

Four miracles at Pentecost!

Christ Church: 19th May 2024 10.00 am. & online
Acts 2:1-41 page 1093

Pentecost was 50 days after Passover. Both festivals relate back to the Exodus: Passover to the night of escape, Pentecost to when they arrived at Mount Sinai and Moses received the law. So it is about how the Jews were to live as a people under God.

But Pentecost was also an agricultural festival for first fruits from the harvest. These are the contexts Luke, the writer, wants us to understand. There is a new era, there is to be a new community.

There are in fact *four* miracles in this chapter.

- 1 The Holy Spirit is given to the apostles as a gift and in a dramatic form (vv1-13). They are enabled to speak in all kinds of languages that Jews who hear them recognise.
- 2 Peter, the one who denied his Master, preaches an amazingly powerful sermon (vv14-36). The Spirit has filled him and changed him. He demonstrates that what has happened is foretold in the Prophets.
- 3 The Holy Spirit is then to be 'received' by all Christian disciples, and we are to be 'filled' with him (vv38-39,4). The NT letters confirm these ideas (eg. Ephesians 5:18).
- 4 3,000 become Christians that day and are baptised and added to the Church (v41).

Luke is writing Acts to show how the Gospel spread, how the Kingdom grew, how the Church began – so he gives more attention to Peter's sermon than to the miraculous signs! (23 verses cf. 13)

So we now pick up the sermon after the Joel passage at v22. What can we learn from what Peter says? (Read Acts 2:22-41.) Four ideas.

Relevance: Its context is that of his listeners

- 'Fellow Jews' (v14)
- What has happened explains their own Scriptures: Joel 2:28-32, David in Psalms 16 (vv25-28) & 110 (vv34,35)
- Reference to the Messiah (v36)

Reality: A blunt accusation of sin

- 'Jesus whom you crucified' – but we do too in sin (vv23,36)
- Leading to their cry of 'What shall we do?' (v37)
- And hence the need to repent for forgiveness (v38)
- Society described as corrupt (v40)

Notice too the reference in the Joel prophecy for salvation (v21) and Peter's use of this word too in v40. It's a word about wholeness and eventual rescue from death on the Day of Judgement.

Resurrection: Focus on the risen Christ as Lord

- Note how central Jesus is to all Peter says (vv22-36)
- Focus on crucifixion and resurrection (vv23,24,32)
- The resurrection/ascension are the key – note Daniel 7:13,14 (!) and Psalms 16 & 110, which Peter cites (vv31-33)
- Now, as raised, he is Lord and Messiah (v36)

Note that the Spirit points to Jesus Christ as Jesus had foretold (John 15:26) – that is his role, as demonstrated clearly here.

Response: To repent and be baptised

- They were the ones who wanted to know what to do (v37)
- The required action: repent and be baptised to be forgiven (v38)
- They then received the Holy Spirit too (vv38,39)

Note that they had been amazed and perplexed (v12) and had even before the sermon asked 'What does this mean?'

So what are we to do?

Relevance: live in this world not cut ourselves off.

Reality: perhaps we need to be more open about our faith.

Resurrection: remember we serve a risen, ascended Lord.

Response: Ask questions as to our actions after a service.

If you are a Christian you have gifts of both forgiveness and the Spirit within you pointing to Jesus. All Christians have both.

We are to seek the filling of the Spirit so that we can be witnesses of the Lord Jesus Christ.