

ACTS 2:1-24 Holy Spirit Comes – Peter Preaches

THEME: The Day of Pentecost.

We can divide this chapter into two sections. The coming of the Holy Spirit is recorded in verses Act_2:1-13. The first sermon in the church age, given by the apostle Peter, is recorded in verses Act_2:14-47.

Act 2:1 *When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.*

The words fully come could be translated “fulfilled.” When the Day of Pentecost was being fulfilled, they were all together in one place.

Pentecost took place fifty days after the Feast of Firstfruits. You may remember in our study in Leviticus that we found that the Feast of Firstfruits speaks of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Christ is the firstfruits—“... Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming” (1Co_15:23).

The Passover speaks of the death of Jesus Christ, we learn from 1Co_5:7: “... For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us.” Since the Passover has been fulfilled in the death of Christ, and the Feast of Firstfruits has been fulfilled in the resurrection of Christ, we believe that the Feast of Pentecost represents something—that is, it is the fulfillment of something. Its fulfillment is the birth of the church, the day the church came into existence.

When the Day of Pentecost “was being fulfilled,” or “was fully come,” means that this was the fulfillment of the meaning and the purpose for which it was given originally. On Pentecost there was to be a meal offering to the Lord, which was to be presented in two loaves of fine flour baked with leaven (Lev. 23). This was to depict the beginning and origin of the church. It spoke of the coming of the Holy Spirit in the very particular ministry of calling a people out of this world to form the body of Christ, which is the church. Five minutes before the Holy Spirit came on the Day of Pentecost there was no church. Five minutes after the Holy Spirit came on the Day of Pentecost there was a church. In other words, what Bethlehem was to the birth of Christ, Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost was to the coming of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit became incarnate. He began to baptize believers, which means that the Holy Spirit identified them with Christ as His body here on this earth. “For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit” (1Co_12:13).

The Holy Spirit began to perform a ministry on the Day of Pentecost. The Day of Pentecost was fulfilled on that day. When the Day of Pentecost “was fully come” does not mean it was 12:00 noon or 7:00 in the morning or 2:00 in the afternoon. It means that Pentecost, which Israel had been celebrating for many generations, was fulfilled. - McGee

Act 2:2 *And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting.*

Now I wish to call your attention to something that is very important. When the Holy Spirit came, He was not visible. However, He made His presence known in two ways. There was an appeal to two of the gates through which all mankind gets his information: the ear–gate and the eye–gate. We hear and we see. The Holy Spirit used both these gates. Through the ear–gate they heard a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind. This sound filled the whole house where they were sitting.

Notice that it was not a wind; it was the sound of a wind. It wasn't like the sound of the wind blowing through the treetops. It sounded like a tornado, and I believe that all of Jerusalem could hear it. A friend

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of my daughter lives in Kansas and went through the experience of a tornado. It did not destroy their home but came within two blocks of it. When she wrote about it to my daughter, she said, “The first thing we noticed was a sound like a thousand freight trains coming into town.” Friend, that was a rushing, mighty wind, and that was the sound. It was that kind of sound that they heard on the Day of Pentecost. - McGee

Act 2:3 Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them.

Again, I would call your attention to this. The tongues were like as of fire. It was not fire, but it looked like fire. This verse would be better translated, “There appeared unto them tongues parting asunder.” That is, the tongues were like as a fire and it rested upon each of them. This was the appeal to the eye—gate. So, on that Day of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit came to the church, baptizing them into the body of Christ, there was an appeal to the ear and an appeal to the eye.

This is not to be confused with the baptism of fire. The baptism of fire is judgment which is yet to come. In the Book of Revelation, we see the wrath of God revealed from heaven, fire from heaven. That is a baptism of fire. If men will not have the baptism of the Holy Spirit, then they must have the baptism of fire—judgment. The baptism of fire is for those who have rejected Jesus Christ.

I used to go to a prayer meeting which a wonderful preacher attended. I loved that dear brother, although his theology differed from mine in some points. He would always pray that fire would fall on us. And I always canceled out that prayer and said, “Lord, for goodness’ sake, don’t let fire fall on us.” Fire, you see, is judgment. Fire burns. That is yet to come. When the Holy Spirit came on the Day of Pentecost, they saw something that in appearance looked like fire. - McGee

Act 2:4 And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

This verse says they were filled with the Holy Spirit. Someone may question the fact that I have been saying they were baptized with the Holy Spirit. Were they? Yes. The Lord Jesus told them they would be. “And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence” (Act_1:4-5). The very fact that they were filled with the Holy Spirit indicates that all the other ministries of the Holy Spirit to believers in this age had already been performed. They occurred in this order: First, they were regenerated. A man must be born again. “Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God” (Joh_3:5). Secondly, they were indwelt by the Spirit of God. “But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man has not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his” (Rom_8:9). Thirdly, they were sealed by the Holy Spirit into an eternal relationship with God. “In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory” (Eph_1:13-14). And again, “And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption” (Eph_4:30). It is possible to grieve the Spirit of God, but it is not possible to grieve Him away. He seals the believer unto the day of redemption. We are never told to ask for the sealing of the Holy Spirit. It is something which God does

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“after that ye believed,” which is better translated “having believed.” Faith in Jesus Christ gives us the sealing of the Holy Spirit unto the day of redemption.

Fourthly, they were baptized of the Holy Spirit. This was foretold by John the Baptist (Luk_3:16) and repeated by the Lord Jesus: “For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence” (Act_1:5). The baptism took place, which placed them in the body of believers. It marked the beginning of the church. Ever since that day every believer in the Lord Jesus Christ is placed into the body of Christ by the baptism of the Holy Spirit. “For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit” (1Co_12:13).

Now when the filling of the Holy Spirit took place on the Day of Pentecost, it indicated that the other four ministries of the Holy Spirit had been accomplished. “And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost.” The filling of the Spirit was for service. The experience of the Day of Pentecost came from the filling of the Holy Spirit (not the baptism of the Holy Spirit). It is still the same today. The filling of the Holy Spirit is for service. This is the only work of the Holy Spirit that we are to do anything about—we are commanded to be filled with the Holy Spirit: “And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit” (Eph_5:18). Notice that before Pentecost the believers wanted this filling of the Spirit. “These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication ...” (Act_1:14). What would their supplication be about? About the promise of the Lord Jesus that He would send His Holy Spirit to them.

The baptism of the Holy Spirit is not a command given to us. It is not an experience. It is an act of God whereby the believer in Jesus Christ is indwelt by the Spirit of God, sealed unto the day of redemption, and placed into the church, the body of Christ, by the baptism of the Spirit. The filling of the Spirit of God is the enablement for service. We are commanded to be filled with the Spirit.

After they were filled with the Holy Spirit, they “began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance” (v. Act_2:4). These “other tongues” are not unknown tongues. There were many tongues spoken by Jews throughout the Roman Empire. These worshipers had come from the different areas of the Roman Empire for the Feast of Pentecost. Remember that all male Jews were required to come to Jerusalem for three of the feasts. They were in Jerusalem because of that, and many of them couldn't speak Hebrew.

That is not unusual. There are many Jews in our country today who cannot speak Hebrew. For years it was a dead language. In Israel today, Hebrew is being spoken again.

Now, my friend, the Day of Pentecost cannot be duplicated. It was a precise point in history. We cannot duplicate it any more than we can duplicate Bethlehem and the birth of Christ at Christmas.

Suppose the wise men had come back to Jerusalem again the next year and had said, “Say, we're looking for the King of the Jews who is born in Bethlehem.” Suppose Herod would have said, “Weren't you fellows here last year?” “Yes.” “Well, did you find Him?” “Yes.” “Well, if He was born in Bethlehem last year, He isn't born there again this year.” “Oh, but we had such a wonderful experience here last year, we thought we'd come back and do it all over again.” Of course, Herod would have answered, “Look, fellows, you can't duplicate that. He was born in Bethlehem only once.”

Just so, friend, you cannot duplicate Pentecost. The Holy Spirit came on the Day of Pentecost. You don't have to beg Him to come or urge Him to come. He is here. The Spirit of God is in the world today. Jesus

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told us what He would do after He came: “He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you” (Joh_16:14). We know He is here when He takes the things of Christ and shows them to us. And when we are talking about the things of Christ, the Spirit of God has something that He can work with.

“As the Spirit gave them utterance.” These apostles were from Galilee. They couldn't speak all these other languages. But they are speaking them now. The Spirit gave them utterance. - McGee

Act 2:5-6 And there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven. And when this sound occurred, the multitude came together, and were confused, because everyone heard them speak in his own language.

They had come from everywhere because of the Feast of Pentecost. This was their reason for being in Jerusalem.

A better translation of “when this was noised abroad” is “when this sound having taken place.” Because of the sound as of a mighty rushing wind, a multitude came together. I shall never forget here in Pasadena, where I live, the first time we heard a jet plane break the sound barrier. We were all out in our front yards wanting to know where the sound had come from. We had never heard anything like it before. The sound the people of Jerusalem heard had never been heard before; so, they came rushing toward it—which may have been to the temple area. Probably all 120 believers were there (Act_1:15).

The people who rushed there were confounded because every man heard—in the Greek the imperfect tense is used, so that it should read, “every man was hearing”—them speak in his own dialect. It was not only that the language of their country was spoken, but each man heard his own dialect as it was spoken in his area of the country.

These men were not talking gibberish. They were not talking in unknown tongues. These men were speaking the dialects of the people in the multitude.

Now there is another aspect which I must mention. Some Bible scholars believe that what is meant here is that the apostles were not speaking in other languages at all, but were speaking in their own Galilean dialect, and the miracle was in the hearing because it says that every man heard them speak in his own dialect. Was the miracle that broke down the language barrier in the speaking or in the hearing? - McGee

Act 2:7-11 Then they were all amazed and marveled, saying to one another, "Look, are not all these who speak Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each in our own language in which we were born? Parthians and Medes and Elamites, those dwelling in Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya adjoining Cyrene, visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs—we hear them speaking in our own tongues the wonderful works of God."

Here were people from three continents. Certainly, they were of diverse languages and dialects. They each heard these Galileans speak in an understandable dialect. May I say these were not unknown tongues. They were languages that were understood. - McGee

Act 2:12-13 So they were all amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "Whatever could this mean?" Others mocking said, "They are full of new wine."

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They were amazed—*perplexed* would be a better word. They didn't understand what was taking place.

The literal translation is sweet wine, and I understand that is a little more intoxicating. They thought these men were drunk.

Remember that Paul writes: “And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit” (Eph_5:18). Have you noticed that a drunk man seems to have more power? He certainly is more talkative. Perhaps many of us today need the filling of the Spirit to make us talkative—not to speak in an unknown tongue, but power to speak the gospel to others. That is the kind of tongues movement we need today. And by the way, we need a tongues movement of giving the gospel in the language that the man can understand. That is all important.

What a day Pentecost was! It was the day the Holy Spirit came to call out to a body of believers to form the church. The day before Pentecost there was no church. The day after Pentecost there was a church. Just as the Feast of Pentecost in the Old Testament followed fifty days after the Feast of the Firstfruits, so fifty days after the Lord Jesus arose from the dead the Holy Spirit came to call out a body of believers.

Now Simon Peter is going to stand up and answer the mocking taunt that they are full of new wine. - McGee

Peter's Sermon at Pentecost

Act 2:14-15 But Peter, standing up with the eleven, raised his voice and said to them, "Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and heed my words. For these are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day.

Now I think that we need to recognize who the congregation was. These were men of Judea and all that dwell at Jerusalem. In that day Jerusalem was entirely a Jewish city. Pilate and his people had their headquarters in Caesarea, not in Jerusalem. This early church was 100 percent Jewish. It was made up of Israelites. We need to recognize that. The church began in Jerusalem, then moved out to Judea, then Samaria, and then to the uttermost parts of the earth. This has been the movement of the church from that day to this. In the Old Testament it was to Jerusalem that the world was to come for worship. Now they are commanded to leave Jerusalem and to take this message to the ends of the earth.

Peter replies to their mockery and ridicule by saying, “This could not be drunkenness, because look at the time of day it is!” This was not an hour when people on that day were drunk. He is talking to the cynic.

Now Peter quotes to them from their own Scripture. – McGee

Act 2:16 But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel:

He uses this prophecy as an answer to the cynical, the unbeliever, the mocker. This is his purpose for quoting it. He says, “That is that” which is, this is similar to or this is like that. He does not say that this is the fulfillment of that which was spoken by the prophet Joel. He is saying, “Why do you think this is something odd or something strange? We have prophecy that says these things are going to come to pass.” Peter goes on to quote the prophecy from Joel. I'm glad Simon Peter quoted as much as he did because he makes it obvious that he was not attempting to say this was fulfilled. Now what is it that is to come? - McGee

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Act 2:17-21 'AND IT SHALL COME TO PASS IN THE LAST DAYS, SAYS GOD, THAT I WILL POUR OUT OF MY SPIRIT ON ALL FLESH; YOUR SONS AND YOUR DAUGHTERS SHALL PROPHECY, YOUR YOUNG MEN SHALL SEE VISIONS, YOUR OLD MEN SHALL DREAM DREAMS. AND ON MY MENSERVANTS AND ON MY MAIDSERVANTS, I WILL POUR OUT MY SPIRIT IN THOSE DAYS; AND THEY SHALL PROPHECY. I WILL SHOW WONDERS IN HEAVEN ABOVE AND SIGNS IN THE EARTH BENEATH: BLOOD AND FIRE AND VAPOR OF SMOKE. THE SUN SHALL BE TURNED INTO DARKNESS, AND THE MOON INTO BLOOD, BEFORE THE COMING OF THE GREAT AND AWESOME DAY OF THE LORD. AND IT SHALL COME TO PASS THAT WHOEVER CALLS ON THE NAME OF THE LORD SHALL BE SAVED.'

I don't think that anyone would claim that on the Day of Pentecost the moon was turned to blood or that the sun was turned to darkness. When Christ was crucified, there was darkness for three hours, but not on the Day of Pentecost. Nor were there wonders of heaven above and signs in the earth beneath. Nor was there blood and fire and a vapor of smoke. Simon Peter quotes this passage to these mockers to show them that the pouring out of the Spirit of God should not be strange to them. Joel had predicted it, and it is going to come to pass.

My friend, Joe_2:28-32 has not been fulfilled to this day. If we turn back to the Book of Joel, we will find that he had a great deal to say about the Day of the Lord. The Day of the Lord will begin with the Great Tribulation period. It will go on through the Millennium. In three chapters of the Book of Joel the Day of the Lord is mentioned five times. Joel talks about the fact that it is a time of war, a time of judgment upon the earth. That has not yet been fulfilled. It was not fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost.

If we could only see that all Simon Peter is saying in his introduction is, "Now look, this is not strange or contrary. The day is coming when this will be fulfilled. And today we are seeing something similar to it." Now after his introduction, he will move on to his text. Remember he is speaking to men who knew the Old Testament. Don't try to read nineteen hundred years of church history into this. This is just the beginning of the church on the Day of Pentecost. This is the inception of the church. Obviously, he is speaking to the Jews—"Ye men of Israel." He doesn't say, "Ye men of Southern California." He is talking to Israelites. Now he is getting down to the nitty gritty. Now he is getting to his subject. – McGee

Act 2:22 "Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know—

Now I personally think that miracles and wonders and signs were all different. I believe that miracles were performed for one purpose, wonders for another purpose, and signs for another purpose. Jesus did certain things that were to be signs. Some miracles of healing were performed to get the attention of His hearers. These were the three areas in which our Lord moved. - McGee

Act 2:23-24 Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death; whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it.

Peter is saying that what has happened was not contrary to God's program. This is not something that took God by surprise. However, he makes it clear that this does not release men from their responsibility. Who is responsible for the crucifixion of Christ? The religious rulers were the ones who began the movement. I would say that they were largely to blame. They moved upon the multitude so that they

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produced mob action. They also maneuvered the Roman government to execute Him. Remember, friend, He was crucified on a Roman cross. Peter is pointing his finger at his fellow Israelites.

But there is no use in our arguing about who was responsible for His death back at that time. I'll tell you who is responsible for His death. You are responsible, and I am responsible. It was for my sins and for your sins that He died. Listen to the words of Jesus:

Joh 10:17-18 "Therefore My Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again. No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This command I have received from My Father."

Peter is speaking to men who were directly involved in the plot of the Crucifixion, and he says, "Ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain."

However, that is not the most important part of his message. He goes on, "Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death." He preaches the resurrection of Jesus Christ. This is the first sermon ever preached in the church age. This is the beginning. This is the Day of Pentecost. What is his theme? It is not the prophecy of Joel, my friend. It is the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. Let's not try to change his subject! Now he is going to quote his text. He quotes from Psa_16:8-10. I am glad he did that because this helps me to understand Psalm 16. - McGee