

# Pentecost is All About Jesus: The Scriptures are Fulfilled

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Date: 03 May 2017

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[ 0 : 00 ] Well, a very good afternoon. Welcome to the Wednesday lunchtime service on a rather beautiful day. It's good to see you here this afternoon. We're continuing our studies in the book of Acts.

So if you'd turn with me to Acts chapter 2, and you'll find that on page 909, I think, in the blue Vista Bible. Acts chapter 2. And we're spending two weeks in Acts chapter 2. So this week we're looking at verses 1 to 21.

And then next week we'll look at verses 22 to the end. So Acts chapter 2 and verses 1 to 21. When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place, that is all the disciples.

And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. And divided tongues, as of fire, appeared to them, and rested on each one of them.

And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak in other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven.

[ 1 : 15 ] And at this sound the multitude came together, and they were bewildered, because each one of them was hearing them speak in his own language. And they were amazed and astonished, saying, Are not all these who are speaking Galileans?

And how is it that we hear each of us in his own native language? We hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God.

And all were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, What does this mean? But others, mocking, said, They're filled with new wine.

But Peter, standing with the eleven, lifted up his voice and addressed them, Men of Judea, and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and give ear to my words.

For these people are not drunk, as you suppose, since this is only the third hour of the day. But this is what was uttered through the prophet Joel. And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams.

[ 2 : 50 ] Even on my male servants and female servants, in those days I will pour out my Spirit, and they shall prophesy. And I will show wonders in the heavens above, and signs on the earth below, blood and fire and vapour of smoke.

The sun shall be turned to darkness, and the moon to blood, before the day of the Lord comes, the great and magnificent day. And it shall come to pass, that everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

Amen. Well, this is the word of the Lord. And before we turn to that together, let's spend a moment in prayer. Our Father God, who, as at this time, taught the hearts of thy faithful people by sending to them the light of thy Holy Spirit, grant us, by the same Spirit, to have a right judgment in all things, and evermore to rejoice in his holy comfort, through the merits of Christ Jesus our Saviour, who lives and reigns with thee, in the unity of the same Spirit, one God, world without end.

Amen. Well, please do keep Acts chapter 2 open there in front of us. Now let me ask, what is Pentecost all about?

What is Pentecost all about? I wonder what your instinctive answer to that question might be. I guess most of us would think about the Spirit. We think about the dramatic events in the first few verses of the chapter I've just read.

[ 4 : 40 ] And yes, as we'll see, the pouring out of the Spirit is hugely significant. But the Holy Spirit really isn't the focus of this chapter.

The focus isn't on the third person of the Trinity. Rather, the focus is on the second person of the Trinity, the Lord Jesus Christ. It's him who is really the focus of Pentecost.

Pentecost is all about Jesus. Let's remember where we are in the story. Back at the start of Acts chapter 1, the risen Lord Jesus was with his apostles.

And he spends 40 days with them, speaking about the kingdom of God. And just before he ascends into heaven, Jesus tells his disciples what is going to happen next.

It's his program. He sets out his priorities for this period of time. The period of time between his ascension and his return.

[ 5 : 40 ] It's the period of time that we still live in today. And we see there in chapter 1, verse 8, what Jesus' program, what his priorities, what his purpose for his people is to be.

Look at that, verse 8. That is what Jesus says will happen.

And here in chapter 2, we see these very things beginning to take place. The giving of the Spirit and the witnessing about Jesus first to Jerusalem and to all Judea.

Now we're going to look at this chapter in three parts. And we'll take this week and next week to do it. But let me give you those three sections. Verses 1 to 13, we see the events of the day of Pentecost.

It's the pouring out of Jesus' promised Spirit. And then secondly, verses 14 to 36, we see Peter's explanation of the events of Pentecost.

[ 6 : 51 ] He proclaims Jesus as the promised Savior. And then thirdly, from verse 37 to the end of the chapter, we see the effects of Peter's explanation.

We see penitence in Jesus' name. So this afternoon, we'll look at the events, verses 1 to 13, and the first part of Peter's explanation in verses 14 to 21.

So firstly then, verses 1 to 13, the pouring out of Jesus' promised Spirit, the events of Pentecost. What is it that took place on that day?

Well, we see that Jesus' disciples, his apostles, were all filled with the Holy Spirit. And this event manifests itself with these extraordinary things.

There's a sound from heaven like wind. Tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested over them. And the immediate effect of this is speaking. It's speech.

[ 7 : 52 ] And it's remarkable, astonishing speech. Speech in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance. There were Jews in Jerusalem from all over the world.

Devout men, we read there, from every nation under heaven. A great multitude comes together. We can't help but think of the events of Genesis 11, the Tower of Babel, when the Lord scattered the people over the earth.

He confused their languages. This is the great undoing of that. This is the great foretaste of what is to come. And we read there in Acts chapter 2, verse 6, that everyone could hear the apostles speaking their own languages.

They could understand in their own mother tongue. The people are absolutely astonished. Look at verse 7. They can't believe it. They were amazed and astonished. Aren't these Galileans, they say?

Now the Galileans probably had a similar aptitude for foreign languages as the English do.

Absolutely hopeless. But here they are, speaking languages that people from all over the world can understand.

[ 8 : 58 ] Every nation under heaven is there. Something of great significance is going on here. The people can hear in their own languages about the mighty works of God.

Verse 11. But what does this all mean? That's their question, isn't it? Verse 12. What does this mean?

They're amazed. They're perplexed. But other people just mocked. They just thought they were drunk. But Peter stands and he addresses them.

He gives them the explanation for all the remarkable things they're witnessing in front of their very eyes. This is our second point. The proclamation of Jesus. The promised Savior.

The explanation of the events of Pentecost. Now we're looking at this speech of Peter in two sections, as I said. The first in verses 14 to 21, Peter gives the explanation for what they're witnessing.

[ 9 : 58 ] This is happening because God has poured his spirit out. This is the fulfillment of the scriptures. It's just what Joel said would happen.

And that means that the last days have begun. Which climax in the day of the Lord. That great day when Christ returns to judge all. And that is a fearsome prospect.

But Joel also says that those who call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. Verse 21. And then the second part of the speech. Verses 22 onwards.

Peter tells us who that Lord is. You're to call on the name of the Lord. But who is that Lord? And Peter tells us it's the man, Jesus. The one whom they crucified.

And we'll look at that a bit more closely next week. But let's focus in on the first half of his answer. Verses 14 to 21. We see the scriptures are fulfilled.

[ 11 : 02 ] The words that God spoke through the prophet Joel are exactly what you're witnessing. Says Peter, verse 16 there. In the last days.

Verse 17. It shall be. That God's spirit would be poured out on all his people. And that they would prophesy. This is what you've witnessed, says Peter.

This is the definitive explanation. You have witnessed in front of your eyes the fulfillment of the scriptures. Now Peter, remember.

Peter's an apostle. He's not only spent three years with Jesus. But remember what we saw earlier in chapter 1, verse 3. Jesus appeared to his disciples.

And for 40 days he spoke to them about the kingdom of God. Think too what we read about at the end of the gospel account. Jesus says to the disciples. These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you.

[ 12 : 02 ] That everything written about me in the law and the prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled. Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures. So with all that knowledge.

With all that authority. Peter explains Pentecost. In the last days, verse 17. God's spirit would be poured out on all his people.

And they would prophesy. Peter says that what Joel wrote all those years ago. It's now being fulfilled.

You've seen it. Now let's just get our terminology and timetable clear in our minds. Verse 17 says that in the last days.

Now that is the reference between Jesus' first and second comings. That is the age that has now begun by this point in the book of Acts. That is the age that we are still in today.

[ 13 : 04 ] It is the age of God's great and final act of salvation. Which is why these last days are, verse 21. The days when people can call upon the name of the Lord and be saved.

These are the days we live in now. And the other key event is the one mentioned there in verse 20. It's described in verses 19 and 20. It's the day of the Lord.

That is the day when Christ will return as Lord and judge. It will be the day when the enemies of God are finally and utterly defeated.

And when his people will be finally and fully blessed. So the pouring out of Jesus' spirit. That means that we are now in the last days.

And the pouring out of his spirit leads to prophecy. Verse 18. And that's exactly what we read happening there in verses 1 to 13.

[ 14 : 03 ] The pouring out of the spirit and prophecy. It's a speaking that leads to others. Verse 21. Calling upon the name of the Lord and being saved. Now you may well be thinking.

This is all very extraordinary indeed. These events of Pentecost. And the words from Joel. This is very exciting. The pouring out of the spirit.

These great signs and wonders. This is what's missing in the Tron church, isn't it? This is what we need. We need more rushing wind. More fire. More prophesying and visions and dreams.

Well, two things in response to that. Firstly, the apostles and those with them. Those who we read there in verse 4 being filled with the Holy Spirit.

They were unique. Only they had spent three years with Jesus. Only they had witnessed his death, his resurrection, his ascension.

[ 15 : 03 ] And there was only this band of brothers that experienced a time lag between believing in Jesus and receiving the spirit. From this point on, there's no time lag.

There's no more time lag between believing in Jesus' name and submitting to his lordship and receiving the spirit. Just flick on there towards the end of the chapter to verse 38.

Just notice what Peter says there. He's responding to all the people who have heard his speech. They've been cut to the heart and they ask, what shall we do? And he says this.

Repent. And be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

So the early events of chapter 2, they're unique. But for us, for all who call upon the name of the Lord, we are immediately forgiven. Immediately filled with the Holy Spirit.

[16:05] The Holy Spirit is always present in the true believer. But we should not expect its coming to look like this. We should not expect its coming to look like Acts chapter 2, verses 1 to 13.

That's not the pattern for us now. The Holy Spirit is always present in those who call upon the name of the Lord, who turn to him in repentance and faith.

Isn't that just astonishing? That should be very encouraging. God, through his Holy Spirit, dwells in you if you're a believer here. So we're not to expect the same events that we read about here for us now.

There's no more time lag between believing in Jesus and receiving the Spirit. The second thing to say is that the evidence of the Spirit at work and present is something very ordinary looking indeed.

The evidence of the Spirit at work is speaking. It's testimony to the Lord Jesus and the urging of others to submit to him to receive forgiveness. Now that looks very ordinary.

[17:21] But it's described particularly in Joel's prophecy in extraordinary language. Extraordinary language is used to describe something that is actually very ordinary looking.

But of course, these particular things that look ordinary are far from ordinary. Which is why extraordinary language is used to describe them.

It is extraordinary. Miraculous even when somebody calls upon the name of the Lord and is saved. That is extraordinary. But when you see it, it looks pretty ordinary, doesn't it?

Think about your own testimony, how you became a Christian. On the surface, it probably didn't look particularly extraordinary. It looked ordinary. At least it did for me. But it's far from ordinary.

It's extraordinary. It's miraculous. It's supernatural. It is extraordinary when men and women, young and old, people just like you and me, speak about the mighty acts of God. That is extraordinary.

[18:25] Any instance of speaking about Jesus, whether over the garden fence, maybe it's at the water cooler at work, whether it's in the Bible study, from the pulpit on a Sunday, any instance of speaking about Jesus, that is nothing short of extraordinary and astonishing.

But it looks. It looks ordinary, doesn't it? Especially when it's people like you and me who are doing it. What I'm doing now doesn't look extraordinary.

So the particular events of Pentecost, they're unique. But the reality of the giving of the Spirit, the enabling of speaking about Jesus continues to this day.

And that is extraordinary. And we need the language of Joel here to shake us, to see what the significance of it really is. This is extraordinary. It looks ordinary. It looks ordinary.

But it's astonishing. It's remarkable. That God works through people like you and I to speak about Jesus, to point to him. So there's Peter's answer, part one.

[19:36] We are now in the last days. The pouring out of the Spirit, which you've witnessed, is evidence of that. What Joel spoke about is now happening.

What was promised in the Old Testament has now been fulfilled. You've seen it with your own eyes. And it means that the last days are here. Now is the time to turn to the Lord.

But that's only half the answer. Notice Peter's last words from the prophet Joel there. Verse 21. It shall come to pass that everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

So the question naturally arises. Who is this Lord? Which Lord do we call upon to be saved? And the second part of his speech, we'll see next week. Peter tells us who that Lord is.

And what that has to do with the events of Pentecost. And we'll consider those details next week. But let's pause for a moment to consider the implications of what we've just read this afternoon.

[20:43] Peter's first part of his explanation of the events of Pentecost is that it is simply just a fulfillment of what was promised. This is what the Scripture said would happen. And you've seen it.

It's now happened. So three implications if we close. Firstly, God is a great promise keeper. We see it here so clearly that God keeps his promises.

He promised there in the book of Joel that he would send his spirit. And he does. He promises that Christ, having ascended to heaven, will return one day.

He will come to judge all creation. And so we can be sure that as he has kept his promises up till now, he will continue to keep his promises. He is the promise keeping God. And that is both wonderful and terrifying. Wonderful because he has made wonderful promises to those who are his.

[ 21 : 43 ] He promises never to leave nor forsake his people. All who call upon his name will be saved. But it's also terrifying because his promise of judgment is a sure thing.

God is a promise keeping God. But secondly, God is gracious and kind. God is a great promise. We are now living in the last days.

That means Christ is reigning in heaven. And we're privileged to live in these days. Now is the day of grace. Now is the time when we can turn in repentance and faith.

It's not too late. Just look again at those words in verse 21. That is what we are to hold out to people. Now is the day to call upon the name of the Lord and be saved.

How kind and gracious our God is. We don't deserve this. We don't deserve the gift of himself in the person of his son. We don't deserve the gift of his spirit.

[ 22 : 46 ] We don't deserve everlasting life in the new creation with him. We don't deserve that. But that is what he gives to all who call upon his name. God is gracious and kind.

And the third thing to see here is that God's people are empowered and equipped to proclaim the good news. God's people proclaim the good news.

Our task as his people is clear. Our priority is clear. And the spirit equips us for it. Our task is to proclaim the gospel.

That is the news of Christ's reign. His lordship over all creation, over every human being. It means testifying to his life, to his death, his resurrection, his ascension.

It means calling people to respond in submission to him. That is our task.

[ 23 : 52 ] It means calling people to turn in repentance and faith. But we can do that on the basis of the first two implications we've seen. Firstly, God is a keeper of promises.

And God is gracious and kind. All who call upon his name will be saved. He will receive them. None will be turned away. And we can do that.

We can make that plea. We can call that out to people because we're empowered to do so by the Holy Spirit. He has given his people his spirit.

And we can hold that out with great boldness. And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. That is the day we live in.

That is what we hold out. And we can do so because we're enabled to by God's spirit. And may the Lord, the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with each and every one of us.

[ 25 : 07 ] For we ask it in his name. Amen.