

ESSENTIALS OF EVANGELISM

The Bob Jones University Lectures on Evangelism for 1958

by

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CHAPTER FOUR

WHAT HAPPENED ON THE DAY OF PENTECOST?

TEXT: “And they were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another, What meaneth this?” (Acts 2:12)

It is my desire today to speak to you on the subject, “What Happened on the Day of Pentecost?” The Scripture is found in Acts, Chapter 2. The text is in the form of a question in verse 12, “. . . **what meaneth this?**”

Let me say in the very beginning of a discussion of this very delicate, but most important subject, that in dealing with any Bible doctrine one’s motives and one’s heart and mind should be baptized by love for all the believers of God, whether or not they agree with our interpretation of God’s Holy Word. I do think, by God’s grace and through His infinite mercy, I am able to speak with a kind disposition toward all of the Lord’s people, the saints in Christ Jesus everywhere.

This message is not designed to harm, but to help. It is not designed to ridicule, but to reveal the truth of God as the Lord has given it to us. We make no claim to having all the answers, but we do claim to be a student of the Bible which we have read through many, many times in more than twenty years of study. We do claim to have the Holy Spirit in our heart and life. He is our Teacher. We do claim that we have surrendered to that Holy Spirit and that our bodies have become the temple of His dwelling place. We do believe that the Spirit of God can lead us as a servant of the Lord in the proper accurate interpretation of the Word of God.

Many times the people of God allow prejudice and tradition and other things to taint or interfere in their interpretation of God’s Holy Word. There can be no doubt whatever but that the Holy Spirit works through human agency in soul winning. God uses men to win men and women and young people to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. There can be no true Scriptural evangelism apart from the ministry and power and conviction of the blessed Holy Spirit. There can be no spiritual power apart from Him, for Jesus said, “**But ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you . . .**” (Acts 1:8). There never has been a great soul winner who did not give a sane and practical and scriptural emphasis to the ministry and Person of the Holy Spirit. Many have misunderstood the manner and purpose of His coming into the world on the day of Pentecost. May God give us receptive hearts, hearing ears, seeing eyes to understand what actually happened on the Day of Pentecost.

I. WHAT DID NOT HAPPEN

Now first, let us notice four things which did not happen.

A. The Holy Spirit Did Not Come in Answer to Prayer

The Holy Spirit of God did not come on the Day of Pentecost in answer to prayer, which is so commonly taught and commonly believed. How well do I know that one hundred twenty people for a period of ten days were in an upper room in prayer and in one accord. Following this ten-day prayer meeting the Holy Spirit came, but did He come because they prayed? My answer is, “No.”

You remember Jesus said in John 16, “. . . **it is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: Of sin, because they believe not on me; Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.**” Notice carefully, Jesus said, “. . . **it is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.**”

I would like to ask you, friends, this question, “Would Jesus have broken His word if the disciples had not prayed?” He said, “**I will send him unto you.**” If Jesus had not sent the Holy Spirit, the Lord Jesus would have gone back on His word. His promise was not contingent upon the prayers of the people of God in the upper room. The Holy Spirit would have come on the Day of Pentecost in answer to promise rather than in answer to prayer. He would have come had the disciples not uttered a prayer in the upper room. He did not come in answer to prayer. He came in answer to promise.

In a sense He came in answer to prayer, but it was the prayer of Jesus and not the prayer of the one hundred twenty in the upper room. Jesus said, “**I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever**” (John 14:16).

Now you might say, “Brother Tom, why this technicality?” Simply this, there are many of God’s dear people, my brothers and sisters in the Lord, whom I love and with whom I could have sweet fellowship on many, many truths taught in God’s Word, who are teaching and practicing that a Christian must pray that he might receive the Holy Ghost after he is saved.

The Bible does not teach that.

The Holy Spirit does not come into one’s life in answer to prayer after he is converted. The Holy Spirit comes into one’s life when he is saved, and one cannot be saved without His in coming. Jesus taught this to Nicodemus when He said, “**Except ye be born of water, and of the spirit, you cannot see the kingdom of God**” (John 3:5).

Paul wrote to the believers at Corinth saying,

“What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God and you 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” (I Corinthians 6:19-20).

So you see that the Bible teaches that every believer, young or old, weak or strong, taught or untaught has the presence of the Holy Spirit.

The important thing to consider, however, is this question, “Does the Holy Spirit have you?” Does He possess you and fill you? Does He control your entire being, thoughts, words, activities and every phase of your life? For you to have the Holy Spirit is one thing and for Him to have you is another. We do need to pray for His fullness and power. Jesus said, **“If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: How much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him”** (Luke 11:13). It does not take God long to do the filling after we have done the emptying. No, I say again that we are not to pray for His in-coming; we already have that, but we need to wait and tarry and pray for His fullness and endowment for effective witnessing for Christ.

B. They Did Not Speak in the Unknown Tongue

Now, notice the second thing that did not happen on the Day of Pentecost. Many people will not take the time to read and see whether or not my words are true. They with a biased mind and a prejudice heart, will say, “Mr. Malone does not believe all the Bible.” But contend that the early church did not speak in an unknown tongue on the Day of Pentecost.

I have on my desk now several letters, one in particular, which reads like this, “Brother Malone, why do you not believe all the Bible? Why do you not believe that the Holy Ghost came upon the disciples and they spake in the unknown tongue as an evidence of the power of the Holy Ghost in the second chapter of the book of Acts?”

I do not believe that because it is not taught. There is nothing taught in the second chapter of the book of Acts which deals with the Day of Pentecost on the subject of the unknown tongue. A careful reading of these first fourteen verses in Chapter 2 of the book of Act shows some sixteen different nationalities of foreign-born Jews.

Verse 8 reads, **“And how hear we every man in our own tongue, (or language) wherein we were born?”** They did not say, “How hear w every man in an unknown tongue?” They said, **“And how hear we ever man in our own tongue,”** or dialect, or language. This, beyond any shadow of a doubt, speaks of their native language and does not refer to an unknown tongue.

God wrought a miracle through the power o the Holy Spirit. These sixteen different nationalities of foreign-born Jews heard in their own native language the wonderful Word of God as preached by the spirit-endowed and anointed Simon Peter and the understood exactly what he said. It is the unknown tongue which listed in I Corinthians as one of the nine gifts of the Spirit.

Now let us be fair, let us be honest. The unknown tongue as evidence of the presence of the Holy Spirit in the life of a believer is definitely not taught in the second chapter of the book of Acts which deals with the Day of Pentecost particularly.

C. This Chapter Does Not Teach That All Visible Manifestation of That Particular Day Are to be Repeated.

Now in the third place, the second chapter of the book of Acts does not teach that all the visible manifestations of that particular day were to be duplicated and repeated in the body of Christ in the days to come.

For instance, the Holy Spirit came on the Day of Pentecost in two manifestations, one of which was visible and the other audible. The visible was the cloven tongues of fire. Now it would be absurd and ridiculous to say that we could expect to see today visible cloven tongues of fire coming upon the people of God who were anointed and endowed with the power of the Holy Spirit of God. It would also be ridiculous to say that we hear a mighty rushing wind.

Fire in the Bible is often used as a symbol of the cleansing effect of the Holy Spirit, and wind is used as a symbol of His life-giving, life-breathing effect and of His mighty power to move upon people. So we cannot teach and be true to the Scriptures that all that happened on the Day of Pentecost must be duplicated. However, let me say that God uses clean tools in His work. We need today as much as ever before the cleansing and refining effect of His presence and fullness.

D. The Pentecostal Experience Did Not Immediately Affect Gentiles

In the fourth place; something that did not happen on the day of Pentecost was an immediate effect upon the Gentiles. Remember, in the second chapter of the book of Acts the Holy Spirit came only upon the Jews, and the Gentiles were not immediately included.

Consider the fact that the body of Christ, of which every believer is an important part, is made up of both Jews and Gentiles, mostly Gentiles, who have been born again by the Spirit of God. This second chapter of the books of Acts is an experience which relates particularly to the Jews, but afterwards has its effect upon the Gentile.

II. WHAT DID HAPPEN

Like those in Jerusalem who came and saw this great demonstration let us ask the question, “. . . **What meaneth this?**”

Then may the Holy Spirit of God give us the answer from His Holy Word, not from tradition, not from ecclesiastical doctrine, not from human experience alone, but from the Bible itself. “. . . **What meaneth this?**”

What actually happened on the Day of Pentecost?

A. The Scriptures Were Fulfilled

In the book of Joel, Chapter 2, verses 28-32 we find the wonderful Promise of the coming of the Holy Spirit into the world. Joel prophesied or wrote under inspiration about 800 years before the birth of Christ. So 800 years before the Day of Pentecost it was promised through the Prophetic Scriptures that the Holy Spirit of God would come into the world. Read very carefully these verses in the second chapter of the book of Joel. Notice two or three outstanding things. First of all, the Holy Spirit was to come in the last days. Verse 28 reads, “**And it shall come to pass afterward.**” “**Afterward,**” we are told by Bible scholars, means in the last days. There is no question about this. The proper interpretation of the verse is “*And it shall come to pass in last days.*”

Many times people say to preachers, “Preacher, do you believe that we are in the last days?” There is no question about that. The last days started on the Day of Pentecost. We have been in the last days for nearly two millenniums. This is the age of the Gentiles. This is the last dispensation before the coming of Jesus. The next dispensation is the millennium. These, beyond any question, are the last days. We have been in this particular period in the history of the world for over 1,900 years.

This prophetic passage in the book of Joel tells us two things about these last days, or this age of the church.

First, it tells us how it will begin. It is written that it would begin with an outpouring of the Holy Spirit, which took place and was fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost.

Second, it tells us how it will end. It will end as Joel said, with “. . . **wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and terrible day of the Lord come.**” This shows how these last days or the age of the Gentiles or the day of the body Christ will end. It will end with the coming of the Lord Jesus to receive His church unto Himself, then, after seven years, with a visible return of the Lord with His saints in the execution of judgment and vengeance of God upon the world.

Here in one breath the prophet Joel spoke of the beginning and ending of this age in which you and I are living and witnessing for Jesus Christ. It is a very short period of time in the mind of God. If in one breath a prophet spoke of its beginning and its ending, you and I should realize as never before that the time is short. The coming the Lord draweth nigh. He shall come suddenly and quickly to receive His waiting bride. What we do for Jesus must be done quickly; and it must be done, if to be effective, in the energy and power and demonstration of the blessed Holy Spirit of God who tabernacles His deity within the confines of our bodies.

B. Types Were Fulfilled

In the second place, types were fulfilled. We mean by this that the Old Testament prophesied in type the Day of Pentecost. Read very carefully Leviticus, Chapter 23. In this chapter seven great religious feasts or festivals are listed and explained which were observed by the Jews under law in the Old Testament. We will notice carefully these seven feasts.

First of all was the Feast of the Passover, which *represents Christ our Redeemer or our passover.*

Second was the Feast of Unleavened Bread, which *speaks of communion on the part of the redeemed with the Redeemer or the fellowship of a believer with his Lord.*

Third was the Feast of Firstfruits, which is *typical of the resurrection of Christ.*

Fourth was the Feast of Pentecost, which is *typical of the descent of the Holy Spirit to form the church and baptize believers into the body of Christ.*

Fifth was the Feast of Trumpets, which has a prophetic significance for it *speaks of the gathering of the Jews from all parts of the earth to the land of Palestine.* This is going on today and prophecy is being fulfilled!

Sixth was the Feast of Atonement, which *represents the repentance of the Jews and their national conversion.*

Seventh was the Feast of Tabernacles, which *represents, of course, the millennium and also the kingdom rest for Israel and for all the redeemed.*

Let us go back now and see the third and fourth of these seven religious feasts, which are the Feast of Firstfruits and the Feast of Pentecost. The Feast of Firstfruits, as we have said, represents the resurrection of Christ. In Leviticus 23:15 we read, **“And ye shall count unto you from the morrow after the sabbath, from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave offering; seven sabbaths shall be complete: Even unto the morrow after the seventh sabbath shall ye number fifty days.”**

Now notice, God plainly said that between these two feasts would be fifty days, **starting on Sunday or the morrow after the Sabbath** and then count seven sabbaths which would be forty-nine days, and then on the morrow after the seventh, as it is clearly set forth, which is a period of fifty days between the feast representing the resurrection and that representing Pentecost. How beautiful and minutely accurate was the fulfillment of this. The Lord Jesus Christ the Bible says appeared to His own some twelve distinct times during a period of forty days after His resurrection. Then after ten days of prayer in the upper room, the Holy Spirit came on the Day of Pentecost just exactly as He was typically prophesied in the 23rd chapter Leviticus in Old Testament types.

The Day of Pentecost was a fulfillment of Old Testament types. How marvelous and beautiful is the structure of God’s Word!

C. Promise of Jesus Realized

The promise of Jesus was brought to fulfillment on the Day of Pentecost. As we have already mentioned, the Lord Jesus on more than one occasion promised that the Holy Spirit would come after His ascent back through the heavens to the right hand of the Father.

There are three great facts taken up in the New Testament — the appearance of Jesus the first time to redeem, the coming of the Holy Spirit into the world on the Day of Pentecost to baptize believers and to form the body of Christ, and the coming again into the world of the Lord Jesus Christ to receive His own unto Himself. How wonderful is God's Word. How accurately its promises are fulfilled.

The promise of Jesus was realized on the Day of Pentecost. He had kept His word.

- How it must have thrilled the hearts of these believers.
- How it must have strengthened their faith.
- How it must have edified and built them up in a holy reverence for God and His Word and a holy fear of such a sovereign, mighty God.

No wonder they went out filled to overflowing to witness and to win people by the thousands as they did.

D. Holy Spirit Baptized Individual Believers

In the fourth place the Scriptures teach that the Holy Spirit baptized individual believers into one body, not into an organization, but into an organism, a living body as it is taught in the Bible.

In I Corinthians 12:13 we read, "**For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many.**" Then in verse 20, "**But now are they many members, yet but one body.**" This body was formed on the Day of Pentecost as Paul clearly teaches in his Corinthian epistle.

III. WHAT MAY CONTINUE TO HAPPEN

We have now seen briefly what did not happen and what did happen. Let us now see what may continue to happen as a result Pentecost.

A. Every Christian Can Have the Fullness of the Holy Spirit

Let us be clear that a Christian has the Holy Spirit. If he did not have the Holy Spirit, he would not be a child of God. Jesus taught that one must be "**born of the spirit.**" Paul taught that "**if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.**" To have the Holy Spirit is one thing and to let the Holy Spirit have you is another.

A lady came very excitedly to a minister friend of mine who is a godly man and a soul-winner and a great student of the Scriptures and said to him, "Oh, praise God, I have the Holy Spirit."

He said, "I want you to know that there is one thing better now."

"Oh," she said, "What could be better than having the Holy Spirit?"

My preacher friend replied, “That the Holy Spirit may also have all of you.”

We sometimes have been accused of not believing in the anointing and the power and the demonstration of the Holy Spirit. How untrue this is. We do not seek to interpret the Word of God by experiences of others or by the doctrines of certain ecclesiastical organizations or by the traditions of men. We want to be true to the Scriptures, but we do believe with all our hearts in the anointing and the power of the Holy Spirit of God as the Bible teaches.

In Ephesians 1:13 we are taught, “. . . **ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise,**” which means God has placed His seal of ownership upon us and the presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives means we belong to God and He belongs to us and we have been recipients of an eternal life imparted through the Spirit.

Also in Ephesians 4:30 we are told, “**And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.**”

You see, dear friends, the Holy Spirit is more than in influence. He is a person. The Bible attributes to Him the characteristics and attributes of a person, and being a Holy Spirit He can be grieved with anything unholy in the life of a Christian.

Then in Ephesians 5:18 we have the plain command, “. . . **be filled with the Spirit.**” This is a command of God to every believer. Oh, how we believe in this. How we daily pray as we confess sin and empty ourselves of all that which is unclean and contrary to His will and His Word. We pray daily that we might be filled to overflowing with the Presence of that blessed Person of the trinity, the Holy Spirit that out of our lives might run an endless, constant river of blessing, an o flow of His inward work.

In I John 2:20 we read, “**But ye have an unction (or anointing) from the Holy One, and ye know all things.**”

Yes, we believe the Bible teaches a special anointing of the Holy Spirit for Christian service, for soul-winning, for cleansing, for separation, for power to be all that God would have us to be.

There is only one incoming of the Holy Spirit, but there may be many uprisings or fillings of the Holy Spirit. Every time a Christian by repentance and confession is willing to empty himself, God is certainly willing to fill him to overflowing with the presence of the Spirit of God.

B. Continual Power to Win Souls

In Acts 1:8 we read, “**But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.**”

Here the Lord Jesus plainly teaches the result of power of the Holy Spirit in and upon the life of a believer. It is that he might be a witness unto the Lord.

The early church started at home. They started in Jerusalem. Acts 5:42 we read, “**And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ.**” They went two by two which is the Bible way. They started at home, and they went from house to house.

After Jerusalem, the city, they went into Judea, the province. After that province, they went into Samaria and then to the uttermost parts of the earth. This is God’s program. The Christian who talks about the power of the Holy Spirit and claims some definite work of the Spirit of God in his life and does not win souls to the Lord Jesus Christ is speaking of an experience which is contrary to the Word of God and the teaching of Jesus. The Holy Spirit is given in power upon the lives of God’s people that they might be witnesses unto Him. We have no confidence whatever in the Christianity of people who make loud praise to God in public but have no witness and no testimony in the shop, store and above all in their home in the midst of their families. The Holy Spirit is given to win souls to Jesus Christ. Oh, may God give us a hunger and thirst for the fulness of the Holy Spirit that we may take the gospel to the ends of the earth that multitudes may hear and believe and be saved.

C. Souls Can Be Saved Anywhere

The third thing that can happen as a result of Pentecost is that people can be saved anywhere and everywhere that they will call in repentance and faith upon the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Remember that in the book of Joel, Chapter 2, verses 28-32, which deal with the coming of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost, one of the results prophesied was, “**And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered.**”

Now then, Simon Peter, on the Day of Pentecost, in preaching that sermon so greatly blessed of God mentioned this prophecy and quoted it again. In Acts 2:21 he said, “**And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.**”

Thank God the Holy Spirit is omnipresent. He is where you are now. He is able to speak to your heart to convict you of your need and to point you to the Lamb of God Who died in your stead on the cross of Calvary and bore in His body on the tree all your sins and mine.

Thank God, as a result of the coming of the Holy Spirit, wherever you are—on a sickbed, in a prison cell, at the bedside in your home, in the church, anywhere—you can call upon the Lord Jesus Christ and trust in His atoning blood and you can be saved. May God help you to do it today.

~ end of chapter 4 ~

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