

The Rest of the Story

Studies in the Book of Acts

***“We will move the world not by criticism of it, nor conformity to it –
but by combustion within it of lives ignited by the Spirit of God”***

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Text

Acts 2:14-21

Topic

Jesus is pouring out the Holy Spirit as history moves towards His Second Coming to reign over the earth

Title

When He Reigns, It Pours

Acts 2:14 But Peter, standing up with the eleven, raised his voice and said to them, "Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and heed my words.

Acts 2:15 For these are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is *only* the third hour of the day.

Acts 2:16 But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel:

Acts 2:17 'AND IT SHALL COME TO PASS IN THE LAST DAYS, SAYS GOD, THAT I WILL POUR OUT OF MY SPIRIT ON ALL FLESH; YOUR SONS AND YOUR DAUGHTERS SHALL PROPHECY, YOUR YOUNG MEN SHALL SEE VISIONS, YOUR OLD MEN SHALL DREAM DREAMS.

Acts 2:18 AND ON MY MENSERVANTS AND ON MY MAIDSERVANTS I WILL POUR OUT MY SPIRIT IN THOSE DAYS; AND THEY SHALL PROPHECY.

Acts 2:19 I WILL SHOW WONDERS IN HEAVEN ABOVE AND SIGNS IN THE EARTH BENEATH: BLOOD AND FIRE AND VAPOR OF SMOKE.

Acts 2:20 THE SUN SHALL BE TURNED INTO DARKNESS, AND THE MOON INTO BLOOD, BEFORE THE COMING OF THE GREAT AND AWESOME DAY OF THE LORD.

Acts 2:21 AND IT SHALL COME TO PASS THAT WHOEVER CALLS ON THE NAME OF THE LORD SHALL BE SAVED.'

Introduction

The Anacreontic Song was the official song of the Anacreontic Society, a club of amateur musicians in London who gathered regularly to perform concerts. The primary purpose of the Society (and its song) was to promote an interest in music. This, however, did not keep the song from being associated with alcohol, as it was commonly used as a sobriety test. If you could sing a stanza of the notoriously difficult lyrics and stay on key, *you were sober enough for another round of drinks*.

The melody became well-known after Francis Scott Key borrowed it for his song, *Defense of Fort McHenry*, which he wrote while detained on a British ship during the night of September 13, 1814, as the British forces bombarded the American fort. It was later retitled *The Star-Spangled Banner* and was officially designated as our national anthem in 1931. Our National Anthem started out as a drinking song.

On the Day of Pentecost, the one-hundred twenty believers began to praise the Lord in languages they had never learned. Men in the **amazed** and **perplexed** crowd that gathered suggested they were **drunk** and that their behavior was similar to singing drinking songs.

They weren't **drunk**; they were *drenched!* They had just received the promised baptism with the Holy Spirit; and they were filled with the Spirit. Peter would describe it three times in this chapter as the effect of Jesus **pouring out** His Holy Spirit upon them – as if they had been spiritually drenched by a Heavenly downpour (v17, 18 & 33).

Peter's description indicates that this drenching should characterize **all** believers during the entire period of time which he called **the last days**. He further warned that it would be followed by another kind of outpouring: The outpouring of the wrath of God in judgment upon unbelievers.

You're supposed to be drenched; do people recognize it? Judgment is going to be poured out; do people realize it? That's what I want to talk about today. I'll organize my thoughts around two points: #1 Help People To Recognize That Jesus Has Poured Out His Spirit Upon

You, and #2 Help People To Realize That Jesus Will Pour Out His Wrath Upon Them.

#1 Help People To Recognize
That Jesus Has Poured Out His Spirit Upon You
(v14-18)

If you've ever been caught in a downpour, you've gotten drenched. When you finally get inside, it's obvious because you're dripping wet.

The promised baptism with the Holy Spirit is described as a kind of spiritual downpour. The disciples were drenched and it was obvious. The thing we need to understand is that the baptism, the downpour, the drenching, is to be characteristic of all believers all the time. To put it another way: **Unbelievers should still have cause to accuse us of being drunk!**

Acts 2:14 But Peter, standing up with the eleven, raised his voice and said to them, "Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and heed my words.

Acts 2:15 For these are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is *only* the third hour of the day.

Peter and **the eleven** – including Matthias – weren't defending themselves. He was even being a little humorous about the accusation. His statement in verse fifteen can mean, *We're not drunk yet – it's still too early in the day!*

Instead of defending themselves they saw an opportunity to **be witnesses**. I think more opportunities would present themselves for us to **be witnesses** if we would get over trying to defend ourselves.

Acts 2:16 But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel:

Peter appeals to the Word of God as our only and ultimate reference for how to live the Christian life. We must have references in the principles and precepts of God's Word for all that we believe, and for our every behavior.

Peter also lets us know that spiritual phenomena must be rooted and grounded in the Word of God. We are not free to behave any way we

choose, then say it was the Holy Spirit. No, there must be a biblical basis for any spiritual or supernatural phenomena.

One other thing I'd like to point out. The very first sermon, on the birth-day of the Church, began with a discussion of Bible prophecy.

Acts 2:17 'AND IT SHALL COME TO PASS IN THE LAST DAYS, SAYS GOD, THAT I WILL POUR OUT OF MY SPIRIT ON ALL FLESH; YOUR SONS AND YOUR DAUGHTERS SHALL PROPHECY, YOUR YOUNG MEN SHALL SEE VISIONS, YOUR OLD MEN SHALL DREAM DREAMS.

Acts 2:18 AND ON MY MENSERVANTS AND ON MY MAIDSERVANTS I WILL POUR OUT MY SPIRIT IN THOSE DAYS; AND THEY SHALL PROPHECY.

If you go back and read Joel in the original context you will see that he thought of the **last days** as a specific period of time. It would begin when the Jewish Messiah would come and establish the kingdom of God on earth.

Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, Peter expanded **the last days** to include the whole period of time leading up to the coming of the Messiah to establish the kingdom. He declared that the **last days** had just begun with this pouring out of the Holy Spirit. **We are in them now!**

The Old Testament prophets did not see any time-gap between the first and second comings of Jesus. They did not see the Church Age in which we live. There were many Scriptures that indicated the Messiah would first suffer and die *before* He would reign supreme; but the prophets themselves did not fully understand what they meant. Peter - this common, ignorant, burly fisherman - put into new perspective the entire scheme of **last days** prophecy.

The promised Holy Spirit had been poured out upon the one-hundred twenty. I want you to notice two things:

1. The manifestations of the Spirit being poured out that Joel mentioned did not occur. They did not, on the Day of Pentecost, **prophecy...** or **have visions...** or **dream dreams**. They would, later on; but not that first day.
2. The manifestations that did occur were not mentioned by Joel. There was a sound of a mighty wind; flame-tongues of fire

rested upon each of them. They spoke in foreign languages that they had never learned, praising the wonderful works of God.

It tells us that what Joel meant, and what Peter understood, was that the emphasis is on the Holy Spirit being poured out, *not* on any particular phenomena that would result. There always is a result from being baptized with and filled with the Holy Spirit; but it cannot be reduced to a particular phenomena.

All believers, from the Day of Pentecost forward, should be characterized by a sense of the spiritual and supernatural. It can and it will manifest itself differently. But it should manifest itself to the point that people think there is something unusual about you – **even to the point of accusing you of being drunk!**

Remember the earlier analogy – of being drenched? If you've been caught in a downpour, then walk into a room, people will see you dripping wet. Peter is telling us that the characteristic of the last days in which we live is that believers are dripping wet with the Holy Spirit.

Let me show you this from another portion of the Bible. In Ephesians 5:18 the apostle Paul wrote,

[Ephesians 5:18](#): And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit,

The mention of being [drunk](#) in connection with the [Spirit](#) immediately reminds you of the original accusation on the Day of Pentecost. Paul was saying that you should be so filled with the Holy Spirit that you could be characterized as being under His influence. An unbeliever might even think you were drunk.

Then Paul lists some effects of being filled with the Holy Spirit:

[Ephesians 5:19](#) speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord,

[Ephesians 5:20](#) giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,

[Ephesians 5:21](#) submitting to one another in the fear of God.

These things are more general than the phenomena in Joel or on the Day of Pentecost. They are the more common, but still spiritual and supernatural, ways we think and act when drenched:

1. Our everyday **speaking to one another** is anointed by the Spirit.
2. Our hearts are filled with **songs**.
3. We **give thanks always for all things**.
4. We are **submitted** to God's will, and **to one another** in the Church.

Those of you familiar with this passage in Ephesians know that immediately following these verses Paul uses marriage as his first example. He tells husbands and wives how to remain under the influence of the Holy Spirit. It is the normal, every day expectation of the Bible that believers be drenched with the Holy Spirit to the point it is noticeable in our talk and walk.

We said last week that there is a definite experience of the baptism with the Holy Spirit. He is said to come *upon* you after you have been born-again to empower you to serve the Lord. Since it was a promise, it is unconditional. You simply realize it has been given, then you receive it by faith.

There is also the experience of being filled with the Holy Spirit. It is something you are commanded to obey. As you cooperate with the indwelling Holy Spirit, you remain filled and under His influence.

A Christian under the influence of the Holy Spirit thinks and acts spiritually and even supernaturally. People will think that there is something unusual about you. *There is!* You are walking with God.

If you are walking with God, it can't help but show. It might show itself in your speech... or songs... or thankful spirit. It might show itself in some supernatural phenomena. But it will show itself.

Peter, quoting Joel, indicated something else would shortly be poured out from Heaven.

#2 Help People To Realize That Jesus Will Pour Out His Wrath Upon Them (v19-21)

Peter, in his first letter, will explain that the Old Testament prophets (like Joel) wrote under inspiration but did not fully understand the timing of the **last days** (1Peter 1:10-12). The prophecy Peter quoted on the Day of Pentecost is a good example. Joel saw the Day of Pentecost; and He saw the return of the Lord; but he did not see that they would be separated by a gap of at least two-thousand years. We are living in that gap, but heading towards what is coming next.

What is coming next is described:

Acts 2:19 I WILL SHOW WONDERS IN HEAVEN ABOVE AND SIGNS IN THE EARTH BENEATH: BLOOD AND FIRE AND VAPOR OF SMOKE.

Acts 2:20 THE SUN SHALL BE TURNED INTO DARKNESS, AND THE MOON INTO BLOOD, BEFORE THE COMING OF THE GREAT AND AWESOME DAY OF THE LORD.

This is unmistakably a reference to the coming, future judgment upon the whole earth that the Bible elsewhere calls the Tribulation. It is a specific period of time – seven years, to be exact – during which the world is prepared through a series of divine judgments for the return of Jesus Christ in His Second Coming to establish the kingdom of God on earth. It's most complete description is in the *Book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ*, in chapters six through nineteen.

As it ends, just before the Lord's return, the judgments are described as seven **bowls of the wrath of God** being poured out upon the earth. Let me read a sampling, from the sixteenth chapter of the *Revelation*:

Revelation 16:1 Then I heard a loud voice from the temple saying to the seven angels, "Go and pour out the bowls of the wrath of God on the earth."

Revelation 16:2 So the first went and poured out his bowl upon the earth, and a foul and loathsome sore came upon the men who had the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image.

Revelation 16:3 Then the second angel poured out his bowl on the sea, and it became blood as of a dead *man*; and every living creature in the sea died.

Revelation 16:4 Then the third angel poured out his bowl on the rivers and springs of water, and they became blood.

Revelation 16:8 Then the fourth angel poured out his bowl on the sun, and power was given to him to scorch men with fire.

Revelation 16:10 Then the fifth angel poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast, and his kingdom became full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues because of the pain.

Revelation 16:12 Then the sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up, so that the way of the kings from the east might be prepared.

Revelation 16:17 Then the seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air, and a loud voice came out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, "It is done!"

Revelation 16:18 And there were noises and thunderings and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such a mighty and great earthquake as had not occurred since men were on the earth.

Revelation 16:20 Then every island fled away, and the mountains were not found.

Revelation 16:21 And great hail from heaven fell upon men, *each hailstone* about the weight of a talent. Men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail, since that plague was exceedingly great.

People need to know judgment is coming. What they mostly need to know is in verse twenty-one of our text:

Acts 2:21 AND IT SHALL COME TO PASS THAT WHOEVER CALLS ON THE NAME OF THE LORD SHALL BE SAVED!

It's very simple: Jesus ascended into Heaven. He will return to establish His kingdom on the earth. Just before He returns, judgment will be poured out upon the earth – a judgment whose purpose is to reveal Jesus Christ as Lord and King in order that unbelievers might repent and be saved rather than be lost for all eternity.

Before Jesus returns... And before that time of terrible judgment... He has raised-up believers to go through the whole earth to **be witnesses** that **whoever calls on His name shall be saved**.

It's an impossible task – unless you first receive the baptism with the Holy Spirit. **You can!** The baptism with the Holy Spirit was an unconditional promise. You can receive it any time by faith. You

simply realize it has been given to you, to empower you to serve the Lord. You only need to realize it once.

Then you must remain filled with the Spirit. It is a conditional promise. It is something you can accomplish as you cooperate with the work of God the Holy Spirit in and through your life. When you are baptized and filled with the Holy Spirit, you are under His influence – similar to a person being under the influence of alcohol. Unbelievers will recognize that there is something different about you... And you can then tell them it is Jesus, Who wants to save them from the wrath of God that is coming upon the whole earth.

Applying the Word...

If you've never had the experience of understanding once-for-all that God the Holy Spirit has been poured out upon you to empower you to serve the Lord, then realize it and receive it.

The Holy Spirit dwells within every believer, but He can be grieved (Ephesians 4:30), and His activity within us can be quenched (1Thessalonians 5:19). When we allow this to happen, we do not experience the fullness of the Holy Spirit's working and power in and through us. To be filled with the Spirit implies freedom for Him to occupy every part of our lives, guiding and controlling us. His power then can be exerted through us so that what we do is fruitful to God.

Sin is what separates us from the filling of the Holy Spirit, and obedience to God is how the filling of the Spirit is maintained. Because we are sinful creatures, it is impossible to be filled with the Spirit all of the time. We should deal with sin in our lives, and renew our commitment to being Spirit-filled and Spirit-led.

Cops apply field sobriety tests when they suspect a drunk driver:

1. An officer will observe your eyes as they attempt to follow a slowly moving object.
2. He will ask you to walk heel-to-toe, or to stand on one leg.
3. He might ask you to recite the alphabet.

Unbelievers don't know it, but (if you are a Christian) they are constantly administering field sobriety tests on **you**. They are watching your walk; listening to your talk.

They should conclude that you are **drunk** – spiritually drunk and under the influence of Jesus.

