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**Sermon Brief**  
**Text: Acts 2:1-42**  
**Pentecost: The Beginning of Christianity**  
Lorin L. Cranford

Seeking to faith-  
fully proclaim  
the whole coun-  
cil of God in  
scripture!



### INTRODUCTION

Next Sunday is Pentecost and will be celebrated in many Christian churches around the world. Because of the family emphasis next Sunday, I want to take advantage of the opportunity today to focus on Pentecost Sunday a week early. Most Christians around the world know the word ‘Pentecost’ or Pfingsten.<sup>1</sup> But I suspect the majority have little understanding of the biblical description and background of Pentecost.

In the ancient world, Pentecost was a Jewish festival that celebrated the promise of the early summer grain harvest. It was the first opportunity in the calendar for Jewish worshipers to bring the ‘first fruits’ of fruits of the land to the temple to dedicate the harvest to God. It came at the end of a seven week long period of harvest and was a time of enjoyment and gladness among ancient Israelites.

Called Shavuot in Hebrew, the festival came fifty days after the Jewish Passover, and thus the name Pentecost, which means 50th in ancient Greek, but in the Old Testament it is typically called the *Festival of Weeks* (Hebrew: תּוֹעוּבָה גַּח, Hag ha-Shavuot, Exodus 34:22, Deuteronomy 16:10); *Festival of Reaping* (Hebrew: רִיצְקָה גַּח, Hag ha-Katsir, Exodus 23:16), and *Day of the First Fruits* (Hebrew: יוֹם הַבִּקּוּרִים, Yom ha-Bikkurim, Numbers 28:26). By the time of Jesus, the festival had come to celebrate also the giving of the Law to Moses on Mt. Sinai, and this is the central emphasis of the celebration among Jews world wide still today. Jewish rabbis concluded many centuries ago that God gave the Law to Moses on the sixth of Sivan, the Jewish month closely connected to Pentecost.

Being one of three major festivals out of the seven observed by ancient Israel during the religious year, thousands of Jewish pilgrims annually would make the trip to Jerusalem to celebrate the observance. Some of them actually came for Passover and then stayed on until after Pentecost before returning home. Thus the city of Jerusalem would be teeming with several thousand extra visitors coming to the temple to worship and make their offerings. The Book of Ruth was read in the homes as a part of the ceremony. In modern Judaism, the Reform Jewish Synod will hold on Pentecost confirmation ceremonies for Jewish young people in the tenth grade as their induction formally into this branch of modern Judaism.

Thus the description of the day of Pentecost in the book of Acts in chapter two underscores this Jewish heritage and background. Turn with me in your Bibles to Acts 2, while I read the first twelve verses of the text.

1 When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. 2 And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. 3 Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. 4 All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.

5 Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem. 6 And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in the native language of each. 7 Amazed and astonished, they asked, “Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? 8 And how is it that we hear, each of us, in our own native language? 9 Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, 10 Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, 11 Cretans and Arabs—in our own languages we hear them speaking about God’s deeds of power.” 12 All were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, “What does this mean?” 13 But

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<sup>1</sup>“Pentecost (Ancient Greek: πεντηκοστή [ἡμέρα], pentekostē [hēmera], ‘the fiftieth [day]’) is one of the prominent feasts in the Christian liturgical year commemorating the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the disciples of Christ.<sup>[1]</sup> The feast is also called *Whitsun*, *Whitsunday*, *Whit Sunday*, or *Whitsuntide*, especially in the United Kingdom. Pentecost is celebrated seven weeks (50 days) after Easter Sunday, hence its name.<sup>[2]</sup> Pentecost falls on the tenth day after Ascension Thursday.

“Pentecost is historically and symbolically related to the Jewish harvest festival of *Shavuot*, which commemorates God giving the Ten Commandments at Mount Sinai fifty days after the Exodus. Among Christians, Pentecost commemorates the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles and other followers of Jesus as described in the New Testament Acts of the Apostles 2:31 [3] during these Jewish “fiftieth day” celebrations in Jerusalem. For this reason, Pentecost is sometimes described as the ‘Birthday of the Church’”.

[“Pentecost,” Wikipedia online]

others sneered and said, “They are filled with new wine.”

14 But Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed them, “Men of Judea and all who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and listen to what I say. 15 Indeed, these are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only nine o’clock in the morning. 16 No, this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel:

17 “In the last days it will be, God declares,  
that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh,  
and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,  
and your young men shall see visions,  
and your old men shall dream dreams.

18 Even upon my slaves, both men and women,  
in those days I will pour out my Spirit;  
and they shall prophesy.

19 And I will show portents in the heaven above  
and signs on the earth below,  
blood, and fire, and smoky mist.

20 The sun shall be turned to darkness  
and the moon to blood,  
before the coming of the Lord’s great and glorious day.

21 Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.’

22 “You that are Israelites, listen to what I have to say: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with deeds of power, wonders, and signs that God did through him among you, as you yourselves know — 23 this man, handed over to you according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of those outside the law. 24 But God raised him up, having freed him from death, because it was impossible for him to be held in its power. 25 For David says concerning him,

“I saw the Lord always before me,  
for he is at my right hand so that I will not be shaken;  
26 therefore my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced;  
moreover my flesh will live in hope.

27 For you will not abandon my soul to Hades,  
or let your Holy One experience corruption.

28 You have made known to me the ways of life;  
you will make me full of gladness with your presence.’

29 “Fellow Israelites, I may say to you confidently of our ancestor David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. 30 Since he was a prophet, he knew that God had sworn with an oath to him that he would put one of his descendants on his throne. 31 Foreseeing this, David spoke of the resurrection of the Messiah, saying,

“He was not abandoned to Hades,  
nor did his flesh experience corruption.’

32 This Jesus God raised up, and of that all of us are witnesses. 33 Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you both see and hear. 34 For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he himself says,

“The Lord said to my Lord,  
“Sit at my right hand,

35 until I make your enemies your footstool.” ‘

36 Therefore let the entire house of Israel know with certainty that God has made him both Lord and Messiah, this Jesus whom you crucified.”

37 Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and to the other apostles, “Brothers, what should we do?” 38 Peter said to them, “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 For the promise is for you, for your children, and for all who are far away, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to him.” 40 And he testified with many other arguments and exhorted them, saying, “Save yourselves from this corrupt generation.” 41 So those who welcomed his message were baptized, and that day about three thousand persons were added. 42 They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>GNT: 2.1 Καὶ ἐν τῷ συμπληροῦσθαι τὴν ἡμέραν τῆς πεντηκοστῆς ἦσαν πάντες ὁμοῦ ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτό. 2.2 καὶ ἐγένετο ἄφνω ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ἦχος ὡς περ φορομένης πνοῆς βιαίας καὶ ἐπλήρωσεν ὅλον τὸν οἶκον οὗ ἦσαν καθήμενοι· 2.3 καὶ ὤφθησαν

In this long text Luke provides a detailed description of the events of that day, with the central emphasis upon Peter's sermon that interpreted the meaning of the special event that took place on that particular occasion. Although for most of the Jewish pilgrims in Jerusalem that spring this was a typical Pentecost celebration, but for several thousand Jewish pilgrims this particular Pentecost mean a dramatic change in their life. Through the special events of this one Pentecost celebration in Jerusalem, they became Christians and would return back to their homes all over the Roman empire a very different person. Life would never be the same again for them.

αὐτοῖς διαμεριζόμεναι γλώσσαι ὡσεὶ πυρός καὶ ἐκάθισεν ἐφ' ἓνα ἕκαστον αὐτῶν, 2.4 καὶ ἐπλήσθησαν πάντες πνεύματος ἁγίου καὶ ἤρξαντο λαλεῖν ἑτέραις γλώσσαις καθὼς τὸ πνεῦμα ἐδίδου ἀποφθέγγεσθαι αὐτοῖς.

2.5 Ἦσαν δὲ εἰς Ἱερουσαλὴμ κατοικοῦντες Ἰουδαῖοι, ἄνδρες εὐλαβεῖς ἀπὸ παντὸς ἔθνους τῶν ὑπὸ τὸν οὐρανόν. 2.6 γενομένης δὲ τῆς φωνῆς ταύτης συνήλθεν τὸ πλῆθος καὶ συνεχύθη, ὅτι ἤκουον εἰς ἕκαστος τῆ ἰδίᾳ διαλέκτῳ λαλούντων αὐτῶν. 2.7 ἐξίσταντο δὲ καὶ ἐθαύμαζον λέγοντες, Οὐχ ἰδοὺ ἅπαντες οὗτοί εἰσιν οἱ λαλοῦντες Γαλιλαῖοι; 2.8 καὶ πῶς ἡμεῖς ἀκούομεν ἕκαστος τῆ ἰδίᾳ διαλέκτῳ ἡμῶν ἐν ἧ ἐγεννήθημεν; 2.9 Πάρθοι καὶ Μῆδοι καὶ Ἑλαμίται καὶ οἱ κατοικοῦντες τὴν Μεσοποταμίαν, Ἰουδαίαν τε καὶ Καππαδοκίαν, Πόντον καὶ τὴν Ἀσίαν, 2.10 Φρυγίαν τε καὶ Παμφυλίαν, Αἴγυπτον καὶ τὰ μέρη τῆς Λιβύης τῆς κατὰ Κυρήνην, καὶ οἱ ἐπιδημοῦντες Ῥωμαῖοι, 2.11 Ἰουδαῖοί τε καὶ προσήλυτοι, Κρήτες καὶ Ἄραβες, ἀκούομεν λαλούντων αὐτῶν ταῖς ἡμετέραις γλώσσαις τὰ μεγαλεῖα τοῦ θεοῦ. 2.12 ἐξίσταντο δὲ πάντες καὶ διεπόρουν, ἄλλος πρὸς ἄλλον λέγοντες, Τί θέλει τοῦτο εἶναι; 2.13 ἕτεροι δὲ διαχλευάζοντες ἔλεγον ὅτι Γλεύκος μεμεστῶμένοι εἰσίν.

2.14 Σταθεῖς δὲ ὁ Πέτρος σὺν τοῖς ἑνδεκα ἐπήρην τὴν φωνὴν αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀπεφθέγγετο αὐτοῖς, Ἄνδρες Ἰουδαῖοι καὶ οἱ κατοικοῦντες Ἱερουσαλὴμ πάντες, τοῦτο ὑμῖν γνωστὸν ἔστω καὶ ἐνωπίσασθε τὰ ῥήματά μου. 2.15 οὐ γὰρ ὡς ὑμεῖς ὑπολαμβάνετε οὗτοι μεθύουσιν, ἔστιν γὰρ ὥρα τρίτη τῆς ἡμέρας, 2.16 ἀλλὰ τοῦτό ἐστιν τὸ εἰρημένον διὰ τοῦ προφήτου Ἰωήλ,

2.17 Καὶ ἔσται ἐν ταῖς ἐσχάταις ἡμέραις, λέγει ὁ θεός,  
ἐκχεῶ ἀπὸ τοῦ πνεύματός μου ἐπὶ πᾶσαν σάρκα,  
καὶ προφητεύσουσιν οἱ υἱοὶ ὑμῶν καὶ αἱ θυγατέρες ὑμῶν  
καὶ οἱ νεανίσκοι ὑμῶν ὁράσεις ὄψονται  
καὶ οἱ πρεσβύτεροι ὑμῶν ἐνυπνίους ἐνυπνιασθήσονται·

2.18 καὶ γε ἐπὶ τοὺς δούλους μου καὶ ἐπὶ τὰς δούλας μου  
ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις ἐκείναις ἐκχεῶ ἀπὸ τοῦ πνεύματός μου,  
καὶ προφητεύσουσιν.

2.19 καὶ δώσω τέρατα ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ ἄνω  
καὶ σημεῖα ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς κάτω,  
αἷμα καὶ πῦρ καὶ ἀτμίδα καπνοῦ·

2.20 ὁ ἥλιος μεταστραφήσεται εἰς σκότος  
καὶ ἡ σελήνη εἰς αἷμα,  
πρὶν ἔλθειν ἡμέραν κυρίου τὴν μεγάλην καὶ ἐπιφανῆ.

2.21 καὶ ἔσται πᾶς ὃς ἂν ἐπικαλέσῃται τὸ ὄνομα κυρίου σωθήσεται.

2.22 Ἄνδρες Ἰσραηλίται, ἀκούσατε τοὺς λόγους τούτους· Ἰησοῦν τὸν Ναζωραῖον, ἄνδρα ἀποδεδειγμένον ἀπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ εἰς ὑμᾶς δυνάμεσι καὶ τέρασι καὶ σημείοις οἷς ἐποίησεν δι' αὐτοῦ ὁ θεὸς ἐν μέσῳ ὑμῶν καθὼς αὐτοὶ οἴδατε, 2.23 τοῦτον τῆ ὠρισμένη βουλῇ καὶ προγνώσει τοῦ θεοῦ ἔκδοτον διὰ χειρὸς ἀνόμων προσπήξαντες ἀνείλατε, 2.24 ὃν ὁ θεὸς ἀνέστησεν λύσας τὰς ὠδύνας τοῦ θανάτου, καθότι οὐκ ἦν δυνατὸν κρατεῖσθαι αὐτὸν ὑπ' αὐτοῦ· 2.25 Δαυὶδ γὰρ λέγει εἰς αὐτόν,

Προορώμην τὸν κύριον ἐνώπιόν μου διὰ παντός,  
ὅτι ἐκ δεξιῶν μου ἔστιν ἵνα μὴ σαλευθῶ.

2.26 διὰ τοῦτο ἠὺφράνθη ἡ καρδία μου καὶ ἠγαλλίασατο ἡ γλῶσσά μου,  
ἔτι δὲ καὶ ἡ σὰρξ μου κατασκηνώσει ἐπ' ἐλπίδι,

2.27 ὅτι οὐκ ἐγκαταλείψεις τὴν ψυχὴν μου εἰς ἄδην  
οὐδὲ δώσεις τὸν ὀσίόν σου ἰδεῖν διαφθοράν.

2.28 ἐγνώρισάς μοι ὁδοὺς ζωῆς,  
πληρώσεις με εὐφροσύνης μετὰ τοῦ προσώπου σου.

2.29 Ἄνδρες ἀδελφοί, ἐξὸν εἶπεῖν μετὰ παρρησίας πρὸς ὑμᾶς περὶ τοῦ πατριάρχου Δαυὶδ ὅτι καὶ ἐτελεύτησεν καὶ ἐτάφη, καὶ τὸ μνημα αὐτοῦ ἔστιν ἐν ἡμῖν ἄχρι τῆς ἡμέρας ταύτης. 2.30 προφήτης οὖν ὑπάρχων, καὶ εἰδὼς ὅτι ὄρκω ἔμοσεν αὐτῷ ὁ θεὸς ἐκ καρποῦ τῆς ὀσφύος αὐτοῦ καθῆσαι ἐπὶ τὸν θρόνον αὐτοῦ, 2.31 προΐδων ἐλάλησεν περὶ τῆς ἀναστάσεως τοῦ Χριστοῦ ὅτι

οὔτε ἐγκατελείφη εἰς ἄδην  
οὔτε ἡ σὰρξ αὐτοῦ εἶδεν διαφθοράν.

2.32 τοῦτον τὸν Ἰησοῦν ἀνέστησεν ὁ θεός, οὐ πάντες ἡμεῖς ἐσμεν μάρτυρες· 2.33 τῆ δεξιᾷ οὖν τοῦ θεοῦ ὑψωθεὶς, τὴν τε ἐπαγγελίαν τοῦ πνεύματος τοῦ ἁγίου λαβὼν παρὰ τοῦ πατρὸς, ἐξέχεεν τοῦτο ὃ ὑμεῖς καὶ βλέπετε καὶ ἀκούετε. 2.34 οὐ γὰρ Δαυὶδ ἀνέβη εἰς τοὺς οὐρανοὺς, λέγει δὲ αὐτός,

Εἶπεν ὁ κύριος τῷ κυρίῳ μου,  
Κάθου ἐκ δεξιῶν μου,

2.35 ἕως ἂν θῶ τοὺς ἐχθρούς σου ὑποπόδιον τῶν ποδῶν σου.

2.36 ἀσφαλῶς οὖν γνωσκέτω πᾶς οἶκος Ἰσραὴλ ὅτι καὶ κύριον αὐτὸν καὶ Χριστὸν ἐποίησεν ὁ θεός, τοῦτον τὸν Ἰησοῦν ὃν ὑμεῖς ἐσταυρώσατε.

2.37 Ἀκούσαντες δὲ κατενύγησαν τὴν καρδίαν εἰπόν τε πρὸς τὸν Πέτρον καὶ τοὺς λοιποὺς ἀποστόλους, Τί ποιήσωμεν, ἄνδρες ἀδελφοί; 2.38 Πέτρος δὲ πρὸς αὐτούς, Μετανοήσατε, φησὶν, καὶ βαπτισθήτω ἕκαστος ὑμῶν ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματι Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ εἰς ἄφεσιν τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ὑμῶν καὶ λήψετε τὴν δωρεάν τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος. 2.39 ὑμῖν γὰρ ἔστιν ἡ ἐπαγγελία καὶ τοῖς τέκνοις ὑμῶν καὶ πᾶσιν τοῖς εἰς μακρὰν, ὅσους ἂν προσκαλέσῃται κύριος ὁ θεὸς ὑμῶν. 2.40 ἑτέροις τε λόγοις πλείοσιν διεμαρτύρατο καὶ παρεκάλει αὐτοὺς λέγων, Σώθητε ἀπὸ τῆς γενεᾶς τῆς σκολιᾶς ταύτης. 2.41 οἱ μὲν οὖν ἀποδεξάμενοι τὸν λόγον αὐτοῦ ἐβαπτίσθησαν καὶ προσετέθησαν ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἐκείνῃ ψυχαὶ ὡσεὶ τρισχίλια. 2.42 ἦσαν δὲ προσκαρτεροῦντες τῇ διδαχῇ τῶν ἀποστόλων καὶ τῇ κοινωνίᾳ, τῇ κλάσει τοῦ ἄρτου καὶ ταῖς προσευχαῖς.

Some thirty to forty years later, when Luke began putting his story of the beginnings of Christianity together, he saw in this experience of that Pentecost celebration the start of the Christian movement. At the very end of his story of Jesus in his gospel account, the Lord had promised that God would cloth the disciples with divine power that would launch the Christian movement (Luke 24:44-49):

44 Then he [Jesus] said to them, “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you — that everything written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled.”

45 Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, 46 and he said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, 47 and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. 48 You are witnesses of these things. 49 And see, I am sending upon you what my Father promised; so stay here in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.”

Even earlier in the preaching ministry of John the Baptist this day had been predicted in relationship to Jesus, as Luke records in 3:15-17:

15 As the people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah, 16 John answered all of them by saying, “I baptize you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. 17 His winnowing fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.”

Thus John was given to understand that in some way Jesus would emerge His people with His Spirit and this event would signal a powerful movement of judgment by God to clean out those unfit to participate in the Kingdom of God. Thus the ‘baptism of the Holy Spirit’, as it has come to be called, took place on the day of Pentecost as a one time event that signaled the beginning of the Christian movement.<sup>3</sup> The only time a few of the traits of Pentecost happened subsequently is with Peter’s preaching of the gospel to the Gentile Cornelius, which is sometimes labeled the “Gentile Pentecost.”<sup>4</sup> But never again did anything like Pentecost happen. The church had all it needed to launch its ministry to witness and service to God. Nothing else was needed, or could be provided. Thus the Day of Pentecost has come to be called the ‘birthday of the church.’

When God gets ready to start an enterprise, He has His special ways of doing it. Certainly the launching of the Christian movement was done in a very dramatic fashion. Before this small group of 120 Jewish followers of Jesus could hope to make any impact on the world they needed God’s help and enabling pres-

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<sup>3</sup>The false teaching of some that every believer must undergo such an experience after professing faith in Jesus Christ is a later ‘man made’ doctrine that has no basis in scripture, and represents a serious distortion of the teaching of salvation found in the New Testament. The New Testament is very clear that subsequent to the Day of Pentecost every new believer receives the full presence of God at conversion.

“In the New Testament conversion seems to summarize the call of the church in response to Jesus’ commission to preach repentance for the forgiveness of sins to all the nations, as the Old Testament called for ( Luke 24:43-47 ). In sum, conversion is a turning to embrace God. So on a few key occasions the concepts of repentance and turning appear together in Acts ( 3:19 ; 26:20 ). Repentance reflects the attitude one brings into conversion, while turning pictures the change of orientation and direction that comes as a part of it ( 9:35 turned to the Lord; 11:21 alongside a reference to belief; 14:15 turn from worthless things; 15:19 turn to God; 26:18 turn from darkness to light). This is often Luke’s way of describing what Paul refers to as faith, although Paul can speak of “turning to God from idols” as well ( 1 Thess 1:9-10 ). First Peter 2:25 uses the picture of coming to the great shepherd to express this idea. As one can see, the term can describe what one has turned from or can indicate to whom one turns.

“Examples of converts appear throughout the Book of Acts, although the technical terminology is not present. Among such examples are Paul’s change of direction at the Damascus road, Cornelius, the instant response of the Philippian jailer, and the picture of Lydia.” [Darrell L. Bock, “Convert, Conversion,” Baker’s Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology online]

For an especially helpful treatment see Craig L. Blomberg, “Baptism of the Holy Spirit,” Baker’s Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology online.

<sup>4</sup>When Peter reflects to his critics in Jerusalem on the experience of Cornelius’ conversion at Joppa he remembers that God did with Cornelius some of the same things that he did with Jewish believers in Jerusalem (Acts 11:13-18a):

13 He told us how he had seen the angel standing in his house and saying, “Send to Joppa and bring Simon, who is called Peter; 14 he will give you a message by which you and your entire household will be saved.’ 15 And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell upon them just as it had upon us at the beginning. 16 And I remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said, “John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.’ 17 If then God gave them the same gift that he gave us when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could hinder God?” 18 When they heard this, they were silenced. And they praised God, saying, “Then God has given even to the Gentiles the repentance that leads to life.”

ence. Jesus had placed on this before His ascension to Heaven the burden of reaching the entire world with the gospel message (Acts 1:8):

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

They had been instructed to wait in Jerusalem until God chose to envelope them in His power.<sup>5</sup> Nothing in the biblical texts suggests that they knew ahead of time just how God was going to do this. They didn't need to know in advance; their task was to prepare themselves for when God would choose to take action. This they did as Luke notes in Acts 1:13-14:

13 When they had entered the city, they went to the room upstairs where they were staying, Peter, and John, and James, and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James son of Alphaeus, and Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James. 14 All these were constantly devoting themselves to prayer, together with certain women, including Mary the mother of Jesus, as well as his brothers.

Luke paints the picture of a small group of followers of Jesus, meeting privately in the home of John Mark's mother in Jerusalem. With Jesus' ascension coming forty days (cf. Acts 1:3) after Passover and Pentecost coming fifty days, the disciples had less than two weeks of waiting. They did some serious praying during those two weeks. At some point the group, numbering 120 people according to Luke (Acts 1:15), decided to fill the vacancy left by Judas in his betrayal of Jesus and subsequent suicide. Luke indicates that Matthias was added to the eleven

How could God enable such a small group of people to adequately carry out such a huge task of winning a world to Christ? Humanly speaking, it was an impossible job that Jesus gave the disciples. He would no longer be physically present with them. But He had promised His presence with them spiritually earlier in Galilee, “And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age,” (Matt. 28:20). Pentecost would signal that divine presence not just in the lives of the 120 but in the communities of faith that would spring up from Pentecost until the Second Coming at the close of human history.

Thus it is important for us to have a clear understanding of the Day of Pentecost, so that we avoid the distortions that many have made. And so that we have the clear understanding of how the church of Jesus Christ is supposed to work. Our text, 2:1-42, divides itself naturally into two emphases, which I want to highlight to you today. There is the event of Pentecost, vv. 1-13, and then Peter's sermon that interprets the meaning of the event, vv. 14-42.

## BODY

### I. Pentecost, the event, vv. 1-13.

1 When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. 2 And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. 3 Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. 4 All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.

5 Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem. 6 And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in the native language of each. 7 Amazed and astonished, they asked, “Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? 8 And how is it that we hear, each of us, in our own native language? 9 Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, 10 Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, 11 Cretans and Arabs—in our own languages we hear them speaking about God's deeds of power.” 12 All were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, “What does this mean?” 13 But others sneered and said, “They are filled with new wine.”

2.1 Καὶ ἐν τῷ συμπληροῦσθαι τὴν ἡμέραν τῆς πεντηκοστῆς ἦσαν πάντες ὁμοῦ ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτό. 2.2 καὶ ἐγένετο ἄφνω ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ἦχος ὡσπερ φερομένης πνοῆς βιαίας καὶ ἐπλήρωσεν ὅλον τὸν οἶκον οὗ ἦσαν καθήμενοι· 2.3 καὶ ὤφθησαν αὐτοῖς διαμεριζόμεναι γλώσσαι ὡσεὶ πυρός καὶ ἐκάθισεν ἐφ' ἓνα ἕκαστον αὐτῶν, 2.4 καὶ ἐπλήσθησαν πάντες πνεύματος ἁγίου καὶ ἤρξαντο λαλεῖν ἑτέροις γλώσσαις καθὼς τὸ πνεῦμα ἐδίδου ἀποφθέγγεσθαι αὐτοῖς.

2.5 Ἦσαν δὲ εἰς Ἱερουσαλὴμ κατοικοῦντες Ἰουδαῖοι, ἄνδρες εὐλαβεῖς ἀπὸ παντὸς ἔθνους τῶν ὑπὸ τὸν οὐρανόν. 2.6 γενομένης δὲ τῆς φωνῆς ταύτης συνῆλθεν τὸ πλῆθος καὶ συνεχύθη, ὅτι ἤκουον εἰς ἕκαστος τῆ ἰδίᾳ διαλέκτῳ λαλούντων αὐτῶν. 2.7 ἐξίσταντο δὲ καὶ θαύμαζον λέγοντες, Οὐχ ἰδοῦ ἅπαντες οὗτοί εἰσιν οἱ λαλῶντες Γαλιλαῖοι; 2.8 καὶ πῶς ἡμεῖς ἀκούομεν ἕκαστος τῆ ἰδίᾳ διαλέκτῳ ἡμῶν ἐν ἧ ἐγεννήθημεν; 2.9 Πάρθοι καὶ Μήδοι καὶ Ἑλαμίται καὶ οἱ κατοικοῦντες τὴν Μεσοποταμίαν, Ἰουδαίαν τε καὶ

<sup>5</sup>Luke 24:49: “And see, I am sending upon you what my Father promised; so stay here in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.”

Καππαδοκίαν, Πόντον καὶ τὴν Ἀσίαν, 2.10 Φρυγίαν τε καὶ Παμφυλίαν, Αἴγυπτον καὶ τὰ μέρη τῆς Λιβύης τῆς κατὰ Κυρήνην, καὶ οἱ ἐπιδημοῦντες Ῥωμαῖοι, 2.11 Ἰουδαῖοί τε καὶ προσήλυτοι, Κρήτες καὶ Ἄραβες, ἀκούομεν λαλούντων αὐτῶν ταῖς ἡμετέραις γλώσσαις τὰ μεγαλεῖα τοῦ θεοῦ. 2.12 ἐξίσταντο δὲ πάντες καὶ διηπόρουν, ἄλλος πρὸς ἄλλον λέγοντες, Τί θέλει τοῦτο εἶναι; 2.13 ἕτεροι δὲ διαχλευάζοντες ἔλεγον ὅτι Γλεύκος μεμεστωμένοι εἰσίν.

Luke provides only a brief glimpse into what happened. Verses 1-4 provide this description and then verses 5-13 describe the reaction of the people beyond the disciples who were present and observed the event. Luke does indicate that this took place on the traditional 'day of Pentecost' in the Jewish calculation of the day at that time. He also indicates that the event took place in the large room where the 120 disciples were meeting. The traditional location is the so-called 'upper room' in John Mark's mother's home, where the disciples had been gathering to pray (Acts 1:13). The event occurred about nine o'clock in the morning (Acts 2:15). Quickly a large crowd of people beyond the 120 disciples gathered and witnessed what was taking place.

**Who were these people?** In verses five, Luke says, "Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem." Jewish pilgrims from all over the Roman empire came to Jerusalem to worship God in the temple there. They would make an annual pilgrimage, and especially in the spring time stay in Jerusalem from Passover to sometime after Pentecost, a period of at least two months. The majority of the crowd that gathered came from these people.<sup>6</sup> Luke then in verse nine through eleven names fifteen different regions from the Italian peninsula eastward to the eastern fertile crescent area of Parthia and Mesopotamia. Each of these areas had its own distinct language separate from either Aramaic or Greek.



**What happened to catch the attention of these Jewish worshippers?** Verses 2-4 describes the event: "2 And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. 3 Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. 4 All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability." The visible elements were a violent wind and fiery tongues. As Ezekiel discovered (Ezekiel 37:9-14) the wind was associated with the life giving presence of God as God's breath. The severity of the wind underscored the overwhelming power of God making its presence known in the group. The fiery tongues underscored the intention of God to have His message communicated to the people in their own native languages. Note that this absolutely was not some non-human language that was granted to the 120 disciples to speak. The wind and the fiery tongues symbolized the presence of the Spirit of God who then enabled these disciples to communicate the gospel message to others in their own native languages.



**The nature of the 'tongues' experience at Pentecost** was a miraculous intervention of God that enabled clear communication of the gospel to non-believers. It was a totally different sort of thing that contributed to the worldliness of the Corinthians that Paul had to criticize in 1 Corinthians 14. There some of the Corinthians were importing into Christian practice from the pa-

<sup>6</sup>Another possibility within the limits of Luke's statement in Greek is that at least some of the crowd were made up of Diaspora Jews who had migrated to Jerusalem from their native homeland in order to await the coming of the promised Messiah from God. Available ancient Jewish records do suggest that during this time many devout Jews did this very thing. Although a legitimate possibility not many scholars adopt this viewpoint, and favor instead the Jewish pilgrim understanding.

gan mystery cults, especially from the nearby Eleusianian Mysteries, the practice of speaking in an unknown 'heavenly language' of the gods. Paul expressly forbid such practice in Christian worship, and imposed such severe restrictions on it that would stamp out the practice when these rules were followed.

The thing that happened on Pentecost was a combination of speaking and hearing. Luke's description has some unclear elements. First, he says, that the disciples "began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability" (Acts 2:4b). Then the crowd responded (2:7b-11), "Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? 8 And how is it that we hear, each of us, in our own native language? 9 Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, 10 Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, 11 Cretans and Arabs — in our own languages we hear them speaking about God's deeds of power." Unquestionably, the gospel message was communicated by the 120 disciples in a way that the crowd of Jewish worshippers heard in their own native language. They recognized that Peter and the others spoke Aramaic with a Galilean accent, but when Peter and the other spoke the words came through into the ears of the crowds sounding like a perfect expression of ideas in their own native language, not in Aramaic with a Galilean accent. The miracle of Pentecost is often labeled a 'miracle of hearing' rather than a miracle of speaking. But it was a miracle of both speaking and hearing the message of God whereby God got His message out to non-believers in a dramatic manner.

Luke sees this as the fulfillment of the prediction of John the Baptist that the Messiah of God would immerse His people with the Spirit of God and that this 'baptism' would be accompanied by visible fire (Luke 3:16b): "He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire." It was the very thing that Jesus had in mind with the instructions to the disciples to wait in Jerusalem until God equipped them to be His witnesses (Acts 1:8). Such a phenomena did not happen again; it was an one time occurrence. When the Holy Spirit came upon the Gentile Cornelius, only the ability to speak in other languages took place as Luke recounts in 10:44-45:

44 While Peter was still speaking, the Holy Spirit fell upon all who heard the word. 45 The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astounded that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles, 46 for they heard them speaking in tongues and extolling God.

No fiery tongues came upon Peter and the other disciples present. In contrast to the day of Pentecost, the coming of God's Spirit upon these Gentiles interrupted Peter's sermon, rather than preceded it as at Pentecost. And it was quite apart from Peter that this happened. The Holy Spirit came upon Cornelius and his friends, rather than upon the disciples. Peter was spiritually alert to recognize that God had done something for Gentiles just like He had earlier done in Jerusalem for the Jews.<sup>7</sup> But this coming of the Spirit upon Cornelius and his friends at Caesarea was also a one-time event in Luke's view in Acts. It was never repeated with the establishment of Gentile oriented churches during the missionary work of Paul in Acts 13-28.<sup>8</sup>

***This dramatic, visual affirmation of the 120 disciples signaled God's blessings upon their ministry and witness.*** The coming of the Spirit in such visual manner highlighted God's contact with these people. Physical contact by devout Jews of other people was highly limited because of the laws of purity and purification laid down in the Law of Moses. The disciples were not considered religiously pure Jews by the temple leadership, and thus -- in their minds -- God would never ever have any direct contact with them. Even more shocking, even to the disciples themselves, was the way God directly contacted Cornelius and his Gentile friends at Caesarea, as he by-passed Peter and the other disciples. In fact this landed Peter in 'hot water' with several Jewish believers in Jerusalem when word got back to Jerusalem about what had happened at Caesarea (Acts 11:1-3): "1 Now the apostles and the believers who were in Judea heard that the Gentiles had also accepted the word of God. 2 So when Peter went up to Jerusalem, the circumcised believers criticized him, 3 saying, 'Why did you go to uncircumcised men and eat with them?'" Peter had to vigorously defend his actions to his Jerusalem critics in the church.<sup>9</sup> This he did successfully and the door was now open for the

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<sup>7</sup>Acts 10:46c-48 (NRSV): "Then Peter said, 47 'Can anyone withhold the water for baptizing these people who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?' 48 So he ordered them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they invited him to stay for several days."

<sup>8</sup>An important part of Luke's theological viewpoint in his two volume story of Jesus and the early church is to show the parallels between Jesus' ministry and the early church both in its beginning Jewish orientation and then in its subsequent Gentile expansion. Luke will show these parallels in many ways, and the coming of the Holy Spirit first upon Jesus, then upon the church is one of these ways.

<sup>9</sup>Acts 11:4-18 (NRSV): 4 Then Peter began to explain it to them, step by step, saying, 5 "I was in the city of Joppa praying, and in a trance I saw a vision. There was something like a large sheet coming down from heaven, being lowered by its four corners; and it came close to me. 6 As I looked at it closely I saw four-footed animals, beasts of prey, reptiles, and birds of the air. 7 I also heard a voice saying to me, 'Get up, Peter; kill and eat.' 8 But I replied, 'By no means, Lord; for nothing profane or unclean has ever entered my mouth.' 9 But a second time the voice answered from heaven, 'What God has made clean, you must not call profane.' 10 This happened three times; then everything

gospel message to begin impacting non-Jews -- something that Luke stresses in chapters 12 through 28 of Acts.

Thus God launched the Christian church in a dramatic manner with clear affirmation to the Jews of Jerusalem that His presence and blessing was upon these followers of Jesus. To be sure, this message would not be welcomed by many of the Jews in Jerusalem. And when the church began reaching out to non-Jews with the message of salvation from God by simple faith commitment to Jesus, even some inside the church would be very uncomfortable as the conflict described in Acts 15 clearly underscores.

What is the enduring message to us today of these verses? It is a clear reminder that God began something in Jerusalem nearly two thousand years ago, and He affirmed this with unmistakable indication that the Christian movement is legitimate and reflects the blessing of Almighty God. To non-Christians in our world we say, "Pentecost confirms God's blessings upon the believing community. We stand today as God's people who proclaim a message of salvation only in Jesus Christ." Some with mock us, as did some the disciples (cf. v. 13), but others will accept this message and come to know Christ as did many in the crowd of Jews that day.

## II. Pentecost, the meaning, vv. 14-42

14 But Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed them, "Men of Judea and all who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and listen to what I say. 15 Indeed, these are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only nine o'clock in the morning. 16 No, this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel:

17 "In the last days it will be, God declares,  
that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh,  
and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,  
and your young men shall see visions,  
and your old men shall dream dreams.

18 Even upon my slaves, both men and women,  
in those days I will pour out my Spirit;  
and they shall prophesy.

19 And I will show portents in the heaven above  
and signs on the earth below,  
blood, and fire, and smoky mist.

20 The sun shall be turned to darkness  
and the moon to blood,  
before the coming of the Lord's great and glorious day.

21 Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.'

22 "You that are Israelites, listen to what I have to say: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with deeds of power, wonders, and signs that God did through him among you, as you yourselves know — 23 this man, handed over to you according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of those outside the law. 24 But God raised him up, having freed him from death, because it was impossible for him to be held in its power. 25 For David says concerning him,

"I saw the Lord always before me,  
for he is at my right hand so that I will not be shaken;

26 therefore my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced;  
moreover my flesh will live in hope.

27 For you will not abandon my soul to Hades,  
or let your Holy One experience corruption.

28 You have made known to me the ways of life;  
you will make me full of gladness with your presence.'

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was pulled up again to heaven. 11 At that very moment three men, sent to me from Caesarea, arrived at the house where we were. 12 The Spirit told me to go with them and not to make a distinction between them and us. These six brothers also accompanied me, and we entered the man's house. 13 He told us how he had seen the angel standing in his house and saying, "Send to Joppa and bring Simon, who is called Peter; 14 he will give you a message by which you and your entire household will be saved.' 15 And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell upon them just as it had upon us at the beginning. 16 And I remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said, "John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.' 17 If then God gave them the same gift that he gave us when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could hinder God?" 18 When they heard this, they were silenced. And they praised God, saying, "Then God has given even to the Gentiles the repentance that leads to life."



29 "Fellow Israelites, I may say to you confidently of our ancestor David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. 30 Since he was a prophet, he knew that God had sworn with an oath to him that he would put one of his descendants on his throne. 31 Foreseeing this, David spoke of the resurrection of the Messiah, saying,

"He was not abandoned to Hades,  
nor did his flesh experience corruption."

32 This Jesus God raised up, and of that all of us are witnesses. 33 Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you both see and hear. 34 For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he himself says,

"The Lord said to my Lord,  
"Sit at my right hand,

35 until I make your enemies your footstool." "

36 Therefore let the entire house of Israel know with certainty that God has made him both Lord and Messiah, this Jesus whom you crucified."

37 Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and to the other apostles, "Brothers, what should we do?" 38 Peter said to them, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 For the promise is for you, for your children, and for all who are far away, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to him." 40 And he testified with many other arguments and exhorted them, saying, "Save yourselves from this corrupt generation." 41 So those who welcomed his message were baptized, and that day about three thousand persons were added. 42 They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

2.14 Σταθείς δὲ ὁ Πέτρος σὺν τοῖς ἑνδεκά ἐπῆρεν τὴν φωνὴν αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀπεφθέγγετο αὐτοῖς, "Ἄνδρες Ἰουδαῖοι καὶ οἱ κατοικοῦντες Ἱερουσαλὴμ πάντες, τοῦτο ὑμῖν γνωστὸν ἔστω καὶ ἐνωπίσασθε τὰ ῥήματά μου. 2.15 οὐ γὰρ ὡς ὑμεῖς ὑπολαμβάνετε οὗτοι μεθύουσιν, ἔστιν γὰρ ὥρα τρίτη τῆς ἡμέρας, 2.16 ἀλλὰ τοῦτό ἐστιν τὸ εἰρημένον διὰ τοῦ προφήτου Ἰωήλ,

2.17 Καὶ ἔσται ἐν ταῖς ἐσχάταις ἡμέραις, λέγει ὁ θεός,  
ἐκχεῶ ἀπὸ τοῦ πνεύματός μου ἐπὶ πᾶσαν σάρκα,  
καὶ προφητεύσουσιν οἱ υἱοὶ ὑμῶν καὶ αἱ θυγατέρες ὑμῶν  
καὶ οἱ νεανίσκοι ὑμῶν ὁράσεις ὄψονται  
καὶ οἱ πρεσβύτεροι ὑμῶν ἐνυπνίους ἐνυπνιασθήσονται·

2.18 καὶ γε ἐπὶ τοὺς δούλους μου καὶ ἐπὶ τὰς δούλας μου  
ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις ἐκείναις ἐκχεῶ ἀπὸ τοῦ πνεύματός μου,  
καὶ προφητεύσουσιν.

2.19 καὶ δώσω τέρατα ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ ἄνω  
καὶ σημεῖα ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς κάτω,  
αἷμα καὶ πῦρ καὶ ἀτμίδα καπνοῦ·

2.20 ὁ ἥλιος μεταστραφήσεται εἰς σκότος  
καὶ ἡ σελήνη εἰς αἷμα,

πρὶν ἔλθειν ἡμέραν κυρίου τὴν μεγάλην καὶ ἐπιφανῆ.

2.21 καὶ ἔσται πᾶς ὃς ἂν ἐπικαλέσῃται τὸ ὄνομα κυρίου σωθήσεται.

2.22 "Ἄνδρες Ἰσραηλίται, ἀκούσατε τοὺς λόγους τούτους· Ἰησοῦν τὸν Ναζωραῖον, ἄνδρα ἀποδεδειγμένον ἀπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ εἰς ὑμᾶς δυνάμεσι καὶ τέρασι καὶ σημείοις οἷς ἐποίησεν δι' αὐτοῦ ὁ θεὸς ἐν μέσῳ ὑμῶν καθὼς αὐτοὶ οἴδατε, 2.23 τοῦτον τῇ ὠρισμένῃ βουλῇ καὶ προγνώσει τοῦ θεοῦ ἐκδοτον διὰ χειρὸς ἀνόμων προσπῆξαντες ἀνείλατε, 2.24 ὃν ὁ θεὸς ἀνέστησεν λύσας τὰς ὠδύνας τοῦ θανάτου, καθότι οὐκ ἦν δυνατόν κρατεῖσθαι αὐτὸν ὑπ' αὐτοῦ· 2.25 Δαυὶδ γὰρ λέγει εἰς αὐτόν,

Προορώμην τὸν κύριον ἐνώπιόν μου διὰ παντός,  
ὅτι ἐκ δεξιῶν μου ἔστιν ἵνα μὴ σαλευθῶ.

2.26 διὰ τοῦτο ἠψφράνθη ἡ καρδία μου καὶ ἠγαλλιάσατο ἡ γλῶσσά μου,  
ἔτι δὲ καὶ ἡ σὰρξ μου κατασκηνώσει ἐπ' ἐλπίδι,

2.27 ὅτι οὐκ ἐγκαταλείψεις τὴν ψυχὴν μου εἰς ἄδην  
οὐδὲ δώσεις τὸν ὀσιόν σου ἰδεῖν διαφθοράν.

2.28 ἐγνώρισάς μοι ὁδοὺς ζωῆς,  
πληρώσεις με εὐφροσύνης μετὰ τοῦ προσώπου σου.

2.29 "Ἄνδρες ἀδελφοί, ἐξὸν εἰπεῖν μετὰ παρρησίας πρὸς ὑμᾶς περὶ τοῦ πατριάρχου Δαυὶδ ὅτι καὶ ἐτελεύτησεν καὶ ἐτάφη, καὶ τὸ μνήμα αὐτοῦ ἔστιν ἐν ἡμῖν ἄχρι τῆς ἡμέρας ταύτης. 2.30 προφήτης οὖν ὑπάρχων, καὶ εἰδὼς ὅτι ὄρκω ὤμοσεν αὐτῷ ὁ θεὸς ἐκ καρποῦ τῆς ὀσφύος αὐτοῦ καθίσει ἐπὶ τὸν θρόνον αὐτοῦ, 2.31 προιδὼν ἐλάλησεν περὶ τῆς ἀναστάσεως τοῦ Χριστοῦ ὅτι

οὔτε ἐγκατελείφθη εἰς ἄδην

οὔτε ἡ σὰρξ αὐτοῦ εἶδεν διαφθοράν.

2.32 τοῦτον τὸν Ἰησοῦν ἀνέστησεν ὁ θεός, οὗ πάντες ἡμεῖς ἐσμεν μάρτυρες· 2.33 τῇ δεξιᾷ οὖν τοῦ θεοῦ ὑψωθείς, τὴν τε ἐπαγγελίαν τοῦ πνεύματος τοῦ ἁγίου λαβὼν παρὰ τοῦ πατρὸς, ἐξέχεεν τοῦτο ὃ ὑμεῖς" καὶ

βλέπετε καὶ ἀκούετε. 2.34 οὐ γὰρ Δαυὶδ ἀνέβη εἰς τοὺς οὐρανοὺς, λέγει δὲ αὐτός,  
Ἐῖπεν ὁ κύριος τῷ κυρίῳ μου,  
Κάθου ἐκ δεξιῶν μου,

2.35 ἕως ἂν θῶ τοὺς ἐχθροὺς σου ὑποπόδιον τῶν ποδῶν σου.

2.36 ἀσφαλῶς οὖν γινωσκέτω πᾶς οἶκος Ἰσραὴλ ὅτι καὶ κύριον αὐτὸν καὶ Χριστὸν ἐποίησεν ὁ θεός, τοῦτον τὸν Ἰησοῦν ὃν ὑμεῖς ἐσταυρώσατε.

2.37 Ἀκούσαντες δὲ κατενύγησαν τὴν καρδίαν εἰπόν τε πρὸς τὸν Πέτρον καὶ τοὺς λοιποὺς ἀποστόλους, Τί ποιήσωμεν, ἄνδρες ἀδελφοί; 2.38 Πέτρος δὲ πρὸς αὐτοὺς, Μετανοήσατε, φησὶν, καὶ βαπτισθήτω ἕκαστος ὑμῶν ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματι Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ εἰς ἄφεσιν τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ὑμῶν καὶ λήμψεσθε τὴν δωρεὰν τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος. 2.39 ὑμῖν γὰρ ἐστὶν ἡ ἐπαγγελία καὶ τοῖς τέκνοις ὑμῶν καὶ πᾶσιν τοῖς εἰς μακρὰν, ὅσους ἂν προσκαλέσεται κύριος ὁ θεὸς ἡμῶν. 2.40 ἑτέροις τε λόγοις πλείοσιν διεμαρτύρατο καὶ παρεκάλει αὐτοὺς λέγων, Σώθητε ἀπὸ τῆς γενεᾶς τῆς σκολιᾶς ταύτης. 2.41 οἱ μὲν οὖν ἀποδεξάμενοι τὸν λόγον αὐτοὺς ἐβαπτίσθησαν καὶ προσετέθησαν ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἐκείνῃ ψυχὰι ὡσεὶ τρισχίλιαι. 2.42 ἦσαν δὲ προσκαρτεροῦντες τῇ διδαχῇ τῶν ἀποστόλων καὶ τῇ κοινωνίᾳ, τῇ κλάσει τοῦ ἄρτου καὶ ταῖς προσευχαῖς.

Peter's task from God was to interpret the significance of this event to the crowd. Thus his sermon, as recorded by Luke in vv. 14-36, does just that with an explanation of Jesus to these Jewish listeners. To be sure, he doesn't give an interpretation based upon the preaching of John the Baptist. The Jews present, had they even known of John, would not have paid attention to such a justification of these events.

Rather, Peter reached back into the Old Testament Messianic prophecies and chose a text from Joel 2:28-32<sup>10</sup> (cf. Acts 2:14-21). The prophet Joel had called ancient Israel to repentance in order to avoid their destruction on the Day of the Lord. Peter chose to highlight one or two aspects of that with the emphasis upon God's pouring out of His Spirit 'upon all flesh.' And secondly the promise that everyone who calls upon the Lord will be saved. The other parts of this text, along with the rest of Joel's prophecy, he pretty much ignores. The dramatic 'portents in the heavens and on earth' had some connection to what happened on Good Friday when Jesus died on the cross.

With this interpretation of the events of that morning of Pentecost, Peter focused strictly upon Jesus (vv. 21-36) as rejected by the Jews but affirmed by God through His resurrection. Quoting from Psalm 16:8-11,<sup>11</sup> Peter brought in King David as a 'witness' to Jesus (vv. 25-28, 29-35) in the ascension of Jesus back into Heaven.

Peter concludes with the blunt declaration (v. 36), "Therefore let the entire house of Israel know with certainty that God has made him both Lord and Messiah, this Jesus whom you crucified." This was a call to repentance by the crowd. And the majority of them heard it that way in their response to Peter's sermon (vv. 37-42):

37 Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and to the other apostles, "Brothers, what should we do?" 38 Peter said to them, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 For the promise is for you, for your children, and for all who are far away, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to him." 40 And he testified with many other arguments and exhorted them, saying, "Save yourselves from this corrupt generation." 41 So those who welcomed his message were baptized, and that day about three thousand persons were added. 42 They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

Luke highlights that about three thousand Jews responded to this message and committed themselves in public confession to Christ through believer's baptism. Now that was some kind of baptismal service! But these new converts were serious in their faith. They began an intensive period of training and learning about what God was doing in Jesus. They quickly bonded into a distinctive community of believers who spent time together in worship, study and fellowship.

What can we learn from Peter's sermon to the Jewish crowd that day? Most importantly we see the foundation for our existence as a church. This foundation is Jesus Christ, the crucified and resurrected Son

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<sup>10</sup>Joel 2:28-32 (NRSV): 28 Then afterward I will pour out my spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions. 29 Even on the male and female slaves, in those days, I will pour out my spirit. 30 I will show portents in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and columns of smoke. 31 The sun shall be turned to darkness, and the moon to blood, before the great and terrible day of the Lord comes. 32 Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved; for in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be those who escape, as the Lord has said, and among the survivors shall be those whom the Lord calls.

<sup>11</sup>Psalm 16:8-11 (NRSV): 8 I keep the Lord always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved. 9 Therefore my heart is glad, and my soul rejoices; my body also rests secure. 10 For you do not give me up to Sheol, or let your faithful one see the Pit. 11 You show me the path of life. In your presence there is fullness of joy; in your right hand are pleasures forevermore.

of God who now stands at the right hand of the Heavenly Father. And yet through His Spirit he stands present also with His people, the believing church. He made that presence known in dramatic fashion in the launching of the Christian church on Pentecost. And as He promised His disciples in Galilee (Mt. 28:20b), “[And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.](#)”

### **CONCLUSION**

Pentecost is our birthday as a church! We can celebrate being nearly two thousand years old. We thank God for what He did in beginning the church so long ago.

Now our task is to get this message about Jesus out to the world. And to carry out His instructions as He commanded us in Mt. 28:19-20a: “[19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you.](#)” God help us be faithful to our mission from our Lord!