

The Fire of the Lord

an introduction to the Person and work of the Holy Spirit

Sometimes spoken of as 'the forgotten Person' of the Godhead, the Holy Spirit exercises a hugely important ministry in the outworking of the purpose of God.

This series of 7 introductory studies is intended to deepen your understanding of what that ministry is, and transform your experience through the enjoyment of that ministry in your life.

You can find the background to this short series [here](#).

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1. The promise of the Spirit (Acts 2.1-47)

[w/b Sunday 7th April 2019]

“.. you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit ..”

From the very start the Christian Church has owed her existence and her continuing significance entirely to the presence and work of the Holy Spirit. The very full account of the ‘birth’ of the church which Luke gives in Acts 2 (along with the background in Acts 1) is, accordingly, an appropriate place for us to start this series of studies.

The risen Lord Jesus was adamant that His followers should not take a single step in pursuit of their calling until, in accordance with the promise of God, the Holy Spirit had been poured out upon them. The story narrated in Acts is the story of God the Holy Spirit, powerfully at work in and through His people.

[Despite your best intentions, there may not be time for all the questions to be addressed in your Community Group! It may be helpful to try and ensure that in this study you cover questions 1, 2, 4 and 6. As always try to leave good time for shared prayer!]

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1. Read Acts 2.1-47. Read the whole chapter: Luke starts by recounting carefully what happened (vv.1-13), how it was explained (vv.14-36), and in what it resulted (vv.37-47).

The crowd here were taught by Peter about the Holy Spirit: what instruction have you received about the Holy Spirit, and what questions do you have?

What (a) excites you, (b) challenges you, and (c) confuses you, as you read this chapter?

2. Read Acts 2.1-6. One of the primary hallmarks of the Holy Spirit's work is the way He brings together those who are scattered and distanced from each other, and unites them as one.

What evidences are there in these verses of this feature of the Spirit's activity?

Read Eph.4.1-3: how should the awareness of this 'hallmark' of the Spirit's work affect the way we approach these studies?

What did the crowd find bewildering? And what do you find bewildering about the Holy Spirit's work?

3. Read Acts 2.7-13. The sizeable crowd which has gathered from all the 'airts and pairts' for this Jewish festival is 'utterly amazed' at what they see and hear.

What were the crowd so amazed about?

Read Genesis 11.1-9: how does the work of the Spirit 'undo' the damage caused by sin?

In what ways will the work of God's Spirit in our lives today prompt the question, 'What does this mean'?

4. Read Acts 2.14-21. Peter starts his explanation of what's going on by reference to the prophecy of Joel and the promise there of an outpouring of the Spirit of God on His people.

What is the point Peter is making by quoting Joel's prophecy so fully?

Read Joel 2.28-32: in quoting these verses why do you think Peter inserts the phrase "*..and they will prophesy*" at the end of Joel 2.29?

5. Read Acts 2.22-36. Having given the 'text' for his message, Peter went straight on to explain how this prophecy has been fulfilled in and through Jesus.

According to what Peter declares, what does the outpouring of the Holy Spirit confirm about Jesus?

What was it about Jesus which meant that the promise of the Holy Spirit is able now to be realised?

6. Read Acts 2.37-41. The message struck home, so Peter was quick to answer the anxious question which his hearers had - 'what shall we do?'

From what you learn in these verses, what would be your answer if someone asked you how they can 'receive the gift of the Holy Spirit'?

What is 'the promise' to which Peter refers in v.39?

7. Read Acts 2.42-47. Luke paints a vivid picture in these verses of the fellowship of believers brought into being by the Spirit of God and His work in the lives of these people.

How would you describe the main features of the life of the church in Jerusalem?

Read Psalm 133: what practical steps towards our 'dwelling together in unity' do these verses in Acts 2 challenge you to take?