

Acts 2:14-24

“Whatever Could This Mean?”

As we enter in to this *portion*, this *passage* of scripture, something radical has just happened. The Holy Spirit has been poured out, the church has been born, and people are being blown away. Because as the disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit we read in vs 4 that they all began to speak with other tongues (that is, languages that they had never acquired naturally) as the Spirit gave them utterance. and Since it was Pentecost, (a national feast day) there were literally hundreds of thousands, if not a couple of million people there in Jerusalem from all over the known world. (As you see listed there in vs 9-11, some 15 nations) So when people began to hear this commotion happening they began to assemble by the thousands to check it out. and To their amazement here was this group of Galileans who were known for their lack of ability to enunciate and articulate properly, (they were the hicks of their day like we are), but they were speaking of the wonderful works of God in these various languages from around the world that were native to these guys home towns down to the very dialect of that language that they spoke!

They were all, “How is it we *hear* these Galileans speaking in our own tongues the wonderful works of God?!” Which was a point that we took the time to draw out, the disciples weren’t preaching to the people, they were praising God, the people overheard what was happening and came to check it out. Often times an individual might speak in tongues in a certain gathering today and in response someone will interpret that as something that *God* wants to communicate to *man*, when in reality tongues is a language by which *man* communicates to *God*. The bible says, “...*he who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God,*” 1 Cor 14:2 Thanking God, praising God, speaking the wonderful works of God, *prophecy* is the word of God to man, tongues is man speaking to God.

The bible is clear that there’s a very specific parameter in which the gift of tongues is to be operated. 1st and foremost it’s a gift that’s to be administered personally in privacy; it’s not *primarily* a gift that’s to be administered corporately. There are times when its appropriate, but never in the midst of an orderly setting like this when the Holy Spirit is ministering to us in the common language that we can all understand and grow by. That’s why Paul said, “*I thank my God I speak with tongues more than you all; yet in the church I would rather speak five words with my understanding, that I may teach others also, than ten thousand words in a tongue.*” 1 Cor 14:18-19

Here we’re very firm on the position that when the Holy Spirit is ministering to us corporately as we study God’s Word, that He won’t interrupt Himself to utter forth in a language that none of us understand. and We’ll see it happen just that way here direct as Peter begins to share with the people what’s going on.

When Peter begins to speak in the common language (probably Aramaic) the other disciples grow silent and the Holy Spirit begins to minister to them all corporately through Peter in the common language of the people. The work of the Spirit isn't to add confusion, but to bring clarification, edification, clear communication with the desired end of salvation, or if you know the Lord, further sanctification.

Now we closed last week examining the fact that there are 2 types of people as it pertains to the work of the Spirit of God, there are seekers, and there are scoffers. Those who legitimately desire to know and understand, and those who say, "They're drunk" just out of their minds, and as Peter begins to address the issue he addresses them in the reverse order they were posed to him. 1st he *deflects* and *averts* the scoffers, then he *deals with* and *appeals to* the seekers.

Vs 14-40 are really the 1st bible study every taught in the church age, Peter stands up and begins to lay the foundations of the church, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone.

As we go through this you might just make a side note regarding 3 things that are noticeable about Peter's message. #1 *His message was simple*, he didn't seek to dazzle them with how brilliant of an orator he was. He didn't speak on a level that lost the average individual, he kept it simple, and it's not that a little intellectual stimulation isn't fun and intriguing now and then, but when it comes to the gospel message, we do well to keep it simple. The crux of his message revolves around these things #1 Jesus was a historical figure, #2 He was crucified and is risen from the dead, #3 It was all foretold in scripture, and #4 These things bear witness of the fact that Jesus is God's Messiah. He didn't get out there in theological never never land, his message was simple. #2 *His message was centered*, he stayed focused on the person of Jesus Christ even as he was explaining the outpouring of the Holy Spirit he simply used that text as an avenue to point the people to Jesus. His message remained Christ centered, and then #3 *His message was sharp*. He didn't mix words, he didn't dilute the message, he shot very straight, so as you seek to communicate the gospel with those around you, try to remember these things, keep it simple, keep it centered, and keep it straight, don't dance around the point, be tactful, but honest.

So see the scene, the Holy Spirit has been *poured* out, people are being *blown* out, some are seeking, some are scoffing, there's general uncertainty as to what's happening there in the crowd.

Vs14-15

“Hey, its only 9:00 a.m. these folks aren’t drunk!” One commentator made the observation that most Jews wouldn’t eat or drink *anything* until after 9:00 in the morning because that was a time for prayer and they wouldn’t attend to themselves until after they’d done their business with God. and As we said last week there’s absolutely no credence to the criticism of them being drunk anyway. They weren’t acting crazy, they weren’t out of control, they weren’t speaking with slurred speech unintelligibly or anything else, 1 of the aspects of the fruit of the Spirit in a person’s life is *self* control, not the lack thereof. So don’t think that just because some critical scoffers made this comment that there was anything happening that gave credence to that comment, the bible doesn’t support that at all.

Something else we note about Peter here is the complete contrast in his character compared to the time prior to his being filled with the Spirit. A couple of months ago he was cowering before a servant girl denying that he even knew Jesus. Now we’re reading phrases like, “Peter, standing up,” “*Raised* his voice,” saying, “Let this be known,” and “Heed my words.” and The only thing that’s changed about Peter is the filling of his being with the Holy Spirit. and As to where before he was failing in his witness, now he’s following through in his witness. and This is the result of the filling of the Holy Spirit, remember Jesus said in Acts ch 1 that when the Holy Spirit came upon them, *then* they’d have the power to be the witnesses He’d called them to be. Apart from Him we can do nothing, but *through* Him we can do all things.

So he takes a quick second to deflect the scoffing, then he immediately fixates his attention upon those seekers. Those who were there saying, “Whatever could *this* mean?” Don’t waste your time with scoffers, those looking for a fight, critically debating everything you say or do. Pay attention to the seekers, those who are curious about your relationship with the Lord, the work of the Spirit in your life, what makes you different than everyone else. How is it that nothing seems to set you off? Give those people your attention, that’s what Peter does, because Satan will place people in your path who’ll do nothing but waste your time, and keep you occupied so that you’re not being fruitful with the message you have. Don’t be ignorant of your enemy’s devises, just deflect those things, and set your sights on those who are genuinely open to the things of God.

Vs16-21

Now there are few things here worth drawing attention to but one thing that’s not directly mentioned that’s *really* worth drawing our attention to is the fact that Peter had scriptural support for this spiritual phenomena that was taking place. Because anytime there is some sort of spiritual phenomena taking place people are going ask questions. “What is this?” (Vs12) and It’s so important that we are able to say, “This is that which is written.”

Believe me when I tell you that you tread dangerous ground when you're seeking after or are apart of some spiritual phenomena for which you can give no scriptural support. and It's irresponsible for certain evangelists or anyone else to promote any sort of spiritual phenomena with out scriptural support. and In order to justify their position they'll say things like, "A lot more can be cooked up in the kitchen than what's placed on the menu, God is bigger than His Word!" Top 10 answers on the board, survey says? "X" That's faulty logic, the bible teaches that when God makes an oath He has to swear by His own name because there is nothing higher than His name, so He swears by Himself. Yet we read in Ps 138:2 "*I will worship toward Your holy temple, And praise Your name For Your lovingkindness and Your truth; For You have magnified Your word above all Your name.*" God will *never* under *any* circumstance violate the parameters He's established in His Word. You start buying into faulty logic like what I stated a moment ago and the next thing you know, you'll start thinking its real godly to laugh uncontrollably under the guise of the "Ontario blessing." Or you'll start barking like a dog, and subjecting yourself to all kinds of weird and biblically unfounded experiences all in the name of a fresh work of the Holy Spirit. But people forget He's the *Holy* Spirit, and yet people insult the Holy Spirit of God by these foolish and ridiculous outbursts in doing things they'd never do in a generally mature environment. If you cannot support a spiritual experience by the scriptures, then reject the experience. These people are uncertain as to what's taking place, and Peter immediately leads them to the scripture so that they might gain their bearings and be assured that things are legit.

Which leads me to the next observable point that's not directly stated, God is using and will use Peter's life in a awesome way. and I think its fair to say that most all of us would like to be an individual that God would use to accomplish His purposes. If that be you, we would do well to take note of some of the general characteristics of the type of person God uses as demonstrated here in His Word. Because there are some common denominators in the lives of the people God used throughout the scriptures. 1st and foremost they were people of prayer, if you want God to use your life, tap in to the power of prayer, cultivate that intimacy with Him, commune with Him in prayer. We noted in ch 1 there in vs 14 how they were continuing persistently in prayer, prior to God's pouring out His Spirit. God uses people of prayer, the 2nd thing we note here, Peter had a powerful yet practical working knowledge of the Word of God. He was able to reach back into the resources of God's Word, show people the observation, give people the interpretation and make an application right there on the spot. and It wasn't always a real common area of scripture that he would pull from. Obscure psalms, portions of the prophets, pulling from here, taking from there, rightly dividing the Word of truth so that people might glean God's purpose in a given situation. God uses people who are people of His Word, who are able to employ the Word of God in a rightly divided way. If you want God to use your life, be a person of prayer, a wielder of His Word.

“What is this?” The people asked, “This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel.” and He begins to lay it out for them, and we note there in vs 17 that God said that He would pour out His Spirit, when? In the last days.

The bible reckons the last days as from the time that Christ came to the earth until the fullness of God’s Word is fulfilled. Scripturally speaking we’re living in the last days, and the culmination of all things is drawing closer day by day. But we see that the promise is to pour His Spirit out on all flesh. Meaning that in the OT God would place His Spirit on select individuals for a specific purpose, we think of Moses, Samuel, David, Elijah, guys like that whom God would raise up and anoint in a certain capacity to lead, or direct, or guide His people. But in the last days God would not reserve His Spirit for a select few, but anyone who would open their lives to Jesus Christ would receive with in themselves the person of the Holy Spirit. and This word, “Pour” is that word “gush” not trickle, or little drops, literally it speaks of running “greedily out.” and I like that because it offers *some* redemptive value to the word “greedily” generally speaking, “greedily” speaks of taking in, but with God He gives His Spirit “greedily out” He His Spirit gives liberally and with out reproach to all who will but call upon Him. and To underscore “all flesh” Peter shows how Joel spoke of, “Sons, and daughters, young men, old men, menservants, and maidservants” it doesn’t matter what social class, what gender you may be, God is no respecter of persons, if you seek *after* Him, He’ll pour His Spirit *out* on you.

Here in vs 19-20 we see mentioned things that are yet to come in the Great tribulation, still with in the context of the last days, yet we’re able to glean from this that the work and gifting of the Holy Spirit in the world wasn’t limited to the time period of the apostles. Clear up until the return of Christ, He’ll be busy in the world seeking to draw men unto Christ, now the church will be removed before the wrath of God is poured out, but the Holy Spirit will still be very much at work. (and Vs 21 read).

Underline that word, “Whoever” because that includes you. Like we mentioned last week, the gospel of Jesus Christ goes out to all men, Jew or Gentile whoever you are God loves you, gave His Son for you and wants to redeem you from your sin. God’s not willing that *any* should perish, but that *all* should come to repentance. and This shows us that its been God’s heart to save mankind from the beginning. He wasn’t only after the Jew, its always been God’s desire to reach out to all of mankind, now it was through the nation of Israel that He elected to do that, but its always been His plan to have the message of His salvation taken to the ends of the earth. The bible says, “*For You, Lord, are good, and ready to forgive, And abundant in mercy to all those who call upon You.*” Ps 86:5 and Again “*The LORD is near to all who call upon Him, To all who call upon Him in truth.*” Ps 145:18 and Believe those are just 2 in a sea of examples that demonstrate God’s desire to forgive and reconcile to Him *whoever* would call upon His name.

Now that Peter has given us this *quotation* of scripture, he begins to move into the *explanation* of the scripture (of which we're just going to dip into today) but as I said its going to take them straight to Jesus. Regarding the person of Jesus Christ the bible says, "*In the volume of the book it is written of Me --To do Your will, O God.*" Heb 10:7 The OT is looking forward to the work of Christ, the NT is pointing back to the work of Christ, He's at the center of it all, and the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus is at the heart of Peter's message.

Vs22-24

Just like that Peter drops the bomb of the gospel, and these guys are going to be subject to, and sensing the shockwaves of it from this point forward. and We see Peter speak of the life of Jesus in vs 22, His death in vs 23, and His resurrection in vs 24, and ultimately Peter is demonstrating to them that "The Lord" whom they're to call on if they're to be saved (connecting the dot between vs 21 and vs 36) is Jesus.

But notice there in vs 22 where once again he calls on them to pay attention to what he's saying. He's already said, "Let this be known," and "*Heed my words*", now he's saying "*Hear my words.*" He's not speaking passively as if to say you can take this or leave it. He's speaking to them in such a way as to say, "You can't afford to tune me out here because what I'm imparting to you is a matter of eternal life or death and it's absolutely imperative that you tune in and listen up." He's being careful to keep their attention, why is he speaking as if what he's saying is that important? Because it is that important, when it comes to the message of Jesus Christ and Him crucified there's nothing more important for us to be occupied with. and Peter grabs their attention, and then gives them the gospel.

He begins by reminding them of the life of Christ, these people weren't 2,000 yrs removed from the scene, most of them were there and very aware of the crucifixion just a couple of months ago. They knew of the life of Christ, saw the triumphal entry, witnessed various miracles, and the bottom line is that no one could do the things that Jesus did unless God was with Him. and Peter's not seeking to belittle the deity of Christ in calling Him a Man, he's sharing with them where they're at. and He's saying that He was a Man who demonstrated the fact that He was from God by the fact of His miracles, and His wonders, and signs. These were undeniable, indisputable facts, He lived his life right there before His eyes. Jesus would often call on the people that if they couldn't receive His *word* alone, then at least consent that the *works* were of God. If you can't believe by My words, than believe because of My works, He said in John 14, "*The words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own authority; but the Father who dwells in Me does the works. Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father in Me, or else believe Me for the sake of the works themselves.*" John 14:10-11 and The people did consent that the works Jesus did, couldn't be done apart from God, remember Nicodemus stated that. He said, "*Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him.*" John 3:2. Peter begins here by calling them back to this reality, that Jesus demonstrated the fact that He was from God based upon not only His Words, but the works that He wrought in their very midst.

Vs23

This is one of those vs that show us the sovereignty of God and the freewill of man working together, yet completely independent from one another. So that God had purposed from before the foundations of the earth that He would give His Son for the sin of the world, yet man, by his own volition and willful rejection of Jesus Christ took Him and crucified Him. The bible is clear that the cross was in the heart of God before the world ever existed, we read in 1st Peter that, “...*you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you who through Him believe in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.*” 1 Peter 1:18-21 God, knowing that man would fall, had the plan of redemption worked out before He ever created the heavens and the earth, and at the center of that plan lay the cross. But that in no way excuses mans willful rejection of Jesus Christ and wrongful execution of the Prince of Life. and Peter pins that on them, and notice both Jew and Gentile are culpable, all of us are responsible for the crucifixion of Christ because we’ve all sinned and fall short of the glory of God. and He who knew no sin was made sin by having my sin and you sin placed upon Him that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. But Peter says, “You took Him” (speaking of the Jews), but you took Him by “lawless hands” or hands that had no regard for the law of God, speaking of the Romans, (Gentiles.) Have crucified, and put Him to death.

Vs 24

Not possible? Prêt ell, though Jesus was *made* sin, He Himself never *did* sin, being in always tempted as we are yet with *out* sin. Now the bible teaches that the wages of sin is death but if you’ve never sinned its impossible that sin should keep you in its grip. Jesus never sinned, it wasn’t possible that death should keep hold of Him. Not only that, once you’ve paid for something in full, you’re no longer indebted to make payment for that which has been paid off. So when Jesus paid in full the purchase price of our redemption through the shedding of His blood, and death on the cross, it was inevitable that He should rise again because He the wages of sin was paid for. There was nothing more owed, He was free from death, but outside of the fact that He was with out sin, therefore He had to rise again, outside of the fact that though He was with out sin He paid the full purchase price of our sin, therefore He had to rise again, Peter doesn’t point to either of those things, there’s another reason yet that He had to rise again. and We’ll see that next week, so be sure to tune in.

But before we close I would draw your attention to this word “pains” having “loosed the pains of death” because the idea there is “labor pains.” So that in a very real sense, the tomb was more like a womb for Jesus, and death and that tomb was no more able to hold Jesus in *it* than the womb of a pregnant woman is able to perpetually keep that baby in it. It’s inevitable that that baby come forth, even so it was inevitable that Jesus would come forth from the dead, death not being able to hold Him, God having raised Him up, that it might come to pass that “... *whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.*” Acts 2:21 Not, might be, perhaps could be, *shall be*.

“For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Rom 6:23 The crowd asked the question, “Whatever could this mean?” This outpouring of the Spirit, these wonderful works of God being declared to us in a language we can understand? It means that Jesus Christ is alive and well, seated at the right hand of the Father, and the promise of everlasting life is available to all who will simply call *upon* Him, surrender their lives *to* Him, and choose to truly believe *in* Him.

Let me encourage you that if you’re here today and you’ve never called upon the name of the Lord, you’ve never surrendered your heart to the Lord. God’s gift of eternal life is available to you in Christ. Jesus lived a sinless life, was delivered up for our transgression, and raised up for our justification, you can be justified in the eyes of God today, forgiven. But only in Christ, outside of Christ is only condemnation, but in Christ is salvation, life forevermore.

Prayer points: To be a people God can use, people of prayer, people who have a powerful yet practical working knowledge of the word. That we might love God’s Word, long to spend time in God’s Word, thanks for the fact that the Holy Spirit is available to all of us and that we serve a risen Saviour who has sealed our salvation in His resurrection, fill us with your Spirit that we might be Your witnesses.