

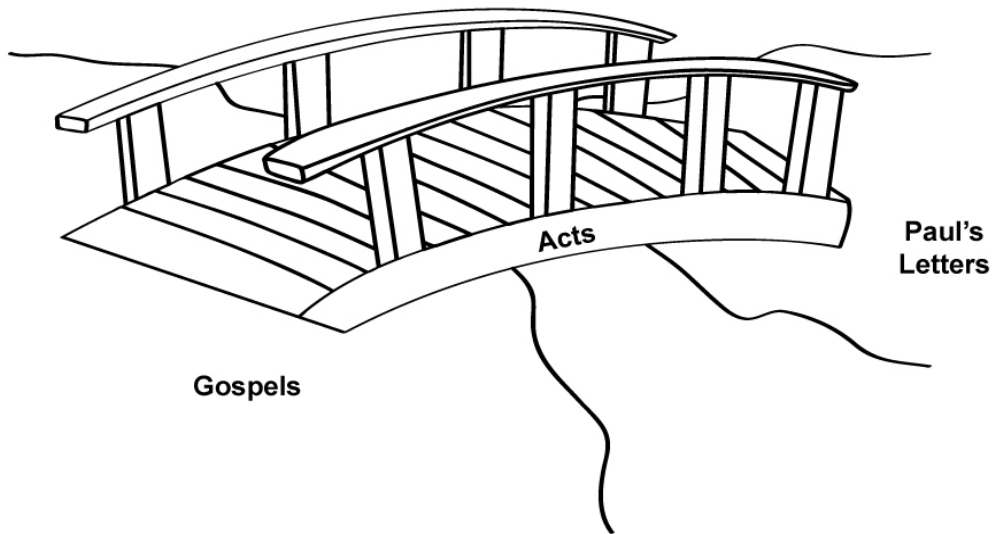
# **Acts: The Holy Spirit at Work in Believers**

**Sessions 1–13**

# Solving the Mystery of When Acts Was Written

Historical fact:	<b>Paul was first imprisoned in Rome (AD 60–63).</b>
Corollary fact:	<b>Acts chronicles this imprisonment in Acts 28.</b>
Evidence suggests:	<b>Acts was written after this imprisonment.</b>
Historical fact:	<b>Jerusalem was destroyed by the future Roman Emperor, Titus, in AD 70.</b>
Corollary fact:	<b>Acts makes no mention of this fact.</b>
Evidence suggests:	<b>Acts was written before AD 70.</b>
Historical fact:	<b>Rome burned in AD 64.</b>
Corollary fact:	<b>Nero blamed Christians, igniting a wave of persecution.</b>
Evidence suggests:	<b>Paul’s good relationship with Roman authorities in the book of Acts suggests it was written before this event.</b>
Conclusion:	<b>Most Bible teachers believe Luke wrote Acts around AD 63.</b>

# The Bridge



In the New Testament, Acts is a bridge between the Gospels and Paul's letters. At first the New Testament had only two parts: the four Gospels and the letters Paul wrote to various churches and believers. This left a gap in the written history of the church.

# Four Themes of Acts

- 1. Bridging the gap between the Gospels and Paul's letters**
- 2. Tracing the growth of the church**
  - a. Growing numerically (from the number of believers who could fit in one room to many thousands of Christians)
  - b. Spreading geographically (from Jerusalem to Rome)
  - c. Expanding missionally (from reaching only Jews to reaching Samaritans, then Gentiles)
  - d. Growing theologically (from strict adherence to the law of Moses to salvation by grace through faith)
- 3. Guiding faith and apologetics**
- 4. Emphasizing the Holy Spirit's power for witnessing and service**

# The Church's Mission

*Jesus said:*

“You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

(Acts 1:8)

# Three Common Ways to Outline Acts

## Outlining geographically

Jerusalem	Acts 1–7
Judea and Samaria	Acts 8–12
The whole earth	Acts 13–28

## Outlining based on the ministries of Peter and Paul

Peter	Acts 1–12
Paul	Acts 13–28

## Outlining according to messages preached

# The Holy Spirit: The Gift Our Father Promised

## The Promise of God

“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. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days” (Joel 2:28–29).

## The Command of Jesus

“Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit” (Acts 1:4–5).

This was the last command of Jesus before He ascended to heaven.

## The Gift of the Holy Spirit

“You will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:38).

## The Baptizer, Jesus

“I baptize you with water for repentance. But after me will come one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not fit to carry. He [Jesus] will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire” (Matthew 3:11, the words of John the Baptist).

# **Why You Should Obey the Lord's Command to Be Filled with the Holy Spirit.**

## **1. The task is bigger than you are**

No matter who you are, no matter how bright, how gifted, how strong, you must rely on a power greater than your own.

## **2. The task is too hard to accomplish without the Spirit's power.**

You need the Spirit's power to do what Jesus has called you to do.

## **3. The task is not finished.**

Not everyone has heard the gospel.



# The Work of the Church

## 1. The Plan to Witness

Our main business is to tell others that Jesus has saved us from sin.

## 2. The Place to Witness

Each Christian must witness in his or her Jerusalem, the place he or she lives. Yet our responsibility to witness does not end there. We are called to spread the gospel beyond our own neighborhoods.

## 3. The Power to Witness

The power from the Holy Spirit is the only kind of power that will enable a Christian to be a faithful witness.

## 4. The Purpose of Witnessing

Jesus will soon return. Our purpose in witnessing is to get people ready to meet Him.

# Steps to the Baptism in the Holy Spirit

## 1. Obedience

The path of obedience always leads to God's blessings. We disobey if we try to do more or less than God commands.

"We are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him" (Acts 5:32).

## 2. Unity

We must rise above our differences by offering forgiveness and love. We must be truly reconciled in Christ.

"When the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place" (Acts 2:1 KJV).

## 3. Prayer

When we develop lives of constant prayerfulness, we open the door to a fresh move of God.

"They all joined together constantly in prayer" (Acts 1:14).

"Pray continually" (1 Thessalonians 5:17).

## 4. Study and Application of the Scriptures

The Bible is our guide to God and to heaven. When we follow the Word of God—and leaders who interpret the Word accurately—we can know God is leading us.

"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness" (2 Timothy 3:16).

# Understanding Pentecost

## Fifty Days

Pentecost (Greek: pentékosté) means “the fiftieth.”

The Old Testament Feast of Pentecost was celebrated fifty days after Passover.

## Seven Weeks

Pentecost was also known as the Feast of Weeks because it falls seven weeks after Firstfruits, the offering of the first of the barley harvest to God.

## The Harvest

Pentecost was a day of celebration and joy for the end of the barley harvest. It also included offering the firstfruits of the new wheat harvest.

The Feast of Pentecost was a harvest celebration.

The Day of Pentecost is related to spiritual harvest. God poured out His Spirit to enable believers to reap that harvest.

“The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field” (Luke 10:2).

Pentecost prepares harvesters for the fields.

# Old Testament Feasts That Foreshadow New Testament Events

<b><i>Feast</i></b>	<b><i>OT References</i></b>	<b><i>NT References</i></b>
<b>Passover</b>	Ex. 12:1–14; Lev. 23:5; Num. 9:1–14; 28:16; Deut. 16:1–8	Matt.26:17; Mark 14:12–26; John 2:13; 11:55; 1 Cor. 5:7; Heb. 11:28
<b>Unleavened Bread</b>	Ex. 12:15–20; 13:3–10; 23:15; 34:18; Lev. 23:6–8; Num. 28:17–25; Deut. 16:3–4, 8	Mark 14:1; Acts 12:3; 1 Cor. 5:6–8
<b>Firstfruits</b>	Lev. 23:9–14	Rom. 8:23; 1 Cor. 15:20–23
<b>Pentecost</b> <i>(Also called the Feast of Weeks, Feast of Harvest, and “firstfruits of the wheat harvest” in Exodus 34:22)</i>	Ex. 23:16; 34:22; Lev. 23:15–21; Num. 28:26–31; Deut. 16:9–12	Acts 2:1–4; 20:16; 1 Cor. 16:8

# The Signs of Pentecost

## Unique Signs of Pentecost

### **Rushing, mighty wind**

“Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting” (Acts 2:2).

### **Tongues of fire**

“They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them” (Acts 2:3).

## Normative Sign of Pentecost

### **The initial physical evidence: speaking in other tongues**

“All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them” (Acts 2:4).

# Four Purposes for Speaking in Tongues Today

1. Speaking in tongues is the initial physical evidence of baptism in the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:4).
2. Speaking in tongues is one of the nine gifts of the Spirit for Christian worship (1 Corinthians 12:7–11).
3. Speaking in tongues is a regular means of personal prayer (1 Corinthians 14:13–19).
4. Speaking in tongues is a sign to unbelievers (1 Corinthians 14:21–25).

# **Benefits of Regularly Praying in the Spirit During Personal Prayer**

## **Build up yourself**

“He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself”

(1 Corinthians 14:4).

## **Release your spirit to fully express itself to God**

“The Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God’s will” (Romans 8:26–27).

# The Crowd's Responses to Pentecost

## **(:| or :-? Bewilderment**

“A crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard them speaking in his own language” (Acts 2:6).

## **:-O Utter amazement**

“Utterly amazed, they asked: ‘Are not all these men who are speaking Galileans? Then how is it that each of us hears them in his own native language?’” (Acts 2:7–8).

## **8-| or 8-} Mocking**

“Some, however, made fun of them and said, ‘They have had too much wine’” (Acts 2:13).



# The Effect of Pentecost on Believers

*Peter spoke with **boldness!***

*The other disciples stood up with Peter, offering **unified support***

# The Pattern of Peter's Preaching

## Peter's Methods

Treat listeners with respect.

Meet listeners where they are.

Speak with authority.

Be prepared.

## Peter's Message

What happened at Pentecost (Acts 2:16–21)

Why Pentecost happened (Acts 2:22–36)

How Pentecost can come to each person (Acts 2:37–41) Peter's Methods