

WEEK 21 | TEACHER BACKGROUND AND PREPARATION SHEET

The Holy Spirit Arrives: God Reverses Babel | Acts 2:1-41 | May 24, 2026

SECTION 1

LESSON IDENTIFICATION

Week	21
Date	May 24, 2026
Lesson Title	The Holy Spirit Arrives: God Reverses Babel
Primary Text	Acts 2:1-41
Support Texts	Genesis 11:1-9; Deuteronomy 32:8-9; Joel 2:28-32; John 16:7
Timeline	Children have walked from Creation through the Exodus, the Law, and the Tabernacle. Now centuries later, Jesus has died, risen, and ascended. God no longer dwells in a tent. He sends His Spirit to dwell inside His people forever. The Church is born. The mission to reclaim every nation begins.

SECTION 2

CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Pentecost and the Pilgrims in Jerusalem

Pentecost (the Jewish festival of Shavuot) was one of three annual pilgrimage festivals. Jewish men from across the known world were required to travel to Jerusalem. By the time of Acts 2, Jewish communities had scattered into at least fifteen distinct regions and language groups. The crowd that gathered when the Spirit fell was not a small local audience. It was a cross-section of the ancient world standing in one place.

The Deuteronomy 32 Worldview: What Babel Really Was

To understand Pentecost fully, teachers need to understand what happened at Babel and why. Deuteronomy 32:8-9 gives us the theological key: "When the Most High gave to the nations their inheritance, when he divided mankind, he fixed the borders of the peoples according to the number of the sons of God. But the LORD's portion is his people, Jacob his allotted heritage."

This passage reveals something most modern readers miss. When God scattered the nations at Babel (Genesis 11), He did not simply disperse people geographically. He disowned them. He handed the nations over to lesser divine beings (called "sons of God" in the Hebrew, also referred to as *elohim* in Psalm 82) to govern and administer. These were not equal to God. They were created beings given authority over the disinherited nations. God essentially said to a rebellious humanity: you want to live apart from Me, so I will give you what you are choosing. The nations became the allotment of lesser rulers. Israel, by contrast, became the LORD's own portion. He was not abandoning the nations permanently. He was choosing one people through whom He would eventually reclaim all the others.

TEACHER NOTE: This divine council framework (Deut 32:8-9; Ps 82; Dan 10:13) is not a separate belief system. It is embedded in the Old Testament's own worldview. The nations under lesser gods explains why Israel's battle was always against both physical enemies and spiritual powers behind them. Paul reflects this in Ephesians 6:12. You do not need to teach the full divine council theology to children, but understanding it will make Pentecost feel like the tectonic shift it was.

Pentecost as the Reversal of Babel

The theological drama of Acts 2 is impossible to miss once you see it. At Babel, one language became many. God fragmented human speech to halt prideful rebellion and handed the nations to lesser rulers. At Pentecost, many languages are suddenly understood. People from every nation hear the same message in their own tongue. God is not just adding more believers to the Jewish faith. He is beginning the reclamation of all the nations He disowned at Babel. Through Jesus, the dividing wall comes down. The lesser rulers are being stripped of their authority. Every nation is being invited back to the one true God.

Fire, Wind, and the Presence of God

The symbols at Pentecost were not random. Wind (ruach) is the Hebrew word for both breath and spirit. God breathed life into Adam at Creation. The Spirit hovered over the waters. Now the same breath rushes through the upper room. Fire throughout Scripture marks God's presence and purifying holiness: the burning bush, the pillar of fire, Mount Sinai. The tongues of fire over each believer are a declaration that God's holy presence is no longer confined to a tent or a mountain. It rests on people.

SECTION 3

WHAT HAPPENS IN THIS PASSAGE

Acts 2:1-4. The 120 disciples are gathered in Jerusalem, waiting as Jesus commanded. Suddenly the sound of a violent rushing wind fills the entire house. Tongues of fire appear and rest on each person individually. All of them are filled with the Holy Spirit and begin speaking in languages they had never learned.

Acts 2:5-13. Jewish pilgrims from across the world are in Jerusalem for Pentecost. When they hear the sound they gather, bewildered. Each person hears the disciples speaking in their own native language, declaring the wonders of God. Some are amazed. Others mock and say the disciples are drunk.

Acts 2:14-36. Peter stands and addresses the crowd. He quotes Joel 2:28-32, declaring that this is the Spirit God promised to pour on all flesh. He then preaches Jesus: crucified by human hands, raised by God's power, exalted to God's right hand, and now pouring out the Spirit as proof. He makes the charge plain: Israel crucified the one God made both Lord and Messiah.

Acts 2:37-41. The crowd is cut to the heart and cries out, asking what to do. Peter calls them to repent and be baptized in Jesus's name for the forgiveness of sins, promising they will receive the Holy Spirit. About three thousand people respond and are baptized that day. The Church is born.

SECTION
4

KEY THEOLOGICAL TRUTHS

1. What This Reveals About God

God is a promise keeper across centuries. He promised through Joel that He would pour His Spirit on all flesh. He promised through Jeremiah that He would write His law on hearts, not stone. He promised through Ezekiel that He would put His Spirit within His people. Pentecost is the day every one of those promises lands. Nothing God says fails to arrive. (Joel 2:28-32)

2. What This Reveals About People

We are divided by sin and reunited only by God. Babel showed that human pride fractures community. Every language barrier, every national hostility, every tribal division traces back to the moment humanity chose its own glory over God's. Pentecost shows that God does not patch the division. He dismantles it from the inside, by putting His Spirit in people from every nation. (Genesis 11:1-9; Revelation 7:9)

3. How This Points to Jesus

The Holy Spirit arrives because Jesus left and was exalted. Jesus told His disciples plainly: it is better for them that He goes, because the Spirit will not come unless He does (John 16:7). The Spirit's presence in Acts 2 is the evidence of the resurrection and ascension. Every person filled with the Spirit that day was receiving living proof that Jesus was alive and seated at the Father's right hand.

SECTION
5

GOSPEL CONNECTION

At Babel, God scattered humanity because pride and rebellion had fractured everything He made. He handed the nations to lesser rulers, carved out one people for Himself, and began the long work of rescue. Every generation from Abraham to Moses to the prophets was a step toward the day when He would reclaim what was lost. Jesus is the turning point. His death paid the price of the division. His resurrection proved the ransom was accepted. His ascension opened the door for the Spirit. Pentecost is the moment God begins gathering the nations back. The fire falls not on a temple but on people. God is no longer meeting humanity at one location. He is living inside His people and sending them out to every corner of the world He once divided.

Jesus died for every nation, rose for every nation, and sent His Spirit to bring every nation home to God.

SECTION
6

QUESTIONS CHILDREN WILL ASK

Why did they speak in other languages?

God reversed what happened at Babel. When people at Babel rebelled, God scattered them by confusing their languages. At Pentecost, He used those same divided languages to show that Jesus brings everyone back together. Every person heard God's message in their own tongue. That was not an accident. That was a sign.

Is the Holy Spirit the same as God?

Yes. The Holy Spirit is fully God, not a force or a feeling. He is the third Person of the Trinity. The same Spirit that hovered over the waters in Genesis 1 is the same Spirit who fills the disciples in Acts 2. God is one being who exists as Father, Son, and Spirit at the same time, always.

Was the fire real?

Luke describes it as tongues of fire that appeared and rested on each person. Whether it was physical fire or a visible spiritual reality that looked like fire, it was real enough for everyone in the room to see it. Fire in Scripture always marks the presence and holiness of God.

Why did some people make fun of them?

When people cannot explain something, they often mock it. Calling the disciples drunk was the easiest way to dismiss what they could not understand. Peter's response shows confidence, not embarrassment. What was happening was not confusion. It was the fulfillment of prophecy.

What does being filled with the Holy Spirit mean for us today?

Peter's promise at the end of Acts 2 is for everyone who repents and believes in Jesus, in every generation. The gift of the Spirit is not reserved for the first disciples. Every person who trusts in Jesus receives the Holy Spirit. He lives inside believers, helps them understand Scripture, gives them courage, and changes them from the inside.

**SECTION
7****TEACHER QUICK-REFERENCE SUMMARY**

Big Idea	God sent His Holy Spirit to bring every nation back to Himself through Jesus Christ.
What God Did	Poured out His Spirit on all believers, fulfilled every promise He made, and began reversing the division of Babel. The nations He disowned He is now reclaiming.
Points to Jesus	The Spirit comes because Jesus was raised and exalted. His presence is the evidence. You cannot separate the gift of the Spirit from the resurrection of Jesus.
Error to Avoid	Do not present tongues as the only or required sign of the Spirit, or imply that children need a dramatic experience to be genuinely filled with the Spirit.
Hope to Emphasize	No one is too far from God. No language barrier, no nationality, no background puts a person outside the reach of what God began at Pentecost.

**SECTION
8****APPROVAL GATE**

Teacher Background and Preparation Sheet complete. Wait for approval before creating Step 2: Main Lesson, Activity and Discussion.