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## THE SIGNIFICANCE AND MEANING OF PENTECOST

A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF THE ACTS  
NUMBER 5  
ACTS 2:1-4

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Pentecost brings us to one of the great turning points of Christian history. At the time of Pentecost in 32 A. D. there were New Testament saints in Jerusalem and there were Old Testament saints in the rest of the world. Integrating these two groups into the Church was quite a task, and this is the story told in the Book of The Acts. Most of these people had been saved under the ministry of John the Baptist, and he was the last voice of the Jewish Dispensation. We are now moving into the Dispensation of the Church.

### Two Dispensations Involved Here

1. The age of Israel. This dispensation began with Abraham and included the era of the Patriarchs, continued through Moses and the period of the law and came to end at Pentecost. The Age of Israel will come back into focus again in the Tribulation when Christ returns to this earth.
2. The age of the Church. The Church began at Pentecost in 32 A. D. and it will last until the 2nd Advent of Christ.

Please note that though there are differences in each of the dispensations one thing remained the same—the plan of salvation. Men were saved the same in both of these periods. No man has ever been saved aside from faith in Christ. Now in the Dispensation of Israel, the Jews were responsible for giving the Gospel to the rest of the world and in this they failed. Spirituality in this age was limited to faith and they did not have the presence and power of the indwelling Holy Spirit.

John 7:39 "(But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)" Once Christ is glorified the Holy Spirit is going to be given and will indwell every believer in the earth. But in Old Testament times the Holy Spirit only dwelt in a few individuals, and the Holy Spirit could be removed as God willed it. In Old Testament times the presence of the Holy Spirit in an individual was not called the indwelling of the Holy Spirit but the enduement of the Holy Spirit. In Old Testament times certain people asked God for the Holy Spirit and received his power. But in the Church Age it is not necessary to pray for the coming of the Holy Spirit. He is already present in every Christian.

The Church Age is divided into two parts—

1. The pre-cannon period. (Before the Bible was completed.)
2. The post-cannon period. (After the Bible was completed.)

Pentecost is the moment of transition from the Old Jewish Dispensation to the Dispensation of the Church. Pentecost did not come because these New Testament saints prayed, were better than anyone had been before them, and stayed in an upper room agonizing for power to come. Pentecost was not worked up by man. Pentecost was sent down from God. Pentecost is not the work of man, but it is the work of God.

In the old Jewish Dispensation priests were needed to do the work of God. In the Dispensation of the Church every believer is a priest. The special priesthood of the past is gone, and each man is his own priest.

The believer in the Church Age will have a completed Bible, something that the Jew did not have in his dispensation. New Testament saints have something that the Old Testament saints never had. Who wants to go back to the miracles of the Old Testament to see an axe-head swim, or see a leper cleansed? Abraham and Moses and David looked rather at the great promises of God.

This is the reason why the Bible says "Moses longed to see Christ's day" because there was so much more to be had in the Christian life. Christ today is not revealing himself in visions, trances, or private conversations. Everything we need to know about him is in the Word of God.

Pentecost is a change in the whole idea of the Christian life. The Jews are going out under discipline because they have failed to give the Gospel message to the world, and the Church is replacing them and given their task. The church now has the task to give the gospel to the whole world. The moment one is saved he becomes a member of Christ's body. A church is made up of born again believers, joined together to do the work of Christ. Pentecost is the 1st Advent of the Holy Spirit. Satan came into the Garden of Eden and found man innocent and made him a sinner. Christ's first advent was to counter-act what Satan had done in the Garden. Satan came into perfect environment and ruined it. Christ came into ruined environment and started a movement that will set man free and exalt him into perfection. The 1st Advent of the Holy Spirit began the Church Age. The 2nd Advent of Christ will be to bring in a perfect Kingdom. Then Holy Spirit will come the second time and when Satan comes the 2nd time, he will be destroyed forever.

ACTS 2:1 "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place." This is the time table of Pentecost. Pentecost is God's schedule for starting the church. Remember, it was not that those 120 individuals were wonderful, holy, praying, agonizing saints that brought Pentecost. Men didn't work up Pentecost, but God sent Pentecost down. God has a schedule for everything, and Pentecost is his schedule for the beginning of the church. The Passover came three days before the feast of First Fruits. This feast was always on Sunday. It is a picture of the resurrection of Christ. 1 Cor. 15 tells us that Christ is our first fruits. Pentecost is 50 days later. This gap in their feasts is a picture of the Church Age, and indicated the Jews will be under discipline until they are finally brought back in during the Tribulation period when many of them will be saved.

At Pentecost this little new church included 120 believers. They were in one accord. The Church started in one accord but it will never be in one accord again until Christ returns. Indeed, there is unity among believers and we are experiencing this in our church right now. But the Church over the earth will never be in one accord again until Christ returns. Remember, Pentecost didn't come because that 120 ate a special diet, prayed a certain way, agonized in emotion. Pentecost is the work of God, sent at the exact moment when God desired.

And suddenly-- these words simply mean God is moving rapidly from one age to another. The Church began with a loud noise at Pentecost and will end with a loud noise when the trumpets blow and God's children are taken from this earth. Some noise is a nuisance, but this noise was a glorious reverberation, a rushing mighty wind. It is an analogy. Notice it says, "And HE filled all the house where they were sitting." He refers to the Holy Spirit. The new dispensation of the Church had begun.

The first two dispensations were ushered in by man and they both ended in failure. The last two dispensations were ushered in by God and they will end in victory. The Church age will end in a blaze of glory when Christ gathers his own to be with him. The Kingdom of Christ will end in a New Heaven and a New Earth. The grace of God does it all.

Christ came in a cradle as a baby at Bethlehem, but at Pentecost God came in mighty power and men heard it. When the Holy Spirit came, he came with a mighty noise. The whole city rushed into the streets to see what was happening. They heard witness in their own tongues and many of them were saved that day.

The Principle of the Holy Spirit's Advent

He came in a special way. A loud noise and a great crowd gathered. Immediately there was an evangelistic opportunity. In Isaiah 28:11 they had been told that when God placed the Jews under discipline, they would be evangelized in Gentile languages. The Jerusalem Jews all spoke aramaic. But at the Passover-Pentecost period, several million Jews were there from all over the world and they spoke many languages. They had come from North Africa, Europe, Persia, etc. Those Jews spoke only Gentile languages. Now they are going to hear the Gospel in a Gentile language. Once the Jews had been responsible for giving the Gospel, but since they failed now they are going to hear the Gospel.

Notice the 120 didn't evangelize inside the church building. They went outside to do their evangelizing. They were sitting together when the power came, but they went out to evangelize. Notice, ALL of them went. Every single one became a witness. Look at them and you can see little groups witnessing to the unsaved all over that city.

Please note-- Some churches never hear anything but evangelistic messages. You can hear evangelistic messages and be spiritual idiots. The Church is the place for the Pastor to teach doctrine, and the people are to go out on the basis of what they have learned and evangelize the unsaved masses. Teaching on the inside, evangelism on the outside - the church is a place to hear - to go from - to tell.

ACTS 2:3 "And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them." This simply means that God distributed to them languages in which they could witness for Christ. Each was given a different assignment. Actually the picture is this--God chose some to witness in this language and some in another language. We have to train our missionaries in language school now, but God took care of all that, performed a miracle and made it possible for them to speak in all these languages of the people represented in that great throng. The cloven tongues is a passive participle and it simply means that they didn't get to pick out which language they would use, but God chose which one each person would use in witnessing.

Fire here refers to judgment. They are about to be judged but God gives them a chance to believe if they will only hear. God never judges without the opportunity of grace.

The Holy Spirit possessed each one of them. This principle is shown in the following verses.

1 Cor. 6:19-20 "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit which are God's."

ROMANS 8:9 "But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his."

GALATIANS 3:2 "This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?" Now this hadn't happened in the Jewish dispensation because Christ had not been glorified then.

JOHN 7:39 "(But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)", explains this.

The Holy Spirit has five different ministries.

1. The Holy Spirit is the agent in regeneration.
2. The Holy Spirit indwells the believer.
3. The Holy Spirit seals the believer.
4. The Holy Spirit baptizes the believer into the body of Christ.
5. The Holy Spirit distributes spiritual gifts.

ACTS 2:4 "And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." Immediately these people began to witness in all the languages of those Jews who were gathered there for the feasts.

You see when the Holy Spirit comes into us at conversion that is only phase one. We are commanded to be filled with the spirit. Now that depends on us and our relationship to God and our willingness to obey his word. When we sin we must use 1 John 1:9 and get back in fellowship again. Notice that their witnessing was in languages. There is no such thing as "unknown tongues" in the Bible and that word unknown does not appear in the original Scripture. Here the Holy Spirit performs a miracle and makes it possible for them to speak in other languages.

#### Eight Points On Speaking In Tongues

1. The discipline of the Jews is outlined in Leviticus 26.
2. The warning of the coming of discipline to the Jews and their hearing the Gospel in Gentile languages is given in Isaiah 28:9,11.
3. This warning is quoted in 1 Cor. 14:21 and 22.
4. The purpose of this warning is to turn cursing into blessing. In other words, God wanted the Jews to be saved.
5. Once the discipline to the Jews was completed, the gift of tongues was discontinued. This gift was used from 32 A. D. to 70 A. D. and then it was over. It will never be needed again.  
Compare 1 Cor. 13:8 and 1 Cor. 13:10.

1 Cor. 13:8 "Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. "

1 Cor. 13:10 "But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.

6. Tongues will continue after 70 A. D. as a Satanic operation.  
2 Thessalonians 2:7 "For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way." This is a picture of demons who speak in foreign languages to duplicate the gift of tongues.
7. Here is the mechanics of tongues as a Satanic operation.  
Isaiah 8:9 "Associate yourselves, O ye people, and ye shall be broken in pieces; and give ear, all ye of far countries: gird yourselves, and ye shall be broken in pieces; gird yourselves, and ye shall be broken in pieces."  
Isaiah 29:4 "And thou shalt be brought down, and shalt speak out of the ground, and thy speech shall be low out of the dust, and thy voice shall be, as of one that hath a familiar spirit, out of the ground, and thy speech shall whisper out of the dust.
8. The perpetuation of the use of tongues as an emotional outlet shows lack of doctrine.  
2 Cor. 6:11-12 "O ye Corinthians, our mouth is open unto you, our heart is enlarged. Ye are not straitened in us, but ye are straitened in your own bowels."  
Romans 16: 17-18 "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple."