

**Conversations on
Acts 2:1–21**

Discuss this passage in light of the commentary below.

Idea! Go to bit.ly/PrayerCycle for information about an ecumenical prayer cycle.

WHAT is important to know?

Pentecost gives power to the band of Jesus followers to speak the languages of the world, to tell the gospel in every language. The early church was to bear witness to the ends of the earth in the languages of the people of the world. We also should pay attention to the explanation for the phenomenon given by Peter. In quoting Joel, Peter is announcing the end of this present age and the beginning of the age to come, the age of the reign of God. For Peter—and for Luke, who tells his story—the unusual tongues of fire and abilities of speech are signs that God’s reign is immanent, that God will ultimately redeem God’s people. *(Margaret P. Aymer)*

- ✧ Why was the Pentecost event so important to early believers in Jesus Christ?
- ✧ What characteristics mark the end of the present age and the beginning of the age to come?
- ✧ Why is Pentecost sometimes called the “birthday of the Christian church?”

WHERE is God in these words?

As the eleven worshiped, there was a noise so loud that it could not be ignored. So startled were they that they lost control of themselves—their sensory systems were flooded with adrenaline so that their minds and bodies processed intensely the sound, energy, and feeling of the coming of the Holy Spirit. She had come as Jesus had promised, and it was an experience rather than something cognitive. Rational theological reflection could not adequately explain the knowledge conveyed in this sensory event. All of the disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit. Not one was excluded. No mortal could engineer the vivacity of the coming of the Holy Spirit sent by the awesome God of Jesus Christ. *(Linda E. Thomas)*

- ✧ What does the Pentecost account explain about the Holy Spirit in relation to God and Jesus Christ?
- ✧ What is the theological significance of the Spirit being poured out on all persons?

SO WHAT does this mean for our lives?

The image of God in which we were created is the image of the triune God of grace. When we say God the Trinity, we are saying that God is in God’s own being, a “Holy family.” In the image of the God who, as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, is eternal and living community, differentiated in person, united in love, we are ourselves created for community, and never fully live in God’s image until we live in communion. Communion assumes difference—not uniformity, not conformity to a single idealized form of life, or nationality, or ethnicity, or tribe. *(Michael Jinkins)*

- ✧ How can the Pentecost account help us recognize and appreciate diversities in the church?
- ✧ How is the Holy Spirit present with you today?
- ✧ What directions is the Spirit of God leading you toward today?

NOW WHAT is God’s word calling us to do?

In “[their] own languages” they heard “them speaking about God’s deeds of power” (v. 11); they heard that “the love of God is broader than the measures of our mind.” Wulfert de Greef writes: The God of Israel is now also the God of the nations. . . . [However,] the fact that the nations are also now included among God’s people does not imply that Israel’s importance is in any way diminished. Calvin observes that God’s care for us as Gentiles implies that he has joined us together with the Jews. We have been united with the descendants of Abraham into one body. We are together with Israel, the people of God. *(Richard L. Sheffield)*

- ✧ What implications does the Pentecost story have for relations between Christians and Jews?
- ✧ Where is God calling your church to follow in the power of the Holy Spirit today?

God of the Spirit, blow through us and enflame our hearts to send us into your world with your word and peace. Amen.