

PASSOVER

FAST

PENTECOST

LESSON 9



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Continuing the
Spiritual Journey

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We close this study tonight examining one final affect that was wrought by the gifting of the Holy Spirit to the world and the formation of the Church.

So far, in his discourse, Peter has directed his attention to the single object of proving the inspiration of himself and his associates.

This was necessary logically due to the unexplained occurrences of people speaking and those hearing could hear in their own language.

- Notice there is no question of the wind nor of tongues of fire, for this was evidenced by the upper room inhabitants only.
- **Acts 2:2-4** And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. ³Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and *one* sat upon each of them. ⁴And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

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- ❖ God always cast His glory on each tabernacle in which He chose to dwell before the exile (**Exd. 40:34** Then the cloud covered the tabernacle of meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle.)
- ❖ **I Kings 8:10-11** And it came to pass, when the priests came out of the holy *place*, that the cloud filled the house of the Lord, ¹¹ so that the priests could not continue ministering because of the cloud; for the glory of the Lord filled the house of the Lord
- The masses did not know about the tongues of fire, but they did hear the sound and it created confusion
 - **Acts 2:6** And when this **sound occurred**, the multitude came together, and were **confused**, because everyone heard them speak in his own language.
 - ❖ The sound which confused them was the “other tongues” in V 4 which was so loud it drew the crowd together (confused/ confounded = syncheō = pour together)

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Upon beholding the miraculous scene, the amazement of the people (Acts 2:7) was a tacit acknowledgment of their inability to account for it.

- This the stage being set for Peter to declare an explanation of what was occurring

But if even he had attributed the effects which they witnessed to any less than divine power, they must have rejected his explanation as unsatisfactory.

Their question was not, whether this was a divine or human manifestation, but, admitting its divinity, their response was mixed (a) “What does this *mean?*” and (b) And since I don’t understand I will deride and make fun of in while doubting (*They are intoxicated* --Acts 2:12)

- **The doubt** in V 12 denotes a state of *hesitancy* or *anxiety* about an event.
- It is applied to those who are travelling, and are ignorant of the way, or who hesitate about the road.
- They were *all* astonished at this; they did not know how to understand it or explain it, until some of them supposed that it was merely the effect of new wine.

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- This response was not just confined to this event for similarly we find in Acts 17:32 “when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked.”
- There has seldom been a spiritual revival without a remarkable manifestation of the power of the Holy Spirit, that has not given occasion for profane mockery and merriment.
- One characteristic of wicked men is to deride those things which are done to promote their own welfare.
- Hence the Savior himself was mocked; and the efforts of Christians to save others have been the subject of derision.
- *Derision*, and *mockery*, and *a jeer*, have been far more effectual in deterring men from becoming Christians than any attempts at sober argument.

There is an arrogant ignorance to the truth that God will treat men as they treat Him:

➤ **Ps. 18:26-27** With the pure You will show Yourself pure; And with the devious You will show Yourself shrewd. ²⁷For You will save the humble people, But will bring down haughty looks.

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- ❖ The sinner's contrariness (froward) is sinful and rebellious, and the only sense in which the term can be applied to the Most Holy God is that of judicial opposition and sternness
 - ❖ all that these moments, the Judge the earth will act at cross purposes with the offender, letting him see things are not to be made subservient to wicked whims.
 - ❖ There is a similar thought conveyed in the OT where God says '*...and if ye walk contrary unto (or perversely with) me, then I will also walk contrary unto (or perversely, or roughly, or at random with) you.*'
- **Lev. 26:21-25** 'Then, if you **walk contrary to Me**, and are **not willing to obey Me**, I will bring on you seven times more plagues, **according to your sins.** ²² I will also **send wild beasts among you**, which shall rob you of your children, **destroy your livestock**, and **make you few in number**; and your **highways shall be desolate.** ²³ 'And if **by these things you are not reformed by Me**, but **walk contrary to Me,** ²⁴ **then I also will walk contrary to you,**

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and I will **punish you yet seven times** for your sins. ²⁵ And I will bring a sword against you that will execute the vengeance of the covenant; when you are gathered together within your cities; I will send pestilence among you; and you shall be delivered into the hand of the enemy.

- ✓ **V 19 is the prologue to this context** And I will break the **pride of your power**; and I will make your heaven as iron, and your earth as brass
- ✓ There are no figures which could have been employed to convey a better idea of severe and long-continued famine.
- ✓ **V 22 Wild beasts** was one of the four judgments threatened (Ezk. 14:21; II Kings 2:4) that will kill cattle and humans
- ✓ **Warfare, famine, and plague** usually go together; for when people are hemmed in by the enemy, they run out of food and become ill, and terrible plagues begin to spread (Ezk. 5).
- ✓ **Your highways shall be desolate**—Trade and commerce will be destroyed—freedom and safety will be gone—neither stranger nor native will be found on the roads (Isa 33:8).

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- ✓ This is an exact picture of the present state of the Holy Land, which has long lain in a state of desolation, brought on by the sins of the ancient Jews.
- ✓ In the **contextual epilogue** in **V 26** it is declared **ten women shall bake your bread in one oven**
- ✓ The bread used in families is usually baked by women, and at home, but sometimes also, **in times of scarcity**, it is baked in public ovens for want of fuel
- ✓ The scarcity predicted here would be so great, that one oven would be sufficient to bake as much as ten women used in ordinary occasions to provide for family use; and even this scanty portion of bread would be distributed by weight (Ezk 4:16).

As if he had said that their obstinacy and stubbornness would make God withhold His accustomed forbearance and gentleness and cast Him recklessly against them.

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We see then what the stubborn gain by their obstinacy; it is this, God hardens Himself even more to break them in pieces, and if they are of stone, He causes them to feel that He has the hardness of iron.

In Jewish tradition it is stated that the manna tasted according to each man's mouth; certainly, God shows Himself individually according to character.

Therefore, God says to the wicked, “Because I have called and ye refused ... but ye have set at naught my counsel; I also will laugh at your calamity, I will *mock* when your fear cometh” (Prov. 1:24–26)

The absurdity of concluding that “*these men are full of new wine*” demonstrates what happens to the thinking of those devoid of the Spirit of God.

- How much more rational to admit your ignorance in the matter rather than adopting a theory *that strong drink can teach languages.*”

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- When men fail in argument, it is common to attempt to confute a doctrine or bring reproach upon a transaction by “**giving it an ill name.**”
- Hence the names Puritan, Quaker, Methodist, and even Christian, were at first given in derision, to account for some remarkable effect of religion on the world.
 - **Matt. 11:19** The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, 'Look, a glutton and a winebibber, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!' But wisdom is justified by her children." [*God's wisdom will become visible by those who embrace it (TPT)*]
- Too often we have seen the offspring of fanaticism trace their revival, growth and advancement to ungoverned and heated passions.

Yet God has a way of making known his purpose and will -- V 14. *But Peter* – a phrase that stands in accord with the natural temperament of the Apostle.

- He was bold, forward, and ardent; and he arises now to defend the apostles of Jesus Christ, and Christ himself, from an injurious charge.

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Undaunted by ridicule or opposition, he felt that now was the time for preaching the gospel to the crowd that had been assembled by curiosity.

- No ridicule should deter Christians from an honest avowal of their opinions, and a defense of the operations of the Holy Spirit.

Peter standing *with the eleven, for* Matthias was now one of the apostles, appearing as one of the witnesses for the truth (V 14) – they all arose, and took part in the discourse.

- Peter did not intimate this was a doubtful matter, or one that could not be explained.
- His address was respectful, yet firm as he proceeded calmly to *show* them their error.
 - When the enemies of religion deride us or the gospel, we should answer them kindly and respectfully, yet firmly.
 - We should *reason* with them coolly, and convince them of their error.
 - ❖ **Prov. 15:1** A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.

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In this case Peter acted on the principle which he afterward enjoined in I Pet. 3:15, “Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear.”

The design of Peter was to *vindicate* the apostles from the charge of intoxication; and to show that this could be nothing other than the work of God.

This he did:

- (1) By showing this could not be reasonably supposed to be the effect of new wine (V15)
- (2) By showing what had occurred had been expressly predicted in the writings of the Jewish prophets (V 16–21).
- (3) By a calm argument, proving the resurrection and ascension of Christ, and showing that this also was in accordance with the Jewish Scriptures (V 22–35)

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We are not to suppose that this was the *whole* of Peter's discourse, but that these were the topics on which he insisted, and the main points of his argument.

If Peter had closed his discourse discussing the prophecy of old, the multitude would have gone away **convinced** of his inspiration, but not one of them would have been **converted**.

All that had been said and done was preparatory; being a necessary preparation for what is to follow – it requires acceptance of gospel truth to turn the hearts and minds toward Jesus

The distance of time and space makes it impossible to even faintly realize the effect upon the minds of the hearers produced by the announcement next made by Peter.

- **Acts 2:22-24** "Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know-- ²³ Him, being **delivered** by the

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determined purpose and **foreknowledge** of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death; ²⁴ whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it.

Filled with amazement by the visible and audible manifestation of the Spirit, they now see that the whole of this amazing phenomenon is subservient to the name of the Nazarene whom they had despised and crucified.

This conviction is brought home in a sentence so replete with overwhelming facts, as to make them stagger under a succession of rapidly repeated fearful blows.

In one breath they have just heard no less than seven startling propositions:

1st That Jesus had been approved by God among them, by miracles and wonders and signs which God had done by him.

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2nd That they, themselves, *knew* this to be so.

3rd That it was not from impotence on His part, but in accordance with the purpose and foreknowledge of God, that he was yielded up to them.

4th That when thus yielded up they had put him to death, by the torture of crucifixion.

5th That they had done this with wicked hands.

6th That God had raised him from the dead.

7th That it was not possible that death should hold him.

- Herein lies a complete embodiment of the four gospels, condensed into three short sentences.

The name “Jesus of Nazareth” vividly brought before their minds a well-known personage, and all His illustrious history flashes across their memory.

- The first assertion concerning him is an appeal to His miracles as a demonstration that He was from God.

- There is no need of argument nor need of further evidence to prove the reality of the miracles; for they were done “in your midst, as you yourselves also *know*.”

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- The fearfulness of the murder is magnified by the thought, that He had been voluntarily delivered to them, in accordance with the deliberate purpose of God.
- The manner of His death makes it more fearful still; in that they had nailed Him to the cross and compelled Him to die like a felon.
- How penetrating the appeal to their consciences, “with *wicked* hands you have crucified and slain him!”
 - This was no time for nice distinctions between what a man does himself, and what he does by another.
 - The “wicked hands” are not the hands of Roman soldiers, who had performed the actual work of His execution, **but the hands of wicked Jews.**
 - Here, before him, were the very persons who had been assembled just fifty days before at the Passover, and had *taken a hand* in the proceedings of that awful day.
- He appeals to their individual consciousness of guilt; and this gives an intensity to the effect of his discourse upon their hearts.

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- The lack of consciousness of fearful guilt is an awful place to find oneself when needing help
- Having cruelly murdered the servant of God; and suddenly being exposed to the darkest response to prophetic vision – God raised the victim of their wrath to life
- Never did mortal lips pronounce, in so brief a space, so many thoughts of so terrific import to the hearers.
- This is the first announcement to the world of a risen and glorified Redeemer.

There are two points in this announcement which required proof, and to the presentation of this Peter immediately proceeds.

Having stated that Jesus was delivered according to the determined purpose of God, he now quotes that purpose as expressed by David in Psalm 16:25-28:

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- **V 25** *“For David says concerning him, I foresaw the Lord always before my face; for he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved.*
- **V 26** *Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad. Moreover, my flesh shall rest in hope;*
- **V 27** *because thou wilt not leave my soul in hades, neither wilt thou suffer thy Holy One to see corruption.*
- **V 28** *Thou hast made known to me the ways of life; thou wilt make me full of joy with thy countenance.”*



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