

Kairos Church Ministries
BIBLE STUDY
May 3, 2016

What is the Meaning of Pentecost



“What Does This Mean?” Acts 2:12

INTRODUCTION:

When the Holy Spirit came upon the apostles and the other believers on the Day of Pentecost, those who heard those speaking in tongues were perplexed and asked, “What does this mean?” The question persists in our day. Many claim that the meaning of Pentecost is that we should have the same experience as the disciples, namely, that we are to seek the baptism of the Holy Spirit and to speak in tongues. You have probably had other Christians ask you, as I have, “Have you received the baptism of the Holy Spirit?” If you have not spoken in tongues, they are eager to help you have this experience for yourself. We all need to answer biblically, in light of the context, What is the meaning of Pentecost?

Acts 2:1-5 must be interpreted in light of **Acts 1:4-8**, where the risen Lord Jesus instructed the disciples to wait in Jerusalem for the promise of the Father, the Holy Spirit. Jesus explained that they would “be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now” (1:5) and they would receive power to be Christ’s “witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth” (1:8). Just as the ministry of Jesus depended on the Holy Spirit descending on Him at His baptism, so the ministry of the disciples depended on them receiving the Holy Spirit and relying on His power. While they had experienced a measure of the Spirit’s power before (**John 20:22**), now He would come to dwell in them permanently (**John 7:37-39; 14:17**).

Thus Acts 2 must be interpreted as a special historical event, signifying a new period in God’s dealings with His people. Pentecost signals the dawning of the age of the Holy Spirit. And the fullness of the Spirit in God’s people is to empower them for witness to all the nations. Thus, the meaning of Pentecost is God’s equipping His church with the power of His Spirit so that He will be glorified among the nations.

The point of Pentecost is mission, and the goal of mission is that “the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea” (**Hab. 2:14**). If we properly understand this great historic event, our hearts will be enflamed with cause of seeing some from every tribe and tongue and nation bowing before the exalted Lord Jesus Christ. During this study we are going to note four things:

1. God’s plan for being glorified among the nations was to form the church.
 - a. We must understand the Jewish Feast of Pentecost (**Lev. 23:15-21**)

- b. Inclusion of the Gentiles (**Eph. 3:4-7**)
 - c. The church founded on the apostolic confession (**Matt. 16:18**)
 - d. Our purpose is to spread the knowledge of God to all the nations, beginning here in our own “Jerusalem.”
2. The scope of God’s plan is all the nations
- a. Representatives of the nations (**Acts 2:9-11**)
 - b. Tower of Babel
 - c. The gift of speaking in tongues was a special miracle to demonstrate God’s purpose in taking the gospel to all the nations.
 - d. Paul and Barnabas did not understand the Lycaonian dialect (**Acts 14:11-14**)
 - e. God’s plan is no longer to be bottled up (**Revelation 5:9**)
3. The Necessary power for fulfilling God’s plan is His Holy Spirit.
- a. Holy Spirit is not just a force. (Eph. 4:30)
 - i. Jesus calls Him the Paraclete
 - ii. He performs deeds (**Acts 5:3-5**)
 - b. The Holy Spirit regenerated men and empowered them for serving
 - c. Transitional outpourings of the Holy Spirit follow the pattern of (**Acts 1:8**)
 - d. All that believe in Christ receive the Holy Spirit at the moment of salvation (**Gal. 3:2-5**)
 - e. In **Acts 1:5**, Jesus said that the apostles would be baptized by the Holy Spirit, which occurred on the Day of Pentecost.
 - f. Baptism refers to being totally identified with the Spirit and to the initial reception of the Spirit. (**1 Cor. 12:13**)
 - g. If the baptism of the Spirit were a special experience for the spiritually elite, Paul would not have said such a thing to the Corinthians, who were not noted for their spiritual maturity!
 - h. The New Testament nowhere commands believers to be baptized with the Holy Spirit, since it is not an experience we are to seek, but God’s action performed on the believer at the moment of salvation.
 - i. We are commanded to be filled with the Spirit, which means to be controlled by the Spirit (**Eph. 5:18**).
 - j. To be filled with the Spirit, we must empty ourselves by confessing all known sin and by dying to self. We must yield ourselves fully to the Lord and depend on Him step by step (“walking in the Spirit,” **Gal. 5:16**).
 - k. Thus the filling of the Spirit cannot be divorced from God’s Word being at home in your heart. The results of a consistent daily walk in the Spirit will be the fruit of the Spirit (**Gal. 5:22-23**) manifested in our lives and relationships.
 - l. Being filled with the Spirit is also called letting the Word of Christ richly dwell in you (**Col. 3:16 – Eph.5:18**)
 - m. The initial outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost was marked by three symbolic phenomena.
 - i. The sound of a violent rushing wind that filled the house
 - ii. Visible sign of tongues of fire resting on each person
 - iii. Speaking in foreign languages which none had previously learned
 - n. Should we seek to speak in tongues?

- i. The word translated “tongues” in both Acts chapter 2 and 1 Corinthians chapter 14 is glossa which means “language.” It is the word from which we get our modern English word “glossary.”
 - ii. Some argue that the sign of being baptized with the Spirit is speaking in tongues and that if you have not done that, you are lacking a vital spiritual experience. This is a controversial subject; if you disagree with me, please try to set aside your emotions and reason with me from Scripture. As I said, there is no command to seek the baptism of the Holy Spirit, although we are commanded to be filled with the Spirit. The main evidence of being filled with the Spirit is the fruit of the Spirit, which is godly character (**Gal. 5:16-23; Col. 1:9-12**).
 - iii. First, we need to be clear that the genuine gift of tongues is the ability to speak a foreign language that you have not studied.
 - iv. We are never commanded or encouraged to seek the gift of tongues. Rather, the Holy Spirit sovereignly distributes gifts as He wills (**1 Cor. 12:11**).
 - v. From the context of Acts 2, the meaning of Pentecost was not to encourage believers to have an ecstatic experience for their own edification. The meaning of Pentecost was that God gave the Holy Spirit to His church so that they would bear witness to the nations for His glory.
 - vi. So should one seek to speak in tongues? Yes, not for evidence of having the Holy Spirit, but for praying in the Spirit but tongues edify self by talking to the father. . **1 Corinthians 14:4 (AMP)**
 He who speaks in a [strange] tongue edifies and improves himself, but he who prophesies [interpreting the divine will and purpose and teaching with inspiration] edifies and improves the church and promotes growth [in Christian wisdom, piety, holiness, and happiness]. Jude 1:20 (AMP)
 20 But you, beloved, build yourselves up [founded] on your most holy faith [make progress, rise like an edifice higher and higher], praying in the Holy Spirit;
4. The goal of God’s plan is that He will be glorified among the nations.
- a. The nations heard the disciples “speaking of the mighty deeds of God” (2:11).
 - b. Book of Acts is a record not only of might conversions, but also of fierce opposition to the preaching of the gospel
 - c. Pentecost was to equip His church with the mighty power of the Holy Spirit so that we would be His witnesses to all the nations, resulting in His eternal glory