

CGYG & LIFE Bible Study - Acts Acts 2:1-47

Read Acts 2:1-13

Pentecost was 50 days after the Sabbath of Passover week. It was also called the Feast of Weeks (Deut. 16:9-10), the Feast of Harvest (Exodus 23:16) or the day of firstfruits (Numbers 28:26). Jews from Judea and around the world were there - from the East (Parthians, Medes, Elamites, residents of Mesopotamia), North (Cappadocia, Pontus, Asia, Phrygia, Pamphylia), West (Rome, Crete, Libya near Cyrene), and South (Egypt, Arabia)

-What phenomena accompanied the Holy Spirit's coming, and what did each signify?

- sound of rushing wind - possibly signifying power; also, cf. John 3:8
- tongues of flame - possibly signifying cleansing/purity; also cf. Lk 3:16 (Jesus to baptize with the Holy Spirit and fire)
- (spoken) tongues/languages - sign or evidence of the disciples' initial reception/baptism of the Holy Spirit;
 - also points to universality of the people of God; ? a reversal of the curse of Babel? (cf. Gen.11:1-9)

-What were the 'other tongues' that the disciples were speaking? How did the people in Jerusalem respond, and why did they respond as they did?

- human languages that were not the native tongues of the speakers, but which were heard and understood by people of those nations (very different for what sometimes passes as the 'gift of tongues' in our day)
- some were amazed & perplexed, knowing the men speaking to be Galileans
- others mocked - perhaps did not recognize some of the languages and thought they were babbling

Read Acts 2:14-21

In Acts 2:14-40, Peter explains from the Old Testament Scriptures the meaning of the events of Acts 2:1-13.

-In v.16-21, Peter quotes Joel 2:28-31. According to these verses, what is the significance of the events of Acts 2:1-13? What do they point to, and what is the appropriate response to them?

- fulfillment of Joel's prophecy (v.16) of the coming of the Holy Spirit
- start of the last days - i.e. the Messianic age, between the 1st and 2nd coming of Jesus Christ (v.17)
- God pouring out the Holy Spirit on His people (v.17), who would include all people - young/old, male/female, Jew/Gentile (17-18)
 - point to the 'great and glorious day of the Lord' i.e. the day of judgment (v.20)
 - a call for all to repent and call on the name of the Lord before that day (v.21)

Read Acts 2:22-41

In these verses, Peter goes on to explain the significance of these events, as they relate specifically to Jesus.

-What elements of the Gospel does Peter present in the following verses?

- v.22
 - life & ministry of Jesus; evidence in the miracles that He was sent by God
- v.23
 - the unjust death of Jesus; yet in accordance with God's purposes and plan
- v.24-32
 - the resurrection of Jesus
- v.33-36
 - the exaltation of Jesus as Lord and Christ
- v.37-40
 - the salvation offered in Jesus, and the conditions for receiving forgiveness and the Holy Spirit

-Why should the Israelites have known that Jesus was sent from God? (cf. John 3:1-2)

- they had the prophecies
- Jesus was accredited to them by God by His miracles, wonders, and signs, as they themselves knew

-Who was responsible for Jesus' death on the cross?

- the Jews (v.23) & the Romans ('lawless men' or 'those not having the law'; v.23) both responsible, but more so the Jews (they should have know better)
- yet, was according to God's set purpose and foreknowledge that Jesus should die to save His people from their sins (Matt 1:21)
 - in a sense, we all are responsible, since He died for our sins, according to God's purpose

-What does it mean, that Jesus is Lord? that Jesus is Christ (v.36)?

- Lord = master i.e. must be obeyed & followed
- Christ = Messiah i.e. the promised Savior/King who would deliver the people of God from the enemies of God

-What is the proof that God has made Jesus both Lord (v.33-36) and Christ (v.24-32)?

- Christ (v.24-32) - quoted from Psalm 16:8-11
 - the Resurrection proves that Jesus is the Christ, because it was prophesied that the Messiah (David's descendant - v.30; God's Holy One - v.27) would rise from the dead (v.31)
 - Psalm 16:8-11 could not have been about the Psalmist (David) himself, since David was dead and in his grave (v.29)
 - both the apostles (v.32 - witnesses) and the prophets (v.30-31) testify to the Christ's resurrection
- Lord (v.33-35) - The pouring out of the Holy Spirit proves Jesus' exaltation as Lord
 - "The Lord [i.e. God the Father] said to my Lord [i.e. Jesus]:
 - 'Sit at my right hand [i.e. position of exaltation and privilege]...'"
 - In this position of power, Jesus received and poured out the promised Holy Spirit (e.g. cf. Acts 2:17, John 14:26)
 - thus, the events related to the Spirit's coming are proof that He has indeed been exalted to the right hand of God as Lord

-How do the crowds respond to Peter's message, and why?

- they were 'cut to the heart', i.e. brought to deep conviction - recognized the greatness of their sin
- asked what they must do

-What does Peter instruct the people to do? What gifts does he promise, and to whom? What is the result?

- calls them to repent and to be baptized (as an outward sign of their repentance and faith)
- offers forgiveness and the Holy Spirit to all who accept the offer (for them, for all generations after them, and for all people near and far) (v.39); also for all whom God would call (v.39)
- 3000 accepted the message and were baptized

-What can we learn about evangelism today from Peter's example?

- proclaim the Gospel boldly and in the power of the Holy Spirit
- Focus the message of Jesus: His life & work, death, resurrection, exaltation, and salvation
- use the testimony of the apostles & prophets, as recorded in the Scriptures
- face people with their sin; call them to repentance, faith, and submission to Jesus as Lord and Christ

Read Acts 2:42-47

-According to these verses, what things characterize a church filled with and empowered by the Holy Spirit?

- devotion to the Word (apostles' teaching) - the Spirit of God directs the people of God to the Word of God
- devotion to fellowship (koinonia) - i.e. sharing life together
 - committed to meeting together daily and eating together (v.46); sharing lives and possessions together (44-45)
- devotion to the breaking of bread (i.e. Communion) and worship (both in homes and at the temple)
- reverence/awe at the power of God (v.43)
- joyful, sincere hearts (v.46)
- powerful evangelism (v.47)
- God's blessing - adding daily to their number those being saved

Reflection and Application

With so many different religions competing in the marketplace of ideas, how can we know for certain that Jesus is the only way to God, that there is no other name under heaven by which we must be saved (Acts 4:12)? We can know because He alone has been raised from the dead and exalted to the right hand of God, as foretold by the prophets and witnessed by the apostles. The pouring out of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost confirmed that God has made this Jesus both Lord, to whom every knee must one day bow, and Christ, in whom alone is salvation. Those who submit themselves in repentance and faith to Jesus as Lord and Christ receive forgiveness and the gift of the Holy Spirit, who empowers their lives and their witness.

Have you acknowledged Jesus as Lord and Christ, repenting from your sin and submitting your life to Him? If not, we urge you to 'save yourself from this corrupt generation'. If you already know Him as Savior and Lord, are you proclaiming him boldly in your life and in your words?