



Coptic Orthodox Diocese of the Southern United States



The Acts of the Apostles

Chapter 2

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Introduction

In This Chapter We Will Explore:

- The events surrounding the outpouring of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost
- Examine St. Peter's first gospel sermon, and the evidence presented in it for the resurrection of Jesus Christ
- Observe the response to the sermon, and what people were told to do in order to be saved
- The establishment and characteristics of the church in Jerusalem

Coming of the Holy Spirit (2:1-4)



- The word "Pentecost" is a Greek word signifying the 50th part of a thing, or the 50th in order
- Among the Jews it was applied to one of their three great feasts which began on the 50th day after the Passover
- Also known as the Feast of Weeks and Feast of Harvest, one of three great annual festivals (cf. Lev 23:15-22; Exo 23:14-18; 34:22)
- Most likely they were not only the apostles, but the hundred and twenty disciples
- As this day, the day of the founding of the church, was to be a day of signs and wonders, the shedding forth of the Spirit was made perceptible to all. The sound was heard, the tongues of fire were seen, the word was spoken in many languages

Coming of the Holy Spirit (2:1-4)



- “divided tongues,” that is, tongue-shaped, flame-like appearances, rising from a common center or root, and resting upon each of that large company:—beautiful visible symbol of the burning energy of the Spirit now descending in all His plenitude upon the Church, and about to pour itself through every tongue, and over every tribe of men under heaven!
- These tongues symbolized the fact that the kingdom now inaugurated was to conquer by the spoken word, by the sword of the Spirit
- Speaking with other tongues (known languages, Acts 2:8,11)
- As the Spirit gave them utterance

Coming of the Holy Spirit (2:1-4)



- To be filled implies that the human spirit within was overwhelmed by, or immersed in, the Holy Spirit. The baptism of the Spirit was not a sprinkling, but an outpouring that overwhelmed the human spirit
- At the building of Babel the language of the people was confounded; and, in consequence of this, they became scattered over the face of the earth: at this foundation of the Christian Church, the gift of various languages was given to the apostles, that the scattered nations might be gathered; and united under one shepherd and superintendent of all souls

The Crowd's Response (2:5-13)



Confused and Amazed (5-11)

- The crowd made up of devout Jews visiting from other nations
- The Jews were already scattered in many nations
- Jews who were born in different countries, and had now come up to Jerusalem to be present at the Passover, and for purposes of traffic, or converts to Judaism, who had come up for the same purpose
- The effect of what they heard
- Drew the multitude together
- Confused them, for everyone heard them speaking in their own language

The Crowd's Response (2:5-13)



- Amazed and marveled them, for those speaking were Galileans
- The Galileans were not generally educated men
- Yet were hearing languages of the countries of their birth
- Not that they spoke one language, and different languages were heard, but the apostles spoke with different languages: for otherwise the miracle would have been in the hearers, whereas it is really in the speakers
- The long list of nations embraces the various races embraced in the we of Acts 2:8: Parthians
- Parthia was east of the Tigris
- Medes, Media, another part of the Medo-Persian empire, east of the Tigris

The Crowd's Response (2:5-13)



- Elamites, Elam was an ancient name of Persia
- Mesopotamia was the seat of Babylon
- These four countries just named were thickly populated with Jews descended from those carried into captivity by Nebuchadnezzar.
- Cappadocia, A Roman province not far from the Black Sea
- Pontus, A province south and east of the Black Sea
- Asia, The Roman province of which Ephesus was the capital
- All the seven churches were in the province called Asia (Rev 1:4,11)

The Crowd's Response (2:5-13)



- Phrygia, and Pamphylia, Parts of what is called Asia Minor
- Egypt, The great African province where many ten thousands of Jews had their home
- Parts of Libya, of Africa
- About Cyrene, A great Grecian city on the coast west of Egypt
- It is said that one-fourth of the population of Cyrene was Jewish
- Roman Jews sojourning at Jerusalem
- Proselytes: Gentiles who had been converted to Judaism
- Hearing in their languages the wonderful works of God

The Crowd's Response (2:5-13)



- Not the works of creation and providence, though these are great and wonderful; but of redemption, pardon, atonement, justification, and salvation, by the Messiah, by his obedience, sufferings, and death, and also of his resurrection from the dead; things which struck them with amazement, and the more, that such illiterate persons should have such knowledge of them, and should be able to speak of them in such a clear, distinct, and powerful manner; and still the more, that they should speak of them in their several tongues in which they were born, and to which they were used, and which the apostles had never learned: and this they heard with their own ears, and were fully satisfied that they did speak divers languages

The Crowd's Response (2:5-13)



- God's word pierces some in such a way that it drives them to seek out the truth, and it so chokes others that it forces them to be witnesses of their own impudence
- The word which he uses here signifies a kind of mocking which is reproachful and insolent: and by this reproachful mocking we see that no matter how great and excellent the miracle, the wickedness of man still dares to speak evil against it
- New wine, a wine made by soaking raisins, pressing out and fermenting the juice, which was very intoxicating. Most wines of Palestine had very slight intoxicating qualities

St. Peter's Sermon (2:14-39)



They Were not Drunk (14-15)

- Standing up with the eleven, St. Peter addresses the crowd
- He now begins the first gospel sermon
- He and the apostles now begin their witness to Christ
- With great courage, boldness, and intrepidity of mind: and "lift up his voice"; that he might be heard by the whole multitude, that was gathered together, as well as to show his zeal and fervor of spirit, and fortitude of mind; for being endued with the Spirit from on high, he was fearless of men, who but a little while ago was frightened by a servant maid

St. Peter's Sermon (2:14-39)



- It was too early in the day
- About nine o'clock in the morning, previously to which the Jews scarcely ever ate or drank, for that hour was the hour of prayer
- This custom appears to have been so common that even the most intemperate among the Jews were not known to transgress it; St. Peter therefore spoke with confidence when he said, these are not drunken - seeing it is but the third hour of the day, previously to which even the intemperate did not use wine

St. Peter's Sermon (2:14-39)



The Fulfillment of Joel's Prophecy (16-21)

- He turns to their prophets for an explanation
- By the prophet Joel who lived about 800 B.C.
- This was the second part of St. Peter's argument, to show that this was in accordance with the predictions in their own Scriptures
- The phrase Last days was used by the Jews to denote the last dispensation, that of Christ
- "I will pour out of my Spirit", A figurative expression to indicate abundant gifts of the Spirit
- "Upon all flesh", On all races, not on the Jews alone

St. Peter's Sermon (2:14-39)



- By the Spirit is meant the gifts of the Spirit, the spirit of wisdom and knowledge, of understanding the mysteries of the Gospel, of explaining the Scriptures, and of speaking with tongues; and by the pouring of it out, is intended the abundance and great plenty of the gifts and graces of the Spirit bestowed
- “your sons and your daughters shall prophesy”, or foretell things to come, as Agabus, and the four daughters of Philip the Evangelist, Acts 21:9
- Such visions as that of St. Peter at Joppa (Acts 10:9-16)
- Such dreams as that of St. Paul at Troas, where he saw the Macedonian asking him to Come and help us (Acts 16:9)

St. Peter's Sermon (2:14-39)



- With signs and wonders in heaven above and earth beneath before the coming of the great and awesome day of the Lord
- St. Peter not only quotes that part of the prophecy of Joel which was applicable to the events now transpiring, but he quotes that part also which pertains to the calamities coming on the Jewish nation, and to the final judgment (Joel 2:28-32)
- Acts 2:19 may apply directly to the overthrow of Judea and Jerusalem
- The same images used here with reference to the sun and moon are used also in Matthew 24:29
- This is called the great day of the Lord, because on that day he will be signally manifested, more impressively and strikingly than on other times

St. Peter's Sermon (2:14-39)



- To turn to the Lord for salvation in his appointed way
- It means far more than simply prayer
- He who would call on the name of the Lord for salvation must do more than say, Lord, Lord, open unto us (Lk 13:25)
- He must hear and obey (Mt 7:21)
- St. Peter now begins to preach Christ directly to them
- He boldly declares that they knew of his miracles, and wonders and signs

He demonstrates the Messiahship in Acts 2:22-36:

- (1) By the miracles of which they were witnesses
- (2) By his Resurrection, proved (a) by the prophecy of David; (b) by the testimony of all the apostles present who were witnesses; (c) by the phenomena then witnessed, which could be only due to his exaltation to the right hand of God

St. Peter's Sermon (2:14-39)



- Jesus, crucified and put to death
- According to the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God
- It was the will of the Father that he should die, and was known to the Father before his coming
- Which they did by lawless hands (via the Romans)
- God's counsel does not excuse the Jews, whose hands were wicked
- Jesus, whom God raised from the dead
- Having loosed the pains of death
- It was indeed impossible that "the Living One" should remain "among the dead" (Lk 24:5); but here, the impossibility seems to refer to the prophetic assurance that He should not see corruption

St. Peter's Sermon (2:14-39)



Evidence: Threefold testimony (25-35)

- The quotation here is made from Psalm 16:8-11, which contains a most remarkable prophecy concerning Christ, every word of which applies to him, and to him exclusively
- Because that he had always the truth, faithfulness, and power of God in his view, and the presence and protection of God with him; and which are sufficient to make the hearts of his people, as well as of him, to rejoice

St. Peter's Sermon (2:14-39)



- This is an apostrophe, or an address to his Father, who He believed would not leave His soul, as separate from His body, in Hades, in the invisible world of souls, in the place where the souls of departed saints are, but would quickly return it to its body, and reunite them
- That is, resurrection-life
- David could not be speaking of himself
- For he was dead and buried
- With his tomb for all to see
- Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne

St. Peter's Sermon (2:14-39)



- He also spoke of the resurrection of Christ, whose soul was not left in Hades nor did His flesh see corruption
- The testimony of the apostles
- They were witnesses
- That God raised Jesus
- That is, the whole 120 saw him after he rose from the dead, and were all ready, in the face of persecution and death, to attest this great truth
- Raised by omnipotence to the highest dignity in the realms of glory, to sit at the right hand of God, and administer the laws of both worlds

St. Peter's Sermon (2:14-39)



- The testimony of the Spirit's outpouring
- Jesus poured forth what they saw and heard
- Having been exalted to the right hand of God
- Having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit
- For David did not ascend into the heavens, but prophesied of the Lord (Ps 110:1)
- Jesus quotes the same passage and applies it to himself (Mt 23:32.)
- Who would sit at God's right hand
- Until His enemies became His footstool (1 Cor 15:25-26)

St. Peter's Sermon (2:14-39)



Conclusion: Jesus is Lord and Christ (36)

- All the house of Israel were to "know assuredly" (i.e., believe with all their hearts)
- This is the sum of his argument or his discourse
- He had established the points which he purposed to prove, and he now applies it to his hearers
- That God made Jesus, whom they crucified, both Lord and Christ
- He who was the hope of their fathers had come, and they had put him to death; and it is no wonder that the consciousness of this - that a sense of guilt, and shame, and confusion should overwhelm their minds, and lead them to ask, in deep distress, what they should do

St. Peter's Sermon (2:14-39)



The Response of the Listeners (37)

- This powerful, intelligent, consecutive, and interesting discourse, supported every where by prophecies and corresponding facts, left them without reply and without excuse; and they plainly saw there was no hope for them, but in the mercy of him whom they had rejected and crucified.
- "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" How shall we escape those judgments which we now see hanging over our heads?
- Before St. Peter began to speak they did not understand the signs; but now it was clear to them that they had rejected and crucified the Lord

St. Peter's Sermon (2:14-39)



The Reply by St. Peter (38-39)

- Two commands: Repent & Let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ
- Repentance and remission of sins in Christ are two principles of the Gospel and therefore of our salvation: and they are obtained by the promises apprehended by faith, and are ratified by us in baptism; and with our salvation comes the power of the Holy Spirit
- For the first time the terms of pardon under the New Covenant and the Great Commission are given; given once for all time, and always the same

St. Peter's Sermon (2:14-39)



- Two promises: For the remissions of sins & You shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit
- The extent of the promise: To them and their children & To all who afar off, as many as the Lord will call
- The promise is ample, full, free; that it is suited to all, and may be applied to all; that there is no defect or lack in the provisions or promises, but that God may extend it to whomsoever He pleases

A Vital Church Grows (2:40-47)



The Results Recorded by St. Luke (40-41)

- "Be saved from this perverse generation"
- This was the object of the many other words
- They could save themselves by complying with the conditions named in Acts 2:38, and thus accepting Christ as their Savior
- "The power is present with you; make a proper use of it, and ye shall be delivered from their obstinate unbelief, and the punishment that awaits it in the destruction of them and their city by the Romans
- Those who repent of their sins, and give up themselves to Jesus Christ, must prove their sincerity by breaking off from the wicked

A Vital Church Grows (2:40-47)



- Those who gladly receive his word were baptized
- They approved of the doctrine delivered
- They were glad to hear of this way of salvation
- They began immediately to act according to its dictates
- The narrative plainly implies that their baptism was done the same day
- Their conversion was instantaneous
- That day about 3000 were added
- This was the first effusion of the Holy Spirit under the preaching of the gospel; and it shows that such scenes are to be expected in the church, and that the gospel is suited to work a rapid and mighty change in the hearts of people

A Vital Church Grows (2:40-47)



Their Steadfastness and Reverence (42-43)

- They continued steadfastly in: The apostles' doctrine and fellowship and the breaking of bread and prayers
- Though they had been suddenly converted; though they were suddenly admitted to the church; though they were exposed to much persecution and contempt, and to many trials, yet the record is that they adhered to the doctrines and duties of the Christian religion
- Fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles

A Vital Church Grows (2:40-47)



- The effect of a great work of God's grace is commonly to produce an unusual seriousness and solemnity in a community, even among those who are not converted
- It restrains, subdues, and silences opposition

A Vital Church Grows (2:40-47)



Their Charity and Growth (44-47)

- Those who believed were together and had all things in common
- Many, perhaps most, were sojourners at, not citizens of, Jerusalem
- It was needful that they remain together for the time, and while sojourning here, they threw their common funds together
- Those with possessions and goods sold them
- Their worldly goods, their possessions and estates; no man called anything peculiarly his own; and whatever he had, his brother was welcome to, and might as freely take, and use it, as if it was his own
- Dividing them among all according to their need

A Vital Church Grows (2:40-47)



- We see the effect of religion
- The love of property is one of the strongest affections which people have
- There is nothing that will overcome it but religion
- That will; and one of the first effects of the gospel was to loosen the hold of Christians on property
- It was not an obligatory rule; the laws of ownership or property were not disturbed or questioned
- Even Ananias might have kept all his land unblamed

A Vital Church Grows (2:40-47)



- They continued daily with one accord in the temple
- They gathered there for the purpose of teaching the multitudes
- Breaking bread from house to house, eating with gladness and simplicity of heart
- It may refer to observing the Lord's Supper in private residences
- Praising God and having favor with all the people
- Their humble, serious, and devoted lives won the favor of the great mass of the community, and silenced opposition and cavil
- The Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved
- This is the first time the church is named as existing
- It had been founded on Pentecost



Conclusion

- What are the verses in this chapter that refer to:
 - a. the Resurrection of Christ
 - b. the unity of the Apostolic church
- In what form did the Holy Spirit descent upon the disciples and what are the sign of His descent?
- What are the prophecies from the Old Testament mentioned in this chapter? Include what book, who said it, and what it is about in your answer
- Baptism is a prerequisite for Salvation. How can you prove this fact in this chapter?
- The Holy Spirit descended upon the disciples on one of the major Jewish feasts. What is this feast and what are the other names of this feast?