

The Acts of the Apostles

Lesson: 2

Topic: Pentecost – The Holy Spirit Is Given for the Preaching of the Gospel

Reading: Acts 2:1-39

Scripture Analysis

Verse 1

- “Day of Pentecost”
 - This is a reference to the OT Feast of Pentecost – 50 Days after the Passover sabbath (Lev. 23:16).
 - Feast of Weeks (Deut. 16:9). Feast of Harvest (Ex. 23:16). Day of First Fruits (Num. 28:26).
 - God commands His people to remember their blessings and to share from their bounty with those in need.
 - We come to understand Pentecost now in the coming of the HS.
 - 50 days after Easter and ten days after the Ascension.
- “They...”
 - Possibly just the 12 Apostles (cf 1:26; 2:14)
 - Though the fulfillment described in vs. 17-18 hints that the 120 are meant
- “...all together in one place”
 - Often devoted to prayer (cf 1:14)

Verse 2-4

- QUESTION: What were the signs of the coming of the Holy Spirit? ANSWER:
 - A rushing mighty wind, tongues of fire upon their heads, and speaking the Gospel in foreign languages.
- “filled with the Holy Spirit”
 - This is what Jesus had promised (See John 14 & 16; Acts 1)
 - The Holy Spirit was never a personal possession but a heavenly gift.
 - Jesus had promised them this gift of the Holy Spirit, so that they might remember His words and faithfully preach the Gospel.

Verses 5 - 7

- QUESTION: Again, why were there so many Jewish pilgrims in Jerusalem at this time?
 - They were celebrating Pentecost, 50 days after the Passover.
- QUESTION: What confused and amazed the multitudes?
 - Galilean Jews – the apostles – were speaking in different tongues (languages) that were previously unknown to them.
 - More specifically, they were preaching the Gospel in various languages of the peoples.
- QUESTION: What Old Testament Bible story told how God had confused human language because of man’s idolatry?
 - The Tower of Babel (Genesis 11:1-9.)
 - The curse of Babel was reversed.
 - The one Gospel of Jesus Christ would be preached in all the languages of the earth.

- Out of many sinners of every tribe and language, who were estranged from God and one another because of sin, God would create one communion and fellowship in the Holy Spirit by faith in Christ's Word of forgiveness.

Verses 9-11

- "Parthians and Medes..."
 - These groups, coming from all corners of the earth, point to the universal character of the church.
 - We see that God desired all people to have His Word, not just the Hebrew speakers.

Verses 12-13

- QUESTION: Of what did some mockers accuse the apostles?
 - Being drunk.
 - Some were amazed at this great miracle. They needed further explanation.
 - Others rejected it by saying the apostles were drunk.
 - What they really were rejecting what Christ and His saving word.
 - This shouldn't be a surprise. Just as some rejected the earthly Jesus, so mockers and skeptics have always dismissed the Church's message.

Verses 14-16

- QUESTION: How did Peter respond to those who mocked the preaching of the Gospel?
 - He preached to them from God Word.
 - He preached to them from the Prophet Joel about the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

Verse 17

- QUESTION: How is the Holy Spirit poured out upon all flesh? ANSWER:
 - By God through the preaching of the Gospel and Holy Baptism.
 - It's a pouring out seen in verse 33; "He has poured out this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing."
 - It's a pouring out seen in verse 38 through Baptism.
- QUESTION: Who is this for?
 - All flesh.
 - God's salvation is universal.
- "your sons and your daughters shall prophesy"
 - The chief effect of the Spirit's activity is prophesying.
 - This shouldn't be taken in the narrow sense – foretelling future events
 - But in the broad sense – Speaking forth the Word of the Lord.
 - Everyone receives the Gospel and believes it does this.
 - As Sons and Daughters of God, we confess our faith and hope in Christ.
- "prophesy...vision...dreams."
 - We think of the OT prophets who spoke the Word of God, received visions and dreams from Him.
 - In the NT church all shall prophesy, confess, and tell the gospel.
 - the young men shall see glorious visions of it's progress and its victories.

- the old men shall dream dreams of its blessedness.
- In these days, through the hope of the Gospel, we have the hope of the resurrection of the body and of the life everlasting, when the corruption of sin will once and for all be removed.

Verse 19-20

- “signs and wonders”
 - Works that demonstrate the arrival of the last days.
 - Signs and wonders that began with the earthly life of Christ and continue throughout the book of Acts.
- “blood and fire and vapor of smoke”
 - I’m not certain:
 - First:
 - we can see this as the result of bloody wars and great calamities in nature.
 - Second:
 - The persecution of Christians.
 - God’s judgment and wrath poured out on sinners.
 - The incense of prayer that arises to God by the broken and contrite of heart and by those Christians who are persecuted.
- “Darkened Sun and bloody moon”
 - At Jesus’ crucifixion the sun was darkened and his blood was poured for as God’s judgment.
 - Also Matt. 24:29, at the end of the age the sun and moon won’t give forth light and stars will fall.
- “The day of the Lord”
 - The final day of the World.

Verse 21

- QUESTION: What is the Lord’s promise to all who hear and believe the Spirit’s message?
 - All who call on the name of the Lord will be saved!
 - It’s a promise that can’t be broken.
 - We have certainty in the promises of God.

Verses 22-24

- Verses 22-36 focuses on the content of the Holy Spirit’s message – the death and resurrection of Christ.
- QUESTION: How does Peter describe what happened to Jesus?
 - Jesus’ death and resurrection happened according to God’s plan of salvation in the Scriptures.
 - This was foretold ever since Adam and Eve’s fall into sin.
 - Genesis 3:15, “ I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.”
- QUESTION: How does Peter show them their sin and need for repentance?
 - He told them that they deliver Jesus to be crucified.

- It was their sin that nailed Him to the cross and for which He died.
- QUESTION: Why was it not possible for Jesus to remain in death?
 - He didn't rise from the dead simply because He was too powerful to remain in the grave.
 - Jesus rose from the dead because His death atoned for the sin of the whole world according to the Scriptures.
 - He paid the full price for sin demanded by the Law.

Verses 25-28

- Peter here references Psalm 16, which was pinned by King David
- QUESTION: In whose mouth do the words of David really belong?
 - Jesus' mouth. David's words are prophetic of Christ.
 - "I [the Son of God] foresaw the LORD [God the Father] always before My face, for He [God the Father] is at My [God the Son's] right hand, that I [God the Son] may not be shaken."
 - This psalm teach us that Jesus continued to trust in the Father even though He was suffering death for the sin of the world.
- QUESTION: How does Jesus, in the words of the psalm, confess faith in His Father to save Him from death?
 - "You will not leave My soul in Hades nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption."
 - Jesus will be dead and entombed as one dead but no corruption decay would touch His holy body.
 - Jesus is without sin and therefore no corruption would come to Him. He would rise again.
 - This is our hope that on the Last Day, God would raise our bodies.

Verses 29-33

- In these verses (29-33), Peter explains further the main points of David's prophecy of Christ.
- Peter first makes clear that David's words were not fulfilled in his own person; "David... died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day" (v.29).
 - David's body saw corruption. It was dust.
 - Christ's body didn't see corruption and was raised up.
- QUESTION: Who are the witnesses?
 - Peter is referring to the apostles
 - But the risen Lord was seen by 500 people at one time.
 - Christ's resurrection wasn't a secret. Peter could attest to it.
- QUESTION: Who exalted Christ and why?
 - The Father.
 - Because Jesus humbled Himself to the point of death upon the cross for our salvation (Phil. 2:5-11).
 - The exalted Jesus receives the Spirit from the Father in order to send him forth to the disciples.
 - This is the Spirit now poured out on the disciples.
 - Peter is now back to where he began in verse 16.

Verses 34-36

- Peter goes on to offer further proof of Christ's ascension.
- Here, he quotes Psalm 110, another Psalm of David.
- QUESTION: Who are the enemies? (v. 35).
 - Sin, death, and the devil.
- QUESTION: The right hand (v. 34) is a place of power and authority. Why does the Father give this authority to Jesus?
 - Jesus willingly died for the sins of the whole world out of love for the Father and out of love for us sinners.
 - Jesus willingly received the death demanded of sinners,
 - and thereby won the forgiveness of sins and authority over Satan and the grave.
- Peter ends his sermon:
 - declaring that God has made the crucified Jesus Lord and Christ
 - He's the Savior of the entire world.
 - He's the One to whom the entire OT points.

Verses 37-39

- QUESTION: What effect did Peter's sermon upon those who heard it?
 - "They were cut to the heart..." (v. 37).
 - κατανύσσομαι τὴν καρδίαν: (an idiom, literally 'to pierce the heart') to experience acute emotional distress, implying both concern and regret—'to be greatly troubled, to be acutely distressed.'
 - Law
 - God's words of Law penetrated their hardened hearts, exposing their sin.
 - They were crushed by the Law.
 - Yet, if these were the last words, the people would only be led to despair.
 - Gospel
 - Peter's words also included words of Gospel.
 - Christ crucified for sinners.
 - The Holy Spirit called them by the Gospel to faith in Jesus Christ.
- QUESTION: What did those who were converted ask the apostles? What was Peter's response?
 - Brothers, what shall we do?
 - Repent and be baptized.
 - Repent – means "to turn." So we turn away from sin and turn toward God.
 - Repentance, in the broad sense, consists of two parts: contrition over sins and faith, which is born of the Gospel.
 - Baptized
 - To have water applied.
 - Baptized in the name of Jesus
 - This isn't a denial of the Trinitarian formula.
 - In the name of Jesus is saying that Jesus is the saving content of the Gospel's message.
- QUESTION: What is "the promise" of the Lord in Holy Baptism?
 - That Baptism delivers the forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit.

- Baptism isn't just a symbol.
- Baptism has an incredible benefit, the forgiveness of sins.
- QUESTION: According to Peter, to whom is this promise of Holy Baptism give?
 - “for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself...” (v. 39).
 - All people, adults and children, including infants
- QUESTION: To what does the preaching of the death and resurrection of Christ ultimately lead those who receive it?
 - To Holy Baptism for the certainty of salvation and new life in Christ.

Terms

Catechesis Summary

- The outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles is the fulfillment of Jesus' promise to them (See John 14:26; 15:26-27).
- The Holy Spirit was poured out upon the apostle so that they would be able to preach the Gospel to the world.
- Peter's sermon on Pentecost makes it clear that the Holy Spirit was given for the preaching of Jesus Christ, His death and resurrection, by which sinners are called to repentance and faith in Christ.
- Not only are sinners converted through the Gospel, but they are also given the glorious hope that flows from the forgiveness of sins, namely the hope of the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting as we confess under the Third Article of the creed.
- Through the Holy Spirit, the apostles are able to preach the Gospel faithfully.
- The Church and her ministers are bound to the apostolic and prophetic Scriptures of the OT and NT in preaching the Gospels and in administration of the sacraments.
- The Holy Spirit continues to be poured out in the world through the same preaching and in the Sacrament of Holy Baptism.
- Preaching Law and Gospel converts sinful hearts and creates faith in Christ, and always draws repentant sinners to Baptism where there's certain of salvation and the gift of the Holy Spirit.