

Church 2.0

*“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”
(Acts 1:8 ESV)*

“Therefore let it be known to you that this salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles; they will listen.” (Acts 28:28 ESV)

Peter’s Sermon At Pentecost

October 23rd, 2022

Acts 2:14-41

Rev. Paul Carter

Introduction:

Good morning everyone! If you have your Bible with you, I would love for you to open it now to Acts 2:14-41. In my Bible verses 1-13 of Acts 2 are given the title “The Coming Of The Holy Spirit” and then verses 14-41 are given the title “Peter’s Sermon At Pentecost” – and that seems like a pretty straight forward division. We have THE EVENT and then we have THE EXPLANATION. And that’s how a great deal of your Bible is put together. The rhythm of the Bible is a lot like the rhythm of a human heartbeat – there are two distinct, though connected parts to the process. The Bible tends to be organized around EVENTS and their EXPLANATION – so most obviously, we have the event of the CROSS. The climax of the gospel narratives is the incredible FACT, the mind blowing EVENT of Jesus’ death on a CROSS!

That is literally an EARTH SHATTERING EVENT - but we only know that because after the EVENT there are pages and pages and pages in your Bible of EXPLANATION. A fair bit of the New Testament is dedicated to explaining why that happened and what it means. And it’s the same way in the Old Testament. There are GREAT EVENTS in the Old Testament – we think of EVENTS like THE EXODUS and THE EXILE – and then there the explanations of those events. What does it mean that God chooses a lowly people and works powerfully and Sovereignly on their behalf? And what it does it mean that he punishes them by allowing them to be defeated and humbled and taken away into exile? And what does it mean when he reverses their fortunes,

punishes their oppressors, sets them free again and re-establishes them in their former homeland – what does all of that MEAN?

A great deal of your Bible is dedicated to EXPLAINING those sorts of earth-shattering events – and so it is here.

Something BIG happened in the first part of Acts 2 and so here in the second part of Acts 2 there needs to be an explanation. Some fool in the crowd offers his first impression:

“They are filled with new wine.” (Acts 2:13 ESV)

No, no, no – that’s not it. These people are changed – there is no doubt about that – they are under the influence of something – there is no doubt about that. But this isn’t about wine, this is about the dawning of a whole new age.

That’s what Peter says.

Under the influence of the Holy Spirit, Peter in this sermon offers the authoritative, inscripturated interpretation of these miraculous events. It is a fairly long sermon – last week we spent some time dealing with the controversial content and complicated language in the first part of the sermon so that we could explore Peter’s argument as a whole this week. We’ll read the text, and then we’ll talk about the three simple questions it is intending to address. Hear now the Word of the Lord, beginning at verse 14:

¹⁴ 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. ¹⁵ For these people are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day. ¹⁶ But this is what was uttered through the prophet Joel:

¹⁷ “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;

¹⁸ even on my male servants and female servants in those days I will pour out my Spirit, and they shall prophesy.

¹⁹ And I will show wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below, blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke;

²⁰ the sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood, before the day of the Lord comes, the great and magnificent day.

²¹ And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.’

²² “Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know—²³ this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. ²⁴ God raised him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it.

²⁵ For David says concerning him, “I saw the Lord always before me, for he is at my right hand that I may not be shaken;

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

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

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

²⁹ “Brothers, I may say to you with confidence about the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. ³⁰ Being therefore a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that he would set one of his descendants on his throne, ³¹ he foresaw and spoke about the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption. ³² This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all 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 yourselves are seeing and hearing.

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 Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified.”

³⁷ Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?” ³⁸ And Peter said to them,

“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. ³⁹ For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself.” ⁴⁰ And with many other words he bore witness and continued to exhort them, saying, “Save yourselves from this crooked

generation.”⁴¹ So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls. (Acts 2:14–41 ESV)

This is the Word of the Lord, thanks be to God!

As I mentioned just a moment ago, this sermon by the Apostle Peter is intending to address three simple – but very significant questions:

1. What just happened?
2. Why did it happen?
3. How should we respond?

Let’s begin with the first part of his sermon addressing the most immediate question that everyone in the crowd was attempting to answer, which is, of course: What in the world just happened?

What Just Happened?

Luke’s narrates the actual phenomenon this way. He says:

When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place.² And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting.³ And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them.⁴ And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance. (Acts 2:1–4 ESV)

We were up in Parry Sound at my inlaw’s cottage on the lake last Saturday and as you may recall, there was some really unusual weather last weekend – so it was mostly an indoor visit. There was rain off and on but then every once in a while, there would be a sudden BURST of really intense wind – it actually blew some of the facia off the front of the house. And each time it happened – everyone stopped what they were doing. The beams of the house would shake. The windows would rattle as they were beaten with pellets of rain. The trees in the yard would bend and groan

– and when it was over everyone would go to a window to look outside to see if there had been any damage.

Have you ever been in a house or a cottage during a hurricane or a windstorm like that?

That's what was happening in the City of Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost. All of the sudden, there came from heaven the sound of a mighty rushing wind – that got everyone's attention – that rattled everyone's cage - and then once everyone was looking – once everyone's EYES were wide open and the HAIR was standing up on the back of their necks then divided tongues as of fire appeared and rested upon all of the disciples. They were all FILLED with the Holy Spirit of God and they rushed into the heart of the crowd and began to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ in all the languages of the known world.

And now Peter stands up in the heart of the crowd to explain that phenomenon, and this is what he says.

¹⁴ “Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and give ear to my words. ¹⁵ For these people are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day. ¹⁶ But this is what was uttered through the prophet Joel:

¹⁷ ““ 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;

¹⁸ even on my male servants and female servants in those days I will pour out my Spirit, and they shall prophesy.

¹⁹ And I will show wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below, blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke;

²⁰ the sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood, before the day of the Lord comes, the great and magnificent day.

²¹ And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.’ (Acts 2:14–21 ESV)

We talked about this last week. Peter says that this EVENT was the fulfillment of the prophecy made long ago by the prophet Joel that BEFORE the great and magnificent day of the Lord – before the Day of Final Judgment – God would do something to OPTIMIZE the conditions for

salvation. He would LIFT UP THE CHURCH by sending his Holy Spirit. He would make EVERY MEMBER of the covenant community a prophet of Almighty God and he would do great works of Providence – wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth beneath so as to WAKEN men and women from their slumber and so as to undermine the strongholds of doubt and disbelief such that everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

That's the essence of this first part of Peter's message – if you have questions about some of the language or some of the applications – see the sermon from last week where we dealt with that – but the SUBSTANCE of this section is very clear: Peter is saying, the END TIMES are upon us! The Great Work of redemption has been accomplished, through the life, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus – everything that NEEDED TO BE DONE to reconcile human beings to their Creator HAS BEEN DONE!

Jesus lived the human life of worship, love and obedience that we never could. By doing that he has EARNED the right to all the blessings God promised to pour out upon the earth through his human vice regents. Jesus did that, so human beings CAN NOW function in the role they were created and intended to fill. We can be UNDER GOD and OVER EVERYTHING ELSE. Jesus PASSED our PROBATION. He fulfilled our end of the covenant. He has put us back on track after MILLENNIA of wandering and rebellion! Praise the Lord!

And – he has cleared our debts. We owed a debt to the Sovereign of the Universe. We had done damage to ourselves as his image bearers and dishonour to him as our Creator – that had to be dealt with – and it was – definitively – through the death of Jesus Christ on the cross.

So again – all that needed to be done HAS BEEN DONE to reconcile human beings to God. So the next big event on the calendar is the Great and Awful Day of the Lord – the DAY OF JUDGMENT. That is an AWESOME DAY – that is a terrifying day, for any who are not properly prepared. The Apostle John saw a vision of that day. He said:

Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. From his presence earth and sky fled away, and no place was found for them. ¹² And I saw the dead,

great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done. ¹³ And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them, and they were judged, each one of them, according to what they had done. ¹⁴ Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. ¹⁵ And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire. (Revelation 20:11–15 ESV)

That's Judgment Day! That's the Great and Magnificent Day of the Lord!!! And on that day, if anyone's name is not found written in the book of life he will be thrown into the lake of fire! So, if you aren't reconciled to God through the person and work of Jesus Christ – you will be condemned! You will be cast out! You will not enter into the world that will be reconstituted on the other side.

And so Peter says to this gathering in Jerusalem – many of whom would have WITNESSED the great acts of our redemption – many of whom may have been in the crowd shouting: CRUCIFY HIM! CRUCIFY HIM – Peter says to those people: “That day is coming! And that judgment will be final! And that destiny will be awful – and so, to maximize your opportunity to hear about the salvation of God, the Holy Spirit has fallen on the church to open our mouths – and he has descended to the earth to do great works of awakening Providence, such that, everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord, may be saved.

This is that, Peter says – thanks be to God!

Why Did It Happen?

The Holy Spirit has come – the Last Chapter has begun, now let me tell you WHY – that's where Peter goes now, in the second section of his sermon.

Look again at verses 22-24. After explaining the phenomenon that everyone had just experienced, Peter begins to build a theological foundation. He says:

“Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know—²³ this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men.²⁴ God raised him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it.” (Acts 2:22–24 ESV)

So Peter says that Jesus DIED and ROSE again – which proves that he was the Messiah of God! The Messiah had to suffer – the King had to pay for the sins of his people, but because the King was also the Son of God, that suffering did not defeat him, rather, he triumphed over it, and rose victorious from the dead – just like the Bible had predicted!! Peter then refers to that very interesting prophecy of David in Psalm 16. The Messiah was to be a Son of David, so David as a prophet would often speak and write and sing on his behalf and in Psalm 16 David said:

“For you will not abandon my soul to Sheol, or let your holy one see corruption.”
(Psalm 16:10 ESV)

The Hebrew word “Sheol” means “grave” or “death” and it came to have the sense of Hades or Hell – so David is saying here, in the Spirit, that Messiah knows that he will never be abandoned to death. He will die, but he won’t stay dead. He will go down “to the dead” but he will arise victorious.

Messiah KNEW THAT – and Jesus just DID THAT – ergo, Peter says, Jesus is the Messiah and you just witnessed the greatest redemptive event in human history!

That’s the punchline of the middle part of the sermon. Look at verse 32:

This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all 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 yourselves are seeing and hearing. (Acts 2:32–33 ESV)

The Tyndale New Testament Commentary does a great job of summarizing Peter's conclusion here. It says:

“Since God had raised Jesus from death, it followed that he was the Messiah, and it was in consequence of this that he had poured out the Spirit”¹

If Jesus is the Messiah – the King – the Son of David – which obviously he is, since he just rose from the dead – then he is seated right now at the Right Hand of the Throne of God ruling and ready to rule over the new heavens and the new earth in the reconstituted Kingdom – and it is obviously AS KING that he has now poured out THIS that you have seen and heard. He is the KING opening the door for all people to pass through the gates of his kingdom.

That's what this is!

Remember, Peter had heard Jesus telling stories about the great lengths that the King would go to to bring people into the joy of his kingdom. Do you remember the Parable of the Banquet? The Master wanted the banquet to be FULL so he said to his servants:

‘Go out quickly to the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in the poor and crippled and blind and lame.’²² And the servant said, ‘Sir, what you commanded has been done, and still there is room.’²³ And the master said to the servant, ‘Go out to the highways and hedges and compel people to come in, that my house may be filled.’ (Luke 14:21–23 ESV)

This is that, Peter says! This is King Jesus optimizing the conditions for salvation! This is Jesus COMPELLING PEOPLE to enter into the joy of his Kingdom! He has sent the Holy Spirit to turn the whole covenant community into one big burning bush – and he has sent the Holy Spirit to do wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth beneath to shake up the world and to upend the dry and hardened soil of human hearts, such that everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved!

¹I. Howard Marshall, *Acts: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 5 of Tyndale New Testament Commentaries. IVP/ Accordance electronic ed. (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1980), 77.

This is that.

This is the Day of Salvation!

This is the Day of Invitation!!

Jesus is the Messiah! Jesus has done everything that needs to be done. Jesus is sitting on his throne and ready to rule over all things to the glory of the Father forever!! The new world could start tomorrow! In a sense, the new world has started already inside every converted human heart! But the fully consummated kingdom could begin at any time. Jesus said that most people won't even see it coming. He said:

“For as were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. ³⁸ For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark, ³⁹ and they were unaware until the flood came and swept them all away, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.”
(Matthew 24:37–39 ESV)

The Last Day will come like a flood! And once the flood comes, the world will never be the same. Peter remembered that sermon from Jesus. He would remind his own people of it saying:

“the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed.” (2 Peter 3:10 ESV)

That's the Day of Judgment – and it could come at any time!

Because the King has taken his seat! And the King has sent out his servants to invite and even to compel people to come in.

So come! Come now. Come quickly – or when HE comes, you will be swept away. The earth will be burned up and dissolved. As once a great flood washed away the effects and stain of sin, so in

the future a wave of fire will scrub and renew the entire cosmos. And then the world will begin again, and only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life will be included in it.

That is the Apostolic Gospel – that is the sermon that the church of Jesus Christ has been preaching since Peter preached it first on the Day of Pentecost – and when the people heard it they responded as shaken and awakened people will. They said to Peter and the rest of the apostles:

“Brothers, what shall we do?” (Acts 2:37 ESV)

Which leads us to the concluding section of Peter's sermon.

How Should We Respond?

He answered them saying:

“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.³⁹ For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself.”⁴⁰ And with many other words he bore witness and continued to exhort them, saying, “Save yourselves from this crooked generation.”⁴¹ So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls. (Acts 2:38–41 ESV)

I'm not sure how much help you need understanding that.

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.

This is what God promised – for you and for your children – for all who have wandered far away. This is what God promised back in Genesis 3:15. He said that a Savior would come, born of a woman, who would defeat our enemy – at great cost to himself – and who would bring us back to

God. He said that he would reverse the curse. End the exile. Break our chains. End our slavery and bring us home.

This is that, Peter says – so come. Come to the waters. Die to yourself. Die to this dying world. Go under the waters and be saved from the fire that is coming. Arise and be made new. Arise to the world that is coming. Arise and serve the King who is seated and who REIGNETH OVER ALL.

That's the message. That's the Gospel. And this is the Word of the Lord – thanks be to God!

Let's pray together.