

# The Promise Fulfilled



## SABBATH—APRIL 22

**READ FOR THIS WEEK'S STUDY:** Exodus 23:16; Mark 16:17; John 4:35; John 14:16-26; John 16:7-13; Acts 1:4, 5, 14; Acts 2:1, 2, 5-7, 22-35.

**MEMORY VERSE:** “Suddenly a sound came from heaven. It was like a strong wind blowing. It filled the whole house where they [the disciples] were sitting. They saw something that looked like tongues of fire. The flames separated and settled on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:2-4, NIV).

**THIS WEEK, WE WILL STUDY ONE OF THE GREATEST AND MOST IMPORTANT EVENTS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT,** the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.<sup>1</sup> This wonderful event<sup>2</sup> fulfilled what Jesus had promised before He returned to heaven. His promise was that His disciples would be “baptized with the Holy Ghost” (Acts 1:5) and would be given “power from on high” (Luke 24:49). The Holy Spirit came upon them as Jesus had promised, and then the disciples began talking in other languages about “the wonderful works of God” (Acts 2:11). The first thing they did with this gift of languages was preach about Jesus, but this was only the beginning of what the Holy Spirit would do for God’s church. The outpouring of the Holy Spirit did not happen out of nothing. It was the last event in a line of many other events that centered around the life, death, resurrection,<sup>3</sup> and ascension<sup>4</sup> of Jesus. Jesus also was getting His people ready to receive this wonderful outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

Study this week’s lesson to prepare for Sabbath, April 29.

<sup>1</sup> Pentecost—fifty days after Jesus went to heaven, there was an outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the believers in the upper room (Acts 2:1-4).

<sup>2</sup> event—thing that happened.

<sup>3</sup> resurrection—coming back to life after dying.

<sup>4</sup> ascension—when Jesus returned to heaven.

**SUNDAY—APRIL 23****FAITH AND THE PROMISE  
(Acts 1:4, 5).**

**Read Acts 1:4, 5. In these verses, Jesus talked about the promise that His disciples “have heard me [Jesus] talk about.” What promise was Jesus talking about? John 14:16-26; John 16:7-13.**

Acts 1:4 shows that the disciples were to wait in Jerusalem until the promise of receiving the Holy Spirit was fulfilled. The waiting itself would not bring the Spirit. The word translated “promise” is *epaggelia*. *Epaggelia* points to God’s grace rather than to human effort. The promise is God’s gift to us (Ephesians 2:8), but there are things believers can do to make their faith stronger. It is very foolish for us to think that we will be given all we need without doing anything just because God has promised to give it to us. God promises great things to those who have faith (Romans 5:1; Hebrews 11:6), but faith is something believers must hold dear, develop, and protect.

**How can we make our faith grow stronger? Deuteronomy 4:9; Psalm 119:1, 2; Colossians 3:1, 2. What other things can protect our faith and make it stronger?**



**Meeting with other Christians for worship can make our faith stronger.**

**MONDAY—APRIL 24****WAITING AS PART OF GETTING  
READY (Acts 1:14).**

Yesterday, we studied the verses where Jesus told the disciples to remain in Jerusalem (Act 1:4, 5). This is exactly what they did (Acts 1:12). Here we see one of the great rules of faith: obedience. We cannot expect Jesus’ promises to be fulfilled in those who disobey Him.

**What important thing is found in Acts 1:14 that helps us understand the disciples’ attitude (feeling) that helped them to be ready to receive the Holy Spirit? Also read Acts 2:1, 46.**

There is a story about the great English Admiral Lord Nelson. Just before a great naval (sea) battle, he took two quarreling officers to a place

where they could see all the enemy ships. The admiral said, "They are your enemies. Shake hands and be friends like good Englishmen." This means that some things were too important to let disagreements spoil the way to victory.

In the same way, we can see how important it was for the disciples to work together. In the past, they had not always been united. Now they were.

**What had caused disagreement and quarreling among the disciples in the past? Mark 9:33, 34; Luke 22:24.**

Acts 1:14 and Acts 2:1, 46 show that the disciples learned to work together. They were no longer working hard for the highest place (Mark 9:33-35). Then the Holy Spirit was poured out on them. They were in agreement. They had stopped quarreling. They had a common purpose much more important than any personal quarrels. But they had to work out these things before they would be ready to work together toward their common mission. "All the believers were agreed in heart and mind" (Acts 4:32, NIV).

**What are some of the things that work against unity in your local church? What can you do to be a peacemaker in your church?**

## TUESDAY—APRIL 25

### THE PENTECOSTAL FULFILLMENT (Acts 2:1, 2).

**Read Acts 2:1, 2. Pentecost comes from a word that means "fiftieth." The word points to the 50 days between the Feast of the Unleavened Bread and Pentecost. Pentecost is the Feast of the First Fruits. In this feast, the children of Israel would offer a wave offering of the wheat harvest to God (Leviticus 23:10-14). In this way, they gave their thanks to Him for His blessings (Leviticus 23:15-21).**



**The wave offering of Pentecost.**

Also, the rabbis taught that 50 days after the Exodus, God had given Israel the Ten Commandments at Sinai (Exodus 19; Exodus 20). For this reason, the Jews also understood Pentecost to be a memorial of Sinai. In that sense, Pentecost honored the beginning of the 12 tribes of Israel as the nation that entered into a

covenant relationship<sup>5</sup> with God. The nation was to be a “kingdom of priests, and a holy nation” (Exodus 19:6) that would preach the truth about God to a sinful and idol-worshipping world. The Holy Spirit came to the disciples during Pentecost. So, Pentecost also would be an important event in the beginning of the early Christian church. The early Christian church also was called to preach the truth about God to a sinful and idol-worshipping world.

**How do Exodus 23:14, 16 and John 4:35 help us understand the spiritual meaning of what was happening in Acts 2:1, 2?**

Of all the festivals, Pentecost attracted the largest number of Jews from different lands. Acts 2:5 talks about the faithful Jews from “every nation under heaven.” What a perfect opportunity for the wonderful outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the early church. Because so many people came to celebrate Pentecost, many people had a chance to hear about Jesus.

**How do you understand your own part in the mission of the church to preach the gospel to the world? What part are you playing? What more could you do?**

### WEDNESDAY—APRIL 26

#### HEAVEN AND THE OUTPOURING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT (Acts 2:22-35).

**Answer the following questions based on Acts 2:22-35.**

1. What difference is Peter making between David and Jesus? What is his important point?
2. How important is Jesus’ death and resurrection to Peter’s whole speech?
3. What was the Father’s promise?
4. What wonderful event in heaven started the outpouring of the Holy Spirit?

“Christ went to heaven. His return was the signal that His followers would receive the promised Holy Spirit. They were to wait for the Holy Spirit before they started their work. When Christ passed within the heavenly gates, He was placed on the throne amidst<sup>6</sup> the praise of the angels. As soon as this ceremony was completed, the Holy Spirit came down upon the disciples. Christ was given glory, even with the glory which He had with the Father from all eternity.<sup>7</sup> The Pentecostal out-

<sup>5</sup> covenant relationship—a covenant is an agreement between God and His people. Being in a covenant relationship with God means being connected with God because you made a covenant (agreement) with Him.

<sup>6</sup> amidst—in the middle of.

<sup>7</sup> eternity—life without end; forever.

pouring was God's way of letting the world know that the Savior's mission was successful. Christ promised He would send the Holy Spirit to His followers as proof that He had received all authority (power) in heaven and earth. He did what He had promised."—Adapted from *The Acts of the Apostles*,<sup>8</sup> pp. 38, 39.



Jesus' death and resurrection were the center of Peter's speech.

**What does today's lesson show us about the closer connection between heaven and earth? How can you be more sensitive to this close connection between heaven and earth? What things might you have done wrong in the past 24 hours that showed that you forgot about this close connection?**

## THURSDAY—APRIL 27

### THE GIFT OF LANGUAGES (Acts 2:5-15).

**How does the Bible explain the gift of tongues (languages) that followed the outpouring of the Holy Spirit? In Acts 2:5-15, what kind of languages were the disciples speaking? Why is this answer important for us today?**

Try to imagine the scene. Religious Jews from all over the world were meeting together for Pentecost. Suddenly, some Galilean peasants (the disciples) start speaking in all these different languages! What is going on?

One could imagine the puzzled look of those who suddenly heard their own language being spoken by the disciples. They were so puzzled that at one point someone accused the disciples of being drunk (Acts 2:13). That was rather silly because how many drunken people could suddenly start speaking in foreign languages that they never knew before?

**How does Mark 16:17 help us understand the gift of tongues?**

From Acts 2, we learn that "tongues" is the Spirit-given ability to speak in foreign languages. The word translated "tongue" (such as in 1 Corinthians 14) is *glossa*. *Glossa*

<sup>8</sup> apostles—God's disciples who preached the gospel after Jesus returned to heaven. The word *apostles* means "people who are sent out." The apostles were sent out into the world to tell others about Jesus.

means “language.” In rules of interpretation, difficult verses to understand are interpreted on the basis of verses that are easier to understand. So, some of the more difficult verses that deal with tongues (1 Corinthians 14) need to be examined from what we know in the easier verses. It is clear that in Acts 2 the gift of tongues was the ability to speak in foreign languages. This point is important because many people today believe that “speaking in tongues” is speaking words that make no sense. This is not what happened when the Holy Spirit was poured out at Pentecost.

### FRIDAY—APRIL 28

**ADDITIONAL STUDY:** Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 30–37; *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 8, pp. 19–21; *The Story of Redemption [Salvation]*, pp. 242–247.

“The Holy Spirit came in the shape of tongues of fire. He came upon those who were meeting together. The tongues of fire were symbols of the Holy Spirit given to the disciples. The Holy Spirit helped them to speak well in foreign languages they had not known before. The tongues of fire showed two things: (1) the great enthusiasm with which the disciples would work and (2) the power that would follow their work.”—Adapted

from *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 39.



“Some people today claim they have what they call gifts. They say that the Lord has placed them in the church. They speak language that has no meaning nor sense. They call it the unknown tongue. This tongue is unknown by both the Lord and all heaven. Such gifts are ‘invented’ by men and women, with Satan’s help. Many people think that false excitement, false talking in tongues, and noisy exercises (shows) are gifts God has placed in the church. But they have been tricked.”—Adapted from *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, p. 412.

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

1. What important things help bring unity among those who quarrel with one another? Acts 1:14. What can you do to help your local church find the same kind of unity the early church had?
2. We saw how the disciples had to wait for the promise of the Holy Spirit to be fulfilled. Is there anyone in your class or church who is waiting for a promise from God to be fulfilled? If so, what can you do to help keep this person or persons from being discouraged as they wait? What can you do to encourage them?
3. "Speaking in tongues" has been growing more popular. Create a Bible study on this topic that will help anyone with questions about "speaking in tongues."