

Lesson 2: Pentecost

Acts 2:1-41

Acts 2:39 tells us that “the promise [of salvation and life through Christ] is for...all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself.” We have been those who are far off. We have been the distant and wandering. We have been separated from Christ, and but for His grace, we would be still. If God has called you to Himself, take a moment to thank God that He has shown you who He is and has offered to you the promise of salvation. Ask Him to meet you today, right where you are, as you open His Word.

“Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ – this Jesus whom you serve.”

Acts 2:36

If you have never considered Jesus’ promise of salvation or if you are unsure that you have accepted His gift, take some time to read through the included Appendix: The Plan of Salvation.

We left the followers of Jesus in Jerusalem, faithfully waiting for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. We will open today to the fulfillment of Christ’s promise – the Day of Pentecost.

The Outpouring of the Holy Spirit

Read Acts 2:1-13.

1. Describe the scene in Acts 2:1-4. You can refer back to Acts 1 if you need to. Who was probably gathered together? What had they been doing? What happened now, and how did they respond?
2. When the Holy Spirit was poured out, what did He “fill”? (See Acts 2:2 and 2:4.)
3. According to Ephesians 1:13 and 4:30, what is one role of the Holy Spirit in the lives of believers?

4. What is the command regarding the Holy Spirit in Ephesians 5:18? (Note: The verb tense in this verse is the present imperative, which would be translated “keep on being...”²)

5. What amazed the crowd of people in Acts 2:5-11?

6. What did the onlookers hear being proclaimed in the many tongues? (Acts 2:11)

7. How did the onlookers respond in Acts 2:12-13?

8. Why do you think the Holy Spirit empowered the followers of Jesus in this way?

I think it is important to note that in Acts 2:7 there is some discrepancy among the major Bible translations. If you use the New International Version of the Bible, the verse reads: “Are not all *these men* who are speaking Galileans?” (italics added). In other translations, that same verse reads: “Are not all *these* who are speaking Galileans?” The word in the Greek is neuter. In fact, the same word is sometimes translated “she.”³ Remember that there were women listed among those followers of Jesus who were waiting for the Holy Spirit in Jerusalem. There is no evidence here that it must have been only the men who were speaking in tongues when the Spirit was poured out.

Jesus Is Lord

In the midst of a day that was bound to have been exciting but chaotic, Peter stood to speak.

Read his sermon in Acts 2:14-41.

9. What had Jesus taught about the Holy Spirit in John 16:13, and how does that apply here?

² *English Standard Version Study Bible*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2008. Page 2271.

³ Blue Letter Bible. "Dictionary and Word Search for houtos (Strong's 3778)". Blue Letter Bible. 1996-2012. 17 Sep 2012. < <http://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strong's=G3778&t=NASB> >

10. Who was Peter addressing? (See Acts 2:14.)

In Acts 2:17-21, Peter quotes the Old Testament prophet Joel. In verses 25-28 and 34-35, Peter quotes King David, also a prominent figure in the Old Testament, whose words often foreshadowed and prophetically announced the coming Messiah.

11. How is quoting the Old Testament Scriptures appropriate when you consider Peter's audience?

12. Later in life, this same Peter would write a letter to believers. According to 2 Peter 1:20-21, who did Peter know is responsible for all the words of prophecy?

13. From Acts 2:36, what was Peter hoping to prove in part by citing the Old Testament prophecies?

14. In Acts 2:32-33, what else did Peter use as evidence that Jesus was "both Lord and Christ"?

Peter relied heavily upon the words of the Old Testament prophets to confirm the Lordship of Christ. However, he also relied upon his own testimony. We may overlook the personal nature of Peter's testimony because we know it to be historical and biblical. But Peter was simply testifying to what he had seen. He has seen the resurrected Christ. He was present when the Holy Spirit was poured out. Peter lived and breathed and fumbled through life just like the rest of us. Like Peter, we are called to be witnesses, and our lives are to be our testimonies!

15. Consider how you might testify concerning the Lord. Think back over the past few months of your life, how have you seen Christ move in a way that confirms His power and goodness?

16. In Acts 2:37, what was the people's reaction to Peter's sermon?

17. According to John 16:7-11, who is responsible for convicting the world of sin? How does that relate to others' reactions to our testimonies?

The Deposit of the Spirit

18. How did Peter encourage them to respond to their conviction in Acts 2:38, and what would they then receive?

19. Read 2 Corinthians 1:21-22 and Ephesians 1:13-14. The Holy Spirit is given as a guarantee, pledge or deposit.

20. The definition of the original Greek word (arrabōn) is:
“an earnest money which in purchases is given as a pledge or downpayment that the full amount will subsequently be paid.”⁴

21. What do you think it means that the Holy Spirit is a pledge, and how does that apply to us?

Throughout the Old Testament and during Jesus' life on earth, God made many promises to mankind. Those promises hinged on the coming of the Messiah and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is a pledge of all that God has promised, a guarantee that what the Lord has spoken is true and that He will bring every bit of it to pass.

22. Who is the promise for according to Acts 2:39?

⁴ Blue Letter Bible. "Dictionary and Word Search for arrabōn (Strong's 728)". Blue Letter Bible. 1996-2012. 20 Sep 2012. < <http://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strong's=G728&t=NASB> >

23. In Acts 2:40, Luke summarizes Peter's sermon. What do you imagine Peter was like as he spoke? What was his attitude? His intensity? Let yourself imagine the scene and the man.

24. In Acts 2:41, what was the immediate result of Peter's sermon?

Prepare for Life

Look back to Acts 2:22-24.

25. According to verse 23, who was in control of Jesus' crucifixion?

26. From Hebrews 12:2, how did Jesus feel about the cross?

27. Read Genesis 50:20 and Romans 8:28. What is God capable of doing and what is His purpose?

The torture and death of our Lord and Savior should turn our stomachs and pierce our hearts. It should leave us breathless that anyone, let alone the Creator and Sustainer of the universe, would choose to leave heaven, wrap Himself up in human flesh and submit to a gruesome and humiliating death. But God used even that for our good and His glory. God used the brutal death of His Son to offer the world salvation, to open the way for us to live in peace and fellowship with the Lord.

28. Take a moment to further consider your testimony. How have you seen God use something bad in your life in a way that worked out for the good?

29. If you haven't yet seen the fruit of His work in a particular situation, write out a prayer to the Lord, asking Him to work out His purpose in your circumstance.

Lecture Notes: Lesson 2