

Message Date: 05-10-20

Sermon Series: To the Ends of the Earth- ACTS Part 1: What Happens Next

Message Title: Week 3, Rushing Wind

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### **SCENE 1: INTRODUCTION**

- ***What makes up the Christian faith?***
- ***Not just what we believe, but taking a step back, what are the overarching components, concepts of what we call Christianity?***
  
- ***THERE IS GOD.***
  - ***Creator***
  - ***As creator, God is good, and his creation was good.***
  - ***Creation fell, and is now in the ongoing process of being restored. This is God's redemptive work for his creation, and at the center of this plan stands Jesus Christ.***
  
- ***GOD HAS GIVEN US HIS TRUTH.. IN SCRIPTURE***
  - ***Who He is- nature, character, his essence***
  - ***What he has done. What he is doing. His ongoing purposes***
  
- ***INCARNATION. Full human event of Jesus Christ.***
  - ***God became flesh and blood. The WORD was made flesh.***
  - ***As GOD INCARNATE, JESUS is essential and central figure in God's redemptive plan***
  - ***Jesus was born, died, rose from dead, and ascended to heaven where He exists today in eternal victory***
  
- ***THEN, God has given a MISSION AND PURPOSE to his followers.***
  - ***To reveal Him to the world. To reveal his glory, goodness, in his Gospel***
  - ***We are called and created as his presence in the world to communicate his redemptive plan to the world, to put before all nations the opportunity to respond to the Good news- to know God as a new creation and enter into his redemptive work.***
  
- ***NOW! YOU COULD STOP THERE, and many would say, "Yes, that's Christianity"... but this would be to miss the last and absolutely essential component of the Christian faith, apart from which knowing God, and being a part of his plan, would be impossible.***
  
- ***This is it: GOD, who created and redeemed us, has an ONGOING AND CONTINUOUS PRESENCE WITH US.***
  
- ***HOW? How has God related to, been present to, his people?***
  
- ***STAY WITH ME!!! THROUGH ALL OF HISTORY, the structure of God's relationship to humanity has been through COVENANTS.***
  
- ***COVENANT is an agreement, the binding framework of a formal relationship. Most common example in our culture would be the COVENANT OF MARRIAGE.***
  
- ***Throughout history, as we see in scripture, God has made multiple covenants with His people, and these all fall within TWO MACRO, or OVERARCHING/PRIMARY COVENANTS.***
  
- ***Simply put, these are the OLD and NEW Covenants***

- **OLD COVENANT.** This includes other covenants we see as we move through the story of OT, such as the ADAMIC, NOAHIC, ABRAHAMIC, MOSAIC, DAVIDIC- all named after PEOPLE, who were God's chosen representative for each covenant.
- **NOW.** For our purposes today, **IN THIS OLD COVENANT,** we see...
  - God's relationship with humanity was through a **SINGLE NATION-** God's chosen people, **ISRAEL**
  - **LOCATION** where God related to Israel was **GEOGRAPHIC-** the **TEMPLE- THE SACRED SPACE,** Because it was in that space that you would be in presence of God.
  - God's **PRESENCE TO ISRAEL** was through the **MEDIATION** of a special class of people- **PRIESTS**
  - **MEDIATION-** means of transmission. **GOD.... PRIESTS.... PEOPLE.** The priests represented God to the people and the people to God, and this happened at the **TEMPLE.**
- **BUT NOW...** through the work of Jesus Christ, we have entered into a **NEW COVENANT. IN THIS NEW COVENANT...**
  - God's presence to humanity is not through **A PEOPLE,** but is available to **ALL PEOPLE**
  - God's presence to humanity is not in a physical location, his presence is in the individual lives of all who believe and follow him. His disciples. **AS SUCH,** there are no longer any sacred spaces, where God is more present than he is anywhere else. We may call churches Houses of faith, but they are **NOT** houses of **GOD.**
  - **BEFORE,** God's presence was mediated to humanity through the special priestly class of people. **NOW, IN THE NEW COVENANT,** the requirement for a human mediation between us and God is **GONE. IN THE NC, NT,** there is **NO LONGER NEED FOR HUMAN PRIESTLY CLASS** to stand between us and God.
  - **NOW,** through Christ, God is able- and it is his intention and purpose- to be present to all people, directly, by the means of **HIS SPIRIT.**
  - **TO SUM THIS UP, NOW... NC...** we have **GOD,** through the work of his **SON (Jesus),** giving His life to all believers by the constant presence of His **SPIRIT,** in union with **OUR NEW SPIRIT,** which we initially received and now continuously experience **BY FAITH.**
- **One more point here... GOD'S SPIRIT WAS AT WORK IN THE OLD COVENANT!**
  - To specific people, specific times, place, for specific purpose.
- **NOW, in NC,** God's Spirit has come **FULLY AND PERMANENTLY** to be the presence of God in **ALL WHO WOULD BELIEVE-** place **FAITH** in the **WORK AND PERSON** of **JESUS CHRIST,** WHO IS LORD, WHOM GOD RAISED FROM THE DEAD, WHO CAME FROM THE FATHER, FULL OF GRACE AND TRUTH.
- **AND CHURCH! THIS NEW WAY,** (that we are part of even now) ... This **NEW PRESENCE OF the SPIRIT OF GOD** in the lives of every Christ Follower, **THIS BEGAN** at the birth of the church on the day of Pentecost, which we find recorded in **ACTS CHAPTER 2.**

**READING OF ACTS 2:1-13- THE STEVENS.**

## **SCENE 2A**

- **VERSE 1- When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place.**
  
- **FIRST. What is PENTECOST?**
  - o Existing Jewish feast, a festival of celebration. Also known as 'day of firstfruits'
  - o One of three Jewish pilgrimage festivals, other being Sukkot and Passover itself.
  - o Occurred once a year, 50 days after the first Sabbath after Passover.
  - o SO, taking into account what scripture tells us, it's been 50 days since Jesus resurrection to the events we are about to see here.
  
- **NOW. The Hebrew name for Pentecost is Shavout, and it's meaning to the Hebrews is twofold.**
  - o First, harvest festival. Celebration of end of Barley harvest and beginning, or 'first fruits' of the wheat harvest.
  - o This celebration is commanded, and instructed, multiple places in the TORAH
    - Leviticus 23:16.. "Count off fifty days up to the day after the seventh Sabbath, and then present an offering of new grain to the LORD."
    - Exodus 34:22 "You shall observe the festival of weeks, the first fruits of wheat harvest, and the festival of ingathering at the turn of the year."
  - o As one of the three festivals of pilgrimage, many jews from around the Mediterranean world would have traveled to Jerusalem.
  
- **SECOND significance of Shavout is the tradition that Shavout celebrates the day God gave the TORAH- the LAW- to Israel, at Mount Sanai.**
  
- **It is fascinating that on the day held by many Hebrews to celebrate God's giving of the LAW- the central framework of the OLD COVENANT, we see God giving of HIS SPIRIT, the central person of the NEW COVENANT. Add to this the imagery of the Exodus account, which has God revealing himself through the manifestation of WIND AND FIRE.**
  
- **THAT SAID... This connection between Sinai and Shavout is a TRADITION- there is not a direct reference to this link in the OT, and Luke himself does not mention this.**
  
- **BOTTOM LINE, God's purpose of THIS Pentecost stands on its own whether or not God intended the timing to correlate/contrast with the giving of the law at Mt. Sinai.**
  
- **MOVING ON...**

## **SCENE 2B**

- **"THEY" were all together... This refers to all of the 120 people- both men and women, that Luke described in our section from last week. WHAT is about to happen didn't just happen to the apostles, but to ALL THE BELIEVERS who were present.**
  
- **"IN ONE PLACE". We don't know where this was. It could have been the same room where they had been gathered praying, but Luke doesn't clarify this.**
  
- **Many have speculated that it was at the temple, but this is very unlikely, because the word Luke uses for 'place' is 'Oikos', which means HOUSE. Luke uses a different word every time he refers to the temple.**
  
- **IN JERUSALEM, space either public or very close to a public space.**
  
- **NOW THE STAGE IS SET. What happens next is the fifth great act in the larger overall event we call the INCARNATION.**
  
- **BIRTH- CRUCIFIXION- RESURRECTION- ASCENSION- and now, HOLY SPIRIT.**

- **IMPORTANT-** the coming of God's Holy Spirit to believers, has roots all the way back in the OC.

*Isaiah 44:1-3... "But now listen, Jacob, my servant, Israel, whom I have chosen.*

*<sup>2</sup> This is what the LORD says— he who made you, who formed you in the womb, and who will help you: Do not be afraid, Jacob, my servant, Jeshurun, whom I have chosen.*

*<sup>3</sup> For I will pour water on the thirsty land, and streams on the dry ground; I will pour out my Spirit on your offspring, and my blessing on your descendants.*

*Ezekiel 36:24-27 <sup>24</sup> "For I will take you out of the nations; I will gather you from all the countries and bring you back into your own land. <sup>25</sup> I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. <sup>26</sup> I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. <sup>27</sup> And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.*

- **WE MENTIONED THIS WHEN WE STARTED....** In Acts Luke is describing NEW WAY, the first generation of the NC, but God's work in the NEW WAY is rooted in His work in the Israel of the OC.

- **Ok... moving on to VERSES 2-4.....**

***<sup>2</sup> Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. <sup>3</sup> They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. <sup>4</sup> All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.***

- **SO- lets walk through this!**

## **SCENE 2C**

- **This event Luke describes is nothing less than GOD giving a visible manifestation of himself to people. Word is THEOPHANY... we only have a few of these in scripture, and the two initial components of God's manifestation of himself- his power- is by SOUND OF WIND AND FIRE.**

- **Luke tells us they heard the SOUND of WIND, actually don't know if this was accompanied by a violent wind itself. Regardless, the impact is unmistakable... this is the presence of God.**

- **The Greek word for SPIRIT here is PNEUMA- which also means Breath, or Wind. In multiple places we see scripture associating the 'breath of God' with the life giving spirit of God.**

**EZEKIEL 37:9ff... part of story of the valley of dry bones...**

**<sup>9</sup> Then he said to me, "Prophesy to the breath; prophesy, son of man, and say to it, 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: Come, breath, from the four winds and breathe into these slain, that they may live.'" <sup>10</sup> So I prophesied as he commanded me, and breath entered them; they came to life and stood up on their feet—a vast army..... **VERSE 13**... Then you, my people, will know that I am the LORD, when I open your graves and bring you up from them. <sup>14</sup> I will put my Spirit in you and you will live...**

- **You may remember Jesus' words to Nicodemus in John 3:8**

**<sup>8</sup> The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit.”**

## **SCENE 2D**

- **NEXT, FIRE enters room, separates, came to rest on each of the believers....**
- **ALSO see throughout scripture FIRE representing the presence and power of God.**
  - **Exodus- pillar of fire at night as God leads Israel toward promise land**
  - **Picture of Judgment, of God’s sovereignty. HEBREWS 12:28-29 (quoting Deut 4)**

**<sup>28</sup> Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe, <sup>29</sup> for our “God is a consuming fire.”**

- **In Matthew 3:11, we see John the Baptist speaking of Jesus when he said...**
- <sup>11</sup> “I baptize you with water for repentance. But after me comes one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.**
- **BOTTOM LINE... what happened was unmistakable- both to the participant and to LUKE’S READERS’, that this event was the very presence and power of God, coming upon these followers of Christ- and not just generally to the group, but separate and personally to each of the individual believers.**
- **THE RESULT? ALL were filled with the Spirit and spoke in tongues as the SPIRIT ENABLED THEM.**

## **SCENE 2E**

- **OKAY. WE NEED TO TALK ABOUT THIS...**
- **This is amazing even that really happened, and we need to understand it in its original context, both historically and theologically.**
- **This scene is incredibly unique, incredibly evocative, full of power, drama, and emotion.**
- **Probably because of this- over the centuries, people have tried to recreate parts of this scene, or teach that to really be a true Christian and filled with the spirit, that we should somehow share in an experience with this type of drama and emotion.**
- **IT IS A MISTAKE to try and normalize what we see here in Acts 2, and if we try we almost certainly will miss the bigger point.**
- **FIRST: The NT, including Acts (as we will see) often speaks of the believer being filled with the Holy Spirit. Being filled with the spirit is both a quality and a command of being a follower of Christ.**
- **HOWEVER, this initial outpouring, or ‘baptism’ of the Holy Spirit was a completely unique and singular event. In his commentary on the book of Acts, FF BRUCE puts it this way:**  
**“Being filled with the Spirit was an experience to be repeated on several occasions (in acts), but the baptism in the Spirit which the believing community now experienced was an event which took place ONCE for ALL.**
- **AND SO, this brings us to the THIRD manifestation of God by the Holy Spirit (sound of wind, fire) and this is what Luke describes as “SPEAKING IN OTHER TONGUES”. Just what is this?**

## **SCENE 2F**

- **First, what is this NOT.** You may know that elsewhere in NT, specifically in 1 Corinthians 14, Paul describes (with some caution), the spiritual gift of tongues. What Paul describes is a “two step ecstatic experience” that could occur in gatherings of believers.
  - **First step is an utterance in a completely unknown or spiritual tongue/ language.**
  - **Second step, and absolutely necessary for the legitimacy of the first step, is the spiritual gift of an interpreter. What was then interpreted would be for the edification and conviction of the assembled hearers.**
  - **KEY- the phenomenon of tongues described by Paul was not for personal worship, but a unique work of the Spirit for the edification, encouragement, and conviction of the church.**
- **BUT THAT IS NOT WHAT IS HAPPENING HERE.**
- **As the story continues, it becomes clear that the believers are speaking in known human languages- just not languages known to them.**
- **SECOND thing that is not happening.** Some have argued that the disciples WERE speaking in an ecstatic unknown tongue, as described later by Paul, and that the Spirit was then enabling the people in the crowds to hear this in their own language. But this also is unsupported by the text. The miracle here isn't in the hearing of the crowd, but what is being spoken by the believers.
- **THIRD thing that is not happening.** Some theologians have stated that here we have a reversal of the curse of Babel.. all the way back in Genesis chapter 11, when God confused the speech of humankind- taking away a single human language and giving them multiple different languages. There are correlations here, but the miracle in Acts does not reverse this. There are still many languages being spoken.
- **WHAT LUKE MAKES CLEAR IS THAT** the Spirit enabled the disciples to speak about God's activity in the foreign languages of their hearers- hearers from around the world, representing many different nations and languages, that had gathered in Jerusalem for the festival of Pentecost.
- **THUS, the enabling of the Spirit is for the purpose of evangelism- it is the first step in the mission Jesus had given these same believers just 10 days earlier at his ascension. And now, these different peoples with different languages were able to hear about the work of God- the message of Jesus Christ- in their own personal languages, down to the intimacy of their dialect.**

## **SCENE 2G**

- **This is what we now see, as Luke describes the reaction of the crowd that has gathered in response to the activity of the disciples.**
- **We aren't told exactly how this happened, but somehow these 120 believers, under the enablement of the Holy Spirit, had moved out into the street and engaged with a significant number of people.**
- **Three times Luke states the nature of this miracle of languages, and three times he describes the reaction of the crowd.**

- **READ VERSES 5-13** <sup>5</sup> Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. <sup>6</sup> When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard their own language being spoken. <sup>7</sup> Utterly amazed, they asked: “Aren’t all these who are speaking Galileans?” <sup>8</sup> Then how is it that each of us hears them in our native language? <sup>9</sup> Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, <sup>10</sup> Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome <sup>11</sup> (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs—we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!” <sup>12</sup> Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, “What does this mean?” <sup>13</sup> Some, however, made fun of them and said, “They have had too much wine.”

## **SCENE H**

- Okay. In verse 6, 8, and 11 we are told that the people of the crowd- from ‘every nation under heaven’, heard the disciples speaking to them in their own language.
- Likewise, three times Luke describes that these people were blown away by this. We are told they were Bewildered, utterly amazed, perplexed, wondered what this all meant.
- Have you ever experienced something so amazing, so unique, that you said to yourself- I know I’m seeing this with my eyes, by I’m having trouble processing that it’s real... so incredible that its SURREAL. DRIVING/TRAFFIC IN INDIA...
- Everyone saw and heard what was happening, but unable to comprehend what was happening. FROM ANY MEASURE, this event was beyond human control. GOD IS AT WORK HERE.
- It’s interesting, even humorous, that Luke records one of the comments in the crowd- we get the sense that it’s an insult against the intelligence of the disciples, most of whom were from the region of the Galilee. The Galilean’s were looking down upon, as being less intelligent, less sophisticated... in my youth what you might have called “Hicks from the sticks”. It’s likely they had a distinguishing accent, one that was associated with not being all that smart- draw your own cultural parallels
- “How are these uneducated Galileans speaking to us in our own native languages?” This is a small reminder of how God often uses people we would least expect to be a part of his work in powerful ways.
- Then, in verses 9-11, we are given a listing of all the foreign lands and peoples that were represented in Jerusalem. NOW- this list on its own has great significance, and there’s lots of speculation about everything Luke may be trying to convey here. I’m going to try and go into that detail in an ‘addendum’ to this message- but for now, sum up with this (DRAWING FROM Commentary by BOCK)

## **SCENE I**

- Luke’s description of the different peoples in Jerusalem emphasizes how this event- the birth of the church- had an impact that reached people whose roots spanned the nations. This is a picture of what would come to be the universal scope of the gospel, even if the disciples themselves- at this moment- had no idea this is what God would be doing.
- Back in Romans, we discussed how many scholars believe the Roman church was founded by jews present in Jerusalem on this day, who came to faith in Christ and then took their new faith with them back to Rome.

- **THINK OF GOD'S TIMING HERE....** Due to many factors, the Jewish community at this time was already being scattered around the Mediterranean world and the middle east. Experts estimate that the Jewish population of Rome was around 40-60 thousand, out of a population of around a million people.
- **Representatives of all these people groups then make their way to Jerusalem, and BOOM, the church is born, thousands believe the gospel, and then disperse back to their homes, taking the gospel with them.**
- **LAST THING... Verse 13... some of the people who heard all this completely missed what was happening, and accused the disciples of being drunk. NOW- this is what some people point to trying to argue that the disciples speech/ tongues- was the ecstatic, non-human tongues Paul speaks of in Corinthians, and that for some reason these mockers were not able to understand, all they heard was meaningless babble.**
- **But this is unlikely, and goes against the overall gist of the text. Most importantly, Peter himself is about to tell the crowd that the disciples are NOT speaking unintelligibly. MORE REASONABLE explanation of the mockery is that these people heard the disciples speaking in languages they themselves didn't understand. They clearly did not believe the testimony the disciples were speaking about God, and coupled with their predisposition to look down upon 'these galileans', they just laughed it off as meaningless babble.**
- **And in this, they were wrong, as we will see NEXT WEEK.**
- **But now, sum up big idea today- the essential truth Luke conveys to us**

## **SCENE J**

- **In fulfillment of prophecy, the promise of God, and the words of Jesus, God sends his holy spirit to indwell the full group of believers, in a ONCE FOR ALL unique event.**
- **This new presence of the Holy Spirit enables the disciples to communicate the message of what God has done in Christ to people in a miraculous way- by enabling them to speak in multiple different languages.**
- **Through this entire event, Luke emphasizes that God is at the center of what is happening. God is revealing himself, and He is at work.**
- **Because of the nature of the festival of Pentecost, God is setting the stage for this message to be taken back to the known world at that time.**
- **As is often the case when God is at work, some people completely missed it and didn't understand, responding with mockery instead of listening.**
- **Final thought- from FF BRUCE's commentary. We read this and marvel- and rightly so. At times, we may think, "oh, why doesn't this spirit move in such a miraculous way today". But this is to miss the point that the body of Christ in our world today DOES speak in many tongues, in the language of almost every nation under heaven. Even if this speech is not supernatural linguistically, it is still a miracle when we- as disciples of Christ- share the message of the mighty deeds of God.**
- **As Paul states in 2 Corinthians 5:20... We are therefore Christs ambassadors, as though God were making His appeal through us.**

- ***Church, the miracle of the coming of the holy spirit in the second chapter of Acts may have been two thousand years ago- but this miracle- the enabling presence of the Holy Spirit in the lives of Christ's followers- this is still true today. For the church, for you, and for me.***
- ***PRAY.***