

We might very well, indeed, ask the same question that the people asked that day in Jerusalem at the Feast of Pentecost. What do these things mean? Like everything else in the Bible these events have been subjected to different interpretations. Satan would throw dust into our eyes to confuse us and rob us of our inheritance in Christ. We remember, of course, that there are differing interpretations for a great many important things in the Bible, but faithful Christians will find that there is truth to be found if we will seek it out with prayer and diligence and humility. And so it is here:

These things did not happen in an historical vacuum, as we are going to see. These events were predicted, interpreted, and explained by the prophets, and by Jesus Himself so that we can be assured of their meaning and not go astray. Over the next several weeks, we will be examining this 2nd chapter of Acts in the light of its historical and biblical context.

It is also important to know that the book of Acts did not start with the 2nd chapter. As we saw two weeks ago, the church was already in existence, with five very important attributes that were inherited from Israel and from the teachings of John and Jesus, Jesus Himself being the chief prophet and teacher.

Unity was not invented at that first Pentecost. Israel was one nation, with one God, one Baptism in the Red Sea, drank of one Rock, and ate of one Bread. They looked for one Messiah and were bound by one Law. They had one temple at Jerusalem where they were to pray to Jehovah who dwelled there. They had Scripture and the preaching of the prophets. They had order and methods for making decisions. There had a membership and roll of members by name. We saw all of these things in chapter 1. It was not an accident that Jesus, after his Resurrection, before He ascended into Heaven, sent them back to Jerusalem to await the coming of the Spirit, this was also the promise that from Jerusalem would come the blessing of the nations.

We will be going into more detail as we examine Peter’s great sermon on this occasion as he answers the question, “What do these things mean?” but today I would like to do two things: 1. Describe the event itself; and 2. Make several observations concerning the events.

I. Description of the event.

- A. Who was there? We assume the 120 names, men, women, Mary of 1:14,15.
- B. Where: in the upper room lodging of the Apostles, But the crush of the multitude would soon make it necessary for them to abandon that chamber. We find them later in the Temple.
- C. Rushing wind, to bring fear and humility before the Lord. “Spirit” = breath. Wind and Fire. Blows away the chaff and burns it up like stubble.
- D. Cloven tongues of fire. “IT” or He [Rom. 8:16] sat upon them. There is no division of the Holy Spirit. The same Spirit,
- E. It was a miracle of divers tongues, not hearing. These were all Jews, but they hear the apostles speak in the language in which they were born. Vs. 5. Vs. 6. They were speaking the languages.

F. There were amazed and marveled. “What does this mean?”

II. I would affirm that it at least means the following things:

A. It was the Day of the Lord, the Year of Jubilee.

1. All slaves were free and every debt forgiven and all returned to their inheritance.
 - a. Le 25:10 And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof: it shall be a jubilee unto you; and ye shall return every man unto his possession, and ye shall return every man unto his family.
 - b. Isa 61:1 The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound” was prophesied of Messiah.
2. Acts 26: Paul “16 But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; 17 Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, 18 To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.
3. Jesus Himself had said so: Jesus: Luke 4:16 “And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up for to read. 17 And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written, 18 The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, 19 To preach the acceptable year of the Lord. 20 And he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him. 21 And he began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.”

B. It was the beginning of a new people: a people not of the flesh, but of the Spirit. A people not born of the flesh, but of the Spirit. John 3: Nicodemus.

1. Signified by baptism
 - a. Circumcision signified the way you became a Jew: born of Abraham.
 - b. Baptism signifies the way you become a Christian: born again by the Holy Spirit.
2. Only God could circumcise the heart; and only Christ can baptize with the Spirit.
3. Israel began when Abraham was circumcised; the New Testament Church began when the church was baptized with the Spirit by the risen Christ.

C. It was the beginning of a new Temple. Living stones in a living Temple.

1. The old Temple would soon be destroyed and prayers would no longer be received there.
2. John 4: the woman at the well: God is a spirit and they that worship Him.....
3. 1Peter 2:1-10
4. Spiritual sacrifices [corporate]: 1Peter 2:5
5. Romans 12:1, 2. We offer up ourselves: our bodies, our hearts, our tithes, and offering.

D. A new mission: to disciple the world, every kindred, tribe and tongue.

1. The Middle wall of partition is broken down: there is no long Jew nor Gentile, but all are made one in the Gospel as Ephesians tells us.
2. Not preservation, but giving up of ourselves to the work of Christ and the Gospel.
3. Acts 1: 8 “But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.” It was the Holy Spirit that thrust them out to bear witness to the world.
4. Thus the Scripture was fulfilled: Mic 4:2 “And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.” Also Isaiah
5. Feast of Pentecost: the first fruits of the harvest of the world. Jesus had said the harvest was ready, now He has prepared His harvesters: John 4:34-38 “34 Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work. 35 Say not ye, There are yet four months, and *then* cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest. 36 And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together. 37 And herein is that saying true, One soweth, and another reapeth. 38 I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labor: other men labored, and ye are entered into their labors.” (Joh 4:34-38)
6. Thus, the evil effects of sin are beginning to be overcome. After the flood, God to ensure that wickedness would not overflow the world as it had before, sent a spirit of division among the nations and their tongues were confused at the Tower of Babel and the unity of the race was destroyed, resulting in wars and troubles and the resulting restraint of wickedness.
7. But now, the reversal of Babel has begun. The Gospel, in the mouths of the apostles is spoken in the tongues of all the nations, and it is so even unto this day, as God promised. Blessed be the Name of the Lord.

May God bless you: Amen and Amen.