

# Acts 2

As Jesus was crucified at the time of the Passover, I wonder whether any of the disciples guessed that the coming of the Holy Spirit would be at Pentecost? The Feast of Pentecost simply means 50 days after Passover but this coincides with the third major Feast in the Jewish calendar. It is the Feast of Weeks. To start with it was a simple harvest festival when the Israelites would bring the early harvest and give thanks - looking to God for a larger harvest to come. Over time it became a celebration of law-giving as the Law was given 50 days after the first Passover when they escaped from Egypt. So this gift of the Holy Spirit comes at the anniversary of the gift of the law and the promise of a greater harvest. Thus the timing of Pentecost is so important in the fulfilment of the Old Testament Law and Prophets.

One of the key things that the disciples were to be, after the Spirit had come down on them, was to be witnesses. Writing to Theophilus as Luke was, a witness was an essential part of a legal case that every defence council needs. The point about a witness is that they have seen something and then they are called to report it. The disciples were witnesses of what Jesus did and said - for the most part, at least in our modern terms, they were poorly educated, yet they are called to be these witnesses to Jesus after this empowering of the Holy Spirit. The Greek word for witness is not primarily a religious word but a legal word - hence Judas' replacement had to be a witness of these things. Even though we are not witnesses in the sense that the disciples were; physically seeing Jesus - we are called to be his witnesses based on what the apostles tell us of Jesus and out of our own personal experience of Jesus and His impact on our lives.

## Read Acts 2.1-4

Why do you think the Spirit came like wind and fire and not a dove (like Jesus' baptism)?  
How do you think they felt and what was going through their minds?  
How do you feel about speaking in tongues?

## Read Acts 2.5-13

What brought the crowd running?  
Why does Luke go to the trouble of listing so many nations that were present?  
What was the crowd's reaction? In the range of reaction - where do you think you would be?

## Read Acts 2.14-21

What is Peter doing in the first few verses of this passage? Why is this important?  
Why does Peter quote this passage from Joel?  
Which part is important and what does he ignore and why?

## Read Acts 2.22-41

What is the essence of what follows in Peter's sermon?  
What are the essential parts that are important in sharing the Christian faith with others?  
What did people need to do? Why is this so important?  
What did God then do? Such huge numbers - how does that make you feel?

## Read Acts 2.42-47

List the consequences to those who were converted.  
Do you think the modern church lives up to this - if not, why not? And is it possible to do so?  
Even allowing for the very special nature of the first day of the Christian Church - what speaks to you most about this account of the day of Pentecost?

Reflect on our need to be filled (and not just once) with the Holy Spirit.