

THE GREAT COMMISSION

A *Vision 195* Series

STUDY THREE

Essential Fuel for Fulfilling the Mission

Acts 2:1–13

The Holy Spirit became the fuel for the mission of the disciples—the fuel that would ignite the engine of evangelism. The Holy Spirit gave them the courage they needed, and when the Holy Spirit took charge, they didn't care if they died. They were no longer operating in fear because the fuel of the Holy Spirit transformed their lives.

—Pastor Charles R. Swindoll

HAVE you ever found yourself missing something you *needed*? You're hoping to bake a cake when you realize you have no flour. Perhaps your phone battery runs low in the middle of a conversation, and you can't find a charger. Or even more disappointing, your vehicle runs out of gas in the middle of nowhere.

What's a cake without flour? Inedible. A phone without power? Just a paperweight. A car without gas? Time to call a tow truck! God's people today will be just as useless if they fail to rely on God's power to accomplish God's mission. God's power is simply that *essential*.

In Jesus' final moments with His disciples, He gave them a mission—one they wouldn't be able to accomplish by merely human effort or earthly clout. No, this would be a *divine* mission, and a divine mission requires a *divine* power source.

In this *Searching the Scriptures* study, we will look at Acts 2:1–13 to see what fuel Jesus provides to empower His mission, how this fuel empowered Jesus' disciples then, and how this fuel still empowers His followers today.



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Committed to Excellence in Communicating Biblical Truth and Its Application

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Acts 2:1–13



PREPARE YOUR HEART

Write your own prayer below, asking the Holy Spirit to guide you in your study of God’s Word today. Specifically ask Him to help you understand your role in His mission.



TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” (Acts 1:8)

Jesus shared these final words with His disciples before He finally rose into the sky to dwell in heaven. The disciples knew the mission: *to share the good news of Jesus*. They knew who would enable them to accomplish this mission: *the Holy Spirit*. But at that moment, they weren’t clothed with the Holy Spirit, and they didn’t even know what to expect for His arrival.

Thankfully, however, Jesus didn’t leave the disciples wondering what would happen next. According to [Luke 24:49](#), what did Jesus tell His disciples to do after His ascension?

This information provides us with the context of the passage—the foundation upon which we will build our observations, interpretation, and application. So, let’s start making observations!



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 **Observation: The Arrival of the Holy Spirit**

The first step in studying any passage of Scripture is observation, which involves taking note of what the text says.¹ With that in mind, read *Acts 2:1–13* carefully.

Good observations always look for clues about the passage’s *context* and *setting*. We’ve already discussed the context, so we can now consider the setting. Where and when did these events occur (see *2:1*)?

In his book *Searching the Scriptures: Find the Nourishment Your Soul Needs*, Pastor Chuck teaches that the words *like* or *as* can show comparison.² In *2:2–3*, Luke discusses signs that announced the arrival of the Holy Spirit. What signs did the people experience? To what did Luke compare these signs (look for *like* and *as*)? Fill in the chart below.

	Sign	Comparison
Verse 2		
Verse 3		

According to *Acts 2:4*, what was the third sign of the Holy Spirit’s arrival that the believers experienced personally?



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There isn't always a one-to-one correspondence between words in the original Greek and words in our modern English. Read [2:6–7](#) in a few different Bible translations. List the different words the various translations use to describe the emotional response of the Jews who witnessed these spectacular events. What specific sign elicited their reaction?

List all the locations these Jews in Jerusalem would have considered home, according to [2:9–11](#). Try to find some of these locales on a [Bible atlas](#). This will help you get an idea of how far these Jews dispersed from their homeland.

According to [Acts 2:11](#), what did the Christians say to their fellow Jews using their new, supernatural language abilities?

What Jesus meant to the disciples during His earthly life, the Holy Spirit means to us. The Spirit of God comes alongside us to bring to our remembrance the things Jesus taught and to give us the kind of strength, vision, courage, insight, cooperation, and willingness to serve that Jesus gave His disciples. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll



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Interpretation: Spirit-Empowered Witnesses

Now, we'll move to interpretation, which asks, "What does this passage *mean*?"

It's easy to glide over certain words when reading, assuming they don't add much to the narrative, but Luke had good reason for including each word he used. The fact that these events occurred at Pentecost may mean little to us, but this small detail would have stood out prominently to those present in Jerusalem that day and to Luke's original readers.

Using your *Bible study tools*, look up the term *Pentecost*. Summarize what this feast meant to the people of Israel.³ How does this background help you better understand the meaning of Acts 2:1–13? Check *Constable's Notes* at netbible.org for a detailed discussion of this topic.

Based on this passage, what did the gift of "tongues" or "languages" allow the Christians to do in this instance? What was the bigger purpose for which the Holy Spirit gave this gift to the believers?



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Based on [Acts 1:8](#), how does [2:1–13](#) demonstrate Jesus' command and promise already being fulfilled so soon after His departure?

The disciples were now equipped supernaturally with the ability to speak to whomever in whatever setting, telling them of the wonderful works of God. And the people stood amazed as they heard about the wonderful things God had done—how Jesus had paid the penalty for their sins. They'd never heard anything like this before, and they heard about Him in their own language. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Correlation: The Tower of Babel

The devout Jews witnessing these miraculous events may have looked around and thought, “This seems familiar.” No, they had never seen anything like this before, but they likely remembered a story they had known from the time they were little children: the story of the Tower of Babel.

Read [Genesis 11:1–9](#). Summarize what the people did and why they did it. How did God respond and why did He respond this way?



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List some points of similarity and difference between the account of the Tower of Babel and *Acts 2:1–13*.

In what ways did the events in Acts 2:1–13 reverse God’s judgment on the people’s sin at Babel? (Hint: It involves their language and worship.)

We’ve looked at what this passage says and then considered what it means. Now that we have a good understanding of what Luke intended to communicate, let’s ask ourselves, “How can I apply the truth of this passage to my life and participate in God’s mission like the apostles?”



Application: The Difference the Holy Spirit Makes

In his discussion of the power of God in Acts 2:1–13, Pastor Chuck lists four benefits of the presence of the Holy Spirit—specifically as they relate to God’s mission. The Holy Spirit makes a difference in . . .

- *How we think*
- *What we do*
- *Where we go*
- *Why we serve*



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Whether it's across the globe or across the street, God is calling each of us to go *somewhere* to testify about the good news of Jesus Christ. But going often demands sacrifice: moving somewhere new and unknown, turning down that dream job, spending some hard-earned savings. Thankfully, God doesn't expect us to do these things by our own strength.

The Spirit of God will do a number on why you serve. You won't be as selfish as you have been. You won't hold the grudges that you've held most of your life. You will drop the prejudices that you've had for all your years. We serve for the sake of others.

—Pastor Chuck Swindoll

How do you sense God is calling you to go and share the good news with others? Is He leading you somewhere specific? What gifts and abilities has He uniquely given you that you can use to participate in His mission? Write your reflections below.

What might be holding you back from serving in God's mission? How has this passage reminded you of the reasons why we serve?

The Father had a mission. The Son enlisted the apostles. The Holy Spirit was the fuel. And we are invited to participate in this supernatural work of bringing the good news to the whole world. Thankfully, just as the Holy Spirit empowered the apostles to proclaim God's work of redemption, He also empowers us today to testify boldly about all the wonderful things God has done through Jesus Christ.



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A FINAL PRAYER

Thank You, Father, for the gift of salvation You've given me through the death and resurrection of Your Son, Jesus Christ. And thank You for the gift of Your presence and power through the Holy Spirit. I ask You to attune my ear to hear the urgings of the Spirit so that I might go with confidence wherever You lead me. In Jesus' mighty name I pray, amen.

ENDNOTES

1. To learn about Pastor Chuck Swindoll's *Searching the Scriptures* method of Bible study, go to the Web page, "[How to Study the Bible for Yourself](#)."
2. Charles R. Swindoll, *Searching the Scriptures: Find the Nourishment your Soul Needs* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 2016), 101.
3. Other tools we recommend are a whole-Bible commentary, such as the two-volume *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: New Testament* and *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: Old Testament*. Pastor Chuck's favorite Bible dictionary is *The New Unger's Bible Dictionary*. A variety of versions of the Bible are available at [BibleGateway.com](#).

