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AN EXEGESIS: PENETCOST ACTS 2

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Introduction

Luke's account of The Day of Pentecost, found in Acts chapter two, promulgates the prerequisite of an miraculous out pouring of the Holy Spirit to: inaugurate the church age; empower the witness and growth of the church; and to strengthen the believers as they propagated the gospel message in: Jerusalem; Judaea; Samaria; and unto the uttermost part of the earth. The international audience found on the day of Pentecost had massive expansion potentialities: "The presence of Jews from several countries held strong universal significance. . . The mission of the church required that the message of Jesus be preached in many languages and dialects"¹

History of Pentecost

Kent describes Pentecost, one of the three major Jewish holy days, as: "This feast (the name "Pentecost" means "fiftieth") occurred annually fifty days after the presenting of the first sheaf of the harvest on the day following the Passover Sabbath (Lev. 23:15, 16) and commemorated the harvest."² Longenecker highlights the three-fold progression Pentecost took throughout the history of the Jews: (1) it was, "originally the festival of the firstfruits of the grain harvest (Exod. 23:16; Lev. 23:17-22; Num. 28:26-31); (2) later, it was "called the Feast of Weeks because it came after a period of seven weeks of harvesting"; and, (3) by the time of the first Christian century Pentecost . . . "was considered the anniversary of the giving of the law at Mount Sinai."³ Furthermore, Earl provides a grammatical etymon of the word "Pentecost": "*pentēkostē* is a feminine substantive from the adjective *pentecostos*, "fiftieth" (AG, p.643)-found three times in

¹ French L. Arrington. *The Acts of the Apostles; An Introduction and Commentary* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1988) 24.

² Homer A. Kent Jr. *Jerusalem to Rome Studies in Acts* (Grand Rapids MI: Baker Book House, 1972) 29.

³ Richard N. Longenecker. "Acts." *The Expositor's Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids MI: Zondervan, 1986), 9: 269.

the NT (see 20:16; 1 Cor. 16:8) . . . In the OT it is called the Feast of Weeks (Deut. 16:9, 10).⁴ So we can determinately deduct that when we are dealing with the first century Jewish Pentecost, found in Acts two; “There was a synergism that associated the Feast of Pentecost, “a celebration of the wheat harvest,” with the “traditional day on which Moses received the law at Sinai.”⁵

The Outpouring of the Holy Spirit

The day of Pentecost found in Acts 2: 1-4 is distinct from any other; deriving its originality from the supernatural outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Keach astutely describes the “outpouring of the Holy Spirit” in Acts two as; “the miraculous effusion of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles, and other believers” and describes the fire as being added as “a symbol of external manifestation.”⁶ It is noteworthy that in Acts chapter two we have a baptism accompanied by physical signs. Keach stresses the differentiation between divine and man’s baptisms: “. . . for whenever Baptism is mentioned, and God or Christ represented as the Agent, it must be understood as the Baptism of the Spirit . . . [contrastingly] whenever Baptism is mentioned as the act of any apostle or minister of the Gospel, it denotes water-baptism, because they have neither power nor commission to Baptize with the Spirit, and with fire.”⁷ So, we surmise the baptism of the Holy Spirit is what is in view in Acts chapter two; where the spiritual baptism is accompanied by “cloven tongues like as of fire” (Acts 2:3).⁸

The Arrival (Acts 2:1-3)

⁴ Ralph Earle. *Word Meanings in the New Testament* (Grand Rapids MI: Hendrickson, 1998) 98.

⁵ Thomas D. Lea and David Alan Black. *The New Testament: Its Background and Message* (Nashville TN: Broadman & Holman, 2003) 292.

⁶ Benjamin Keach. *Preaching from the Types and Metaphors of the Bible* (Grand Rapids MI: Kregal, 1972) 630.

⁷ Benjamin Keach. *Preaching from the Types and Metaphors of the Bible*, 631.

⁸ All Scripture quotations taken from the *King James Version* unless otherwise noted.

The description of Pentecost, which we find in Acts 2:1 is elucidated by Luke as having “fully come.” The Greek term for “fully come” is (συμπληρώω, *sumplēroō*) which is used exclusively by Luke (Luke 8:23; 9:51; Acts 2:1) and is used to denote “was being fulfilled” . . . Canon Cook defines “*ep̄lērōsen* [filled, in Acts 2:2] as, “a bath is filled with water, that they might be baptized with the Holy Ghost, in fulfillment of Acts 1:5.”⁹ Though not terribly important it should be marked that the physical location for the miraculous account of the baptism of the Holy Spirit is never explicitly mentioned. Harrison believes the location “may well have been the upper room mentioned in 1:13, but if so there must have been an exodus from these quarters, probably to the temple area, in order to have space for the mass of people that began to congregate.”¹⁰ As aforementioned, though worthy of multiple mentions due to its importance: The baptism of the Holy Spirit was accompanied and authenticated by physical manifestations to include sounds “as of a rushing mighty wind” and visible tongues “as of fire” (Acts 2:2-3).

The Three Phenomena

It is not the primary purpose of this paper to go into great depth regarding the charismatic aspects of the “supernatural signs” occurring in Acts 2: 2-4; but, this paper is written to exegete Acts chapter two as a whole. Therefore, the subject of phenomenal signs will only be restrictively mentioned though voluminous comments can be said regarding these three verses. Stott identifies the “three phenomena” with the coming of the Holy Spirit as: the supernatural signs of a sound, “*like a blowing of a violent wind*”; visible signs, “*what seemed to be tongues of fire*”; thirdly, *all of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues . . .*

⁹ Archibald Thomas Robertson. *Word Pictures in the New Testament. Acts 2:2.* n.d. e-Sword, Version 9.5.1. Copyright © 2000-2009. Rick Meyers.

¹⁰ Everett F. Harrison. *The Apostolic Church* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985) 48.

as the Spirit enabled them.”¹¹ Marshall relates these phenomenal analogies as “symbolism reminiscent of Old Testament theophanies. Marshall continues, “the wind is a sign of God’s presence as Spirit” and “fire . . . that of Sinai (Exod. 19:18); or [perhaps], “John the Baptist’s association of the Spirit with fire as a means of cleansing and judgment (Luke 3:16).”¹²

Regarding the scope of this miracle, most scholars believe the 120 found in Acts 1:15 are those who, “were all filled with the Holy Ghost” in Acts 2:2-4.

Essential to the proper interpretation of this particular text, the context of how the Greek word (γλῶσσα, glōssa) is transliterated “tongues” should be stressed. Harrison sees the tongues mentioned in Acts 2: 2-4 as involving; “intelligible speech” where each individual heard what was being said in his own language.¹³ Harrison emphasizes, “The same cannot be certified for other occasions when tongues are mentioned in this book [Acts] (10:46; 19:6) . . . Nothing is said one way or the other to clarify the matter.”¹⁴

The Results (Acts 2:4-6)

The supernatural baptismal filling of the Holy Spirit, along with its phenomenal signs, led to some very calculable responses: confusion, amazement, and reaction (Acts 2:6-8). What made this miraculous manifestation of tongues so bewildering to the hearers can be glaringly appreciated when the diversity of nations represented in Luke’s narrative is envisaged. Marshall summarizes this divergence: “It begins with three countries to the east of Rome in the area known as Persia or Iran” and moving westward to “Mesopotamia, modern Iraq, and Judea . . . Furthermore, it encompassed “various provinces and areas in Asia Minor, (modern Turkey), and

¹¹ John Stott. *The Message of Acts, Bible Speaks Today* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1990) 62.

¹² Howard I. Marshall. “Acts,” *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999) 75.

¹³ Harrison. *The Apostolic Church*, 49.

¹⁴ *Ibid*, 49.

then Egypt . . . Rome” and “Jewish populations along with Crete and Arabia.”¹⁵ Certainly, if any prudent person was placed in the same circumstances as those present at Pentecost their response would be similar: confusion, amazement and bewilderment.

The Crowds Amazement (Acts 2: 5- 7)

To fully understand the crowd’s amazement it should be re-emphasized that the crowd in Acts chapter two was a conglomeration of pilgrims, Jews from lands of dispersion. In Acts 2:5 they are identified as, “devout men, out of every nation under heaven,” who have traveled to Jerusalem in preparation for the celebration of Pentecost. This variegation of humanity, originating all the way back to the time of Babel, was separated by the multifarious linguistic impediments. Stott sees the supernatural break of the language barrier in Jerusalem as a “sign that the nations would now be gathered together in Christ, prefiguring the great day when the redeemed company will be drawn from every nation, tribe, people and language.”¹⁶ Therefore, consider the amazement of these distant pilgrims, represented by multiple languages: some speaking Aramaic, others Greek; yet, hearing these Galileans speaking “most of the tongues spoken throughout the known world.”¹⁷ Earle defines the Greek verb (ἐξίστημι, existēmi), which is transliterated as “amazed” in Acts 2:7, to convey the idea of putting “out of its place” . . . to “drive out of his senses” . . . It indicates an overwhelming [or paralyzing] feeling of amazement.”¹⁸

The Reaction (Acts 2: 7-13)

¹⁵ Howard I. Marshall. “Acts,” *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries*, 76.

¹⁶ John Stott. *The Message of Acts, Bible Speaks Today*, 68.

¹⁷ F.F. Bruce, *The Book of Acts (Rev), New International Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988) 54.

¹⁸ Ralph Earle. *Word Meanings in the New Testament*, 99.

The dispersion Jews, who were perplexed in amazement, attributed this phenomenal event to the results of “new wine” (Acts 2:13). The “new wine” (γλεῦκος, *gleukos*), used only in Acts 2:13, was a sweet wine that was preserved by various methods to last until the next harvest season began. The thing to notice is this particular wine was aged and very intoxicating. Peter will correct their false assumption of drunkenness by stating, “It is *but* the third hour of the day” which is 9 o’clock in the morning (Acts 2:15). Peter queries his hearers to consider the unlikeness of their accusation and then launches into his Spirit influenced Pentecostal Sermon. Keener adds, “Although drunkenness was common among Greeks, it would have been a grievous accusation in Jewish Palestine, where it was regarded as obnoxious and sinful.”¹⁹ Therefore, the probability of phenomenal divine intercession far outweighs the belief that a group of pious Jews, from multiple locations, embracing different cultural backgrounds were able to pull off such a preternatural task. Additionally, even if the phenomena could be explained away by drunkenness; then, there are still physical manifestations which are described to be “like” a rushing wind/fire. These evidences would still need to be accounted for.

Peter’s Sermon: Empower Witness and Growth (Acts 2:14-40)

The Jews of dispersion: confounded, amazed and impressionable, are seeking an explanation for this supernatural event (Acts 2:1-13); and, Peter has the answer. Peter’s sermon will include references to Old Testament prophecies along with five additional arguments in response to the crowd’s confoundedness. It is in Peter’s answer we see progressive movements regarding the newly incepted church as it initiates the developmental phases of: empowerment, witness, and growth. Peter is cultivating, planting and watering; and, God will miraculously respond with an

¹⁹ Craig S. Keener. *The IVP Bible Background Commentary, New Testament* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1993) 328.

immediate harvest. Luke records in Acts 2:41, “that same day . . . about three thousand souls” were added to the church.

Introduction (Acts 2:14-21)

Kent outlines Peter’s sermon into three distinctive components; Introduction, argument, and application.²⁰ Kent’s outline is a sensible delineation of Peter’s sermon; but, Marshall’s recommended five argument designation of Peter’s sermon seems more felicitous for the scope of this paper. Marshall characterizes Peter’s five arguments as: (1) the miracles of Christ; (2) the resurrection of Christ; (3) the ascension of Christ; (4) the exaltation of Christ; and, (5) the Lordship of Christ.²¹ Before these arguments are commented upon Peter’s quotation of the Old Testament prophet Joel should be examined.

Peter’s Quotation of Joel 2:28-32 (Acts 2:14-21)

The Old Testament prophecy Peter refers to in Acts 2: 14-21 can be found in the Book of 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” (Joel 2:28-32). Stott identifies some alterations made by Peter, probably to add clarity to the current situation. First, Peter “starts” his response (Acts 2:16) with the word “this,”

²⁰ Homer A. Kent Jr. *Jerusalem to Rome Studies in Acts*, 32-34.

²¹ Howard I. Marshall. “Acts,” *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries*, 80-85.

referring to the current phenomena, is “that”; thus, alluding to that which was foretold by Joel. Second, Peter [or possibly Luke] changes “afterwards” (Joel 2: 38) to “last days” (Acts 2:17). Third, Peter alters the source of deliverance from “Yahweh” (Joel 2: 32) to the “Lord” [Jesus] (Acts 2:21).²² Though Peter has made these minor adjustments to Joel’s prophecy it is fundamental to espouse the proper context of Peter’s overall mindset. Stott states, “we must be careful not to re-quote Joel’s prophecy as if we are still awaiting its fulfillment” or that it was only partially fulfilled . . . Stott adds, Peter, like the unanimous consensus of the New Testament authors, believed “that Jesus inaugurated the last days of the Messianic age, and the outpouring of the Spirit” was a fulfillment of the Old Testaments foretelling of the end times.²³ Furthermore, Bruce notes that Joel’s account of outpouring, referred to in Acts 2:17 is “upon all flesh” [meaning without distinction]; thus, “the whole human race.”²⁴ Bruce concludes that it is likely that Peter lacked a full understanding regarding the foreshadowing of the “worldwide Gentile mission movement” when these words were “quoted on the day of Pentecost.”²⁵

Peter’s Arguments (Acts 2:22-36)

Peter’s message follows the typical early church “kerygma” (gospel message) format. One of the key elements of the early church kerygma was the inclusion of Old Testament prophecy accompanied with its fulfillment. Arrington list several examples: “Psalms 16:8-11 (Acts 2:25-28); 132:11 (Acts 2:20); 110:1(Acts 2:34, 35), as well as allusions to Deut. 29:1-21 in Acts 2:33, 38 and to Isa. 63:9-11 in Acts 2: 22, 36.”²⁶

²² John Stott. *The Message of Acts, Bible Speaks Today*, 73.

²³ Ibid, 73.

²⁴ F.F. Bruce, *The Book of Acts (Rev), New International Commentary on the New Testament*, 61.

²⁵ Ibid, 61.

²⁶ French L. Arrington. *The Acts of the Apostles; An Introduction and Commentary*, 26

Miracles of Christ (Acts 2:22)

The first argument Peter uses in his sermon is the miracles of Christ: “Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know” (Acts 2:22). Earle defines the Greek word in Acts 2:22 (ἀποδείκνυμι; apodeiknumi), transliterated to the English word “approved,” as a “passive participle of apodeiknymi, which means ‘attested’ or . . . ‘accredited’ . . . Earle concludes that Acts 2:22 means “Jesus’ miracles were His divine credentials, proclaiming God’s appointment of Him as the Messiah.”²⁷ Lockyer concurs, “Miracles are also the insignia of Christ’s deity—“a constitutive element of the revelation of God in Christ”—and Messiahship (John 2:11; 11:4; Matthew 11:4-6; Acts 2:20; 10:38).”²⁸ Another thing worthy of mention is Peter’s usage of three specific terms: miracles; wonders; and signs. Earle delineates the three words as: *dynamesi*, “powers” (miracles wrought through divine powers); *terasi*, “wonders” (divine miracles caused amazement); and, *sēmeion* “signs” (of divine power).²⁹ Lockyer defines wonders, powers, and signs as: (1) *terasi* (wonders), one which “indicates the state of mind produced on the eyewitnesses by the sight of miracles; (2) *dynamesi* (powers), one that manifests the mighty power of God; and (3) *sēmeion* (signs), a seal “by which God authenticated the miracle-worker himself .”³⁰ Lastly, Peter identified Jesus’ miracles as being manifested “in the midst of you.” Lockyer underscores, “It is impossible to calculate how many miracles Christ performed . . . Fausset says, “the 40 miracles of Christ recorded are but samples out of a greater number.” Scroggie says they are 35 in number. Trench, in his well

²⁷ Ralph Earle. *Word Meanings in the New Testament*, 99.

²⁸ Herbert Lockyer. *All the Miracles of the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1961) 14.

²⁹ Ralph Earle. *Word Meanings in the New Testament*, 99.

³⁰ Herbert Lockyer. *All the Miracles of the Bible*, 15.

known volume on *The Miracles* expounds 33 of Christ's miracles."³¹ So, when considering Peter's argument regarding Christ's miracles there is no shortage of evidences.

Resurrection of Christ (Acts 2:24)

The second argument Peter uses in his sermon is the resurrection of Christ: "Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it" (Acts 2:24). Re-stated, God raised Jesus "because it was not possible" for Jesus to be seized (or taken) by death. Peter substantiates the resurrected Christ, by preceding the statement regarding the impossibility of Jesus with the phrase "having loosed the pains of death."

Commentators differ on translation; some take the word "pains" to be an adoption of a phrase found in the LXX (Job 39:2), (𐤀𐤋𐤁; yâlad) "when they bring forth." Marshall states, "The Greek expression here is slightly odd. The word *pangs* refer to the pains of childbirth . . . The verb *loosed* goes oddly with this subject."³² Others believe Peter may have followed a mistranslated word "pains" taken from "snares" found in Psalms 18:5 "the snares of death."³³ The word "snares" portrays the idea of "escape from the snare of a huntsman."³⁴ In summation, Vincent recommends "It is better, perhaps, on the whole, to take the expression in the sense of the A. V., and to make the *pains of death* stand for death generally."³⁵ Nevertheless, whatever Peter had in mind the final thought is summed up nicely by Marshall, ". . . in which death is regarded as being in labour and unable to hold back its child, the Messiah."³⁶

³¹ Ibid, 154.

³² Howard I. Marshall. "Acts," *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries*, 80.

³³ Marvin R. Vincent. *Word Studies in the New Testament, Acts 2:24*. Covenant Parsonage, NY. 1886. E Sword, Version 9.5.1. Copyright © 2000-2009. Rick Meyers.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid.

Peter continues the thread of Jesus' resurrection in Acts 2:25-28 by quoting from Psalm 16:8-11. Marshall sees this Psalm as the prayer of a Godly man, David, with a two-fold meaning: (1) that David believed "that after death he will not descend to Sheol but will be taken into the presence of God; and, (2) "that *the Holy One* was understood as a reference to the Messiah.³⁷ The argument bleeds over into Acts 2:29 where it is stated that David is "both dead and buried, and his sepulcher is with us unto this day." Marshall (*fn.* 19) refers to the Jewish historian Josephus who attested to "a monument known as the tomb of David."³⁸ It seems rather obvious that this second meaning is the part in which Peter has in mind when delivering his sermon at Pentecost. So, in Peter's second argument, he is attesting to his Jewish audience that Jesus is the Messiah which is validated through His resurrection.

Ascension of Christ (Acts 2:32)

The third argument used in Peter's sermon is the ascension of Christ: "This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses" (Acts 2:32). Peter has arrived at a point in his sermon, with the resurrection of Christ being proven, where he can introduce an explanation for the filling of the Holy Ghost that occurred in Acts 2: 2-4. Harrison elucidates the message of Acts 2:33, "In order for Jesus to be exalted into glory [considering exaltation to be crucial in the pouring of the Spirit] Jesus first had to be raised from the dead."³⁹ The ascension of Jesus is well attested and documented throughout the Canonical New Testament witness. Thiessen records at least twelve post resurrection appearances of Jesus; thus, giving further proof of the incalculable probability of the future ascension of Jesus. These twelve appearances are:

³⁶ Howard I. Marshall. "Acts," *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries*, 81.

³⁷ *Ibid*, 81.

³⁸ *Ibid*, 81.

³⁹ Everett F. Harrison. *The Apostolic Church*, 51.

(1) To Mary, who came to the tomb after Peter and John had already left (Mk. 16:9; Jn. 20:11-18); (2) the other women on the way (Matt. 28:9) (3) the two on the way to Emmaus (Mk. 16:12; Lk. 24:13-33); (4) to Simon Peter (Lk. 24:34; I Cor. 15:5); (5) to the ten Apostles (Jn. 20:19-24); (6) to the eleven disciples (Jn. 20:26-29); (7) to the Apostles at the Sea of Tiberius (Jn. 21:1-14); (8) to the apostles at the Mount of Galilee (Matt 28:16-20); (9) to more than 500 brethren; at the same time (1 Cor. 15:6); (10) to James (1 Cor. 15:7); (11) to the disciples at the Mount of Ascension (Mk. 16:19; Lk. 24:50; Acts 1:9); (12) to Paul (1 Cor. 15:8).⁴⁰

Exaltation of Christ (Acts 2:33)

The fourth argument used by Peter in his sermon is the exaltation of Christ: “Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear” (Acts 2:33). The ascension of Christ, in verse 32 is complemented by the exaltation (vs. 33); therefore, we have the Lordship of Christ (vs.34-35). Marshall explains, “. . . however Peter came to his deduction that the Spirit was the gift of the exalted Jesus, the important fact is that the bestowal of the Spirit offers further testimony that Jesus is the Messiah.”⁴¹ Arrington adds, “For Peter the giving of the Spirit was proof that Jesus had been enthroned in heaven.”⁴² Likewise, Dunn summarizes: “The idea that the resurrection /ascension constituted Jesus installation as Lord is present wherever the Psalm 110:1 passage is echoed (e.g. Rom. 10:9-10; Phil. 2:9-11; Heb. 10:12, 13).”⁴³

Lordship of Christ (Acts 2:34, 35)

The fifth argument Peter uses in his sermon is the Lordship of Christ: “For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, Until I make thy foes thy footstool” (Acts 2:34, 35). Here Peter is quoting from

⁴⁰ Henry C. Thiessen. *Lectures in Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979) 246.

⁴¹ Howard I. Marshall. “Acts,” *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries*, 84.

⁴² French L. Arrington. *The Acts of the Apostles; An Introduction and Commentary*, 30.

⁴³ James D.G. Dunn. *The Acts of the Apostles, Narrative Commentaries* (Valley Forge: Trinity Press, 1996) 31.

another Davidic Old Testament passage, Psalm 110:1: “A Psalm of David. The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.” This Davidic , Messianic Psalm, encapsulates an invitation to the “Lord” to “Sit at my right hand” and is being extended by God as attested by the “Gospel incident of Mark 12:35-37.”⁴⁴ Additionally, in Matthew 22: 42-45, Jesus challenges the Pharisees with His own questions: (1) “What think ye of Christ? Whose son is he” (vs.42); (2) “How then doth David in spirit call him Lord,” saying (vs. 43b); (3) “The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool” (44); (4) If David then call him Lord, how is he his son (45).” Robertson points out, “By his [Jesus’] pungent question about the Messiah as David’s son and Lord he really touches the problem of his Person (his Deity and his Humanity).”⁴⁵ So, it is without question that Peter is referring to the Lordship of Jesus in this portion of his sermon.

Peter’s Application (Acts 2:37-40)

It is the word ‘therefore,’ found in Acts 2:36, that signals Luke is drawing Peter’s sermon to a climactic conclusion. Peter gives one final fundamental summarization of his kerygma sermon: “God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ” (Acts 2:36). Here Peter is hoping to provoke his Judaist audience into a repenting spirit. Now that Peter has given a clearly formatted presentation of the gospel: the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus; he will challenge his audience to: repent (Acts 2:38); receive his word (Acts 2:41); and, be baptized (Acts 2:41).

Call to Repentance (Acts 2:37-40)

⁴⁴ F.F. Bruce, *The Book of Acts (Rev), New International Commentary on the New Testament*, 67.

⁴⁵ Archibald Thomas Robertson. *Word Pictures in the New Testament. Matthew 22:42*. n.d. e-Sword, Version 9.5.1. Copyright © 2000-2009. Rick Meyers.

The response of Peter's hearers was efficacious due to the illuminative work of the Holy Spirit; thus, causing a conscious induced conviction. Some of the English descriptions regarding the audience's disposition "pricked in their heart" (Acts 2:37) include: to "pierce thoroughly or agitate violently"⁴⁶; to "sting sharply or stun/smite."⁴⁷ Vincent concludes, "The radical idea of the word [pricked] is given in the simple verb *νύσσω*, to *prick with a sharp point*."⁴⁸ The Holy Spirit generated conviction led the hearers to a necessary repentant heart; something that had previously been proclaimed as necessary by John the Baptist and Jesus incarnate. Bruce defines repentant as: "a complete change of heart, a spiritual about face" . . . This repentance, which they had previously refused from the "God-sent deliverer", was now being offered from "his place of exaltation."⁴⁹ The hearers responded to Peter with the wonderful question of "what shall we do," to which Peter had a ready response. May it be learned from Peter's example to prepare ourselves to share the eternal truths when posed with the question; what shall we do. Lastly, it can be seen, in Acts 2:14: "Save yourselves from this untoward generation" that Peter was not limiting this proclamation to "private and individual conversions"; but, "for a public identification with other believers."⁵⁰

Reception of Word (Acts 2:41)

In Acts 2:41 Luke records: "Then they that gladly received his word. . ." In Acts 2: 41 we find that an enormous number of people responded to Peter's message: "The body of Christ in

⁴⁶ James Strong. *Strong's Hebrew and Greek Dictionaries. Acts 2:37*. Taken from Strong's Exhaustive Concordance by James Strong, S.T.D., LL.D., 1890. e-Sword, Version 9.5.1. Copyright © 2000-2009. Rick Meyers.

⁴⁷ Ralph Earle. *Word Meanings in the New Testament*, 100.

⁴⁸ Marvin R. Vincent. *Word Studies in the New Testament, Acts 2:37*.

⁴⁹ F.F. Bruce, *The Book of Acts (Rev), New International Commentary on the New Testament*, 69.

⁵⁰ John Stott. *The Message of Acts, Bible Speaks Today*, 78.

Jerusalem multiplied twenty-six times, from 120 to 3,120.”⁵¹ It should be marked that in Acts 2:41, Luke makes no mention of the accompaniment of supernatural elements: wind, fire etc.; thus, adding weight to the belief that the inauguration process of the church had already been accomplished in Acts 2:1-4. Lastly, it must be emphasized that in Old and New Testaments the reception of the word is mandatory for faith to be initialized.

Baptism (Acts 2:41)

Baptism is preceded by repentance and reception of His word; thus, making baptism (immersion) of the Holy Spirit possible. Bruce comments on John the Baptists outlook regarding baptism: “John the Baptist distinguished his own baptism in water—a ‘baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins’ (Mark 1:4 par. Luke 3:3) – as different from the baptism in the Spirit to be administered by the Coming One. . .”⁵² Stott provides a cultural dimension regarding Peter’s demand for the Jewish hearers to be baptized: to “*be baptised* in the name, submitting to the humiliation of baptism, which Jews regarded as necessary for Gentile converts only, and submitting to it in the name of the very person they had previously rejected.”⁵³ Bruce relates Paul’s concept of baptism as a symbol of “the believer’s dying and rising with Christ” “the man we once were” (Romans 6:6) has died in his death and the “new man,” bearing the Christ-likeness, has come alive in his resurrection.”⁵⁴ Therefore, baptism even for the pious Jew was considered necessary because of its symbolic testimony of associating one’s personal identification with the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Church and Mission: Gospel Propagation (Acts 2:42-47)

⁵¹ Ibid, 79.

⁵² F.F. Bruce, *The Book of Acts (Rev)*, *New International Commentary on the New Testament*, 69.

⁵³ John Stott. *The Message of Acts, Bible Speaks Today*, 78.

⁵⁴ F.F. Bruce. *Paul, Apostle of the Heart Set Free* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 2000) 138.

The next section found in Acts two concentrates on the developmental phases of the newly formed church: a learning church (Acts 2:42-43); a loving church (Acts 2:44-45); a worshipping church (Acts 2: 46); and, an evangelistic church (Acts 2:47). It is paramount to see this section as a whole, connected in verses 42-46 by the continuative Greek conjunction (δέ, de), transliterated into the English conjunction “and”; thus, showing an interdependent relationship.

A Learning Church (Acts 2:42-43)

In Acts 2: 42 we see Luke emphasizing the early church as a learning church: “And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.” It is often overlooked that the undertaking of teaching 3,000 new babes in Christ must have been an insurmountable task. The key to the churches growth is attributed by Luke to the authority of the apostles teaching (Acts 2:43). A “fear” meaning reverential esteem was displayed towards the apostle’s because of their teachings, which were accompanied by supernatural wonders and signs. Notice the embryonic phase of the church, as was the inception of the church, involved apostolic miraculous wonders; thus, authenticating their teaching authority.⁵⁵

A Loving Church (Acts 2:44-45)

This passage of Scripture is difficult to understand because on many occasions the embryonic features are often impressed upon today’s church community. The keynote factor here is “the voluntary mutual love” resulting from the indwellment of the Holy Spirit. In Acts 2: 42-44, Peter underscores the horizontal love, vertical love coming from God Himself, which must be expressed mutually between the members of the body of Christ. This love is an extension and proof of our relational fellowship with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit (1 Jn. 4:12, 16, 19-21).

⁵⁵ Ibid, 82.

Key words to note: first, in Acts 2:42, is the Greek word (κοινωνία, koinōnia), transliterated into English as “fellowship”; is akin to the second Greek word found in Acts 2:44 (κοινός, koinos), transliterated into English as “common.” Therefore, we can conclusively establish that Peter see’s Christian love to include sharing “out what we receive.”⁵⁶ Stott lengthens this meaning for us, “Koinōnia is the word Paul used for the collection he was organizing among the Greek churches, and koinōnikos is the Greek word for ‘generous.’⁵⁷

As aforementioned, Luke is dealing with the features of an embryonic church, though many today are capable of being gifted in this area as well. Stott proposes the belief that “Jesus still calls some of his disciples, as he did the rich young ruler, to a life of total, voluntary poverty [e.g.: Apostle Paul, Mother Teresa]. Yet neither Jesus nor his apostles forbade private property to all Christians.”⁵⁸ Looking at historical groups like the Anabaptist and Mennonites, who emphasized brotherly love and community goods ... also noted it was not “compulsory.” Antithetically, the Hutterite Brethren in Moravia made “complete common ownership a condition of membership.”⁵⁹ Menno Simons, famous leader of the passive sect of the Mennonites, “pointed out that the Jerusalem experiment was neither universal nor permanent.”⁶⁰ Looking at the text passage it becomes unmistakably clear that this “sharing of property and possessions was voluntary.”⁶¹

⁵⁶ Ibid, 82-83.

⁵⁷ Ibid, 83.

⁵⁸ Ibid, 83.

⁵⁹ Ibid, 83.

⁶⁰ Ibid, 83

⁶¹ Ibid, 84

Additionally, Earle's overlay of the grammatical structure of this verse supports a voluntary and continuous giving: the verbs "are in the imperfect tense [not the aorist tense] of continuous or repetitive action (*epipraskon kai diemerizon*, [sold and parted]) . . . As needs arose, properties were sold and money made available. This thought is further developed in . . . Acts 4:34, 35)."⁶² Furthermore, in the account of Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:4) Peter states, "Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power"; thus, we have a clear pattern for a conceptual framework of voluntary giving.

In conclusion, John exemplifies Christian love in 1 John 3:17: "But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels *of compassion* from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him"? Stott admonishes Christians to learn from these verses and submits this reminder, "we have hundreds of thousands of destitute brothers and sisters . . . It is part of the responsibility of Spirit-filled believers to alleviate need and abolish destitution in the new community of Jesus."⁶³ May Christian believers learn these valuable lessons from the early church!

A Worshiping Church (Acts 2:46)

Worship emanates from the Christian believer as a result of their love for God and is the inner-working of the spiritually regenerated heart. Jesus identifies the results of a false type of worship in Matthew 15:8: "This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me." It has already been noted, in Acts 2:42, the newly formed church was active in corporate worship: "*They devoted themselves . . . to the*

⁶² Ralph Earle. *Word Meanings in the New Testament*, 100.

⁶³ John Stott. *The Message of Acts, Bible Speaks Today*, 84.

breaking of bread and to prayer.”⁶⁴ In Acts 2:46 we find further description of this Pentecostal worship; which was permeated with a Spirit of unity: “And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart.” Robertson defines the Greek word (ἀφελότης, *aphelotēs*), transliterated to “Singleness,” as follows: “The word occurs only here in the N.T., though a late *Koiné* [28928]ῆ word (papyri). It comes from *aphelēs*, free from rock (*phelleus* is stony ground), smooth.”⁶⁵ Secondly, it was a worship that was identified as stemming from a platform of “gladness,” seasoned with sincerity. When considering the English word “gladness” Stott conveys, “. . . There can be no doubt of their joy . . . which literally means ‘in exultation [ἀγαλλίασις, *agalliasis*- transliterated gladness] and sincerity of heart’ (Gal. 5:22).”⁶⁶ The ember of their worship was attributed to reconciliation: “He was in their midst, and they knew it. They bowed down before him in humility and wonder.”⁶⁷ May Christianity learn from the early churches example of what true worship truly encompasses: Jesus; the resurrected Christ; ascended; exalted; and Lord of all!

An Evangelistic Church (Acts 2:47)

A learning, loving, and worshiping church will undoubtedly be an evangelistic church. Stott surmises that Acts 2:42 “provides a very lopsided picture of the church’s life” and the addition of Acts 2:47b compliments its overall function: “*And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.*”⁶⁸ First, it is imperative to understand that in the early church, as it is still

⁶⁴ Ibid, 84.

⁶⁵ Archibald Thomas Robertson. *Word Pictures in the New Testament. Acts 2:46.*

⁶⁶ John Stott. *The Message of Acts, Bible Speaks Today*, 85.

⁶⁷ Ibid, 86.

⁶⁸ Ibid, 86.

today, it is the Lord who adds to the church through the evangelistic efforts of His body, the church. Secondly, in regard to those being saved, the Greek word used (σῶζω, *sōzō*), transliterated “such as should be saved,” can be considered as: “he added . . . those who are being saved” because “the present participle *sōzomenous* either being timeless or emphasizing that salvation is a progressive experience culminating in final glorification”; i.e., salvation and church membership belong together.⁶⁹ Thirdly, the addition was daily: “And the Lord added to the church daily” (Acts 2:47). Stott underscores the grammatical structure of the verb “added”: which “is an imperfect (‘kept adding’) and the adverb (‘daily’) puts the matter beyond question.”⁷⁰ Lastly, the characteristics of the Holy Spirit demonstrate that of a “missionary Spirit . . . So a Spirit filled church is a missionary church”⁷¹ May today’s church learn from those who have pressed on before us.

Conclusion

Acts chapter two, the account of Pentecost is the churches training manual for Today’s Body of Christ: “For the Church was not an organization merely, not a movement, but a walking incarnation of spiritual energy. And she accomplished within a few brief years such prodigies of moral conquest as to leave us wholly without an explanation--apart from God.”⁷² Pentecost, the church became anointed with the Holy Spirit; thus, enabling the church to accomplish her divine mission.

⁶⁹ Ibid, 86-87.

⁷⁰ Ibid, 87.

⁷¹ Ibid, 87.

⁷² A.W. Tozer. Literature Ministries International: Tozer Daily Devotional. February 16, 2009. <http://www.litmin.org/tozer.php>. Accessed February 16, 2009.

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