

Acts 2:1–13

Introduction

In [Isaiah 43:19](#) God declares, “Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?”

Throughout the story of redemption God shows up and does new things. But for the attentive reader of the story, the new things that God does always harken back to what He has done before. God does new things, but they are always recognizable. In fact, God’s prophets often declare that God’s new actions will be like His previous acts but greater and more glorious this time.

The great example of this that is alluded to in Isaiah is the way that God is going to restore His people from their exile in Babylon and Persia. Throughout the writings of the prophets, it is described as a new and greater Exodus.

However, when we think of the Exodus we often only focus on one half of the event. We tend to focus on God’s deliverance of His people from Egypt. But that leaves out half of the story. God didn’t just deliver His people **from** something, but also **to** something.

God saved His people from Egypt so that they might serve and worship Him at Mount Sinai. Salvation and worship are two sides of the same coin.

God’s **new** exodus from exile should follow the same pattern. Out of exile and into worship. But this isn’t what happens.

After the exile, God’s people tried to build a new Temple but the process was strained. Even when the temple was finally built, there were questions over whether it was legitimate or not. God’s fiery presence never filled that second temple like it did the Tabernacle at the time of the Exodus or the Temple that Solomon built.

God’s people had been delivered in the new exodus out of exile and they even had a new temple. But, there was a sense in which they were still waiting for God's new thing to spring forth.

When we come to the events of the gospels and the story of Pentecost, what everyone has been waiting for is finally coming to pass in the appearance of Jesus and the establishment of His church.

We will see this in three ways in our passage this morning:

1. Verses 1-4 show the creation of a new temple.

2. Verses 5-11 show that this new thing is a part of God's old plan
3. Verses 12-13 show the perpetual challenge to God's mighty works

God's New Temple (vv. 1-4)

Verse 2 states that it was the "**day of Pentecost**" when these events occur. Luke assumes that his audience would find that detail to be significant as he is telling this story. But we are far removed from Luke's original audience so it will be helpful to fill in the details.

Pentecost was an agricultural festival that Israel held each year 50 days after Passover. During the passover, the feast of first fruits was celebrated and then 50 days later, at Pentecost there would be a celebration of the whole harvest.

What Luke is trying to show his readers is that all of the feasts and major events of Israel's history are now to be understood in light of what has taken place in and through Jesus Christ. Passover, First Fruits, and Pentecost all need to be re-imagined so that we understand that they find their fulfillment in Jesus.

The account of Pentecost in [Acts 2](#) is one of the most typologically rich passages in the entire Bible. But one thing stands out in particular is the way these events parallel to the giving of the Law at Mount Sinai.

It is believed that the giving of the Law at Sinai occurred 50 days after the first Passover took place in Egypt.

On that day it was Moses who ascended into the presence of God, whereas in the events of Acts it is Jesus, the new Moses, who has just ascended. In Exodus, God's fiery presence descended upon the mountain. In Acts, the fiery presence of God descends upon His people. At Sinai, 3000 people were put to death because they rebelled against God with the golden calf. Here in Acts, 3000 will be saved after they hear Peter's sermon. At Sinai, Moses descends from the mountain with the law of God written on tablets of stone. At Pentecost, the gift of the Spirit writes the law of God on human hearts.

These events help us to understand what God is doing with His church in [Acts 2](#) and what it is that God is doing with His church today. When Israel was brought out of Egypt to Sinai to receive God's law, they were given instructions for the building of the Tabernacle so they might worship God in holiness. God's chosen servant Moses ascends into God's presence, the result of this is that the Law is brought to God's people, who are then commissioned to build God's Tabernacle.

This is the same pattern displayed in Jesus' ascension and at Pentecost. God's chosen servant, Jesus, ascends into God's presence, the Holy Spirit is poured out on God's people, and now God's new Tabernacle, the church, is being build.

At the end of Exodus, the glory cloud of YHWH that covered Mt. Sinai, filled the Tabernacle. This same reality is happening here at Pentecost. God's glorious presence that **filled the house** they were in, is consecrating the New Temple, God's church.

Practically speaking, how does knowing this inform Luke's original audience and us as how we are to live as God's new temple. The answer comes by looking back as to what the original plan of the old Tabernacle and Temple were.

God's Old Plan (vv. 5-11)

The immediate result of God's presence descending upon His apostles is that the **Spirit gives them utterance and Jews from every nation were bewildered because they were hearing these men speak in their own language**. Luke draws attention to the fact that those who were in Jerusalem were "**Parthians, Medes, Elamites, Mesopotamians, Judeans, Cappadocians, Phrygians, Pamphylans, Egyptians, Libyans, Romans, Cretans, and Arabians**." Not only this, but these who were gathered were not just Jews but also proselytes of Judaism. That is, gentiles who were God-fearing. They weren't circumcised, but they worshipped the God of Israel.

God's plan for His creation has always been comprehensive. When He gave Adam his marching orders it was to fill the whole earth. When God made promises to Abraham it was that Abraham's offspring would be a source of blessing to **all** the nations of the world. When God made His covenant with David, there were promises that a son of David would be a ruler over all the nations. God's plan in creation **and redemption** has been to bless every tribe, tongue, people, and nation. This is not something new that arrives in the times of Jesus and His apostles. This has **always** been the plan.

One of the primary goals of the giving of the Law and the construction of the Tabernacle was so that God's people might be a light to the nations around them. The nations would see how close YHWH was to Israel and how just His laws were and they would come to Israel to learn. This is part of the reason why God can say through His prophet Isaiah, "my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples." ([Isa. 56:7](#)).

In the events of Pentecost we see that God's plan to bless the nations through Abraham's seed is coming to pass. As God's presence and Spirit fills His new Temple, the church, thousands of people from many of nations are blessed by Abraham's offspring, Jesus.

- › This means that the practical application for the church in the first century and for the church today is much the same as it has always been for God's people. We seek to bless all nations through Christ. Of course this starts where you are. Offer the blessings of Christ to those you live with by exhibiting the fruits of the Spirit in your own life. But we want the blessings of Christ to flow beyond the boundaries of our own community.

- › Seek to bring the blessings of Christ to your neighbors and those you work with. Moreover, as God gives you opportunity, seek to extend the blessings of Christ to those who are in positions of influence in the world around us.

God's Spirit and presence indwell His church, His new Temple, and it is not meant to stay there. It is meant to flow out from here into all the four corners of the world.

But it is not always met enthusiastically.

God's Perpetual Challenge (vv. 12-13)

In verses 12-13 it is clear that the events of the first Pentecost were not met with enthusiasm across the board. While many were amazed, others mocked what God was doing, accusing that the Apostles were "**filled with new wine**". These mockers did not know that they were speaking the truth. The Apostles were filled with new wine, but not in the way that they supposed.

But as you read through the book of Acts, the Apostles were not discouraged by mocking or even those who reviled them. Rather, they simply did what we must do which is proclaim in our own tongues "**the mighty works of God.**"

And what are these mighty works? They are all of God's acts in the account of the Bible. They are God's power in creation and in the Flood. They are God's promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. They are God's preserving of his people through Joseph and in the Exodus. They are God's victories that He worked through great kings like David. They are the way in which God preserved His people through the words of the prophets through the exile.

But ultimately, the mighty works of God are displayed in how all of these things find their fulfillment in the incarnation, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ. Let the word of Christ dwell in us richly as we remind ourselves and others of Christ's gift to us in His death and resurrection. These truly are the mighty works of God!

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.