

Pentecost Sunday

Acts 2:22-47

The Qualifying Events Leading Up To The Day Of Pentecost When Holy Spirit Was Poured Out Upon The Disciples – cf. Acts 1:1-11

- The book of Acts is Luke's sequel to his gospel – cf. Acts 1:1-9 – Luke gives a brief recap of the events from Jesus' resurrection and leading up to His departure/ascension into glory.
- This brief recap also anticipates the promised outpouring of the Holy Spirit as the inauguration of the church and its commissioning and empowerment for ministry – cf. 1:4-8 – As we will see in Peter's Pentecost sermon, it is Jesus exalted who pour out the Spirit on the church.
- Jesus ascended and exalted is the promise of His return to establish His Kingdom – cf. 1:9-11.

The Day Of Pentecost And The Outpouring Of The Holy Spirit As The Inauguration Of The Church – cf. 2:1-41

- The Spirit's coming took place during the celebration of Pentecost which meant that there were thousands of pilgrims present in Jerusalem from "every nation under heaven" on that day – cf. 2:1-5. There were 120 disciples waiting and praying for the Spirit's coming.
- The coming of the Spirit was accompanied by phenomena which clearly ties it to the promise made by John the Baptist that Jesus would baptize believers with the Holy Spirit – (cf. 2:3; Luke 3:15-16, 21-22; also see Jesus' promises - John 14:15-23; 15:26-27; 16:5-16). The disciples are baptized by the Spirit and filled by Him, which results in the disciples speaking the mighty works of God in such a way that everyone "hears" them in their own language – (cf. Acts 2:4-12).

Note: It is by the baptism of the Spirit that Jesus established/inaugurated His church and empowered or equipped the church for gospel ministry – cf. Acts 1:4-5, 7-8; 1 Corinthians 12:4-13; also Romans 8:5-11; Ephesians 2:13-22.

- The worshipping pilgrims were in awe and wonder at what they were witnessing. Peter explained what was taking place in his "Pentecost Sermon" – cf. 2:14-36.

Note: I know that some of you listening will want me to address the issue of the "baptism of the Holy Spirit" and its relationship to "speaking in tongues" as it is understood in the evangelical church of today. I will not be addressing that this morning but think on these two things. **First,**

the text says that those filled by the Spirit “began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them” and those present *heard* “them declaring the wonders of God in our (their) own tongues” (cf. 2:4, 11). **Second, the supernatural “hearing”** enabled by the Spirit among different language groups is no more miraculous and necessary than that which takes place every time the gospel is spoken if the dead are to be brought to life (cf. 2:12-13, 37-41).

The Eternal Gospel Truths On Display In The Events Of The Day Of Pentecost – cf. 2:22-36

Note: Peter, in his sermon, laid an eternal, gospel foundation for understanding the events of that day. We will see that Peter understands/declares that the outpouring of the Spirit is the outworking of the gospel truths of incarnation, crucifixion, resurrection and ascension/exaltation to glory. It is the next step, if you will, in the creation of the New Humanity/the church. It is the exalted Lord sanctifying, commissioning and empowering the church for gospel ministry.

He first ties the coming of the Spirit to the end times events prophesied in the book of Joel. We won’t discuss Joel’s prophetic statements but check with 1 Peter 1:10-12 to get a sense of how Peter depicts the thinking of the prophets with respect to the coming of Jesus. For our purposes this morning, there is only one thing I want to take away from Peter citing Joel – in the events of that day the people were witnessing an apocalyptic event (an unveiling/revealing event) in which the realities of heaven powerfully broke into this temporal/historical moment. This was a “last days” event.

- Peter begins his sermon by explaining the coming of the Spirit upon the believers in Jesus in the context of Jesus as the incarnate Son. Clearly this is an implication of Peter’s initial statement as well as his concluding statement (cf. Acts 2:22, 34-36; also John 1:1-4, 14; 3:13; 6:62). In the incarnation the Divine Son of God left His infinite glory to enter into solidarity with us – with fallen humanity (cf. John 17:4-5, 24; Philippians 2:5-6).

- The next major point in Peter’s sermon – his explanation of the events surrounding the coming of the Spirit – was Jesus’ crucifixion (cf. Acts 2:23, 36). Peter told the Jews that though they, with the Romans, crucified/kill Jesus – this incarnate Lord of glory – His crucifixion fulfilled the Father’s will. In fact Jesus submitted to death by crucifixion at the hands of fallen humanity on behalf of/in solidarity with fallen humanity (cf. also Hebrews 2:5-18; 10:1-14; 1 Corinthians 15:3; John 1:29; 1 Peter 1:17-21). He who is life died – He died our death so that He could give us His life (cf. John 3:16-17)!!

- Peter then moves to the resurrection of Jesus. He spends the bulk of his sermon on the Jesus resurrection (cf. Acts 2:24-32). **Notice the powerful statement Peter makes 2:24b – “...because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on Him.”** Peter calls David and the hearers themselves to witness to Jesus’ resurrection from the dead. He declares that the One who is life, by His own death, destroyed death and was raised from the dead in a demonstration and

proclamation of His victory over sin, the curse and death, on behalf of all of us who are under the reign of sin, the curse and death (cf. Romans 5:12-21; Hebrews 4:14-18).

Note: Peter then declares that the events of this day – the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the disciples of Jesus – find their explanation in Jesus’ exaltation to glory. Peter then declares that it is this final and oft neglected gospel truth/event – Jesus ascension/exaltation to glory – which gives ultimate meaning to the incarnation, crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus. As we consider Peter’s message, it seems clear that all of the truth and power of the gospel is brought to bear in this one truth – Jesus exalted (cf. Acts 2:29-36).

- We are brought into solidarity with Him in glory – (cf. Ephesians 2:4-7; Colossians 3:1-4) I am/we are seated with Jesus in glory. As He entered into solidarity with us in our humanity (incarnation), our sin, curse and death (crucifixion) – so we enter into solidarity with Him in His life (resurrection) and glory (exaltation). This is seen as the Spirit transformingly and effectually dwells within me and within us making us the church (cf. Ephesians 2:11-22; 3:1-10). The Lord of Heaven and Earth lives in me and within us and He has given me/us the life of Jesus, the mind of Jesus, the heart of Jesus – His appetites and passions - by the Spirit (cf. Romans 8:5-12). I am/we are citizens of Heaven bearing the image/likeness of my King (cf. Philippians 3:20-21). The hymn writer captures it in the simple phrase “Heaven came down and glory filled my soul” – we who are “seated with Him” in His glory – we bear His glory in this world. We are His witnesses.

Note: Such glory cannot remain hidden by the veil of our humanity. If it is true and if it is as He wills it – such glory bursts through these jars of clay and is seen in the distinctive life of every Christians and within the life of the church.

The Church – The Miraculous And Ongoing Work Of The Holy Spirit – cf. 2:37-47 – Heaven is among us – we are citizens of heaven - (cf. Philippians 3:20-21) and it ought to look like it – “other-worldly” living

– Though these are kingdoms in conflict – the Spirit opens the eyes of the world which is looking on. He enables them to see the glory of God in the face of Jesus ***in the life of the church*** (cf. 2:37-41).

- He enables the church to live out the distinctive life of Jesus in the world and before the world as witnesses to His glory (cf. Acts 2:42-47; Ephesians 1:15-23). Notice the elements of the corporate life of the church – they consist in a Spirit birthed and shared passion for God and the things of God which reflect that our lives are “***hidden with Christ in God*** (cf. Acts 2:42-43; Colossians 3:1-4). In addition this life is seen in its Christ-like character – how we live in fellowship with each other in this world (cf. 2:44-47). Finally, this power is seen in the heart of Jesus with which we respond to our world – the people in the world (cf. Acts 2:47; Matthew 5:38-48; John 3:16ff).