

The Holy Spirit Has Come

Acts 2:1-21

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Introduction

Last week I spoke to you about expectation.

- We looked at Acts 1:12-26.
- We saw that one hundred and twenty of Jesus' disciples were gathered together in Jerusalem to wait for the promised coming of the Holy Spirit.
 - They were expecting God to do what He had promised to do.
 - And so they prayed and they prepared leadership that they might be ready.
- I exhorted you that you also need to expect the Lord to work in you and in His church today.
 - We need to come eagerly to the means of grace, expecting Him to do great things among us.
 - When we do, our prayers will be fervent because we will believe His promises to work in us through His Spirit.
 - We will be united together in our expectation with one holy passion to see Him work.
 - You will recall that when it says that the 120 were of one accord (*homothumadon*), it means that they had one passion.
 - Their unity was not in agreeing to disagree, or setting aside differences...
 - It was in having a fervent passion for Christ to work among them by His Spirit according to His promise!
 - And in their case, it was for Him to pour out His Spirit, to baptise them with the Spirit, as He had promised.

Today in Acts 2, we see the history of that great event which scripture calls

- “the outpouring of the Holy Spirit,
 - the baptism of the Spirit,
 - the promise of the New Covenant!”
- In Acts 2:1-21 we have the scriptural record of what happened.
 - It was a glorious, unrepeatable event, in which He was poured out upon His church to be with them forever and ever.
 - It was the gift of Jesus Christ at His coronation as He had ascended to His throne and right hand of God as Peter will tell us when we get to verse 33.
 - It is customary for kings to give gifts to their subjects at that coronation and that is what Jesus does here—
 - He ascends on high and He gives gifts to men.

- But when I say that this event is unrepeatable, I certainly do not mean that it has nothing to do with us!
 - Quite the contrary!
 - The giving of the Holy Spirit in this way is not repeatable because He was poured out at Pentecost to remain with us forever.
 - He will never be poured out on us again because He will never be taken away.
 - Oh yes, individuals can quench the Spirit or be filled with the Spirit afresh—even as the apostles themselves are said to be at various times...
 - But the giving of the Spirit is a one time event.
- Abraham Kyper gave a wonderful illustration of this.
 - He said that the giving of the Spirit at Pentecost was like the Mayor of a city providing a new water system to his city.
 - On the great day when he first opens the supply line, everyone is supplied with this new water.
 - That initial event is not repeatable, but the supply remains.
 - Those who move into the city from that day on benefit in that they are able to tap into the wonderful supply.
 - The water is there for all of them.

And so this outpouring of the Holy Spirit has very much to do with us today!

- As we consider this momentous event in history,
 - you need to ask yourself if you are partaking of this Precious Gift in all His fullness.
- The Lord wants you to know about the coming of the Spirit.
 - He wants all of His people to know what He has done.
 - And so I want you to see in the first place that...

I. The Lord makes it clear that His Spirit has come.

- He made this a conspicuous event because He wants each generation to know and benefit from what He has done!
- A. He chose a time and place for the Spirit's coming that would allow the event to be seen by many people.
1. The time was a time when the Jews were gathered for one of their three major feasts...
 - The feast of Pentecost.
 - It is referred to as the Feast of Weeks in the Old Testament because it occurred seven weeks after the second Sabbath of the Passover.

- As this was a period of fifty days, it became known as *Pentecost* which means fifty in Greek.
- a. Pentecost was a very appropriate time for the Spirit to be given.
 - First, because it always fell on the Lord's Day—on the first day of the week when Jesus rose from the dead.
 - This reminds us that we need to look for the Spirit to work in us and fill us in our New Testament assembly each week!
 - Without the Spirit there would be no effective preaching, no mission, not conversion, no true prayer, no worldwide Christian movement!
 - b. Pentecost was also a very appropriate time for the Spirit to be given because it was the Feast of the Firstfruits.
 - That is another name for it because at Pentecost, the worshippers feasted with thanksgiving to God for the beginning of their harvest.
 - This is very suitable for the coming of the Holy Spirit because His coming brought about the beginning of the great harvest of the ascended Christ.
 - The 3000 that came to believe on that day were the firstfruits of the great worldwide harvest that was to come.

TRANS> All these are important reasons for the choice of the day,

- but perhaps the most important reason is given in verse 5...
- c. It was a time when Jews from all over the world were gathered together to worship God!
 - Verse 5 says:
 - **Acts 2:5: And there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven.**
 - This made it the perfect time for the LORD to act so that His people who were scattered through the world would be able to know about it.
 - Of course any of the three annual feasts of the Jews could have served this purpose, but Pentecost was the first feast after Jesus' resurrection.
 - Those who had come up from the feast and saw what the Lord did could take the news back to their home towns.
 - This reminds us that our Lord is eager for the gospel to be published!
2. Of course the location was important as well...
 - Jesus had expressly instructed His disciples to go and wait for the promised coming of His Spirit at Jerusalem.
 - As we saw last week in Acts 1:12 & 13, they had obeyed Him.

- It was necessary for them to be at Jerusalem in order that the multitudes who had gone up to Jerusalem might be able to witness the coming of the Spirit.
- The room where the disciples met also appears to be one that was quite public—
 - likely they were meeting on a rooftop as was often done.
 - This would have enabled those in the area to easily hear what happened.

TRANS> So everything was arranged in such a way that the event could be seen by Jews from all over the world.

- It is something that Jesus wanted people to know about!
 - This is seen all the more in that...

B. He gave signs that would make the Spirit's coming perceptible.

- The baptism of the Spirit is itself a work that is entirely invisible to our senses.
 - But signs were given to make the work both audible and visible.

1. First, there was the sound from heaven "as of a mighty rushing wind" that filled the whole house where they were sitting."

a. You can see that in verse 2.

- It doesn't say it was wind, but it was the *sound as of* a mighty rushing wind.
- No doubt, this must have been quite alarming on what was otherwise a calm day.

b. This sound, along with the sound of the speaking in tongues that followed,

- was used to draw a crowd from the streets of Jerusalem.
 - **Verse 6 says "when *this* sound occurred, the multitude came together,"**
 - So you see how the Lord attracted a great crowd to witness the coming of the Spirit.

c. The sound of wind was very well suited to this event because in both Hebrew and Greek, the word for spirit and the word for wind are basically the same.

- Besides that, in Ezekiel 37 when the bones were resurrected, the Spirit came in the form of wind to breathe life into the bones...
 - so the Jews were already familiar with this symbol of the Spirit...
 - In His conversation with Nicodemus about the new birth, Jesus had compared the Holy Spirit to wind.
 - So wind would have been readily understood as a symbol for the Holy Spirit.

TRANS> But the Spirit's coming was also given a visible manifestation...

2. He came with the visible appearance of fire.
 - Verse 3 describes this:
 - **Acts 2:3: Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them.**
 - a. This made the outpouring of the Spirit upon each of the 120 disciples very visible.
 - It made it clear that He is given to every one of Christ's disciples individually.
 - He is not given to us in a vague, general way, but to each person.
 - Water baptism also shows us this—it is given to each disciple individually to show that the baptism of the Spirit is given to each one of us individually.
 - If you are resting in Christ, the Holy Spirit has come to you personally.
 - If you are not a partaker of the Spirit, you do not belong to Christ at all.
 - b. Fire is also very suitable to represent the Holy Spirit.
 - Repeatedly in scripture, God appears as fire...
 - He appeared as a burning torch in Genesis 15 when He made His covenant promise to Abraham.
 - He appeared as fire at the burning bush when Moses was called.
 - He appeared as fire on Mount Sinai when the commandments were given.
 - He appeared as a fiery pillar to lead and guard Israel.
 - He frequently came down in the appearance of fire to consume sacrifices—with Aaron and Manoah and Elijah and Solomon.
 - In the New Testament He is said to be a consuming fire.
 - Fire points to His purity and divinity.
 - It is quite amazing to consider that his pure holy fire comes into us but, as with the burning bush, does not consume us!
 - Indeed, it purifies us and refines us, but it does not destroy us.
 - How this ought to affect you my brothers and sisters!
 - Consider that the holy God who is a consuming fire dwells in you as a temple if you belong to Christ!
 - What manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct!
 - How zealous you ought to be!
 - The fire of God, the Holy Spirit Himself, is in you!

TRANS> So you see that with these two visible signs, the Lord made the outpouring of the Spirit perceptible to all!

- These things are recorded for our benefit—that we might know that He has been given to the church forever!
- But that is not all He did draw attention to this great event...

C. He also worked a notable miracle to testify that the Spirit had come.

1. This is mentioned in verse 4 where it says:

- **Acts 2:4: And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.**
- You see that Luke takes all the guess work out of what was happening when He says “and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit.”
 - We are not left to conjecture about what happened here.
 - We are plainly told that it was the coming of the Holy Spirit to fill each one of Christ’s disciples.
 - But the signs were given to confirm the word—
 - They are given to help us grasp what was done and to help us believe.
 - They were given to those who did not have the benefit of Luke’s inspired testimony...
 - And now there is this miracle of tongues.

2. We are told that the disciples were enabled, as soon as the Spirit came, to speak with other tongues!

- They were able to speak in languages that they had never learned—in real languages that could be understood by the Jews from various nations.
- This was not the ecstatic babbling that was common in the Pagan religions of the day and was also called speaking in tongues.
 - There are records of pagan tongue speaking in Egypt from 2000 years before Christ—the time of Abraham!
 - Many Greeks were doing this pagan kind of tongues speaking in Jesus’ day.
 - They claimed that the spirit of the gods took possession of them and carried them away.
 - Even Philo the Alexandrian Jew who mixed Judaism with Greek religion practiced the pagan variety of tongue speaking at this time.
 - Paul had to put a stop to this pagan form of tongues speaking in the church at Corinth—
 - He told the worshippers there to be quiet if nobody could understand what they were saying!

- But you see that the tongue speaking in Acts 2 was truly miraculous!
 - Verse 6 says that the multitude was confused **“because everyone heard them speak in His own language.”**
 - Verse 7 and 8 go on to say:
 - **Acts 2:7-12: They were all amazed and marveled, saying to one another, "Look, are not all these who speak Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each in our own language in which we were born? Parthians and Medes and Elamites, those dwelling in Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya adjoining Cyrene, visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs—we hear them speaking in our own tongues the wonderful works of God." So they were all amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "Whatever could this mean?"**
 - It seems that the disciples had little groups of persons from different places around each one of them, listening to them speak in their own native languages.
 - This was certainly not that kind of tongues speaking that nobody could understand!
 - This was miraculous speaking by the Holy Spirit!
3. Observe that the multitude comments that they are Galileans...
- Galileans were looked down on as uneducated men who spoke with a funny accent.
 - It was not possible that they knew all of these different languages!
 - Or that they could speak so eloquently about God’s works!
 - Clearly, the multitude perceived that a miracle was happening before their eyes!
 - Their question was, “What does this mean?”
 - Of course there were some there upon whom all of this was lost...
 - They were very likely the Jews from Jerusalem and Judea who only knew Greek and Hebrew (or Aramaic) which the disciples also knew.
 - They did not have the benefit of recognising that other languages were being spoken and so in their ignorance they mocked, saying that the disciples were full of new wine!
 - Perhaps they thought it was pagan tongues speaking which was often accompanied with drunkenness and drugs.
 - Paul had to rebuke the Corinthians about drunkenness in worship as well as pagan tongues speaking.

TRANS> But how could the multitude gathered at Jerusalem have known what all of this meant?

- Clearly there were the supernatural signs of wind and fire...
- And clearly, there was a real miracle of tongue speaking that many of them were able to discern—
 - but how could they know what it all meant?
 - The LORD does not leave them to guess...

D. The LORD gives them His word to tell them that this is about the giving of the Holy Spirit.

1. Peter stands up and proclaims the Word of God to them!

- He speaks to them out of their own scriptures.
 - a. He tells them that this not drunkenness at the third hour of the day—8 or 9 in the morning!
 - This is the outpouring of the Spirit that the Lord promised for the last days!
 - He quotes from Joel 2:28-32, explaining that the LORD had promised that He would pour out His Spirit on all flesh...
 - That is why the 120 were all filled with the Spirit and all prophesying as the Spirit gave them utterance.
 - Joel had said that the Spirit would be given to all flesh—
 - That is why the tongues of fire fell upon each one...
 - men and women,
 - young and old,
 - even to servants.
 - b. Peter goes on to explain to them that this is what the now exalted Lord Jesus whom they crucified has done (v. 33)
 - We will look at this in detail next time.

2. But you see in this that the LORD makes it clear to a whole multitude that the Holy Spirit has come!

- He poured Him out at a time when Jews from all over the world were present.
- He poured Him out with miraculous symbols of wind and fire for all to see.
- He poured Him out with a notable miracle in which the disciples could speak in real languages that they had never learned.
- He poured Him out in fulfillment of prophecy that His servant Peter opened to them from the prophet Joel...
 - Our Lord did all this to make it plain that He had fulfilled the promise of the Spirit to His people.
 - In His mercy to all His people, even to us, He made it very evident that He had done this so that we might know that the Holy Spirit has been given.

TRANS> But that is not the only thing He made known at this time...

II. The Lord also makes it clear that with the coming of the Holy Spirit is the coming of a new age—a new covenant.

- He shows us four characteristics of the new age or new covenant.
 - These are things that come with the Holy Spirit in the new covenant!
- A. First, He shows us that the new age is an age characterised by prophecy.
 1. In verse 17, Peter quotes the LORD as saying through Joel:
 - **Acts 2:17-18: ‘And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, That I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, Your young men shall see visions, Your old men shall dream dreams. And on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days; And they shall prophesy.**
 - Prophecy is the chief characteristic of the last days when the Spirit comes!
 2. What this means is that when the Spirit comes, every believer will have an anointing that will enable him to understand what God has done .
 - The Spirit will open his eyes and renew his heart to see clearly that he is a sinner...
 - And to see clearly that Jesus Christ offered the only sacrifice for sin that God accepts.
 - The one who receives the Spirit will see how holy God is, how sinful we all are, and how gracious and perfect a Saviour Jesus is!
 - As Jesus said, even the least in the Kingdom of God will have a greater understanding than the greatest of the Old Testament prophets—John the Baptist.
 - As Jeremiah said, in the New Covenant when the Spirit comes,
 - we will not need anyone to teach us because we will all know Him from the least of us to the greatest of us...
 - We will all have an anointing from the Holy Spirit by which we will know from God’s revelation what He has prepared for us!
 - We will be full of the knowledge of Christ and of the gospel concerning Him!
 - That is what characterises the last days in which we live.
 - Jesus has come and done His work and the Spirit has come to cause all of His elect to understand and rejoice in that work for our salvation!

3. Consequently, in the New Covenant, preaching replaces all the ceremonies of the Old Testament.
 - They are no longer needed because now God's redemptive work is finished through the finished work of Jesus Christ.
 - We are no longer under a tutor, but now we hear the voice of the Son of God by whom God has spoken to us in these last days!
 - Now instead of a temple and priests offering sacrifices, we have the Word of God preached to us.
 - Instead of worshipping at Jerusalem in types and shadows, we worship in Spirit and truth in the Christian assembly.
 - Preaching (or prophecy) has replaced ceremonies.
 - The revelation of God is complete for all who are in the New Covenant!
 - The New Age brought in by the Spirit is an age of prophecy.

B. Secondly, the Lord shows us that the new age is an age of *universal* proclamation.

1. Before, the word of God was given to Israel, but not to the other nations.
 - But by giving the miracle of tongues with the coming of the Spirit,
 - the LORD reminds us of His ancient promise to bless all the families of the earth.
 - Tongues is symbolic of the fact that the age has come when the gospel will no longer be confined to one nation!
 - The gospel of Christ will be preached at Jerusalem, but it will not stop there.
 - It will not stop until it has spread to the very ends of the earth!
 - Christ speaks to all nations!
 - Here we are worshipping Him today in a language that was unknown even to all those who were gathered at Pentecost.
2. This language miracle is a complete reversal of Babel.
 - At Babel, they were all confused because they **could not** understand each other.
 - At Pentecost, they were confused because they **could** understand each other in their own language!
 - The New Age of the Spirit is an Age of the spread of the gospel to all peoples and tongues.
 - That is the second thing that characterises the new age.

C. Third, the LORD shows us that the new age is an age of judgement upon those who refuse to participate in it.

1. In speaking about the coming of the Spirit from Joel, Peter also speaks about the terrible judgement that comes on those who reject God's salvation.
 - In Acts 2:19-20, Peter quotes Joel who describes the dreadful judgements that will fall upon the unbelievers in Israel in the last days...
 - Remember, the last days began with the coming of Christ and end when He returns...
 - Look at what Peter says about these days in Acts 2:19-20:
 - **Acts 2:19-20: I will show wonders in heaven above And signs in the earth beneath: Blood and fire and vapor of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, And the moon into blood, Before the coming of the great and awesome day of the LORD.**

2. Jesus prophesied that before the present generation was over, He would bring this judgement upon Israel!
 - It would be a day like no other!
 - In fulfillment of these prophecies, the LORD sent the Romans to destroy Jerusalem so that not one stone was left upon another.
 - Blood ran in the streets of Jerusalem.
 - Fires burned as the Roman armies destroyed the cities of Judah.
 - It was a destruction such as had not been know before.
 - Blood and fire and smoke!
 - This is what was to befall the Jews because, as Jesus said, "you did not know the time of your visitation."
 - You did not accept the Messiah that was sent to you.
 - In Luke 19:41-44, scripture says:
 - **Luke 19:41-44: Now as He drew near, He saw the city and wept over it, saying, "If you had known, even you, especially in this your day, the things that make for your peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. For days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment around you, surround you and close you in on every side, and level you, and your children within you, to the ground; and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not know the time of your visitation."**

3. The language of verse 20 is very common in the prophets.
 - They use it to speak of the overthrow of the established leadership—in this case of Jerusalem...
 - **Acts 2:20: The sun shall be turned into darkness, And the moon into blood, Before the coming of the great and awesome day of the LORD.**
 - a. Those who are not familiar with Old Testament prophecy are confused by such prophesies, so we need to look at some examples.

- Let me give you three examples to demonstrate how such language is used to speak of the overthrow of a nation and its leaders.
 - First, Isaiah 13:10. It says:
 - **Isaiah 13:10: For the stars of heaven and their constellations Will not give their light; The sun will be darkened in its going forth, And the moon will not cause its light to shine.”**
 - The reference is to the fall of Babylon.
 - For years, Babylon had been like the sun that rules the day and the moon and the stars that rule the night...
 - but now the sun was to be darkened and the moon was to no longer shine nor the stars give their light!
 - It would be replaced by another light—namely, that of the Medes and Persians.
 - Second, Isaiah 34:4-5 which refers to Idumea or Edom.
 - **Isaiah 34:4-5: All the host of heaven shall be dissolved, And the heavens shall be rolled up like a scroll; All their host shall fall down As the leaf falls from the vine, And as *fruit* falling from a fig tree. For My sword shall be bathed in heaven; Indeed it shall come down on Edom, And on the people of My curse, for judgment.**
 - Idumea was not all that great of a nation, yet the Holy Spirit saw fit to use the imagery of stars falling from heaven the skies being rolled up like a scroll when his sword came upon them.
 - Third, we have Ezekiel 32:7-8 which is a lamentation about the destruction of Egypt.
 - **Ezekiel 32:7-8: “When I put out your light, I will cover the heavens, and make its stars dark; I will cover the sun with a cloud, and the moon shall not give her light. All the bright lights of the heavens I will make dark over you, And bring darkness upon your land,” Says the Lord GOD.**
 - It is explained that this judgement will be brought upon them by Babylon—it speaks of a judgement that happened long ago.
 - And when it did, the sun and moon of Egypt ceased to shine.
- b. If this language was used to describe the destruction of the nations in their days,
- Why should we put a different meaning on the similar language when Joel uses it to refer to the destruction of Jerusalem in the day of Christ?
 - Israel had rejected their own Messiah, but God had raised Him up.
 - Now the Spirit had come because Christ is exalted to sit at God’s right hand...

- Joel's prophecy speaks of the outpouring of the Spirit, but it also speaks of the destruction of Jerusalem in connection with the Spirit's coming.
- When the Spirit comes, so does the new age that brings destruction to Israel and an end to the old economy.
 - Now preaching replaces ceremonies...
 - The inclusion of the nations replaces nationalism...
 - And judgement falls upon Israel as a nation for rejecting the Messiah.

TRANS> But there is yet one more thing that characterised the New Age that comes with the Spirit!

D. The LORD shows us that the new age is an age of grace for all who will call upon His name.

- This is expressed in verse 21—just after the pronouncement of the dreadful judgement!
 - **Acts 2:21: And it shall come to pass *That* whoever calls on the name of the LORD Shall be saved.**
- This is the marvellous promise that accompanies the preaching of the gospel in all the nations and the declaration of judgement...
 - **That whoever calls upon the name of the LORD will be saved!**
 - It doesn't matter what you may have done—what sins you may have committed!
 - If you call upon the name of the LORD you will be saved!
 - The Messiah has come and He has shed His blood for the remission of sins!
 - Those who reject Him are ripe for judgement...
 - But if they will but call on the name of the Lord they will be saved!
 - All you have to do is come to Him and receive Him for salvation!
 - Confess your sins and look to Him for mercy and you will be completely pardoned.
 - You will be reconciled to God through His blood.
 - That is the promise of the new age that came in with Christ when the Holy Spirit was given!
 - Jesus is merciful and He will not reject you if only you will repent and come to Him.

Conclusion:

So be sure that you participate in the new age that Jesus began when He poured out His Spirit.

- Be sure that you are filled with His Spirit!

- Oh brothers and sisters,
 - The Spirit was poured out to give us this fullness—
 - He was not poured out to be taken away, but to remain among us—and so He does remain for us today!!
 - The water main has been opened and we can all drink of the Spirit!

 - We can partake of His fullness now just as the 120 disciples did who were in the upper room.
 - Not that we would have the signs that were given to mark His initial coming that they had...
 - But that we would have His fullness so that we would understand the wonderful works of God and speak about them!
 - Not that we all become public preachers...
 - But that we become filled with the joy of our salvation in Christ so that by the Spirit we speak about God's wonderful works through Him!
 - So that we earnestly call upon the name of Lord!

 - But it is possible for us to quench the Spirit and to cut off the supply.
 - It is for this reason that Paul urges us in Ephesians 5 to be filled with the Spirit—it is because we not always filled with Him!
 - Are you?
 - Is the life of the Spirit evident in you?
 - Are you full of the gospel?
 - Are you full of new life?

- Oh brothers and sisters,
 - We are not so full of the Spirit!
 - We need to seek His fullness!
 - We need to repent of our sin and turn to Him.
 - There is so much for us to have!
 - John Calvin said: “God continues to call us to come to partake of the Spirit. We are poor and needy only through our own sluggishness;”

 - Do not push Christ away as the Jews did.
 - It will lead to terrible destruction for you!
 - No, come to Him and embrace Him with gladness and receive the blessing of His Spirit in all His fullness...
 - This is your portion and your inheritance in Christ!
 - Call upon the name of the Lord and you will be saved!