

## **Bi134 Acts**

### ***Lesson Bi134-4 Pentecost: Peter's Message***

A large crowd of people pushing each other to get a better view of something can become dangerous. People can become angry. Often someone gets hurt. The crowd gathered around the temple at Pentecost could not believe their eyes or ears. They cried out, "What does this mean?" Peter, full of the Holy Spirit, stood up and began to answer their question. He boldly preached to them, saying, "These people are not drunk, as you suppose. It's only nine in the morning." In fact, just the opposite was true. They had all been filled with the Spirit!

Peter then told the people how this miracle had been predicted by Joel. Centuries before, the prophet had written, "In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy" (Joel 2:28-29). Peter then explained how the supernatural signs and the Holy Spirit's outpouring was a fulfillment of Joel's ancient prophecy.

Peter further explained to the crowd that this powerful experience from God was not just for these disciples. It was for all of God's people—until Jesus comes again. It was for men and women, old and young, rich and poor. And, because God was freely pouring out his Spirit on all people, the door of salvation had been opened. Now, "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved" (Acts 2:21).

Once Peter had explained to the people what had happened, he began to boldly proclaim the gospel to them. He told them about Jesus' miracles, his crucifixion, his resurrection, and his exaltation to the right hand of God. He then explained how all of these things were part of God's plan from the beginning. What they had just witnessed was proof. Jesus, whom they had crucified, had ascended to the right hand of God. There he had received from the Father the promise of the Spirit. And now he had poured out the Holy Spirit on these 120 disciples. Peter concluded his message, "Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah" (Acts 2:22-36).

When the people heard Peter's Spirit-inspired words, they were deeply moved, and they began to cry out to the apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?" Peter replied that the gift of the Spirit was a promise for everyone. However, they must first repent of their sins and follow Christ in water baptism. The powerful demonstrations at Pentecost were followed by Peter's powerful proclamation of the gospel. As a result, about 3,000 people believed on Christ and repented of their sins. They were baptized in water and were added to the church that very day.

In his message Peter explained the meaning of the Spirit's outpouring at Pentecost. It was not to be thought of as a random event. It was rather a fulfillment of prophecy. It was part of God's eternal plan to redeem the nations. Joel had prophesied that God would someday pour out his Spirit on all people. When that day came, the door would be opened for all people to be saved. These ancient predictions were being fulfilled before the people's eyes.

Another prophecy was being fulfilled at Pentecost. This is the prediction Jesus had made about a week earlier. He had told his disciples that they would receive power when the Holy

Spirit came upon them. As a result, they would become powerful witnesses for Christ (Acts 1:8). At Pentecost this promise was first fulfilled. Peter, along with the rest of the 120, was filled with the Spirit. Immediately he began to witness in the Spirit's power. Peter was not merely speaking out of his own heart, he was speaking by the Spirit and telling the people about Jesus.

Peter's Spirit-anointed message at Pentecost and again in the next chapter of Acts, establishes a pattern for preaching the gospel that we should follow today. Peter's message includes the following five key elements: **First**, Peter announced that Jesus Christ was Lord, and that he was crucified, raised from the dead, and exalted to the right hand of God. **Second**, he announced that the Spirit has been poured out on all people. **Third**, Peter encouraged believers to receive the promised gift of the Holy Spirit. **Fourth**, he declared that Jesus will return. And **finally**, he called on the people to repent of their sins, be baptized, and put their faith in Christ for salvation.

Each of these five elements should be found in our preaching today. Christ's death, burial, and resurrection must be at the heart of all our preaching. We must never forget that it is this message, preached in the power of the Spirit that will draw people to be saved. We must also proclaim that Jesus baptizes in the Holy Spirit and empowers his disciples to witness for him. The Spirit has been given. Now he must be received through repentance and faith. And we must announce that Jesus is coming again. We would be very foolish and shortsighted if we were to replace this message with other less important messages, no matter how appealing they may seem at the time.

Those who listened to Peter's Spirit-anointed message were "cut to the heart." That is, they were brought under strong conviction by the Holy Spirit. Such conviction is the natural result of the gospel being proclaimed in the power of the Holy Spirit. The people cried out to the apostles, "What shall we do?" They were really asking, "What must we do to receive Christ and to experience what we have seen here today?"

Peter answered them, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38). We should not confuse the "gift of the Holy Spirit" that Peter is talking about here with the "gifts of the Holy Spirit" that Paul talks about in his letters. This "gift of the Spirit" is the gift of the Spirit himself. It is an empowering experience from God. It is separate from conversion and it is given to Jesus' disciples to empower them to witness for him. Peter then told the people that this promise of the Spirit "is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call" (2:39). In other words, the gift of the Spirit is for all people of every generation until Jesus comes again.

As a result of the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost, and the powerful Spirit-empowered witness that followed, 3,000 people followed Peter's instructions and were saved and added to the church that day. Jesus' promise was true. He had promised the church power to carry out its mission of proclaiming Christ "in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8). And now that promise was being fulfilled. As a result of the Spirit's outpouring on 120 at Pentecost, the church began witnessing with great power.

As preachers of the gospel, we must never forget that we have two great responsibilities. The first is to clearly proclaim the gospel of Christ and point people to salvation. The second is to immediately lead these same people into the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Being born of the Spirit will prepare them for heaven. Being filled with the Spirit will prepare them for Christian service.

This lesson is **important** because Peter's Spirit-anointed sermon at Pentecost can serve as a pattern for our evangelistic preaching today. The gift of the Spirit can empower us to preach with the same power that Peter preached with on that day.

The **main truth** of this lesson is that we could commit ourselves to preaching the gospel to the lost, just as Peter did on the Day of Pentecost.

Let's **review** some significant things we have learned in this lesson.

1. In his sermon on the Day of Pentecost, which Old Testament prophet did Peter quote?  
A. [PAUSE] If you answered, "Joel," then you answered correctly.
2. What did Peter do once he had been filled with the Holy Spirit?  
A. [PAUSE] If you answered that he began to witness or proclaim Christ to the people, you answered correctly.
3. Based on Peter's sermons in Acts 2 and 3, what five elements should our preaching contain today?  
A. [PAUSE] If you answered,
  - (1) Jesus Christ is Lord, crucified, raised, and exalted,
  - (2) The Spirit has been poured out on all people;
  - (3) Believers must receive the gift of the Holy Spirit,
  - (4) Jesus is coming again, and
  - (5) People must repent of their sins and put their faith in Christ for salvation,you are correct.
4. What two great responsibilities do preachers of the gospel have?  
A. [PAUSE] If you answered to clearly proclaim the gospel of Christ and to lead converts into the baptism in the Holy Spirit, you answered correctly.

Your **assignment** for this lesson is to replay this assignment two or three times until you thoroughly understand what is being taught. Then you are to go preach a sermon that includes the five elements of apostolic preaching in Acts. When you are finished with the sermon, invite the people forward and pray with them to be saved and filled with the Holy Spirit.