

# THE GREAT COMMISSION

## Essential Fuel for Fulfilling the Mission

Acts 2:1–13

SEARCHING  
THE  
SCRIPTURES

STUDY



### LET'S BEGIN HERE

“If I do go away, then I will send him to you” (John 16:7). “He will guide you into all truth” (16:13). “You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you” (Acts 1:8).

Jesus’ promises echoed in the minds of the newly commissioned apostles as they sat in the upper room during Pentecost—just fifty days after His crucifixion. Jesus already appeared to them in His resurrected body, taught them, then ascended into the clouds. But after Jesus’ ascension, what were the apostles to do next? Jesus said to simply wait for the Spirit—and that’s what they did.

Then, with exquisite timing, the Holy Spirit rushed into the room filling the apostles with power to proclaim the works of God through Christ. The Spirit’s coming happened just as Jesus promised, and that same Spirit indwells all Christians today. From Him we receive wisdom, courage, and power to proclaim the gospel of Christ in our own time—nearly two thousand years later.



### YOUR TURN IN THE SCRIPTURES

If you’ve been engaged in Insight for Living Ministries’ *Searching the Scriptures* studies, you’ve caught on that we use the Bible study method Chuck Swindoll follows. It includes four basic steps: observation, interpretation, correlation, and application. Today we’ll cover these steps as we examine Acts 2:1–13, written by Luke—the doctor who also wrote the gospel that bears his name. They’re helpful for those new to the Bible as well as those who’ve studied the Bible for years.

It’s always best to begin your study with prayer. After Israel’s King Solomon built God’s temple, he dedicated it with this prayer:

*“In the future, foreigners who do not belong to your people Israel will hear of you. They will come from distant lands because of your name, for they will hear of your great name and your strong hand and your powerful arm. And when they pray toward this Temple, then hear*

## Quotable

*The Holy Spirit  
became the fuel  
that would ignite  
the engine of  
evangelism.*

— Charles R. Swindoll



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SEARCHING  
THE  
SCRIPTURES

STUDY

*from heaven where you live, and grant what they ask of you. In this way, all the people of the earth will come to know and fear you, just as your own people Israel do. They, too, will know that this Temple I have built honors your name.” (1 Kings 8:41–43)*

God now fully expresses Himself through Jesus and no longer dwells in stone structures built by calloused fingers. So we don't pray toward a temple, but to God Himself in Jesus' name. However, our mission remains the same. Like Solomon who proclaimed God to the nations through the building of the temple, we herald Jesus so that nations may hear of His great name, learn of His wonderful deeds, call upon Him, and receive the salvation He promises. Pray for the Spirit to give you strength through this study. Try incorporating into your prayer a bit of the language from Solomon's prayer.



### Observation

To observe a biblical passage means to read what it says. We ponder every word the author uses, noting how the words connect in a sentence, how the sentences connect in a paragraph, and how paragraphs connect through the whole book.

Read [Acts 2:1–13](#) a few times in your preferred translation. Chuck likes the *New Living Translation* and the *New American Standard Bible*. The NLT version, a thought-for-thought translation, changes the order of words and ideas from the original languages to foster the smoothest reading experience. The NASB, a word-for-word translation, keeps the English words and ideas as close as possible to the order in which they occur in the original languages so we can more easily perceive each author's flow of thought and emphases.

Write down what you observe in Acts 2:1–13, examining the who, what, when, why, and how of the passage.



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S03  
2



### Searching the Scriptures Tip

In his book *Searching the Scriptures: Find the Nourishment Your Soul Needs*, Chuck teaches us to look for ideas that are associated in meaning or connected with the words *like* or *as*.<sup>1</sup> We'll focus on that in this step so we don't misinterpret the image or meaning Luke conveyed.

Chuck identifies three supernatural signs in Acts 2:1–13.

### The Audible Sign—Acts 2:1–2

In these verses, what noise came from heaven and to what did Luke compare it?

### The Visual Sign—Acts 2:3

In this verse what visible sign appeared and rested on the disciples, and to what did Luke compare it?

See the importance of noticing *like* and *as*? The sound of wind rushed into the room of believers, but their hair did not wave and their tunics did not flap. They saw flames but felt no heat.

### The Oral Sign—Acts 2:4–13

In these verses, what sign bellowed from the lips of the Aramaic-speaking Galileans?



# THE GREAT COMMISSION

## Essential Fuel for Fulfilling the Mission

Acts 2:1–13

SEARCHING  
THE  
SCRIPTURES

STUDY

Where were the visiting Jews from? What did the Christian Galileans say to the visitors?

The gospel boomed in perhaps a dozen languages. Wow! “But in fact, it is best for you that I go away, because if I don’t, the Advocate won’t come. If I do go away, then I will send him to you” (John 16:7). For this, we are thankful.



### Interpretation

When we interpret the Bible, we want to understand what it means, so we consult resources, perform word studies, and learn the cultural background.

First, take a look at this [map](#). It shows the spread of Christianity across the Roman Empire, but notice that most of the places in our passage are mentioned before Christianity expanded. The Jewish travelers came from all over! What’s the farthest city from Jerusalem you can find?

Next, look up *Pentecost* in your Bible Dictionary. If you don’t have one, we recommend the [New Unger’s Bible Dictionary](#). You can also reference Dr. Constable’s [notes](#) on Acts 2:1 for a quick and helpful overview. You’ll find it on the right reading pane.

Why is Pentecost significant to our understanding of the passage?

The devout Jewish travelers journeyed to Jerusalem to offer the first of their crops to God. Then God made them the first of His church harvest through His Spirit. How did this help spread Jesus’ good news?



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S03  
4

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## Essential Fuel for Fulfilling the Mission

*Acts 2:1–13*

SEARCHING  
THE  
SCRIPTURES

STUDY

Now we see God’s strategy by sending the Spirit during Pentecost. Also, we learn how the church spread so rapidly in the first century—like we see on the map. The visiting Jews heard the gospel, believed in Christ, learned from the apostles, and journeyed back home. Many of them became the seed for the planted churches across the Mediterranean.



### Correlation

The Bible interprets itself—that’s the motto of correlation. We correlate the Bible when we compare the meaning of one biblical passage to another. The authors of the Bible considered themselves part of a cohesive story, so they alluded to God’s work in the past to explain what God was doing in their present.

Events from Israel’s past illuminate our understanding of Acts 2:1–13. Read the following passages from the Old Testament, and write down your reflections as they relate to our passage.

*Numbers 11:16–29*

*Joel 2:28–29*

Acts 2:1–13 is known as the great reversal of Babel. In Babel, people of one language unified themselves and committed idolatry against the one true God. Take a moment to read *Genesis 11:1–9*, the account of Babel. What did the people build, and what was God’s judgment against them?



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S03  
5

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SEARCHING  
THE  
SCRIPTURES

STUDY

In what ways did the events in Acts 2:1–13 reverse God’s judgment on the people’s sin at Babel? (Hint: it involves their language and worship.)



### Application

Application is the last step in the *Searching the Scriptures* method of Bible study. With the Spirit’s power, we’ll integrate what we’ve learned into our minds and hearts.

### Why and Whom We Serve

Notice that the Galileans proclaimed the works of God. They did not speak to make their own names great nor recount the greatness of their deeds; they wanted to glorify Jesus. That’s what we want to do too. So let’s reflect. Consider areas in which you serve and may be tempted to act in your own power or make your name great instead of God’s. The areas may be at church, work, home, or in your community. Write down two of them—and be specific regarding your struggle in that area.

It’s a blessing from God that we’re allowed to serve in these capacities. They benefit us as we benefit others. We combat pride and self-exaltation through prayer. We pray before, during, and after our times of service. Take a moment to write a prayer thanking God for your opportunities of service, requesting that God give you strength to accomplish His work and asking that He be glorified through your service. Then internalize your prayer so you can pray it when you serve.



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6

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## Essential Fuel for Fulfilling the Mission

Acts 2:1–13

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THE  
SCRIPTURES

STUDY

### Where We Serve

Above we considered and prayed over where we currently serve, but some of us may need to embrace a new location—a new job, neighborhood, city, or even country. Do you sense the Spirit nudging you in a different direction? If so, write down where that might be.

If you're married, have you discussed this new direction with your spouse? It's also wise to discuss with pastors, spiritual mentors, and other family members when you're considering such a change. The Spirit often speaks through the wise counsel of fellow believers. Do you need to seek guidance from others during this time?



### A FINAL PRAYER

*Father, thank You for empowering me by Your Spirit to carry the good news of Your Son, Jesus, that others may hear of His mighty works and receive life that only He can give. In Him we have true hope, joy, and strength, and through Him we experience Your true love. It stops us in our tracks. I pray that He may increase and that I may decrease. In Jesus' name, amen.*

### ENDNOTE

1. Charles R. Swindoll, *Searching the Scriptures: Find the Nourishment Your Soul Needs* (Carol Stream, Ill.: Tyndale House, 2017), 101.



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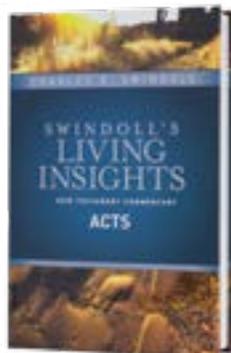
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SEARCHING  
THE  
SCRIPTURES

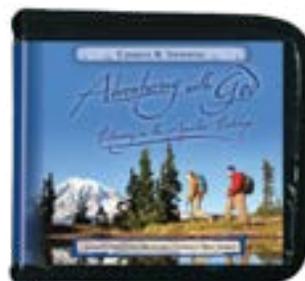
STUDY



### Tools for Digging Deeper



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*Insights on Acts*  
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For the 2018 broadcast, this *Searching the Scriptures* study was developed by Aaron Massey in collaboration with Bryce Klabunde, executive vice president of *Searching the Scriptures* Ministries, based upon the original outlines, charts, and transcripts of Charles R. Swindoll's messages.



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