—  
so great is their wickedness!”  
14 Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision!  
For the day of the LORD is near in the valley of decision.  
15 The sun and moon will be darkened, and the stars no longer shine.  
16 The LORD will roar from Zion and thunder from Jerusalem;  
the earth and the sky will tremble.  
But the LORD will be a refuge for his people,  
a stronghold for the people of Israel.

## The “Last Days” in Anacortes

### 1) We are identified by the Holy Spirit

*Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off – for all whom the Lord our God will call.*

Acts 2:38-39

### 2) Watch for God’s restoring work to come before

*“ I will repay you for the years the locusts have eaten . . . .*

*Then you will know that I am in Israel, that I am the Lord your God, and that there is no other; never again will my people be shamed.*

*“And afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on all people . . . .*

Joel 2:25-28

### 3) How is God getting our attention?

<sup>14</sup> *Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision! For the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision. The sun and the moon will be darkened, and the stars no longer shine. The Lord will roar from Zion and thunder from Jerusalem; the earth and the sky will tremble. But the Lord will be a refuge for his people, a stronghold for the people of Israel.*

Joel 3:14-16

God send us a season of glorious disorder. Oh for a sweep of wind that will set the seas in motion and make our ironclad brethren now lying so quietly at anchor to roll from stem to stern . . . .

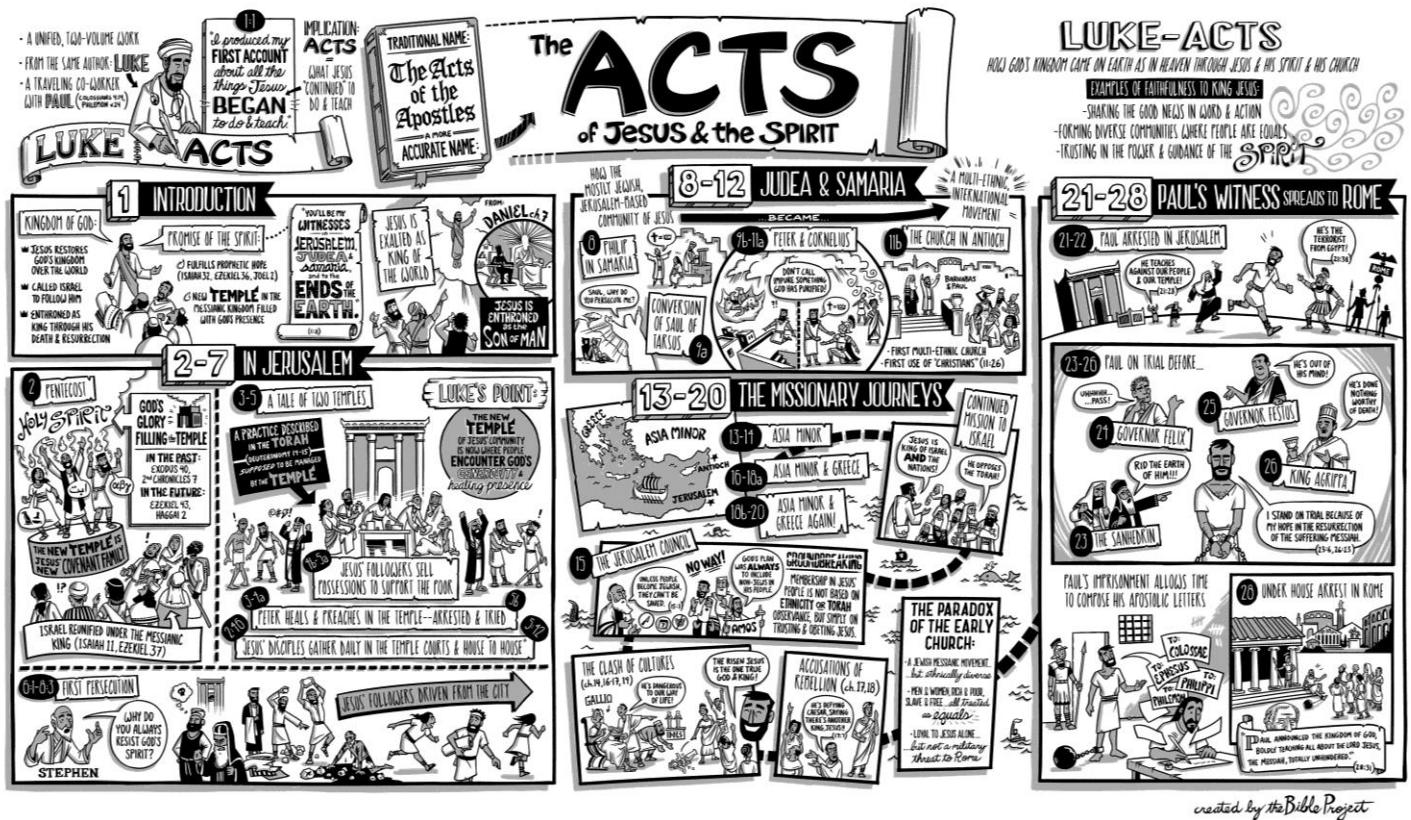
O Spirit of God, You are ready to work with us today even as You did then! Stay not, we beseech You, but work at once. Break down every barrier that hinders the incomings of Your might. Overturn, overturn, O sacred wind! Consume all obstacles, O heavenly fire, and give us now both hearts of flame and tongues of fire to preach Your reconciling word for Jesus’ sake. Amen.

Spurgeon’s closing prayer in “The Pentecostal Wind and Fire”

### 4) There is a whole lot of calling going on

<sup>32</sup> *And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved; for on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there will be deliverance, as the Lord has said, among the survivors whom the Lord calls.*

Joel 2:32 (see Acts 2:39)



## Resources for further studies in Acts

The Bible Project team has great stuff on Acts at <https://open.life.church/items/179224-poster-jpg>

Spurgeon has sermons on this text at <https://www.spurgeon.org/resource-library/sermons/pentecost-2/#flipbook/> and <http://www.spurgeongems.org/vols25-27/chs1619.pdf>

Deffinbaugh's introduction at <https://bible.org/seriespage/unique-contribution-book-acts> and Acts series at <https://bible.org/series/studies-book-acts>

I have really appreciated John Stott's *The Spirit, The Church and the World: The Message of Acts* (IVP, 1990) and F. F. Bruce's work: *New Testament History* (Doubleday, 1980) and *The Book of the Acts* (Eerdmans, 1984).