

The Great Sayings in the Gospels
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What Did Jesus Promise?
Luke 24:45-53, Acts 2:1-13

Luke 24:45-53

- 45 Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures,
46 And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day:
47 And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.
48 And ye are witnesses of these things.
49 And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.
50 And he led them out as far as to Bethany, and he lifted up his hands, and blessed them.
51 And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven.
52 And they worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy:
53 And were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God. Amen.

Acts 2:1-13

- 1 And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.
2 And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.
3 And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them.
4 And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.
5 And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven.
6 Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language.
7 And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galilaeans?
8 And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?
9 Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judaea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia,
10 Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes,
11 Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God.
12 And they were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another, What meaneth this?
13 Others mocking said, These men are full of new wine.

Introduction:

There is no question at all in the Christian World that Jesus promised something massive to the disciples who watched Him ascend into heaven 40 days after His resurrection. Peter then declared that what occurred on the Day of Pentecost was the realization of that promise as well as the fulfillment of an ancient prophecy.

Acts 2:14-21

- 14 But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judaea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words:
- 15 For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day.
- 16 But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel;
- 17 And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams:
- 18 And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy:
- 19 And I will shew wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke:
- 20 The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come:
- 21 And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.

Joel 2:28-32

- 28 And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions:
- 29 And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit.
- 30 And I will shew wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke.
- 31 The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the LORD come.
- 32 And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the LORD hath said, and in the remnant whom the LORD shall call.

But here the agreement almost completely ends. Variations on what happened and what it meant are almost endless. We could spend months discussing all of the different opinions and shades of theology that have surrounded this event over the centuries. I, personally, want to stay with what we know and what we can clearly affirm from the biblical account.

I doubt there is any question in any of your minds but that the Holy Spirit of God, the Third Person of the Trinity, came upon the 120 believers at Jerusalem in a mighty way. They all (all 120, men and women) began to declare “the wonderful works of God,” 2:11, in the languages of the various nationalities represented there. At least 15 language groups are named. What is

impressive is that these believers were almost entirely, if not altogether, Jewish people, many of them Galilean (i.e. ‘Country’) folks who at best would have known two languages, Aramaic and Greek.

People have wondered and debated over times whether the miracle was in the speaking or in the hearing. Maybe, say some, God simply arranged for the spoken words to be *heard* in the native languages of those present. However, it seems obvious to me that these people were actually *speaking* in languages they did not know.

2:4

4 And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

Not only that but they were “filled with the Holy Ghost,” which means that they were overwhelmed, totally consumed and focused upon heavenly things, specifically the truths of God that these people at Jerusalem needed to hear.

Some have also suggested that these folks went into a kind of trance in which their minds were oblivious to either the meaning of their words or the sounds that their mouths were making. In fact, there is a large group of the ‘Christian’ world that thinks that this is the format for every occasion that the Holy Spirit comes upon a believer and fills him/her. They believe and teach that the filling of the Holy Spirit produces a mindless state in which a person is doing things that he is not aware he is doing and saying things he does not understand.

All of my study and experience has led me to the opposite conclusion, that a person caught up in the Power of God is thereby granted a vastly heightened sense of awareness and control, a profoundly deepened understanding, and an absolute and conscious commitment to do and say whatever the Lord would desire. It is the absolutely opposite state to that of drunkenness, so much so that Paul used it as an analogy and contrast.

Eph 5:18

18 And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;

Paul was not saying, as some attempt to read this, “don’t be drunk on wine, be drunk on the Spirit.” Rather, he was saying, I am convinced, “don’t be drunk, be the polar opposite, filled with the Spirit.” So, I am convinced that those believers there at Pentecost were absolutely in control of their faculties and knew intimately and clearly every thing that they said, which creates a wholly different picture than some would paint. Peter himself was filled with the Spirit and his message is clear, logical, and profoundly convincing in and of itself. Add to that the fact that the Holy Spirit was endorsing these truths to the minds and souls of the audience and you realize that it was indeed compelling.

The same was true, I am convinced, with each one who was speaking. In addition to whatever experience each of them was having (it must have been wonderful) God the Holy Spirit was taking what they were saying and plunging those words and ideas forcefully into the minds of those who were hearing them. At the same time, He was speaking life into the dead souls of those Jews so that they were being completely smitten with the wonderful messages.

Add to that the sound of the ‘rushing mighty wind’ when no wind was blowing and the fact that each of the 120 had something looking like a flame sitting on them or over them, and the scene is without comparison in all of history.

It really is difficult to picture the scene: Jerusalem filled with countrymen and pilgrims for the celebration of Pentecost; 120 saints gathered in one of the porches of the temple, a very loud sound of wind coming from heaven, a flame (as it were) sitting on each believer as they all powerfully proclaimed God’s truths to a crowd now powerfully affected by what they were hearing.

Although God did some amazing things after this in the New Testament record and has done some incredible things over time, never has this event been duplicated in just this way.

The most important thing that happened that day, however, was not the spectacular events but the fact that the gospel was both ***Powerfully Proclaimed*** and ***Believingly Heard!*** This is and always has been the one consistent and unfaltering reality attending the visitations of the Holy Spirit across time ever since. Different manifestations were sometimes present and sometimes the only thing that happened was that the gospel was proclaimed with power.

Let us remember the examples given to us in scripture.

Acts 3: Just a few days later and right there at the temple, a lame man was healed by Peter and John. A crowd gathered as he loudly praised God for what had happened. Peter proclaimed the gospel to them and more people were converted that day than had been at Pentecost, (5,000/3,000). The extraordinary thing here was the man’s healing but other than that, no sound of wind, no fire, no languages used except one. Yet the Holy Spirit was powerfully present to press Peter’s message home into the hearts of the crowd that gathered.

Acts 6:8-7:60: Stephen was mightily empowered by God the Holy Spirit and did great wonders and miracles. Some came to him to try to openly discredit him but he was so capable and so empowered by the Spirit, 6:10, that they were put to shame. The effect was that they hired men to lie about him to the council and as he preached to them they took him and stoned him to death. The Filling of the Holy Spirit does not always have a pleasant outcome.

Acts 8:5-16: Philip went to Samaria and, again, the power of God fell in the form of miracles and exorcisms. But the gospel was also preached with power so that there were many conversions.

Acts 8:6

6 And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did.

There is an oddity here which we should note. Even though the Holy Spirit had moved among them, He did not directly fall ***upon*** them until Peter and John came.

Acts 8:14-17

- 14 Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John:
15 Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost:
16 (For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.)
17 Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost.

In Acts 9:32-42: Two miracles at the hands of Peter resulted in massive conversions at Lydda and Joppa. Aenus was healed of palsy and Dorcas was raised from the dead.

Acts 9:42

- 42 And it was known throughout all Joppa; and many believed in the Lord.

Acts 10: Then, Peter was sent to Cesarea, north along the seacoast from Joppa, to preach the gospel to Cornelius, a Gentile seeking after God. The Holy Spirit fell on him and those of his kin and close acquaintances before they were even baptized. This became proof that the gospel kingdom was open to Gentiles, uncircumcised men. It also proves that people come into the Kingdom before they are baptized.

Acts 11:19-21: There was mighty moving of God at Antioch (along the seacoast in modern Lebanon) through unnamed disciples resulting in a great number of conversions.

Acts 11:21

- 21 And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord.

Meanwhile, Paul had been converted and was now called by God into the traveling gospel ministry, Acts 13:1-4. He preached a message in Antioch of Pisidia which was greatly empowered by the Holy Spirit and a great number believed.

Acts 13:48-49

- 48 And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.
49 And the word of the Lord was published throughout all the region.

It must also be noted that persecution broke out and Paul had to leave the area. However, the Holy Spirit was powerfully with them.

Acts 13:50-52

- 50 But the Jews stirred up the devout and honourable women, and the chief men of the city, and raised persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them out of their coasts.
51 But they shook off the dust of their feet against them, and came unto Iconium.
52 And the disciples were filled with joy, and with the Holy Ghost.

Acts 19: But the greatest outpouring of power under Paul's ministry possibly occurred at Ephesus where Paul had found some partially instructed disciples and had completed their understanding of the gospel. There were powerful confrontations and miracles but also the consistent presence of the powerful proclamation of the gospel.

Acts 19:10-12

10 And this continued by the space of two years; so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks.

11 And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul:

12 So that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them.

Acts 19:18-20

18 And many that believed came, and confessed, and shewed their deeds.

19 Many of them also which used curious arts brought their books together, and burned them before all men: and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver.

20 So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed.

A pattern begins to emerge. Miracles, conflict, persecution, and the mighty preaching of God's Word accompanied the apostles and those who were in directly contact with them.

But history records that as the apostles passed from the scene much of their miracle working power did as well. Reports of miracles continued and have continued to this day, mostly centering around healing and exorcisms but over the centuries the issue of miracles has lessened while the Holy Spirit assisted preaching of the Word has continued, at least until the last 100 years.

The stories of the moving of God's Spirit through the 1000 years from Constantine to John Hus and John Wycliffe are sparse since almost nothing of the literature of the Evangelical Church during that time has survived to us. What did exist was mostly destroyed and what remains is in the keeping of the Roman Church to this day. What we do know from the testimony of the enemies of the gospel is that Evangelical Christianity did survive and did continue to proclaim the gospel with powerful effect. Even at the height of the Inquisition Rome's own representatives report areas where the Evangelicals outnumbered the Catholics. Can that be attributed to anything but the powerful Presence of the Spirit of God with His people?

The modern record begins with the 100 Year Prayer Meeting of the Moravians (1727) which resulted in God's power outpoured not only on that little colony at Herrnhut Saxony but ultimately on the whole world as it progressed into the First Great Awakening. Here we have only a few testimonies of anything miraculous occurring but we do find exhaustive records of how the Word of God was preached in power resulting in the conversions of many thousands all over the world.

And, there have been many movements of the Spirit since then, some large and some small, some very effective and some seemingly overwhelmed and defeated by the powers of darkness.

But the testimony of God's Word as well as history declares that the primary effect of the Holy Spirit being poured out in power is that the gospel is preached, men are converted, communities and cultures, sometimes whole nations are changed.

So, what does this mean for us, for you and me? What are we to think? What are we to do?

It is clear that the apostle Paul longed for a deeper and greater, more powerful and profound, work of the Holy Spirit to be done among the churches to whom he ministered and wrote.

The great prayers of Eph 1 and 3 show Paul earnestly engaged in prayer himself, seeking to enlist the prayers of the Ephesians for themselves, to the end that the Holy Spirit might have a greater work among them than He had already had. Remember, this was the place of the mighty outpouring of the Spirit at the beginning of the church. We referenced this in the discussion of Acts 19. And, as we have also seen, he commanded them to 'be filled with the Spirit.'

To the Galatians he said, "Walk in the Spirit," twice, 5:16, 25.

To the Philippians:

Phil 1:9-11

- 9 And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment;
- 10 That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ;
- 11 Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.

The 'fruits of righteousness' can be nothing other than 'the fruit of the Spirit' and Paul desired for them to be filled with them, living lives with room for nothing else.

To the Colossians:

Col 1:9-11

- 9 For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding;
- 10 That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God;
- 11 Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness;

This prayer carries the same ideas as the prayer of Ephesians 1. Even though the Holy Spirit is not mentioned by name, no one was 'strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power' ever, except that he was Filled with the Holy Spirit.

Here is my conclusion, the result of over 50 years of study, reading, thought, meditation, experience, and prayer.

The Holy Spirit **AND HIS POWER** are available to God's people in every age and time. Peter said:

Acts 2:39

39 For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.

The people of God, either individual or collectively in churches, can never truly be what God would have them be, the practicing students of all the Christianity that has gone before them, unless they are **empowered and filled by the Spirit of God**.

Therefore, it should be very high on our agenda both as churches and as individuals that God would indeed fill us completely up, that we might be **filled with all the fullness of God**, knowing and completely convinced that this is the only way that we are going to glorify God and serve our generation for Him.

So, what part does this thing of being Filled with the Holy Spirit play in your life? In your prayers? In your study? Your meditations? Is it a high ranking priority? Are you looking at and realizing that in order for Him to fill you, some things are going to need to be emptied out?

I have said it before, but it bears repeating, Revival and Awakening is nothing more nor less than 1st Century Christianity finding expression in a different century. It is the very conclusion of the Ministry of Jesus Christ and the beginning of the Ministry of the Holy Spirit through the church. It is all that I want, all that I seek, and all that I desire.

This is the legacy of Our Enthroned Lord. This is the Great Gift that He has given to His people. Shall we not put out our hands to receive it? Shall we not pray earnestly for it?