

Dedication of a Living Temple (Acts 2:1-4)

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Today's passage (Acts 2:1-4)

When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly there came from heaven a noise like a violent rushing wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them tongues as of fire distributing themselves, and they rested on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit was giving them utterance.¹

IMPORTANCE of Passage

1. **TWO SESSIONS** - This passage is immensely important to understand!
 - A. **LAST TIME** - The importance of understanding the historical setting, not an experience to be sought by believers today.
 - I. **NATURE OF THE CHURCH** - When did the Church begin historically?
 - II. **SPIRIT BAPTISM = FORMATION OF BODY OF CHRIST** - Spirit baptism is the means by which individuals are joined to the body of Christ
 - III. **A BEGINNING** - The birth of the Church - a new spiritual organism never existing prior to the baptizing ministry of the Spirit.
 - IV. **EXPERIENCES** - What and why?
 - B. **TODAY** - The significance of the events in relation to God's communion with man: the relationship of Pentecost to God's Temple program.

TONGUES AS OF FIRE - Manifestation of a work of the Spirit

1. **ACTS 1:3** - . . . *divided tongues as of fire, and one sat upon each of them*
2. **BAPTISM WITH FIRE?** - Do the cloven tongues as of fire signify the baptism with fire which John the Baptist mentions (Matthew 3; Mark 1)?
 - A. The context of the passages concerning the baptism with fire determines its meaning.
 - B. John is speaking to Pharisees and Sadducees.

- C. **Brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?**
- D. . . . **every tree which does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.**
- E. **He will thoroughly clean out His threshing floor, and gather His wheat into the barn; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.**
- F. **Jesus' words in Acts 1:5, You will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now. - No mention of fire.**
- G. **Baptism with fire is a baptism of judgment and does not take place in Acts 2.**
- H. **So what *is* the significance of the cloven tongues as of fire in Acts 2?**
- I. **Symbolizes the cleansing and dedication of a new temple: the living temple of the Church-Age.**

PURPOSE of temple

- 1. **MEETING PLACE - were man and God's manifest presence meet**
- 2. **AFFECTED BY SIN**
 - A. **The "bookends" of the Bible, where there is full fellowship, unbroken by sin**
 - I. **Eden - full fellowship before the Fall**
 - II. **Eternal state - full fellowship after the creation of the new heavens and new earth where sin is eradicated**
 - B. **Meanwhile: fellowship between man and God is fractured, divided, separated by sin**
 - I. **Holy God vs. sinful man**
 - II. **God as a consuming fire**
 - a. **Nadab and Abihu, *Now Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took their respective firepans, and after putting fire in them, placed incense on it and offered strange fire before the LORD, which He had not commanded them. And fire came out from the presence of the LORD and consumed them, and they died before the LORD. Then Moses said to Aaron, "It is what the LORD spoke, saying, 'By***

those who come near Me I will be treated as holy, And before all the people I will be honored." So Aaron, therefore, kept silent (Lev. 10:1-3).

III. The need for mitigation

a. Atoning sacrifices

- i. Temporal and spacial: allowed sinful man to approach the place of God's manifest glory - in the holy of holies within the temple
- ii. Temporary: continued sin required continued atonement
- iii. Made no contribution to salvation or the work of Christ on the cross²

3. **SUMMARY** - a meeting place between man and God, requiring a means for shielding that which is sinful from that which is holy

GOD'S TEMPLE PROGRAM - 9 stages

1. **TEMPLE #1** - Garden of Eden before the fall
2. **TEMPLE #2** - tabernacle in wilderness
3. **TEMPLE #3** - Solomon's temple - eventually destroyed by Babylon
4. **TEMPLE #4** - Zerubbabel's temple - the 2nd actual temple, enhanced by Herod, visited by Jesus
5. **TEMPLE #5** - Jesus³
6. **TEMPLE #6** - the temple of the Church (to be elaborated, not the final stage in God's temple program)
7. **TEMPLE #7** - tribulation temple mentioned in Revelation 11 and elsewhere⁷
8. **TEMPLE #8** - millennial temple of Ezekiel 40 and following
9. **TEMPLE #9** - eternal state, there is no [separate] temple because God and the Lamb are the temple (Rev. 21:22)

THE LIVING TEMPLE - the Church

1. **CHANGE COMING** - Indications of a coming change in the manner and location of worship in relation to the temple

A. Jesus' response to the question from the Samaritan Woman at the well

about which temple was preferable for worship: Mt. Gerizim or Jerusalem?

I. She said, *"Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, and you Jews say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship."* Jesus said to her, *"Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father.* (John 4:20-21)

B. The predicted destruction of the 2nd temple following Israel's rejection of Jesus

I. *Then Jesus went out and departed from the temple, and His disciples came up to show Him the buildings of the temple. And Jesus said to them, "Do you not see all these things? Assuredly, I say to you, not one stone shall be left here upon another, that shall not be thrown down."* (Mat. 24:1-2)

C. The rent veil. When Jesus *cried out with a loud voice, and breathed His last. Then the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom.* (Mark 15:37-38)

2. **PREREQUISITES** - John reveals there are two prerequisites for a new ministry of the Spirit

A. "Margin verses" for Acts 2 → John 7:37-39 and John 14:16-18

B. Prerequisite #1 - the departure of Jesus

I. *Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you.* (John 16:7)

C. Prerequisite #2 - the glorification of Jesus

I. *On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water." But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.* (John 7:37-39)

II. *He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.* (John 7:38)

3. **SOURCE OF LIVING WATER** - Rivers of living water (John 7:37-39) flow forth from temples

A. EDEN - typological

- I. *Now a river went out of Eden to water the garden, and from there it parted and became four riverheads. (Gen. 2:10)*

B. TABERNACLE/TEMPLE - the blood that ran from the numerous sacrifices

I. Dedication of Solomon's temple

- a. . . . *sheep and oxen that could not be counted or numbered for multitude. (2Chr. 5:6)*
- b. . . . *twenty-two thousand bulls and one hundred and twenty thousand sheep. . . . (2Chr. 7:5)*

- II. *A veritable river of blood which flowed from the sacrifices, life is in the blood (Lev. 17:11)*

C. MILLENNIAL TEMPLE (Eze. 47:1,9)

- I. *And it shall be that every living thing that moves, wherever the rivers go, will live. There will be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters go there; for they will be healed, and everything will live wherever the river goes. (Eze. 47:9)*

D. ETERNAL STATE - river of life (Rev. 21:22; 22:1-2)

- I. *And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb. (Rev. 22:1)*

E. WELLSPRING - of living water

- I. *Back to the Samaritan woman at the well (John 4:10-14)*

- II. *The context where Jesus predicted that soon, neither the temple at Jerusalem nor the one at Mt. Gerizim would be the focal point for offering worship to God.*
- III. *Jesus . . . said to her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, 'Give Me a drink,' you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water." The woman said to Him, "Sir, You have nothing to draw with, and the well is deep. Where then do You get that living water?" (John 4:10-11)*

IV. Temple/living water connection

V. Becomes a fountain within the believer (John 7:38)

F. LIFE-GIVING - What makes the water “living”? The temple? The location?

- I. The source: - the Living God,⁸ the Prince of Life (Acts 3:15), He who upholds all living moment by moment is the source of life-giving water (the gospel) from within believers.

4. NT TRUTHS - concerning the living temple of the Church

A. PREREQUISITES - something never before possible historically!

- I. Prior to crucifixion, ascension, and glorification of Jesus this particular ministry of the Holy Spirit was not possible.
- II. The formation of the body of Christ, the creation and dedication of a living temple.
- III. The Holy, perfect Spirit of God taking up permanent residence within a living temple - the sinful flesh of believers!

B. BODY OF CHRIST - as a temple

- I. *Do you [plural] not know that you [plural] are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you [plural]? (1 Corinthians 3:16)*
- II. *Now, therefore, you [plural] are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom the whole building, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you [plural] also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit. (Ephesians 2:19-22)*
- III. The individual believer's body as a temple (1 Corinthians 6:15-19; 2 Corinthians 6:14-16) - see application below

5. DIVIDED TONGUES AS OF FIRE

- A. **What do the cloven tongues of fire signify? The accomplished cleansing, acceptance, and dedication of a new temple, the Church**
- B. **Fire from God - signifying acceptance of the sacrifice**
- C. **OT examples**

I. Dedication of Solomon's temple

- a. “Then the king and all Israel with him offered sacrifices before the LORD. And Solomon offered a sacrifice of peace offerings, which he offered to the LORD, twenty-two thousand bulls and one hundred and twenty thousand sheep. So the king and all the children of Israel dedicated **הִנִּיחַ** [*hānak*] the house of the LORD.

On the same day the king consecrated **קִדְּשׁ** [*qādaš*] the middle of the court that was in front of the house of the LORD; for there he offered burnt offerings, grain offerings, and the fat of the peace offerings, because the bronze altar that was before the LORD was too small to receive the burnt offerings, the grain offerings, and the fat of the peace offerings. At that time Solomon held a feast, and all Israel with him, a great assembly from the entrance of Hamath to the Brook of Egypt, before the LORD our God, seven days and seven more days-fourteen days.” (1 Kings 8:62-65)

- i. *Dedicated*, **הִנִּיחַ** [*hānak*], “to devote a structure to deity or special purpose (Deu. 20:5; 1K. 8:63; 2Chr. 7:5).”⁹
- ii. *Consecrated*, **קִדְּשׁ** [*qādaš*], to set apart for holy service, be regarded as holy.

b. God's sign of acceptance (2Chr. 7:1).

- i. *Fire* consumed the sacrifice. Analogous to divided tongues as of fire (Acts 2:3).
- ii. Glory of the Lord, the *shekinah*, filled the temple. Analogous to sound as of a rushing mighty wind (Acts 2:2).

D. PURIFYING WORK - allowing that which is Holy to dwell permanently amidst sin

I. CONTRAST God's response to sin on the part of His people in Ezekiel vs. Ephesians

- a. **God to Ezekiel - . . . "Son of man, do you see what they are doing, the great abominations that the house of Israel commits here, to make Me go far away from My sanctuary? Now turn again, you will see greater abominations." (Eze. 8:6)**
- b. **Paul to the Ephesians - *Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labor, working with his hands what is good, that he***

may have something to give him who has need. Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. (Eph. 4:28-31)

- II. **SEALED** - permanently indwelt by the Holy Spirit of the Creator of the Universe!
 - a. ***Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and has anointed us is God, who also has sealed us and given us the Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee. (2 Corinthians 1:21-22)***
 - b. ***In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory. (Ephesians 1:13-14)***
- III. **PERMANENCE** - God permanently indwells sinful flesh until our sin is purged at our glorification.

APPLICATION

- 1. **UNIQUENESS** - Historically and spiritually unique role of the Church among the saved of all ages.
 - A. The unique temple relationship of our age
 - B. **Acts 2** has a historical context, the formation of a new living temple
 - C. The coming of the Spirit at Pentecost in this new ministry was a one-time historical event (never again was there a manifestation of sound as a mighty rushing wind or divided tongues as of fire).
- 2. **GOD'S WORD VS. FEELINGS** - Comprehending what God has said regarding Who and What is within us!
- 3. **SANCTIFICATION** - How, then, should we live? Tremendous motivation for godly living.
 - A. ***Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are. (1Cor. 3:16-17)***

- B. ***Do you not know that your [plural] bodies [plural] are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them members of a harlot? Certainly not! Or do you not know that he who is joined to a harlot is one body with her? For "the two," He says, "shall become one flesh." But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him. Flee sexual immorality. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body. Or do you [plural] not know that your [plural] body [singular] is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? (1 Corinthians 6:15-19)***
- C. ***Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever [singular]? And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you [plural] are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will dwell in them [plural] And walk among them [them]. I will be their God, And they shall be My people." (2 Corinthians 6:14-16)***

4. EVANGELISM - Our mouths are the source of living, life-giving water!

- A. **The same life-giving power which raised Christ from the dead is available through our words and actions for God to give life to those who are spiritually dead.**

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Endnotes:

1. [NKJV, Acts 2:1-4](#)
2. Obedience to the OT law and its stipulations regarding sacrifices was one means by which believers demonstrated their faith in God.
3. Concerning the incarnation of Jesus as a temple: [John 1:14](#); [2:18-21](#).
4. [Ref-0038, John 1:14](#)
5. [Ref-0187, Mat. 8:1-4](#)
6. Leprosy as a symbol for sin, "... from a very early period, among the Hebrews ... it thus furnished to the whole nation a familiar and affecting symbol of SIN, considered as (1) *loathsome*, (2) *spreading*, (3) *incurable*."⁵

7. Concerning the tribulation temple: Dan. 9:27; 12:11; Mat. 24:15; 2Th. 2:4; Rev. 11:1; Rev. 13:6.
 8. Concerning the living God - Ex. 3:6; Deu. 5:26; Jos. 3:10; 1S. 17:26,36; 2K. 19:4,16; Ps. 42:2; 84:2; Isa. 37:4,17; Jer. 10:10; 23:36; Dan. 6:20,26; Hos. 1:10; Mat. 16:16; 22:32; 26:63; John 6:69; Acts 14:15; Rom. 9:26; 2Cor. 3:3; 6:16; 1Ti. 3:15; 4:10; 6:17; Heb. 3:12; 9:14; 10:31; 12:22; Rev. 7:2.
 9. Ref-0618, #2852
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Sources:

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Ref-0038 John Walvoord and Roy. B. Zuck. *The Bible Knowledge Commentary* (Wheaton, IL: SP Publications, 1983).

Ref-0187 Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset and David Brown, *A Commentary, Critical and Explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments* (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997).

Ref-0618 James Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages With Semantic Domains : Hebrew (Old Testament)*, electronic ed. (Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997).

Links Mentioned Above

a - See <http://www.spiritandtruth.org/id/tg.htm>.

b - See <http://www.spiritandtruth.org>.