Acts of the Apostles – 2

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II. Introduction
- A. The setting of chapter one summarized the Lord's ascension and the replacement of Judas.
- B. The Lord Jesus before ascending promised them a baptism of the Holy Ghost in a few days.
- C. The congregation of the Lord at this stage was a group of 120 frightened and timid disciples.
- D. The kingdom of God appeared weak, impotent, precarious, and without much to admire it.

III. The Sense and Meaning
- A. The apostles and disciples were all baptized by a superabundant granting of the Spirit (2:1-4).
  - 1. Pentecost (meaning fifty) comes to English from Greek and is the Feast of Weeks.
    - a. It is also called the feast of harvest and commemorates the completion of grain harvest (Ex 23:16). It is observed for one day - fifty days after Nisan 16, or one day after seven weeks after the second day of the Passover Feast.
    - b. It was one of three feasts, which all men of Israel were to attend (Ex 23:14-17).
    - c. This feast was important to Paul even after his conversion (20:16; I Cor 16:8).
    - d. Because of this holy season, there were many foreign Jews back home (2:5).
  - 2. Notice the unity – they were ALL with ONE accord in ONE place (Ep 4:1-6; I Pe 3:7).
  - 3. The Spirit comes from heaven with a sudden and dramatic Presence to fill all of them.
    - a. We do not read of a rushing mighty wind but rather the sound of such a wind.
    - b. Our Lord compared the Spirit to the wind to Nicodemus earlier (John 3:8).
    - c. The wind, from a pleasant breeze to a destructive hurricane, is from the Lord.
    - d. When a house is filled where people sit, they have been immersed and buried!
  - 4. Each one was given a visible sign of the Spirit's Presence indicating the spiritual gift.
    - a. Jesus had the likeness of a dove to indicate the Spirit's Presence (Mat 3:16-17).
    - b. Only John and Jesus saw the Spirit's manifestation descend on Jesus (Jn 1:32).
    - c. It was not a literal tongue of fire on them any more than it was a literal dove.
    - d. A cloven tongue – split lengthwise or cleft asunder – would be a split flame.
    - e. These tongues represented the gift of tongues and the Spirit's flame (Rev 4:5).
    - f. This is not the baptism of fire whatsoever – it is the baptism of the Holy Ghost.
  - 5. The Spirit not only filled the room with His Presence, but He also filled all of them.
    - a. They had received the Holy Ghost earlier, but this was a filling (Jn 20:21-23).
    - b. This filling was not permanent, for they received it again just days later (4:31).

B. The apostles and disciples were given a miraculous gift of speaking in other tongues (2:4-13).
   1. Other tongues mean other languages, for this is the true sense of the word tongue.
      a. **Tongue**. The speech or language of a people or race (Oxford English Dictionary).
      b. God confounded the languages or tongues of men at Babel (Gen 10:5; 11:1-9).
      c. Foreign tongues (languages) are not understood (Genesis 11:7; Deut 28:49).
      d. Each nation has its tongue or language (Ezra 4:7; Dan 1:4; Acts 22:2; 26:14).
      e. Heaven has those of every tongue or language due to every nation (Rev 5:9).
      f. Words vary in different languages (Re 9:11). Pilate wrote thrice (Jn 19:19-20).
      g. Compare Acts 2:6 "his own language" with Acts 2:8 "our own tongue," and do not let ignorant persons even suggest that tongues were Charismatic gibberish.
      h. They did not hear the babbling of idiots; they heard God's wonderful works.
      i. The Bible knows nothing of the ecstatic speech or gibberish promoted today.
   2. The gift of tongues is grossly misunderstood today and perverted by the Charismatics.
      a. "Unknown" tongues are new languages not known to hearers (I Cor 14:6-14).
      b. Tongues "of angels" is Paul's illustrative hyperbole raising love (I Co 13:1-3).
      c. Tongues are a sign (Mar 16:17), but gibberish is clear madness (I Cor 14:23).
      d. Tongues are the very least gift in the church (I Cor 12:28) but exalted today.
      e. We are to covet earnestly the best gifts – anything but tongues (I Cor 12:31).
      f. Teaching was far more important than tongues in Paul's rules (I Cor 14:1-26).
      g. Tongues were a sign to unbelievers – not a thrill for believers (I Cor 14:21-22).
      h. Tongues were limited to three speakers and only one at a time (I Cor 14:27).
      i. Tongues were limited to assemblies with a gifted interpreter (I Cor 14:28).
      j. Tongues were never used by women in an assembly with Paul (I Co 14:34-35).
      k. These rules from the Holy Ghost were for all the churches (I Cor 14:33).
   3. Jerusalem at this time (Passover/Pentecost) had Jews from every nation under heaven.
      a. These were devout men inasmuch as they traveled great distances for this feast.
      b. These men were amazed to hear Galilaean Jews speak in their own languages.
      c. There are fifteen different languages represented by Luke's specific listing.
      d. Galilaeans had a corrupt dialect (Mar 14:70), so even men of Judah knew it.
   4. This incredible event quickly got their attention and a multitude formed around them.
      a. These devout worshippers of God were confounded and amazed at the miracle.
      b. It was an obvious, unquestionable demonstration of the power of God to them.
      c. They were hearing wonderful preaching of the wonderful works of God.
      d. In their amazement and doubt they remained sober wondering at the miracle.
      e. Others who did not remain sober but showed their foolishness mocked them.
      f. It is a fact of drunkenness that it steals the proficient use of the tongue. But these spoke perfectly, and they spoke in new languages never before learned. Oh what ignorance and rebellion resides in the hearts of men apart from grace.

C. Peter explains this miraculous speaking in other languages as fulfilling prophecy (2:14-21).
   1. With full solemnity and authority, Peter instructs the multitude with the other apostles.
   2. He rules out the mocking ridicule of drunkenness due to the time of day (9:00 A.M.).
   3. With the most precise language possible, Peter teaches fulfillment of Joel's prophecy.
      a. Peter shows Holy Ghost understanding applying a prophecy from Joel 2:28-32.
      b. Whether you can understand the application or not is totally irrelevant to truth.
      c. We are neither experiencing nor waiting for the fulfillment of this prophecy, in spite of how often Jimmy Swaggert or Kenneth Copeland quotes it adoringly.
      d. It is in the future tense ("it shall come to pass") only from Joel's perspective.
      e. Peter identifies it plainly as being fulfilled in the present tense ("this is that").

4. God gave Joel a preview of His glorious granting of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost.
    a. It would be in the last days of Israel – the days of the Son of God (Heb 1:1).
    b. It would be general instead of particular – men and women of all ages (21:9).
    c. Revelatory gifts would be until Scripture was done (I Cor 13:8-12; II Pet 1:19).
5. All this would occur before the great and notable day of the Lord would come.
    a. This great and notable day of the Lord is that of Malachi 3:1-6; 4:1-6. <u>See 4:5</u>.
    b. John the Baptist warned of a day of judgment to come soon (Matthew 3:7-12).
    c. Luke had already written of it (Luke 17:22-37; 19:41-44; 21:32-36; 23:28-31).
    d. Paul warned of coming judgment on Hebrews (I Thes 2:14-16; Heb 10:23-31).
    e. Peter concludes his sermon with many other words about this judgment (2:40).
    f. This day of judgment was the destruction of Israel and Jerusalem in 70 A.D.
6. But salvation from this day was offered to those who would call on the Lord Jesus.
    a. Very real salvation from a very real judgment was known (Mat 10:22; 24:13).
    b. Believers could be saved (2:40) by fleeing to the mountains (Luke 21:20-24).
    c. Peter will conclude his sermon with many other words of this salvation (2:40).
7. But, mister, what about the blood, fire, vapour of smoke, dark sun, and bloody moon?
    a. Either Peter was an ignorant liar (2:16) or you are an ignorant reader (2:19-20).
    b. Maybe you should read the prophets' methods (Hos 12:10; I Pet 1:11; Re 1:1).
    c. In the day of the Lord in Isaiah (13:6,9,13), did the Medes truly (13:17) knock out the stars, sun, and moon (13:10), shake the heavens (13:13), and remove the earth (13:13) in 452 B.C. when they conquered the city of Babylon?
    d. Great events in spiritual, religious, or political realms are described in terms of cataclysmic events in the natural realm i.e. stars falling, sun not shining, etc.
    e. Have you ever called an event "earth shaking"? Then why get confused here?

D. Peter begins his glorious sermon by announcing that Jesus Christ was indeed alive (2:22-24).
1. Note how the miraculous speaking in tongues got everyone's attention for this sermon.
2. See the authority by which Peter, a timid man 50 days before, confronts the multitude.
3. The identity of Jesus of Nazareth was known to all by the stupendous miracles He did.
    a. It was clear proof of His Divine message, as the Jews were to require signs.
    b. This thing was not done in a corner, so all knew He was special (10:36-38).
4. Jesus going to the cross was by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God.
    a. Salvation of sinners by Jesus Christ is surely the most determined event of all.
    b. Whether no bones broken, lots for His raiment, or the death of Judas, it was all according to the Divine decrees.
    c. It is not mere foreknowledge, for it does and must flow from predestination.
    d. Rather than His crucifixion denying His Divine mission, it rather confirms it.
5. Peter confronts them about taking the Lord Jesus with wicked hands and slaying Him.
    a. God's true ministers are neither effeminate nor fearful. They call it boldly.
    b. Though they fulfilled God's determinate counsel, they were guilty of great sin.
6. Peter states the fact first about Jesus of Nazareth – God has raised Him from the dead.
    a. The same Jesus you wickedly crucified has been raised from the dead by God.
    b. As the anointed Christ of God, it was not possible that death could hinder Him.

E. Peter explains with careful reasoning that David had precisely foretold this event (2:25-32).
1. Having stated the fact – Jesus is alive from the dead – Peter uses David to prove it.
2. David recorded a prophecy in Psalm 16:8-11, which is from our Lord's perspective.
    a. David wrote that he ALWAYS saw the Lord and that he was never moved.
    b. David wrote of great joy and gladness and of his flesh RESTING IN HOPE.
    c. David wrote of rescue from hell and being SAVED FROM CORRUPTION.
    d. David wrote of being shown the WAYS OF LIFE and God's countenance.

3. Peter reasons: David is dead and buried here, therefore he did not write of himself.
4. Peter reasons: David was a prophet with a promised Son, therefore he wrote of Him.
5. By God's inspiration, David saw long ago the resurrection of Christ from the dead, and in this way prophesied of Christ's deliverance from hell and bodily corruption.
6. This Jesus, Whom David fathered and wrote about, we have witnessed alive recently.

F. Peter explains that this resurrected Son of David has been exalted as King of Israel (2:33-36).
1. As exalted King, and receiving the reward of the Spirit, Jesus has created this event.
2. David was not exalted in heaven, but rather he spoke prophetically of the Lord Christ.
   a. This prophecy, used elsewhere by Jesus, was from the psalms also (Ps 110:2).
   b. Jesus taught David calling his Son Lord meant He was God (Mat 22:41-46).
   c. David was addressing this Son of his as his Lord, so He must be God Himself.
   d. David prophesied of Christ sitting on His throne and judging His enemies.
3. The obvious conclusion is that you Israelites have crucified God's Lord and Christ.
4. The message of the gospel is that Jesus is King – simple news deserving a response.

G. This multitude had sensitive hearts to truth and displayed a response of godly men (2:37-38).
1. Sometimes the gospel pricks and sometimes it cuts (2:37 cp 7:54; II Cor 2:14-17).
2. Consider the Lord making His people willing in the day of His power (Psalm 110:3).
3. Godly men respond to truth with open desire to obey God (10:1-6; Luke 3:10-14).
4. Peter gives the answer that still stands: Repent, and be baptized in the name of Jesus!
   a. "Baptism of repentance" combines both (Mark 1:4; Luke 3:3; Act 13:24; 19:4).
   b. Baptism is a figurative salvation from sin (Acts 22:16; Rom 6:3-5; I Pet 3:21).
   c. This condition of faith and baptism brought the Holy Ghost (John 7:37-39).
   d. The Bible does not recognize faith without baptism (Mark 16:16; Acts 8:37).

H. Peter extends the promise of the Holy Ghost (2:33) to other generations and Gentiles (2:39).
1. The churches of Galatia received the Holy Spirit by believing the gospel (Gal 3:2).
2. The church at Ephesus received the Holy Spirit by believing the gospel (Eph 1:13).
3. Those "afar off" were the Gentiles blessed with the Holy Spirit (Eph 2:13,17-18).

I. Peter further explains the coming day of judgment against Israel and salvation from it (2:40).
1. Salvation from sin is by God's grace; salvation from Roman armies was by obedience.
2. Missing the importance of 70 A.D. in the New Testament cheats us of Christ's glory.
3. Observe that he used many other words to testify of the coming tribulation on Israel.
4. God was about to bring all the righteous blood from Abel on that ungodly generation.
5. God calls us to separate from ungodliness (Phil 2:15; II Cor 6:17; Tit 2:14; Jas 1:27).

J. Observe the character of those converted by a powerful blessing of the Holy Ghost (2:41-43).
1. True God-fearers receive instruction – no matter how condemning and new – gladly!
   a. The Lord calls the Bereans noble for the way in which they responded (17:11).
      (1) They received the preaching with ready minds – humbly eager to learn.
      (2) They read Scripture zealously to confirm the preaching – not reject it.
      (3) They believed what they heard and obeyed it with no ignorant arguing.
   b. John the Baptist blasted the gospel trumpet: see the response (Luke 3:10-14).
   c. The Thessalonians converted with suffering to believe with joy (I The 1:6-10).
   d. Peter had condemned these hearers as the wicked murderers of Jesus (2:23,36).
   e. He demanded repentance (change of life) and baptism without delay (2:37-38).
   f. If you need to think about being baptized, then you have not fully believed yet.

2. They immediately sought to join the apostles and disciples to be in their fellowship.
    a. They joined as do all church members anywhere – by mutual assent (9:26).
        (1) Roman Catholic heresy spawned baptismal membership – even infants.
        (2) The gift of the Holy Ghost is not membership. It is the Holy Ghost!
        (3) Receiving, or excluding members, is by formal congregational action.
        (4) The eunuch was no more a member at Jerusalem than you are (8:39).
        (5) God converts; we receive; the Spirit adds members (I Cor 12:13,19,27).
    b. There is an error today that we do not need the fellowship of other believers.
        (1) Observe that these Spirit-filled believers were not content with tapes.
        (2) They loved the saints (I Jn 5:1) and wanted fellowship (He 10:23-25).
        (3) The multiplication of communication media has created isolationism.
        (4) God's order by apostolic tradition is for saints to assemble together.
        (5) The error comes from pride, selfishness, carnality, and some ignorance.
3. These Holy Spirit converted believers not only started well but also continued well.
    a. True conversion lasts. We cannot presume well of quitters (Heb 10:38-39).
    b. They continued – not weakly or by mere attendance – but with stedfastness.
    c. They continued in the apostles' doctrine, community of fellowship, and prayer.
    d. Breaking of bread here is the eating of food with each other as we ought to do.
        (1) "Breaking of bread" can be common eating (Lu 24:35; 14:1,15; 15:17).
        (2) Bread was a primary food staple (Lu 4:3; 11:3; 24:30; II Thess 3:8,12).
        (3) And it is the common eating of bread and meat in the context (2:46).
        (4) Besides, this breaking of bread is not modified by "in the apostles'."
        (5) The Lord's supper was done in a general assembly (20:7; I Cor 11:20).
        (6) "Given to hospitality" is a mark of Spirit-filled Christians (Rom 12:13).
4. A Spirit-filled church results in a fearful and sober attitude of every one to the gospel.
    a. This was not the fear of man or loss, but rather fear of the Lord (9:31; 19:17).
    b. It included fearful respect of the apostles – rightly so as the Lord's men (5:13).
    c. Spiritual Christianity perfects holiness in the fear of the Lord (II Cor 7:1,11).
    d. Grace in Christ is to serve Him with reverence and godly fear (Heb 12:28).
    e. The Presence of the Lord even with beneficial miracles creates fear (Luke 5:8).
    f. First the incredible tongues display and then other wonders affected them all.
    g. Holy living by God's people brings Holy Spirit power as it did to the apostles.

K. Note the character of those continuing stedfast in apostolic doctrine and fellowship (2:44-47).
1. They were together – they did not live their own little lives catching up on Sundays.
    a. They were not together all the time, but they assembled daily and ate together.
    b. The error of forsaking assemblies had not yet occurred in this Spiritual season.
2. They had all things common – no man considered anything uniquely his own.
3. They shared their blessings widely – those with more shared with those who had less.
    a. Not all property was sold; we read of houses remaining (5:42; 12:12; 16:15).
    b. The rich cheerfully obeyed Paul's instruction to distribute (I Timothy 6:17-19).
    c. Barnabas was a great example of this (4:34-37), and Ananias was not (5:1-11).
    d. Such a community of property was not commanded nor seen elsewhere (5:4).
4. They continued daily – this was neither a one-service church nor a two-service church.
5. They continued with one accord – they didn't allow division and strife to divide them.
6. They ate with one another in their houses with Christian joy and unified hearts.
7. They praised God (Ephesians 5:19; Philippians 4:8; Hebrews 2:12; 12:28; 13:15).
8. They were in favour with all the people, which shows their true character (Luke 2:52).
    a. When a man's ways please the Lord, He takes away his enemies (Prov 16:7).
    b. Jesus gave love to one another as their great sign (Jn 13:35), and it was visible.
    c. The rulers hated Jesus and apostles rather than the people (4:1-3; Matt 23:13).

L. When a church lives in the Holy Spirit, we should expect God's blessing of growth (2:47).
   1. The Lord opens hearts and grants repentance, so we need Him (16:14; II Tim 2:25).
   2. Conversion missing God's great work of regeneration is vanity and vexation of spirit.
   3. If we try growth by fleshly efforts, we are no better than Abraham begetting Ishmael.
   4. There is a salvation in the church of Jesus Christ – from 70 A.D. judgment and more.

IV. The Application

V. The Difficulties