

They Were Full of The Holy Spirit

Acts 2

Jerry Marek 09/13/10

1. Introduction (Acts 2:1-4)

a) Obeying, Watching and Praying

- The hearts of the apostles and the one hundred and twenty were broken in the wake of their beloved master's death, resurrection and ascension, and they were together, tarrying in the city Jerusalem, for the gift of the Spirit.
- During their wait, the Day of Pentecost arrives. Though it may have been a feast day, and therefore holy for the Jews, it was in many ways *just another day* for them to wait, watch and pray for the Holy Spirit to come upon them.
- It is here we find a common principle in the Kingdom of Heaven. The 'suddenlies' of God, those moments when God breaks in mightily in an instant, are often preceded by many days (sometimes years) of waiting and crying out to the Lord. Deep prayer, yearning, lovesickness, and brokenness for that which we have not yet obtained is almost always a prerequisite to receiving the things of which God calls us to contend.
- When we tarry with the Lord, the final days of our wait often feel very much the same as the days preceding. We're not aware of when God is actually going to suddenly come, which demands that we live our lives in a manner ready to receive. Had the disciples grown uncommitted, they would not have been in the right place, or at least the right heart posture, to receive what God had for them. How terrible would it have been to be on the outside looking in when God descended upon His people with a mighty wind and tongues of fire!

b) Filled, Empowered, Baptized

- The disciples were an excellent example of what it means to epitomize imperfection, yet display lovesick faithfulness in waiting upon the Lord. Let us be like them, and all those who have sought first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, for Jesus says in Matthew 5:6, "*Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled.*"
- Suddenly, there came a sound from heaven... and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit. They hungered and pained for the Lord, and were richly rewarded with the baptism of the Spirit. The broken and lovesick disciples were immediately filled by the all-consuming presence and power of the Holy Spirit.

2. Signs that Glorify Jesus (Acts 2:5-16)

a) The Holy Spirit always glorifies Jesus Christ.

- The Holy Spirit had descended upon the disciples, and in the process He created quite the scene! God, knowing exactly when and how to best display His truth, waited for Pentecost, when Jerusalem would be filled with devout men from every known nation.
- He came in power, and a multitude gathered at the sound of a mighty wind. Three signs were immediately evident: The wind, tongues of fire, and the tongues of many different

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languages.

- The crowd was perplexed and marveled as they saw a band of Galileans speaking about the wonderful works of God in their own language. The majority of these people were not white-washed pharisees, but heaven-starved, devout Jews who longed to see the kingdom of heaven. While some mocked, the Holy Spirit had in a few short hours prepared thousands of hearts to receive the testimony of Jesus.
- A key spiritual principle to be gained here is this: The Holy Spirit always glorifies Jesus Christ. No exceptions. If ever anyone speaks a spiritual message or operates in any spiritual gift, but does not give the glory to Jesus, we know that we are not to receive them or their message.

b) A Testimony Goes Forth

- The Holy Spirit, fully committed to the salvation of the precious souls in Jerusalem, calls Peter forth to prophesy and preach the Gospel.
- Here we find two more spiritual principles:
 - 1) The Holy Spirit is always searching for willing vessels to proclaim the message of Christ and display the glory of God. Our qualification is not based on any kind of earthly merit, but rather a loving obedience to the Holy Spirit and the Scriptures.
 - 2) Salvation cannot be achieved by any earthly means. Anyone who is convinced to believe the truths of the Gospel can just as easily be convinced otherwise. Salvation is a miracle that can only take place when God personally opens someone's eyes. Only God is able to reveal God to an individual. When we preach the Gospel, we are partnering with God in His greatest miracle, the salvation of fallen man. In the book, *Back To Jerusalem*, a leader in the Chinese house church makes the following statement in an interview: *"I have come to understand that it is completely impossible for even a single lost person in the world to become a Christian unless a great miracle takes place. Lost human souls are firmly chained prisoners of Satan and his demonic forces. They cannot be argued into the kingdom of God because their problem is not an intellectual one. Nor is there any point in trying to change their outward behavior if they do not have the inward spiritual life that only Jesus can give. The Bible clearly says that every person outside of Christ is spiritually dead, and a battle needs to be waged for his or her soul... There is not the slightest possibility that we can lead anyone to the foot of the cross unless Jesus Himself becomes personally involved... The good news is that we can be completely sure that Jesus will help us reach the lost... for the Word of God says, "He is patient with you, not wanting any to perish, but everyone to come to repentance." (2 Peter 3:9)" -p.68*
- Next, Peter stands up, in full sobriety, and first of all addresses the mockers. He offers them a solution that cuts to the heart of the mockers accusations, declaring that the scene was not created by drunk Galileans, but rather by the Holy Spirit, who is beginning to fulfill a prophecy spoken by the prophet Joel.

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3. The Three-fold context of Peter's Sermon: (Acts 2:17-36)

a) Joel's Prophecy

- Peter connects the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit promised in the last days. In a broad sense, we entered what is biblically termed, the 'last days', during the great transitional period that began when Jesus went to the cross, and ended at the day of Pentecost.
- As a side note, we have yet to enter the last days in the much narrower sense, meaning the final seven years before the Lord's return. Pentecost was the 'beginning of the end', so to speak. The last days will be completely fulfilled when Jesus comes to receive the Church and establish His government on earth as it is in heaven. The term 'last days' does not refer to the end of the world, but rather the end of Satan's influence in the world.
- Peter announces to the crowd that the gift of God's Spirit has come and is available to all, as evidenced by the signs and wonders they have all just witnessed. He declares that these must all take place before the coming of the Lord, so that whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be saved in that day.
- Significant to this portion of Joel's prophecy, is the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, the wonders and judgments of God, and the way of salvation. Salvation is emphasized here, but as John Wesley comments on this section of Scripture, "*Great revelations of grace are usually attended with great judgments on those who reject it.*"

b) The Testimony of Jesus

- For the first time, the Gospel comes forth from one of the apostles, as Peter proclaims Christ to the men of Israel. Peter calls the Jews to account for the crucifixion of Jesus, fully attesting to His life, miracles, death and resurrection.
- The key in this section is the unveiling of God's purpose, demonstrating that it is impossible for the Holy One to be held by death. Likewise we also, though it isn't mentioned at this moment, know that all who are dead in Christ will not be held by death but will instead be raised up in Christ.
- Peter declares to the Israelites, that though they have killed the Lord of glory, He is now crowned with the oil of gladness and is alive and seated at the right hand of the Father, where He has made known the ways of life and the fullness of joy in His presence.

c) Expounding on the Humanity and Diety of Jesus Christ

- Peter continues by expounding on David's revelation of the Messiah. He fully solidifies the reality of Christ as the One who fulfilled the oath that God swore to David.
- Addressing again Jesus' death and resurrection, Peter makes reference to Psalm 110, which is a Psalm proclaiming the humanity and diety of the Messiah, as well as His role as the eternal priest and king.

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- Peter finishes with an astoundingly clear and bold declaration, which by the way is probably the greatest evidence of God's redeeming forgiveness evident in Peter's life (for Peter three times denied his Lord, but in one testimony evidenced God's complete work of forgiveness)... He said, "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ."

4. Favor Upon the Early Church (Acts 2:37-47)

a) Cut to the Heart

- When the crowd heard this, they were cut to the heart. By the working of the Spirit and the testimony of His elect, God had pierced the hearts of these Jewish men with His mercies.
- The response was a resounding, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" When the Holy Spirit convicts the soul, He draws people unto Himself. Psalm 65:4 says, "Blessed is the man You choose, and cause to approach You." God drew three-thousand devout Jews to Himself on that day.
- In response Peter declares to them the essential response of anyone who desires to know Christ as their Lord and Savior. Without repentance there is no salvation. God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble, and a broken and contrite spirit He will not despise. Whenever we turn to Jesus Christ and repent of our sins, He always forgives us.
- On a side note, many people define repentance as 'feeling sorrow' for our sins. Though this is partly true, it is not the full extent. When the bible refers to repentance, it means that we are to turn away from our sins, completely changing the course of our lives. It is a turn in the other direction, where we now oppose sin and pursue God's kingdom and righteousness.
- Repentance though, does not mean we immediately have it all together. Even when we turn the other direction, there will be times when our immaturity and flesh hinder us from running properly. We need not be discouraged by this, nor continue sinning, but rather sustain ourselves in the revelation that God delights in mercy. He is willing to uphold us in our weakness so that He might have a full reward in us later.

b) Be Saved from this Perverse Generation

- Following his initial message, Peter continued to testify to crowd saying, "Be saved from this perverse generation." Peter was specifically addressing a generation that crucified the Lord of glory. Jesus had spoken of the judgement coming to Jerusalem, and Peter knew that unless there was city-wide repentance as in the days of Ninevah, Jerusalem would likely be destroyed.
- Though three-thousand repented in one day, and many more to follow shortly after, there was still not enough of a revival in Jerusalem to withhold her destruction in 70A.D.
- Side note again, many bible scholars criticize the apostles for staying in Jerusalem as long as they did, saying that they had missed God's call to preach to the ends of the

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world until they were forced out of Jerusalem, but I hold a much different view. I believe they had set themselves to tarry in the city until the work was completed. God had sent them as witnesses first of all to Jerusalem, and the work was not finished. To me it seems evident that they were set to faithfully stand in the gap until either repentance or judgement was complete. Regardless, God later removed them and destroyed Jerusalem.

- When the Jews were scattered, the apostles preached the Gospel among the nations. Before Christ returns, the remnants of these Jews will be gathered to a restored Jerusalem (probably the one of our day, for many have already returned), and Psalm 126 will again be fulfilled, which says, *“When the Lord brought back the captivity of Zion, we were like those who dream. Then our mouth was filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing. Then they said among the nations, “The Lord has done great things for them.””*

c) All things in Common

- The early church had all things in common. We will take a deeper look at this in chapter four; what it means and how we can walk in the same purpose and unity as the early church.
- God also blessed them with a short season of favor with all people so that many would believe on Him before the testings of persecution arose. God had gently and faithfully built His house and prepared it for the winds of persecution that soon blew in.

5. The Complete Fulfillment of Joel 2

- a) On All Flesh... A world-wide outpouring (given to every nation and class of people); It will be confirmed by the wonders in heaven and the signs in the earth that have been prophesied to happen before the return of Christ.
- b) Great Exploits: (Daniel 11:32-33) The Spirit will equip the Church to do great exploits in the earth in the face of the greatest persecution. The Word of the Lord will be glorified in every nation, and the great commission will be completed.
- c) Parellel to the complete fulfillment of Joel 2 will be the rise of the antichrist and the release of God's earthly judgments on the antichrist and those who serve him. These must all take place before the return of Christ. The truest, simplest and most assuring summary of these days is, “And it shall come to pass that whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.” We know the end of the story, and it is in this we have assurance of hope.