

February 18, 2024

God's Good News Story: The Church Alive & Growing

The Book of Acts Pt 3

Holy Spirit Powered

Our theme for 2024 is God's Good News Story, Continued... ***"The Church Alive & Growing"***. For the past few weeks, we have been looking at the basic idea and descriptions of the Church. **It is a COMMUNITY**, which requires COMMITMENT. The Church is a Fellowship, a Family, a Body, a Flock, and an Army. We followed that up by **discovering the true call**, purpose and power of the Church as found in the Book of Acts... That is to be Powerful Witnesses of God's Good News Story motivated by love and accomplished empowered by the Holy Spirit! Then last week we looked at the early church's example of decision making, and **seeking God's Will**.

- > Consult God Earnestly Through Prayer
- > Trust the Bible as Your Authority & Act Accordingly
- > Look For God's Concealed Will Through the Lens of God's Revealed Will
- A. Prayerfully, Skillfully and Cooperatively Gather Information Concerning the Issue
- B. Trust in God's Sovereignty Through His Holy Spirit's Guidance, Make a Decision and Go With It.

Well, 10 days has passed since the Ascension (on day 40 after the Resurrection). It is what the New Testament calls Pentecost. That is the Greek term, which literally means "Fiftieth, 50th". It is known as ***Shavout*** in

Hebrew, Named so, because it came 50 days after ***The Feast of Firstfruits*** of Passover Week. This is also the same day we know of as Resurrection Day. Jesus fulfilled this ancient Hebrew Festival by becoming the "firstfruits of those who have been raised from the dead"... Paul writes in...

1 Corinthians 15:20... ***But the fact is, Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep.***

Pentecost/Shavout is also known as **"The Feast of Weeks"** and also 'The Feast of Harvest' and the "Day of Latter Firstfruits. Many Jewish people believe that it was on this day in the time of Moses that God gave the "10 Commandments" to the Hebrew people. If that is true it shows a great parallel to Pentecost, God gave the "Law" to guide the Old Testament believers, now God has given us the Holy Spirit to guide us personally, and to better interpret the "Law" for our daily lives.

Pentecost is one a series of "feasts" that seem to have have application to the work & ministry of Jesus.

So let's get back to our message. It is 50 days after the Resurrection, the city of Jerusalem is bustling with feast followers and the early church is obediently following the last instructions of Jesus 10 days earlier when He ascended into heaven.

(The following is adapted from Acts: Christ Centered Exposition. Tony Merida)

Let's pick up with the first 13 verses of **Chapter 2 in Acts** and refresh ourselves of the actual **EVENTS... or WHAT HAPPENED on PENTECOST.**

Acts 2:1-13... *When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. ² And suddenly a noise like a violent rushing wind came from heaven, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. ³ And tongues that looked like fire appeared to them, distributing themselves, and a tongue rested on each one of them. ⁴ And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with different tongues, as the Spirit was giving them the ability to speak out. ⁵ Now there were Jews residing in Jerusalem, devout men from every nation under heaven. ⁶ And when this sound occurred, the crowd came together and they were bewildered, because each one of them was hearing them speak in his own language. ⁷ They were amazed and astonished, saying, “Why, are not all these who are speaking Galileans? ⁸ And how is it that we each hear them in our own language to which we were born? ⁹ Parthians, Medes, and Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea, and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, ¹⁰ Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya around Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, ¹¹ Cretans and Arabs—we hear them speaking in our own tongues of the mighty deeds of God.” ¹² And they all continued in amazement and great perplexity, saying to one another, “What does this mean?” ¹³ But others were jeering and saying, “They are full of sweet wine!”*

1. THE EVENTS: WHAT HAPPENED ON PENTECOST.

Three Key Senses Were Used By God to Bring This Event To Vibrant Life

- a. **SOUNDS** – There was a great WIND or BREATH that was heard. The Bible often compares the power & presence of the Holy Spirit with wind or breath. There is an obvious parallel with some key Old Testament events. In Ezekiel 37:9,10... ⁹ *Then He said to me, “Prophecy to the breath, prophecy, son of man, and say to the breath, ‘The Lord God says this: “Come from the four winds, breath, and breathe on these slain, so that they come to life.””* ¹⁰ *So I prophesied as He commanded me, and the breath entered them, and they came to life and stood on their feet, an exceedingly great army.*
- b. **SIGHTS**: There was the magnificent power of FIRE that accompanied this event. Again, like breath or wind FIRE is a common occurrence with the power of God’s presence. Like the Ezekiel passage in the first point paralleled an Old Testament outpouring of the Holy Spirit, we have another parallel with an Old Testament event. In 2 Chronicles King Solomon is dedicating the Great Temple to God and we see FIRE symbolizing the presence of God.

2 Chronicles 7:1-3... ¹ *Now when Solomon had finished praying, fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices, and the glory of the Lord filled the house.* ² *And the priests could not enter the house of the Lord because the glory of the Lord filled the Lord's house.* ³ *All the sons of Israel, seeing the fire come down and the glory of the Lord upon the house, bowed down on the pavement with their faces to the ground, and they worshiped and gave praise to the Lord, saying, "Certainly He is good, certainly His faithfulness is everlasting."*

Another passage is the well-known one of the Burning Bush and Moses. The FIRE and the WIND/BREATH at this event connect the God/YAHWEH of the Old Testament with the event of Pentecost showing that God is alive and active and is now anointing and appointing the Church with the Power of God in the Holy Spirit. We can believe that God is now choosing to dwell in the lives and hearts of the people of His church, just as He had dwelled in the Old Testament Temple. Now, we are His Temple, filled with the Spirit and power of God.

c. SPEECH:

The WIND/BREATH & FIRE were also accompanied with SPEECH. The power of God came upon them, and they SPOKE, filled with the Holy Spirit. These

words were designed to bring Glory to God and bring the Good News Story of Salvation to all people who listened. This SPEECH or 'tongues' were intelligible known languages of the massive and diverse crowd of people that were gathered in Jerusalem for Shavuot/Feast of Harvest/Pentecost.

This leads us to our next key focal point.

2. THE EXPLANATION: WHAT DO THE EVENTS AT PENTECOST MEAN

Acts 2:14-36... ¹⁴ *But Peter, taking his stand with the other eleven, raised his voice and declared to them: "Men of Judea and all you who live in Jerusalem, know this, and pay attention to my words.* ¹⁵ *For these people are not drunk, as you assume, since it is only the third hour of the day; ¹⁶ but this is what has been spoken through the prophet Joel:*

¹⁷ **'AND IT SHALL BE IN THE LAST DAYS,' God says, 'THAT I WILL POUR OUT MY SPIRIT ON ALL MANKIND; AND YOUR SONS AND YOUR DAUGHTERS WILL PROPHESY, AND YOUR YOUNG MEN WILL SEE VISIONS, AND YOUR OLD MEN WILL HAVE DREAMS; ¹⁸ AND EVEN ON MY MALE AND FEMALE SERVANTS I WILL POUR OUT MY SPIRIT IN THOSE DAYS, And they will prophesy.**

¹⁹ **AND I WILL DISPLAY WONDERS IN THE SKY ABOVE AND SIGNS ON THE EARTH BELOW, BLOOD, FIRE, AND VAPOR OF SMOKE. ²⁰ THE SUN WILL BE TURNED INTO DARKNESS AND THE MOON INTO BLOOD, BEFORE THE GREAT AND GLORIOUS DAY OF THE LORD COMES.**

²¹ **AND IT SHALL BE THAT EVERYONE WHO CALLS ON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED.'**

²² **“Men of Israel,** listen to these words:

Jesus the Nazarene, a Man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him in your midst, just as you yourselves know—²³ this Man, delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death.²⁴ But God raised Him from the dead, putting an end to the agony of death, since it was impossible for Him to be held in its power.²⁵ For David says of Him,

‘I SAW THE LORD CONTINUALLY BEFORE ME, BECAUSE HE IS AT MY RIGHT HAND, SO THAT I WILL NOT BE SHAKEN.²⁶ THEREFORE MY HEART WAS GLAD AND MY TONGUE WAS OVERJOYED; MOREOVER, MY FLESH ALSO WILL LIVE IN HOPE;²⁷ FOR YOU WILL NOT ABANDON MY SOUL TO HADES, NOR WILL YOU ALLOW YOUR HOLY ONE TO UNDERGO DECAY.²⁸ YOU HAVE MADE KNOWN TO ME THE WAYS OF LIFE; YOU WILL MAKE ME FULL OF GLADNESS WITH YOUR PRESENCE.’

²⁹ **“Brothers,** I may confidently say to you regarding the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day.³⁰ So because he was a prophet and knew that God had sworn to him with an oath to seat one of his descendants on his throne,³¹ he looked ahead and spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that He was neither abandoned to Hades, nor did His flesh suffer decay.³² It is this Jesus whom God raised up, a fact to which we are all witnesses.³³ Therefore, since He has been exalted at the right hand of God and has received the promise of the Holy Spirit from the Father, He has poured out this

which you both see and hear.³⁴ For it was not David who ascended into heaven, but he himself says:

‘THE LORD SAID TO MY LORD, “SIT AT MY RIGHT HAND,³⁵ UNTIL I MAKE YOUR ENEMIES A FOOTSTOOL FOR YOUR FEET.”’

³⁶ Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ—this Jesus whom you crucified.”

THE EXPLANATION: WHAT DOES THE EVENTS OF PENTECOST MEAN

There is so much that can be said, but let me try and give the Key Points:

- a. Pentecost Means Prophecy Has Been Fulfilled. (2:16)
Peter affirms that this event is the fulfillment of the Old Testament Prophet Joel. Everyone there was fully aware of this prophecy as it was one of the key passages read at the feast they were celebrating.
- b. Pentecost Means the Last Days Are Dawning. (2:17a)
Joel’s prophecy is the signaling of the beginning of the events of the Last Days
- c. Pentecost Means Everyone Can Know God Intimately and Should Make Him Known Faithfully.
Joel’s prophecy reveals that all people from every tribe and nation, male and female would be considered a Prophet. God is revealing that he wants to dwell and move in every believer. His Holy Spirit can now dwell permanently and powerfully in EVERY BELIEVER!

d. Pentecost Means Christ Has Ascended to the Throne. Peter in his sermon moves on from the Joel prophecy and ties it together with the Old Testament teachings about the Messiah and shows how Jesus fulfilled them all: His Birth, Life, Miracle Ministry, His Suffering, Death, Crucifixion, Resurrection, and the crowning event the Ascension. Signaling that Christ is now EXALTED. Christ has finished His work of Redemption and Salvation is available for all who would accept Him and believe in Him.

Now. Let's close out with the last of this passages story.

We have look at:

The Events: What Happened (Historical Facts)

The Explanation: What These Events Meant (Spiritual Doctrines)

**NOW The Results: The practical Application
Point 3**

3. **THE EVANGELISTIC HARVEST:** **WHAT WAS THE RESULT OF PENTECOST**

Acts 2:37-41... ³⁷ *Now when they heard this, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brothers, what are we to do?"* ³⁸ *Peter said to them, "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."* ³⁹ *For the promise is for you and your children and for all who are far away, as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself."* ⁴⁰ *And with many*

other words he solemnly testified and kept on urging them, saying, "Be saved from this perverse generation!" ⁴¹ *So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and that day there were added about three thousand souls.*

It is great to know the:

The Historical Facts
The Spiritual Doctrines

But the Main Point of God's Good News Story, is that because of Jesus Christ and His work of Redemption and the Outpouring of God's Holy Spirit, we can now be SAVED, REDEEMED and BECOME PART OF THE FAMILY OF GOD! HALLELUJAH! AMEN!

The result of people hearing and experiencing God's Good News Story by Powerful Witnesses under the Power of the Holy Spirit, is a Great Evangelistic Harvest and the building of God's Kingdom through the Church.

Wow! What amazing news. But let me ask you...

- Have you heard and accepted God's Good News Story of Salvation through Jesus Christ?
- Have you been Born Again and Filled with the Holy Spirit?
- Have you committed to being a faithful member of God's Church?

If not... Why not today, right now!