

The Promised Holy Spirit

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[0 : 0 0] In Jerusalem, on the day of Pentecost, that is 50 days after the celebration of the Passover, So, 50 days after the death and resurrection of Jesus.

As we arrive here, in terms of where the Gospels finished, in terms of what was already recorded, we actually arrive here at the start of Acts to quite a big surprise. Back in chapter 1 of Acts, if you look at verse 3 and just scan down there, Jesus is alive, he's been raised from the dead, he's presented himself alive and risen to his disciples after his suffering by many proofs.

He appears to them during 40 days and speaks to them of the kingdom of God. Now, if we stopped there and hit pause there, we'd think, well, Jesus is alive, he's been raised from the dead, he's appears to his disciples that the news has just got to get out. They just need to get on and tell everyone when someone wins the World Cup this summer that the news will probably be on the back pages of the newspapers probably before the full-time whistle has been blown or on our news apps or flashing up on our phones or whatever it is. Big news, word gets out. Well, this is infinitely greater news.

So you think the disciples, the apostles here, you think they would be off. Well, verse 4, and while staying with them, Jesus ordered them not to depart but wait for the promise of the Father that they would be baptized with the Holy Spirit. And so there's the surprise. They're not to go, or at least not yet, until the Spirit comes. And we see it again in verse 8. Jesus says, you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth. And so this surprising delay is that the apostles are not to be in the greatest news in all the world being told. It's not that the weather's holding the apostles up here. It's not that there's kind of roadworks or repairs needing done in all the Roman roads. It's not that they lack social media to kind of post it and tell it all to the world. No. For the apostles to go out after the greatest news, the greatest news ever told, the greatest news there is, they need the Holy Spirit. And I think that tells us then of the significance of the work of the Spirit and what He's been sent to do. And so as we arrive into chapter 2 today, we arrive to the apostles, actually to 120 kind of disciples of Jesus' followers waiting.

And there in chapter 2, verse 2, the Holy Spirit comes. He is poured out. And so that brings us to our first point this morning. The promised Holy Spirit has been poured out and He empowers our witness. And we are to go and tell. So the apostles here at the start of chapter 2 are in this room. It must be large. We're told in chapter 1 there's about 120 of them there in all. And verse 4, they're filled with the Holy Spirit. But His arrival and pouring out are accompanied with quite an amazing sight. You get a sound from heaven, like a mighty rushing wind. Tongues of fire appear on them but don't burn them. And they can speak in other languages, in tongues. They can speak languages that are understood by all the nations that are gathered as we find out. So I think you'll agree as they're in this room. It's not your average day, right? It's not your average day. No, if we see someone now whose hair looks like it's on fire, you get help, right? Okay? But not here because the fire's there and they're not getting burned up. So this is not your average day. And it's not actually how being filled with the Spirit would happen for believers from then on. No, there's a significant thing happening here at Pentecost.

[4 : 1 3] And so for all these things that are happening, as the Spirit's poured out at the start of chapter 2, it shows us something seismic is happening. That's what's happening here, something seismic, something huge. And actually, it's going to show us that, if we can put it this way, that a new dawn has arrived, a new age has come, that the age of the Spirit has arrived here on earth. Just think with me, mighty rushing wind, that the Spirit, that the breath of God hovering, where can we think of hearing that before? Well, we can think of it in Genesis 1, can't we? In creation. And this is a kind of a new world order being birthed here. That's what we're to think of. The tongues of fire

that appear here as well. Where do they point us back to? Well, they point us back to the presence of God. Think of Exodus, as we've been seeing, fire burning but not consuming. Where have we heard that before?

Well, just recently, God's presence at the burning bush to Moses. And actually, just at Sinai, these last few weeks, Exodus chapter 19, God descends on the mountain like fire. And we'll see that again as we get to Exodus chapter 42. So, a work of a kind of a new world order is arriving here. And also, God's presence is here with His people. And the third thing we see, as we said, is they all start speaking in other languages. Now, why is that a big deal? Well, because ever since Genesis 11, a few thousand years before this, God confused the languages of the earth and people couldn't communicate in one language as they did before. Remember the Tower of Babel. People building the tower to try to get up to God. God says, no, thank you. Scatters the languages and people are scattered. And so, verse 5, when Luke tells us that devout Jews in Jerusalem from every nation are gathered, there's a difficulty for these people, right? Most of them then wouldn't have understood the preaching. The apostles are waiting to be sent out, but if you like, there's the language barrier. And as they gathered, they wouldn't have understood it kind of on their own. And so, the Spirit is given to empower the disciples' witness to the gospel. The Spirit comes, and that's why verse 6 is so astonishing. They do understand, and they understand what's being said in their own language. Now, I know what you could well be thinking, or at least this is what I thought this week. Perhaps, well, maybe if only they'd had smartphones, right? If only they'd had kind of Google Translate. Perhaps if that had just happened at this time, right? They could have spoken into their phone and translated it, and all would have been good. We'd been watching or had been watching that program race across the world, and people have no phones or anything, and they're meant to get across the world and whatever. But the amount of times you see people standing there on their Google Translate, and you think, no, surely you can't be doing that, right? That feels like cheating. Surely, if they just had phones here, all would have been easier.

Well, no. No. What's going on here is theological. It's deeper than just the languages. This, albeit kind of temporary reversing of the effects of Babel, is saying now that people need no longer be scattered away, but are able to draw near to God in the message of salvation that we have in the Lord Jesus. It's not that we need a common language. No, the message of this is that we need a common spirit, that it's the Spirit who's come to unite us to Christ. Now, we're going to think a bit more about that in our second point and in the weeks ahead as well. But firstly, I just want us to stop and slow down and just hunker down in this first point of what's going on here, that the coming Spirit empowers gospel witness. They speak in these languages and they're understood. They praise God.

And then that Peter stands up in the power of the Spirit and preaches and says, what's going on here? Isn't it these people are drunk on new wine? No, it's nine o'clock in the morning. But that what is happening here is that the Spirit has come. So, friends, that is what we want to see as the Spirit is poured out. The Spirit comes and gospel witness comes through Peter's preaching and through everybody sharing the wonderful works that God has done. So, let me just give us two applications then. One is thanksgiving. One is thanksgiving and praise. We would not be here today if it were not for the coming of the Spirit, the pouring out of the Spirit. It was the Spirit coming to the apostles that empowered and emboldened them to preach and go. I suppose sometimes we can think that it's the kind of the resurrection that changes everything for the apostles. And of course, it does. But actually, the start of Acts tells us that that's not the full story, that something, someone else is needed.

That is that they're waiting in obedience to the Lord Jesus for the Spirit to come that they would then go. And so, dear friends, we have reason this morning to praise God that He sent His Spirit and that in the power of the Spirit, the gospel really did go out from Jerusalem to Judea to Samaria and is still going out to the very ends of the earth. In other words, the gospel being sent out from Pentecost to this day as the apostles go, it's not an accident. It is the gracious work of God as He's poured His Spirit out to make Jesus known. And so, friends, as we give thanks to God then that the Spirit has come and that from the apostles all the way through to where we are now that the message has gone out.

[10 : 30] As we praise God for that, a point of encouragement for us as well, just a second application, a point of encouragement. For all of us who belong to the Lord Jesus, we can have confidence that that same Spirit is still at work in us today. That as we go and tell the gospel, we're

not on our own, but God is working through us as we seek to share of the Lord Jesus with those around us. And so, for those of us here this morning at school, school-aged amongst us, probably the hardest place to follow Jesus today in Scotland, I think, is in school. Given how long you've known Jesus, your age, given how hostile the worldview is that's in our schools, given how young you are, it's hard to follow Jesus in school. It can be hard to live for Him, and it can be hard to tell people about Him.

So, for those of us who are here that are children or teenagers or in school, I want you to know this morning that the Lord Jesus by His Spirit is with you, that He's with you. He'll help you to live for Him. He'll help you to speak of Him and to follow His ways in all that you do. So, trust Him. Trust Jesus to be with you by His Spirit. He is with you as you go and live for Him in school. Perhaps for some of us here this morning, the greatest concern to our witness is within our own families. We have parents or children or siblings or neighbors or whoever it is in our families needing to know Jesus, needing to know more of the Lord Jesus. And we feel so weak, don't we, and helpless in the spiritual battles that is going on. Well, friends, remember the Spirit has come, and He is with you to enable and help you to live and speak for Him. And so, I think the encouragement here from the very start of Acts is then to keep relying on the Spirit, to trust Him to be with us, and to trust the God who is mighty to save to work through you as you go and tell and live for the Lord Jesus. So, friends, go and tell the greatest news that we have. Trust the Spirit to be at work in us as we bear witness to all that

Jesus has done. Second, the promised Holy Spirit, the promised Holy Spirit tells us the time, repent and believe. So, first, He empowers our witness. Second, He tells us the time, repent and believe. So, what time does Peter say it is? He tells them that it's the last days. Verse 14, but Peter, standing with the eleven, lifted up his voice and addressed them, men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you and give ear to my words. For these people are not drunk, as you suppose, since it's only the third hour of the day. But this is what is uttered through the prophet Joel. And in the last days, it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall see dreams, even on my male servants and female servants. In those days, I will pour out my Spirit, and they shall prophesy. So, Peter stands up and preaches to the crowd that's before them that the speaking in all these languages that they're hearing isn't new wine. It's not drunkenness, but he ties it to the prophecy in Joel and says, actually, this is the last days. This is the last days where God promised that He would send His Spirit on His people. So, what they're seeing and what they're hearing here at Pentecost is a sign of the times. It's telling them the time. The last days have arrived. We look at the weather, that the length of days, the temperature, well, we can sort of look at the temperature, I guess, but we look at the length of days, certainly up here in the northeast. The day's length, and the temperature sort of gets warmer.

Oh, it's spring. The nights shorten again. The weather cools some. Oh, it's autumn. Oh, it's winter. These are signs of the season, aren't they? They tell us the time. Well, this pouring out of the Spirit, Peter says, tells us the time. We are in the last days. They have arrived. Or we could put it this way. We are in new covenant days, no longer in old covenant days. No, the new has come in Christ. So, why? Why has the season changed? Why has the calendar switched over to a new page? Why are we now in the last days? Well, Peter goes on to tell us it's because of Jesus. And Peter goes on to preach then how Jesus' life, death, resurrection, and exaltation have led to this change of season, to the Spirit coming and the last days arriving. Just look with me and sort of scan down. We don't have time to go into the detail of it all. But look with me. Verse 22, Peter preaches the life of Jesus. [16:03] Verse 23, the death of Jesus. Verse 24, the resurrection of Jesus. And verse 31 and 32. And also because of the exaltation of the Lord Jesus. Verse 33. And he concludes there, verse 36.

Jesus who was crucified is Lord and Christ. In other words, we're in the last days of the Spirit because Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ, the Savior, the Messiah, the King that was promised to David. He has come and he is here. And so, Peter's sermon there tells us a number of things. Firstly, the fact that the Spirit has come, says Peter, tells us, shows us, demonstrates to us that Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ. If you're not a Christian here today and you want evidence that Jesus really is who he says he was, look at the evidence of the Christians here who have come to know Jesus through the power of the Spirit. The Spirit would not have come. People would not have become Christians. The gospel would not have gone out if Jesus was not the Christ who fulfilled all of God's promises that he would send a Messiah, a Savior to this world. But since Jesus of

Nazareth is the Christ and is the Lord, is the one sent by God to save his people, so then the Spirit is poured out. And it tells us Jesus really is who he said he is and really did do what he set out to do, to save his people and bring his kingdom. So, the coming of the Spirit actually points us back to the Lord Jesus, to praise him and to demonstrate, to show us, yes, a Savior has come. Secondly, it tells us that God always keeps his promises. You see, the Spirit was promised by God to his people. There are glorious promises in Ezekiel, in Jeremiah, in Joel. Also, as we know through John the Baptist as well, as we see at the start of Acts 1, God promised he would send his Spirit, and he has. God will always keep his promises. So, as we arrive here at Pentecost and the Spirit is poured out, it's not as though the Spirit wasn't in the Old Testament. No, he was there at creation.

And at times, the Spirit would come upon a certain person at a certain time, for a certain moment, for a certain role. But it was like, perhaps, in Old Testament days, like a dam of water that just had a little hole open for a certain time as the Spirit would come upon someone. But here at Pentecost, if you like, the dam is burst, it's pulled up, it's taken away, and the Spirit is poured out upon all of God's people. That is what Joel is saying. Men and women, young and old, God's Spirit comes to all his people. God promised that, and God did it. But notice, actually, that the Spirit wasn't just promised to God's people. The Spirit was promised by the Father to Jesus as well. Verse 33, being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing.

So after Jesus ascends into heaven, what does he do? Or what does he do first? He ascends, he sits at the right hand of the Father, and he pours out his Spirit that people may receive new life and turn to him. And so, friends, the coming of the Spirit is a reminder that God always keeps his promises to his people. And third, and finally, the fact that the last days are here, it tells us that it is time to repent and believe. The day of salvation is here, and we are to turn to Christ. Did you see in the prophecy of Joel that we're in these last days? But as we're in these last days, there's another date in the diary put before us that the calendar has something else ahead.

[20 : 36] Verse 20, Joel says that the sun shall be turned to darkness, the moon to blood, before the day of the Lord comes, the great and magnificent day. Friends, we are still in these last days, this age of the Spirit, awaiting the great day of the Lord, when Jesus will return, but he will come in what? He will come in glory and in judgment. You see, verse 20 speaks of judgment, the sun turning to darkness, the moon to blood. It is speaking of judgment, judgment on sin and wrongdoing. So, we are in the last days waiting for that great day. So, what should we do? Verse 21, turn to the Lord Jesus, for all who call upon his name will be saved. The coming of the Spirit tells us the time, it's the time, the days, to turn to the Lord Jesus to be saved from the coming judgment. And notice how Peter's preaching in the Spirit and the work of the Spirit doesn't actually lead people to be pointed to the Spirit. No, it points people back to Christ.

It points people back to Jesus and our needs of Him. And so, there's no conflict between Christ and His Spirit. No, Christ sends His Spirit to point us all back to the Lord Jesus. We need to turn and come to Him.

And that is what happens. We see that. Some in the crowd, they turn and they believe, don't they? Verse 37, now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter, to the rest of the apostles, brothers, what shall we do? And Peter said to them, repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Verse 40, and with many other words, He bore witness and continued to exhort them, saying, save yourselves from this crooked generation. So, those who received His Word were baptized, and they were added that day about 3,000 souls. Dear friends, if anyone here does not know and trust the Lord Jesus, come to Him today. While it is still the last days, while it is the age of the Spirit, before the great and awesome day of the Lord. For it is only in Him, through His life and death and resurrection and exaltation, only in Jesus, that you can be saved. He is both Lord and Christ, King and Savior, the only way for you to escape the coming judgment of God on our sin. That day, the great day of the Lord is coming. So, while it is still today, turn to Him and be saved.

And don't think, I don't need it or I'm not worthy of it. No, verse 39, it's for everyone. This great gospel offer in the Lord Jesus is for everyone. All need it, and all are to come to Christ. For all need Christ, and the salvation that only He can give. So, if you don't know Jesus, while it is still today, this day, come and you will receive salvation in Him. And for all of us who do know and do love and do

trust the Lord Jesus, our invitation here is to keep living in the Spirit's power. To keep remembering that Jesus is both Lord and Christ. Not just a Savior, but a Lord who calls us to bend our knee in obedience and praise to Him. So, dear friend, are you looking to Him today? Are you remembering Him today? And indeed, it is for us to have great joy and assurance that He really has come. The table set before us reminds us of that, that in Christ, in His death and resurrection, there really is forgiveness and life in all its fullness. Friends, Christ has come. Our sins have been dealt with for all who have repented and believed. Forgiveness and new life is ours because of His grace and His mercy and His love. And by His Spirit, He has brought us to Himself. So, let us then, with thanksgiving, praise the Father for sending us a Savior, who then sent His Spirit, that we might be brought to Christ and have life in Him forever. Let's pray.