

Point #2

Acts is the story of the coming of the Spirit with power.

A. Acts is more descriptive than prescriptive.

1. Distinguish between **DESCRIPTIVE and **PRESCRIPTIVE** texts.**

Descriptive texts simply tell us what HAPPENED in the early church, not necessarily what should happen in the 20th cent. Church - ie. The choice of Matthias to replace Judas in Acts 1:15-26.

Prescriptive texts give instruction as to what SHOULD BE DONE and often have a timeless application - ie. Peter’s exhortation Acts 2:38.

Characteristics of Occasional teaching	Characteristics of Universal teaching
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Isolated to particular time and place - <i>concubines</i> • Meaningful in a narrow context - <i>meat offered to idols</i> • Rare references with little illustration of actual practice – <i>foot-washing</i> • Violation of clearly stated principle - <i>baptism for the dead</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistency across Biblical cultures - <i>sanctity of life</i> • Universal setting - <i>water baptism</i> • Appeal to a permanent factor - <i>marriage</i> • Both commanded and practiced consistently - <i>evangelism</i> • Final position within progressive revelation - <i>Sabbath, tithing</i>

2. Most of Acts is descriptive in nature.

- a. All Scripture is written for us but not necessarily to us or about us.
- b. We should look at the material in Acts as a model for the modern church when the events are supported by doctrinal teaching concerning normative conduct and belief.
- c. It is important to recognize that the structure of the religious life of the early church evolves over time so that it is difficult to find one model that is mandated for the modern church.

B. Acts is more descriptive than prescriptive in its story of the experience of the Holy Spirit.

1. The reception of the Holy Spirit in the Early Church.

The following texts speak of the coming of the Holy Spirit in Acts.

- 1:4-8 The Promise of the Father (Lk.24:49) which was the Spirit (Gal.3:14) is coming to all who have faith in Christ.
- 2:2-4 The disciples receive the Spirit at Pentecost and are "*filled*" with the result that they speak in tongues.
- 2:33 Peter's sermon referring to Pentecost indicates that the Spirit could not have come until after Jesus ascended to the Father (Jn.16:7, 7:38-39).
- 2:38 Peter's promise that all who Repent and are Baptized will receive the Spirit.
- 8:14-24 The Samaritans receive the Spirit through the laying on of hands after they "*believed*". It is not clear that their faith was true faith until the Spirit came - ie. Simon vs.13,22-24.

10:44-11:18 Cornelius (a Gentile) receives the Spirit after the pattern of Pentecost (11:15) where the Spirit "*fell on them*" (10:44) as a result of repentance unto life (11:18).

19:1-7 The Ephesians receive the Spirit when they believed on Jesus (vs.5-6 may have taken place simultaneously).

2. **The Biblical doctrine of the Baptism with the Holy Spirit:**

a. It is **unique** to the Church age (II Cor.3:7-8).

b. It is a **ministry of Jesus Christ** (John 1:33).

1. It is stated as such in Matthew 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16.

2. The Greek present tense in He who baptizes (John 1:33) implies continuous repeated action, not just the day of Pentecost.

c. It is linked with **removal of sins** (Titus 3:5).

1. Christ's ministry-removal of sin (John 1:29) and bestowal of Spirit (John 1:33).

2. Ezekiel 36:25,27; II Cor.3:8-9; Acts 2:38; Titus 3:4-7

d. It is **universal** among regenerate Christians (I Cor.12:13; Eph.4:5; Joel 2:38 with Acts 2:33,38-39).

e. It takes places at **the moment of regeneration** (Gal.3:2,14,26-29; 4:6; Rom.8:9,14-16; 5:5; Jude 19).

f. It is **sufficient and complete** (Eph.1:3; I John 2:29; 3:9-10; 5:18).

g. It **unites** us to the Body of Christ (I Cor.12:13; Rom.6:1-4; Gal.3:26-29; Eph.4:5).

1. We belong to Christ (Gal.4:29).

2. We are clothed with Christ (Gal.3:27).

3. We put on Christ (I Cor.12:13).

4. We are identified with Christ's death and resurrection (Rom.6:1-4; Col.2:12).

h. It results in **fellowship, worship, and power** (Acts 1:8; I Cor.2:15-16; Gal.5:22-23; John 4:24).

i. It results in the bestowal of Spiritual **gifts** (I Cor.12).

j. It is the basis of the believer's **position and possessions** in Christ (Eph.1:13; Col.2:10; 3:1-4).

k. It is presented **prophetically** in the Gospels, **historically** in Acts (1:5 with 11:6), **doctrinally** in Epistles.

3. **Regeneration and the Holy Spirit**

Although men in every age are justified by faith (Gen.15:6), it seems clear that regeneration or new birth (at least in the New Testament sense of the word--John 3:3-7, Titus 3:5) is the unique experience of the Body of Christ which is, historically speaking, all believers between Pentecost and the coming of Christ for His Church.

a. The Old Testament system offered pardon for sin but no power (new life).

1. Cleansing was provided through the Levitical sacrifices and offerings, which pictures the coming cross of Christ.

- 2. Change was promised through a NEW COVENANT (Jer.31:31-33; Ezek.36:26-27) which was viewed in the Old Testament and the Gospels as a future reality.
- b. John the Baptist, the forerunner of Christ, spoke of a Spirit baptism which was to take place through Jesus in fulfillment of the Old Testament promise (Joel 2:28; Luke 3:16; 24:49; Acts 1:4-8; Gal.3:14).
- c. Jesus came preaching that the Kingdom of God (eternal life, age to come, regeneration) was at hand.
 - 1. People were to repent in preparation for it (Mark 1:4-8).
 - 2. He pointed His followers to a day (Pentecost) when they would experience union with Him (John 14:20), and new power (Luke 24:49) through the Spirit, Who would come after His ascension (John 16:7; Luke 24:49).
- d. The Apostles make it quite clear that “new life” (regeneration) is dependent upon -
 - 1. The death and resurrection of Christ (Rom.6:3-11,22; 7:6; Eph.2:4-9; I Cor.5:15-17; Gal.2:20; I Peter 1:3-4).
 - 2. The indwelling Holy Spirit (I John 3:24; 4:13; Rom.8:1-10).
- e. In the New Testament, the absence of the Holy Spirit is a sign that the person is unsaved, unregenerate, and outside the body of Christ (Rom.8:9).
- 4. Luke seems to make a distinction between the **SPIRIT BAPTISM** (indwelling) and **SPIRIT FILLING** (outworking).
 - a. Spirit baptism is a positional (non-experiential) event with experiential aspects.

FACT (non-experiential for every Christian at the point regeneration)	POTENTIAL (experiential for every Christian, but often subsequent to regeneration)
Indwelt by the Spirit	Filling (Pleroo)
Sealed with the Spirit	Security of Salvation
United to Christ by the Spirit	Power
United to the Body by the Spirit	Fellowship
Given gifts by the Spirit	Manifestation

- b. We are baptized with the Spirit at the moment of new birth, and this is not always an emotional event. Experiencing the results of the Baptism may be a very emotional event.
- c. Luke speaks of two types of **FILLING**.
 - 1. **PIMPLEMI** (πιμπλημι)--This is a special filling which may be the best word to describe the charismatic experience today.
 - a. It appears in

Acts 2:4 “And they were all **filled** with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit was giving them utterance.”;

Acts 4:8 “Then Peter, **filled** with the Holy Spirit, said to them . . .”;

Acts 4:31 “And when they had prayed, the place where they had gathered together was shaken, and they were all **filled** with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak the word of God with boldness.”;

Acts 9:17 “the Lord Jesus . . . has sent me so that you may regain your sight, and be **filled** with the Holy Spirit.”;

Acts 13:9 “but Saul, who was also known as Paul, **filled** with the Holy Spirit, fixed his gaze upon him.” Note that this filling is consistently associated with energy to speak prophetically or in praise.

- b. Before Pentecost, “the filling of the Holy Spirit” was expressed through a sovereign anointing for specific types of service-- Exodus 28:3 (35:30-35), Judges 3:10; 6:2,4; 11:29; 13:25; 14:6,19; 15:14. (See also Numbers 11:17,25; 27:18; I Samuel 10:9-10; 16:13; Daniel 4:8; 5:11-14; 6:3)
 - c. Note the unique features of the Old Testament filling:
 1. It had not relationship to spiritual character.
 2. It was associated with a sovereign call to service for a specific task.
 3. It was temporary.
 4. John 14:17 suggests that the Spirit’s work was from a position of “with” as opposed to “in” the individual.
 - d. Classical examples of this special manifestation of power before Pentecost are seen in Luke 1:15,41;67.
 - e. In short, this PIMPLEMI (filling) is not for every believer, temporary, instant power, related to special gifts of service, given by God’s sovereign will.
2. **PLEROO** (πληροω)--This is a term (translated “full” or “filled”) used to describe a state of maturity available to all believers.
- a. It is not dramatic (like PIMPLEMI) but more a description of character and growing power.
 - b. It appears in

Acts 6:3 “but select from among you, brethren, seven men of good reputation **full** of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may put in charge of this task.”

Acts 7:55 “but being **full** of the Holy Spirit, he gazed intently into heaven and saw the glory of God.”

Acts 11:24 “for he was a good man, and **full** of the Holy Spirit and of faith.”

Acts 13:52 “and the disciples were continually **filled** with joy and with the Holy Spirit.” (“Were filled” is an imperfect passive meaning “they kept on being filled”.)
 - d. Some conclusions:

1. Every true believer is Spirit baptized (indwelt) with the Holy Spirit - ie. Rom.8:9, I Cor.12:13.
2. Every believer should grow to be “filled” (pleroo) with the Spirit.
3. Some (but not all) will experience a “filling” (pimplemi) for power ministry, praise, and bold witness. This is what I would call “the charismatic experience”.

5. **Signs and Wonders in the Early Church.**

- a. We understand that God in Christ sustains all of nature. This means that there is no ultimate conflict between what we call "natural" (God's normal operation) and “supernatural” (God's unusual way of operating).

- b. Supernatural acts vary in their degree of improbability:

Class “A” Miracles - Virtually unheard of in the natural world - ie. the resurrection from the dead.

Class “B” Miracles - Highly improbable events in the natural world - ie. Physical healing through prayer.

Class “C” Miracles - Natural events that are dramatic because of their timing - ie. Calming the storm.

- c. The importance and uniqueness of “signs and wonders” in the Early Church is indicated in the following texts:

Heb.2:3-4 *“how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation? After it was at the first spoken through the Lord, it was confirmed to us by those who heard, God also bearing witness with them, both by signs and wonders and by various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit according to His own will.”*

II Cor.12:12 *“The signs of a true apostle were performed among you with all perseverance, by signs and wonders and miracles.”*

NOTE: Jesus’ use of miracles tells us a lot about their purpose.

To authenticate a message: Jn.5:36; 20:30-31

To symbolize His spiritual work: Lk.5:23

To attract an audience: Jn.12:9

To reveal His fullness: Lk.8:46

To show compassion: Mk.1:41

- d. A list of the miracles in Acts indicates that they were the work of the Apostles and their associates, not every believer. Acts 2:43 *“And everyone kept feeling a sense of awe; and many wonders and signs were taking place through the apostles.”* (Also 5:12)

TEXT	KIND OF	PERFORMED BY
2:43	Sign	The twelve
3:67	Healing	Peter & John
5:12	Sign	The twelve
5:15-16	Healing	Peter
5:19	Release from prison	Angel
6:8	Sign	Stephen
8:6	Sign	Philip
9:40-41	Resurrection	Peter
12:7	Release from prison	Angel
13:11	Blinded	Jesus
14:3	Sign	Paul & Barnabas

14:9-10	Healing	Paul
16:18	Exorcism	Paul
19:11-12	Healing & exorcism	Paul
20:9-10	Resurrection	Paul
23:11	Appearance of Christ	God
27:23	Appearance of angel	God
28:5	Immune to poison	God
28:8	Healing	Paul
28:9	Healing	Paul

4. **Paul indicates that the power of the Spirit would take different forms in different people.**

Eph.4:10-16 “¹⁰ He who descended is Himself also He who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things. ¹¹ And He gave some {as} apostles, and some {as} prophets, and some {as} evangelists, and some {as} pastors and teachers, ¹² for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; ¹³ until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ. ¹⁴ As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves, and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; ¹⁵ but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all {aspects} into Him, who is the head, {even} Christ, ¹⁶ from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by that which every joint supplies, according **to the proper working of each individual part**, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love. (See theology note file #604 on apptoteach.org)

Lesson #2

We are called to live lives that “work properly” in the power of God’s Spirit.