



# THE PURPOSE OF PENTECOST

WEEK 1  
12.06.15



## FOCUS VERSE

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### Acts 1:4

And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me.

## LESSON TEXT

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### Acts 1:1–11

1 The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach,

2 Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen:

3 To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God:

4 And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me.

5 For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.

6 When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?

7 And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power.

8 But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

9 And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight.

10 And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel;

11 Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.



## FOCUS THOUGHT

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Receiving the Holy Ghost is an essential part of salvation. It regenerates believers through the new-birth experience, and it enlightens, energizes, and encourages them in their new life with Christ.



# CULTURE CONNECTION

## The Best GPS System in the World

**H**ave you seen a roadmap lately? You know, one of those old paper maps that folded at least a dozen times and never seemed to fold back the way they were originally.

Smart phones, GPS units, and satellite technologies have made the old-fashioned paper roadmaps almost obsolete. Rather than having a car's glove box stuffed with every map imaginable other than the one you presently need, you can have one GPS-accessible device to find out exactly where you are or how to navigate to where you want to go. It is possible because of GPS technology—a global positioning system that works by interacting with satellites revolving around the planet.

GPS systems work well for getting us around the globe, but there is a better GPS system—the best on the planet. It is the privilege of having the Holy Spirit dwelling within. The Bible teaches us the Holy Spirit is essential—and it certainly is if one desires to be saved, enlightened in the Scriptures, empowered for Christian service, and encouraged through every circumstance of life. Not only is receiving the Spirit the down payment of our spiritual inheritance, but it is the power through which we receive divine guidance through life. The Spirit promises to guide us into all truth.

The Holy Spirit is the greatest gift one could ever receive, and we should cherish it above everything else.

### OUTLINE

- I. THE HOLY SPIRIT IS ESSENTIAL**
  - A. For Salvation
  - B. For Service
- II. THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL ENLIGHTEN**
  - A. Lead and Guide into All Truth
  - B. Lead to Opportunities for Ministry
- III. THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL EMPOWER**
  - A. To Live the Christian Life
  - B. To Preach with Power
- IV. THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL ENCOURAGE**
  - A. Encouragement When Not Surrounded by Believers
  - B. Encouragement in Times of Crisis

### CONTEMPLATING THE TOPIC

It is nothing less than amazing to consider the fundamental change over the past seventy-five years in the way individuals view speaking in tongues and the experience of receiving the Holy Ghost. Fifty years ago, the major Christian denominations of North

America often thought speaking in tongues was “of the devil.” They fought and resisted the movement toward receiving the Holy Spirit, calling it at best unnecessary expressions of emotional frenzy and at worst demonically inspired works designed to inflict confusion upon the body of Christ. But more than a century of God-inspired, Pentecostal revival has greatly affected the perspectives of many sincere people.

There are still those today who resist Spirit baptism and those who call it unnecessary or devilish. However, there also are a multitude of various churches whose members have received the Holy Ghost and who now acknowledge receiving the Spirit as a fundamental tenet of their assemblies. To be sure, they may yet need to receive further illumination from the Scriptures regarding various aspects of the new-birth experience and living for God, but God is working among many congregations and within many believers to lead and guide them into all truth (John 16:13). We have the opportunity to be a part of that spiritual renewal. We can assist these believers in discovering all God has in store for them through the Holy Ghost.

What an indescribable blessing it is to have the opportunity to know God intimately through the new birth! We do not have to take animal sacrifices to the priest at the Temple or go through various rituals to try to assuage the wrath and judgment of God because of our sins. At the death of Jesus Christ on the cross, the great veil in the Temple that once separated the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies was supernaturally torn in two, from the top to the bottom, opening a way for all people to enter into the presence of God. Every person can come to God for Himself and enjoy a personal encounter with Him, resulting in a new spiritual birth and the beginning of a new spiritual life in Jesus Christ.

## SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

### I. THE HOLY SPIRIT IS ESSENTIAL

#### A. For Salvation

Some individuals will readily admit that receiving the Spirit with the evidence of speaking with other tongues as the Spirit gives the utterance is an additional spiritual empowerment for Christians, but they do not believe it is necessary for salvation. However, this is contrary to the teaching of Scripture, which clearly enunciates the essentiality of the Spirit within the life of every true believer.

*“So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his” (Romans 8:8–9).*

*“Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit” (John 3:5–8).*

*“Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call” (Acts 2:38–39).*

Perhaps some individuals are considering the wrong question when they ask, “Do I have to receive the Holy Ghost to be saved?” Maybe they should be asking, “Can I receive the Holy Spirit?” and “How may I receive the Spirit?” and “What is the evidence of that spiritual reception?” Receiving the Holy Ghost is a fundamental aspect of the new-birth experience, and it is a glorious blessing and opportunity for everyone who believes.

*How one receives the Holy Spirit.* Receiving the Spirit of God is a distinct, spiritual experience as part of the new birth. Every biblical account of individuals receiving the Spirit was accompanied by a dramatic conversion, which included a clear evidence of receiving the Holy Ghost, namely speaking with other tongues.

*What is the sign of receiving the Holy Spirit?* The biblical accounts of one’s receiving the Spirit involved speaking with other tongues as the Spirit of God gave the utterance. A study of the birth of the church at Pentecost (Acts 2:1–4) and the expansion of the church throughout the Book of Acts confirms this.

- When the Jews first received the Spirit, they spoke with tongues (Acts 2:4).
- When the Samaritans first received the Spirit, they also evidently spoke with tongues (Acts 8:17–23). While Acts 8 does not specifically mention tongues, clearly there was visible a supernatural sign of their receiving the Spirit. When Simon witnessed it, he desired “to purchase” the same ability to lay hands on individuals that they would receive the Spirit. Had there been no prominent, supernatural sign that accompanied the outpouring in that instance, Simon would have had no reason to offer to purchase the supernatural ability the apostles demonstrated. Simon witnessed something clearly visible

that was pronounced and prominent, and he wanted the power to replicate what he had seen.

- Further, when the Gentiles first received the Spirit, they spoke with tongues as well (Acts 10:46).

- In addition, the Ephesian disciples of John the Baptist spoke in tongues when they received the Holy Ghost (Acts 19:1–6).

*The biblical accounts of one's receiving the Spirit involved speaking with other tongues as the Spirit of God gave the utterance.*

## **B. For Service**

*“But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1:8).*

Not only did the Holy Ghost bring spiritual regeneration to the believers (Titus 3:5), but it also empowered them for Christian service. From the beginning in the Garden, God desired communion and fellowship with His creation. Since mankind's fall into sinful disobedience, however, a pathway of redemption became necessary. Consequently, one of God's primary desires and purposes for His people involves reaching out through evangelism to a lost world.

Anyone who has experienced the love of Jesus Christ would certainly be qualified to tell others of His love, grace, kindness, and goodness. However, the Lord did not leave the task of evangelism only to individuals

offering personal testimonies of redemption. The Lord has anointed believers by His indwelling Spirit. He has empowered them to perform the service of His kingdom, telling others about Him through the power of the Holy Ghost! A testimony is powerful, but when the power of the Spirit is added to it, the testimony becomes a moving spiritual force for good.

## **II. THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL ENLIGHTEN**

### **A. Lead and Guide into All Truth**

In addition to the fundamental, regenerative effecting of a person's salvation, the experience of receiving the Holy Ghost brings spiritual enlightenment. This new-found relationship with Jesus Christ opens the door for a growing spiritual connection to the Redeemer. As babes in Christ, new believers have a limited understanding of spiritual dynamics; but as they consume the “milk of the Word,” they begin to grow spiritually toward full Christian maturity. The Lord leads new believers and guides them into a fuller understanding of and experience with all the truths of Scripture.

*“Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come” (John 16:13).*

The Holy Ghost is the most important teacher in our lives. Of course, it certainly is important to be faithful in church attendance where godly, anointed ministers and teachers will guide us in our understanding of the Christian life, but the Spirit is always with us. If we will give ourselves to prayer and the study of the Word of God at home, the Spirit will prompt us, lead us, and guide us as a teacher. The Spirit's guidance then will position us to receive what God has for us when we gather with fellow believers for corporate worship, and services will take on an enhanced dimension of spiritual progress and growth.

*“But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you” (John 14:26).*

Is it important for believers to be led by the Holy Spirit in their Christian lives? Absolutely! Paul indicated it is a qualifying definition of being born again—of being a child of God.

*“For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God” (Romans 8:14).*

## **B. Lead to Opportunities for Ministry**

As we continue to grow in spiritual maturity by the Holy Ghost’s prompting and guidance, we also will grow as servants for Christ. We make a mistake when we assume church ministry is something left only to the church pastoral and ministerial staff. Rather, every believer is a minister, which means “servant.” We all are called to occupy specific places in the body of Christ as we minister to each other and reach out to lead others to Jesus Christ.

As we grow and seek to serve the Lord in His church, He will lead us to opportunities to serve Him by effectively ministering to others.

1. The Spirit guides us with regard to timing or when we are to go in ministry to others. He opens doors of opportunity to us.

2. The Spirit guides us as to where we are to go and minister to others within and outside the Christian body. He gives us direction.

3. The Spirit guides us as to who should go. He gives us discernment for our spiritual activities and involvement in the kingdom of God.

As believers we are to seek out opportunities to serve Jesus Christ, His body, and others in this world, but He also will lead us to opportunities of service on His behalf.

## **III. THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL EMPOWER**

### **A. To Live the Christian Life**

The power believers receive when they are filled with the Holy Ghost (Acts 1:8) not only empowers them as witnesses, but it also enables them to connect with Christ daily in

relationship and spiritual life. The Holy Spirit within is a believer’s spiritual lifeline.

Our day is one of unprecedented allurements of the world and temptations of the flesh. Perhaps worldly temptations are no worse in substance or in number today than in previous generations. However, the present multimedia culture with the advent of computers, Internet, and smart phones delivers a multitude of temptations directly to individuals. Surrounded by such an ever-present pull of temptation, it is essential for today’s believer to have an empowering daily relationship with Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit.



**“A little boy named Bobby desperately wanted a new bicycle. His plan was to save his nickels, dimes, and quarters until he finally had enough to buy a new ten-speed. Each night, he asked God to help him save his money. Kneeling beside his bed, he prayed, ‘Dear Lord, please help me save my money for a new bike; and please, Lord, don’t let the ice cream man come down the street again tomorrow’” (Lee Griess, *Taking the Risk out of Dying*).**

Some Christians rely more on chance than on the Lord to help them avoid temptation. As believers we need to awaken to the desire and purpose of the Holy Spirit within us to give us new life. Only when we rely upon His strength to empower us can we successfully avoid or resist the temptations we may encounter. It is foolish and unnecessary to leave dealing with temptation to happenstance or chance.

### **B. To Preach with Power**



**Several Greek words in the New Testament are translated “preach” or “proclaim,” but perhaps the most prominent Greek word is *kerusso*, which means “to herald (as a public crier), especially divine truth (the gospel)” (*Strong’s Concordance*). The word in its various forms is translated as “preach,” “preacher,” “proclaim,” and “publish” in other translations.**

The idea of the various Greek words translated “preach” in the New Testament is not exclusive to those we most often consider to be preachers: pastors, teachers, evangelists, or others holding ministerial credentials and performing various ministerial duties. Rather, the fundamental idea of to “preach” or “proclaim” the gospel applies to all believers in their call to be witnesses for the Lord Jesus Christ. He has called all Christians to share their faith—to proclaim to others the goodness of the Lord and the lifesaving power of the gospel of Jesus Christ. We err when we assume all proclaiming of the gospel is to be done by those holding ministerial credentials. Christ has called us all to proclaim and publish the good news of redemption.

Further, Spirit-filled believers can expect the Spirit’s empowerment when they witness to a lost world. Whether one is preaching from a pulpit as a pastor or an evangelist, or he is sharing his faith and testimony with someone at the local coffee shop, the Lord has promised the help of the Spirit to make one’s proclamation of the gospel effective.

*Inherent power of God’s Word.* First, the Scriptures reveal the inherent power in the Word of God. Isaiah recorded God’s assurance: “So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it” (Isaiah 55:11). When anyone shares God’s Word, power accompanies it.

*Inherent power in believers by the Holy Spirit.* Second, the Scriptures reveal that when we receive the Holy Ghost, we also receive power to be His witnesses (Acts 1:8). The power of the Spirit enables us to fulfill the calling of Jesus Christ to be His witnesses, to proclaim the gospel—whether by pulpit ministry or by testifying to others on the street—and to live anointed lives as believers.

Further, these avenues of spiritual empowerment work together to enhance the experiences of every believer. For example, Christ empowers us to be His witnesses; He also has assured us that by sharing our testimony on His behalf, we will receive further power by the Spirit to live as victorious overcomers. (See Revelation 12:11.)

## IV. THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL ENCOURAGE

### A. Encouragement When Not Surrounded by Believers

What a joy it is to join together with fellow believers for times of worship at our local assembly or in large worship meetings with Christians from around the world! The writer of the Book of Hebrews encouraged the early believers not to forsake their assembling together. (See Hebrews 10:25.) Believers gain great strength through corporate gatherings for worship.

Still, many times we are not with our fellow believers in Christ. We may be alone on a distant business trip or visiting family members where there is no nearby church for fellowship. On the days between worship gatherings we may have only limited opportunities for fellowship. How are we to draw spiritual strength and sustenance for those times?

The Holy Ghost is a source of strength, comfort, and encouragement every day. Our experience is enhanced and strengthened by corporate worship, but it does not exist through worship gatherings alone. We can have an ongoing, real, and dynamic relationship with Jesus Christ that strengthens and encourages us daily.

*“And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you” (John 14:16–18).*

The Lord promised to personally come to us through the Holy Spirit (John 14:18). He specifically stated He would come to the believers as the Comforter. He is ever-present to strengthen us and to comfort us through all life’s troubles and challenges.

### B. Encouragement in Times of Crisis

Every individual will endure times of crisis when he needs the help and strength only

Jesus Christ can provide. He may be alone and lonely, needing a friend's encouragement. He could be in prison, possibly for unfair and untrue accusations against him. He may be facing physical, mental, or spiritual abuse, threats, or sickness. He could even be facing death.

Whatever challenges may arise and whatever temptations or difficulties we may encounter, we can rest assured Jesus Christ is with us as the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, living within us. Jesus promised His disciples He would always be with them (Matthew 28:20); that is now supremely possible through the indwelling Holy Ghost. He is present with us to strengthen us, love us, comfort us, and encourage us through every circumstance of life.

## INTERNALIZING THE MESSAGE

*"And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high" (Luke 24:49).*

*"And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me" (Acts 1:4).*

Before His ascension into the heavens, Jesus Christ gave His disciples, and consequently all Christians, one of the greatest promises they were ever to receive: "the promise of the Father" (Luke 24:49; Acts

1:4). Little could the disciples have comprehended at that moment how great a promise it was! The promise of the Father was simply the assurance the Lord would send the Comforter—the Holy Ghost—through whom He would indwell all believers. Words cannot express what an awesome privilege it is for a mere mortal to host the God of Heaven in one's being. It is a gift of power to live in intimate relationship with Jesus Christ and successfully fend off the temptations of this life, and it is a gift of anointing for service within the Lord's kingdom as His witnesses.

The foundation of Pentecostal revival rests in the outpouring of the Holy Ghost, which established the church on the Day of Pentecost. From that day until now, genuine believers everywhere have been blessed to experience the power of redemption through the Holy Spirit. It is truly life-changing and life-enhancing; it is the very heart of receiving and living a new life in Christ Jesus.

*"And I will . . . put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh: that they may walk in my statutes, and keep mine ordinances, and do them: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God" (Ezekiel 11:19–20).*

*"A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you. . . . And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them" (Ezekiel 36:26–27). ■*

## REFLECTIONS

- How has the world's perspective on the Spirit baptism changed over the past fifty years?
- Discuss the privilege of receiving the Holy Spirit. Is it an essential aspect of the new birth?

Discuss.

- What is the one, consistent initial sign of receiving the Spirit?
- Discuss the ways in which the Holy Spirit empowers believers in their relationship with God.
- How does the Holy Ghost operate as the Comforter in our lives?