

They Were “Filled” with the Holy Spirit: the Special Empowering Work of God’s Spirit *A Biblical Study*

The Jews, before they believed, sought a confirming sign from God (cf. John 2:11,18ff; Matt. 12:38; 1 Cor. 1:22; Isa.7:10f). Jesus gave them many such signs (see John’s Gospel; 2:11ff), but they *refused* to believe. Again at Pentecost, God gave them unmistakable signs that what transpired was absolutely a work from God and in precise fulfillment to His word and promises. (In fact, at every transition point in Acts as marked out by Luke in Acts 1:8, God supplied a confirming sign (cf. Acts 8:14-17; 10:44-47; 19:1-7)!

Much! Very much is involved with and included in the “promise of the Father” to “pour out” His Spirit. Far more than most people realize or think about!

It is helpful to understand that the **Spirit “Poured Out”** - the figure of speech used here and elsewhere in Scripture - pictures vastly more than the pouring out of a glass of water, or even a pitcher of water. Rather, the pouring out anticipates a **deluge of water**, a massive out-pouring of water as when a dam breaks and the waters pour through breach, or when streams of flood waters overflow the riverbanks. Compare:

Isaiah 44:3; *“For I will pour water on the thirsty land, and streams on the dry ground; I will **pour My Spirit** upon your offspring ...”*

Isaiah 32:14-15; *“For the palace is forsaken, the populous city deserted ... until **the Spirit is poured** upon us from on high, and the wilderness becomes a fruitful field, and the fruitful field is deemed a forest.”*

Joel 2:28-29 (2xs); *“I will **pour out My Spirit**” on all flesh.*

The Spirit poured-out anticipates a gusher falling upon the righteous in the land. It anticipates a soaking shower of blessings from the Spirit. Such an outpouring aptly corresponds to a manifold work of the Spirit. Consequently Acts can refer to the Spirit’s coming at Pentecost in many different ways (6): the “Holy Spirit fell” on them; they were “**filled** with the Holy Spirit;” they “**received** the Holy Spirit;” God gave them the “gift of the Holy Spirit;” they were “**baptized** with the Holy Spirit;” and “the promise of the Holy Spirit.” So, Christ’s words come to pass just as He had promised and instructed His disciples. And they were:

1) “**filled**”; they received power (special divine enablement), 2) “**baptized**” (immersed, dunk, plunged into) they were united together *in* Jesus: both corporately and individually in the body of Christ (Gal. 3:26-27; i.e., “baptized into Christ”), 3) “**received**” the Spirit, meaning the “indwelling” permanent, eternal presence of the Holy Spirit (cf. Rom. 8:9-10,15; note: this included all the

accompanying NT works of the Spirit: sanctifying work of the Spirit, leading of the Spirit, gifting from the Spirit, illumination by the Spirit, adoption into the family of God by the Spirit (the "Spirit of Adoption"), the "sealing" work of the Spirit, and more).

The "filling" was a *special* divine empowering work of the Spirit that was **not** a permanent indwelling of the Spirit, and it was something that was temporal (impermanent), intermittent, and even could be taken away. It was a work of the Spirit appearing in the Old Testament as far back as Exodus 28:3; 31:3; 35:31.

At the coming of the Father's Promise, there were - concerning the Spirit - things both OLD and NEW!! For the idea of the "**filling**" ministry of the Spirit was not a new one, it represented a familiar work of the Spirit in the OT (therefore it could act as a "sign"); however, the "**baptizing**" and "**indwelling**" work were completely NEW, and announced the arrival of the New Covenant as promised. Thus, the coming of the Spirit connected both Old and New, with the New wonderfully superseding the first covenant made at Sinai. (even as the OT had gloriously anticipated: Isa. 32:15; 44:3; Jer. 31:31; Ezek. 36,37; Joel 2:28ff)

What OT scene closely resembles this great Pentecost occurrence? Num. 11:16-30 (i.e., the Spirit's empowerment of the chosen leaders in Israel to aid Moses)

What is it to prophesy? Num. 11:25-26 (see Luke 1:67; also Saul's ex.: 1 Sam. 10:6-13)

(On occasion, especially with the writing prophets, *foretelling* was included; however, the *foretelling* consisted of a *forewarning* of sin's consequences (cf. Deut 27-28, 30); and, along with the *forewarning* a reassurance for the righteous that God is always faithful to His promises. As such, both judgment and salvation are key elements in OT prophecy)