

***International Bible Lessons Commentary***  
***Acts 2:1-7, 12***

**King James Version**

***International Bible Lessons***  
**Sunday, May 24, 2015**

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The **International Bible Lesson** (*Uniform Sunday School Lessons Series*) for **Sunday, May 24, 2015**, is from **Acts 2:1-7, 12**. **Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further** follow the verse-by-verse *International Bible Lesson Commentary*. **Study Hints for Discussion and Thinking Further** discusses *Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further* to help with class preparation and in conducting class discussion: these hints are available on the [International Bible Lessons Commentary](#) website along with the *International Bible Lesson* that you may want to read to your class as part of your Bible study. A podcast for this commentary is also available at the [International Bible Lesson Forum](#).

***International Bible Lesson Commentary***

**Acts 2:1-7, 12**

**(Acts 2:1) And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.**

The disciples obeyed Jesus and they waited in Jerusalem until they had received the promised power from on high (the Holy Spirit). Because Jesus had been raised from the dead 50 days earlier, and had appeared to them, they were no longer scattered and hiding. They were all together in one place, probably so they would not miss the sending of the Holy Spirit as a gift from God and so they could encourage one another as they prayed, waited and wondered what would happen. They knew from their time spent with Jesus something of what to expect when the Holy Spirit came upon them in power, because the Holy Spirit had empowered Jesus. In some sense, they already knew the Holy Spirit personally within them, because Jesus had breathed the Holy Spirit upon them before He ascended into heaven: “When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit’” (John 20:22). By His Spirit, Jesus had not left them from the day of His ascension to the Day of Pentecost.

**(Acts 2:2) And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.**

The Holy Spirit did not come quietly. If He had come quietly, that might have left some doubt among some as to whether or not the Holy Spirit had been sent or received. The Holy Spirit came from heaven (from a location above them or outside of this material world as the sound came

into the room). It might have sounded similar to a roaring tornado or a sudden loud gust of wind. Notice: the Spirit “filled the entire house;” therefore, everyone in the house heard the Spirit’s coming and everyone could talk about their experience. Everyone in the house was surrounded by the Holy Spirit, and all of Jesus’ disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit and His power. Everyone heard the Holy Spirit when He came, and they could describe the sound He made. No one had a doubt about His coming, just as Jesus’ disciples had no doubt about the power of the Holy Spirit in Jesus. Whereas Jesus had gently breathed the Holy Spirit upon them, on the Day of Pentecost He came like the sound of a rushing wind.

**(Acts 2:3) And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them.**

The Holy Spirit also came visibly into the house. Fire can represent cleansing. Fire is used to remove the impurities from precious metals, such as silver and gold. Fire lights up the darkness and reveals the reality of what surrounds it. John preached about Jesus the Messiah when He came: “I baptize you with water for repentance, but one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to carry his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire” (Matthew 3:11). When the Holy Spirit came, each follower of Jesus Christ could see the flames of

fire upon one another. They saw that no disciple of Jesus was left out; all of them had received the gift of the Holy Spirit in power. The Holy Spirit filled the house in a general way, as air fills a house, and the Holy Spirit also related individually and particularly to each person in the house as He came to each person and gave them the precious gift of Himself. The Holy Spirit also gave a variety of different gifts to each person, as Paul later described the giving of the Holy Spirit and His gifts. The Holy Spirit came on Pentecost as the power from on high to help the disciples teach others about Jesus and lead them to believe in Jesus as their Lord and Savior.

**(Acts 2:4) And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.**

The Holy Spirit rested upon each one and entered into each one, but not to manipulate them as a puppet master from the outside. The Holy Spirit not only gave them gifts, but the Holy Spirit also gave them Himself by coming into the life of each person and filling each person. No part of any person was left untouched by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit was heard with human ears as He entered the house, and His effects were seen with human eyes. He gave the disciples the ability to speak various human languages on that day, languages previously unknown to each one of them so unbelievers could hear the truth with human ears.

The Holy Spirit came as a spiritual and physical presence in human history, revealing His coming to believers and unbelievers alike; just as Jesus, the Son of God, came and revealed himself to believers and unbelievers alike in the Holy Spirit's power.

**(Acts 2:5) And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven.**

Not only did Jews come to Jerusalem to visit on special feast days, but some also came to live in Jerusalem—some for business and work, some visiting family and friends, some who were happy to move from the land of their birth to Jerusalem itself. The Jews had been scattered the first time in 722 BC when the Kingdom of Israel was destroyed, and by later defeats by their enemies and through the exile of Jews to Babylon in 587 BC. By the Day of Pentecost, many had returned to Jerusalem for a variety of reasons, and many would return home with the amazing story of Jesus, the crucified and resurrected Messiah, and of how they had been there when the Holy Spirit came upon His disciples. Some would return home as dedicated followers of Jesus Christ and lead some in their family and some in their community to saving faith in Jesus Christ, so they too could receive the Holy Spirit. As Peter concluded the sermon he preached on the Day of Pentecost, he promised “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of

Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:38).

**(Acts 2:6) Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language.**

Perhaps those living near the house or passing by heard the sound of the Holy Spirit as a rush of violent wind in the house. Perhaps they heard many loud voices, and as they listened each one could distinguish a voice or voices that were speaking their own language. No wonder they were shocked and confused.

**(Acts 2:7) And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galilaeans?**

Thinking back to the Tower of Babel, where God confused the people’s language into many languages and scattered them into various language groups because of their sins. On the Day of Pentecost, everyone from any of these language groups could hear the good news of Jesus Christ preached to each one in their own language. In their own language, each one heard the good news of forgiveness for sin; and each one learned about God’s gift of the Holy Spirit through faith in Jesus Christ. Each one heard Jesus’ disciples from Galilee teaching about Jesus, and they

heard them, not in a Galilean accent or dialect, but in their own native languages.

**(Acts 2:12) And they were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another, What meaneth this?**

Praises to God would be heard in Jerusalem in languages from all of the above places. On the Day of Pentecost, the curse of the Tower of Babel (see Genesis 22) was reversed. Now, all of the Jews from all of these places heard Galilean Jews speaking in their own individual languages. No wonder they were amazed and perplexed and wanted to know what it meant. The Holy Spirit created eager listeners by His gift of tongues on the disciples of Jesus. Any Gentiles in Jerusalem at the time could have also heard the gospel in their own language. From the beginning of Jesus' ministry to the Day of Pentecost and beyond, Jews and Gentiles have had the opportunity to hear and believe the good news about Jesus the Messiah, God's only Son.

### **Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further**

1. Why do you think it was important for the Holy Spirit to come with the sound of a rushing wind?
2. Why do you think it was important for the Holy Spirit to rest individually upon each follower of Jesus in the house?

3. Why do you think it was important for the Holy Spirit to give the gift of speaking in tongues to Jesus' disciples?

See two additional questions in the Commentary on 1 Corinthians 14:13-19 that go with this Lesson.

Begin or close your class by reading the short weekly *International Bible Lesson*.

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