

Peace be with you. We greet you in the name of God, the Lord of peace, who wants everyone to understand and submit to the way of righteousness that He has established, and have true peace with Him forever. We are happy to be able to return today to present your program *The Way of Righteousness*.

In our last few studies in the Gospel {*Injil*}, we have heard how **the Lord Jesus fulfilled all that God's prophets wrote long beforehand concerning the Messiah's death and resurrection**. We read that Jesus shed His holy blood on the cross to which He was nailed, to pay the debt of sin for the children of Adam. We saw also that He was taken down from the cross and placed in a tomb. However, on the third day, God raised Him up from the dead! After Jesus had risen, He appeared to His disciples for forty days, proving to them that He truly was alive. Then in our last lesson, we saw Jesus ascend into heaven while His disciples looked on.

Do you remember the last thing Jesus commanded His disciples, before He went up to heaven? Let us read again what He said:

[Jesus] gave them this command: "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit. ...you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight. They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. "Men of Galilee," they said, "why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven."

In this way, Jesus parted with His disciples, returned to Paradise from where He had come, and sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high. That is where He remains today, awaiting the moment when He will return to judge the world in righteousness.

Did you hear what Jesus commanded His disciples before He ascended to heaven? He commanded them to stay in Jerusalem until they were clothed with the Holy Spirit, who was to come from heaven. Perhaps some of you are still wondering: **Who is this Holy Spirit?** The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God and the Spirit of Jesus. He is One with God the Father and Jesus the Son, yet distinct from them. He existed with God in the beginning when God created the world. He is the Spirit who inspired the prophets to write and to announce the Word of God in early times. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of the Most High who descended on a virgin by the name of Mary and enabled her to conceive and give birth to the holy Child Jesus. He is the Spirit who was in the Messiah, Jesus. Also, the Holy Spirit is the Counselor, whom Jesus promised His disciples when He said to them,

"I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever-the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you."

What Jesus promised His disciples concerning the coming of this Counselor, or *Helper*, is important for us to understand, because some today want to make people believe that Jesus was announcing the coming of another prophet. But the Counselor whom the Lord Jesus promised cannot be a human being, because Jesus stated clearly that the Counselor was **pure Spirit**, and that **no one could see Him**, and that **He would live inside Christ's disciples forever**. So who is this Holy Spirit? He is the Spirit whom God places in the hearts of all who believe in the Messiah. He regenerates them -

which literally means to make them to be born again - cleanses them, strengthens them, marks them as His own, and gives them a share in His holy presence forever.

Today we are going to see how God poured out His Holy Spirit on Jesus' disciples on the day of **Pentecost**. Pentecost was a festival God had established for the Israelites in the time of the prophet Moses. You can read about it in the Torah. On this day the Israelites would thank God for the prosperity which He had given them in the harvest of the wheat crop. However, there was an even more important meaning to the Pentecost festival. Pentecost was the day God chose long beforehand to send down the Holy Spirit to live in all who truly believe in the Messiah. Just as the Pentecost festival took place fifty days after the Passover feast, so God planned to send down the Holy Spirit fifty days after Jesus the Messiah died and rose again.

Now let us continue in the Word of God to see what happened after Jesus left His disciples and returned to heaven. The Scripture says:

Then [Jesus' disciples] returned to Jerusalem from the hill called the Mount of Olives, a Sabbath day's walk from the city. When they arrived, they went upstairs to the room where they were staying. Those present were Peter, John, James and Andrew; Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew; James son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James. They all joined together constantly in prayer, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers.

When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them. Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. When they heard this

sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard them speaking in his own language. Utterly amazed, they asked: "Are not all these men who are speaking Galileans? Then how is it that each of us hears them in his own native language? Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs—we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!" Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, "What does this mean?" Some, however, made fun of them and said, "They have had too much wine."

Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd:

*"Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say. These men are not drunk, as you suppose. It's only nine in the morning! No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: "'In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy... And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.'" Men of Israel, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know. **This man was handed over to you by God's set purpose and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross. But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him. [The prophet] David said about him:***

"I saw the Lord always before me. Because he is at my right hand, I will not be shaken. Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body also will live in hope, because you will not abandon me to the grave, nor will you let your Holy One see decay..."

"Brothers, I can tell you confidently that the patriarch David died and was buried, and his tomb is here to this day. But he was a prophet and knew that God had promised him on oath that he would place one of his descendants on his throne. Seeing what was ahead, he spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to the grave, nor did his body see decay. God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of the fact. Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear. For David did not ascend to heaven, and yet he said,

"The Lord said to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet."

"Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ!"

*When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?" Peter replied, "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.** The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call." With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, "Save yourselves from this corrupt generation."*

Did you really hear Peter's sermon? In summary, he proclaimed to the crowd in Jerusalem that God had sent the Messiah, Jesus, just as He promised long ago through His prophets. Peter told them: You despised the Messiah whom God sent from heaven! You murdered Him by nailing him to a cross, but God raised Him from the dead! We are all witnesses of it! God has exalted Jesus to His right hand and has sent the Holy Spirit whom He promised! Repent and turn to God! Believe the message of God's prophets!

Believe in Jesus whom God has appointed to be the Savior and Judge of the world! *"All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name!"*

In this way, the apostle Peter proclaimed **the Good News of salvation** through faith in Jesus the Messiah. When the crowd heard Peter's words, they felt great pain in their hearts because they now recognized that Jesus of Nazareth, whom they had nailed to the cross, was the Lord of Glory from heaven! This Jesus, whom they had scorned and hated, was the Messiah whom God had promised long ago through His prophets! Thus, on that day, many **repented** of their sins, turned to God, and **believed** in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. These new disciples were baptized in water to give public testimony to the fact that they had been cleansed from their sin by faith in the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Being baptized in water did not wash away their sin--it was only an **outward** sign of the cleansing that had already taken place on the **inside**.

And so, the Scripture says:

"Those who accepted [the message of the Gospel] were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day. They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer....and the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit."

Thus, on that day of Pentecost, **the church**--the assembly of those who believe in Jesus Christ--was born. The church of Jesus is not a building or a religion. The word for church in Greek is *"Ekklesia"* meaning "called out ones." Just as there are true believers and false believers in the world today, there is also a true church and a false church. The true church of Jesus Christ is composed of all who, since that day of

Pentecost, have been transferred from **Adam's family** to **Christ's family** by sincere faith in Christ's perfect, finished sacrifice.

The events of Pentecost we have heard about today happened about two thousand years ago. Perhaps this will cause some to say, "This is of no concern to me! I was not one of those who crucified the Messiah! The Jews and the Romans did it! I didn't have a thing to do with it!" However, God's Word tells us that the Messiah "*was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities!*" **Our sins** caused His death. **Our transgressions** were the reason God permitted man to nail His Beloved One to a cross! **Man crucified Jesus, but God raised Him from the dead** to be **the Savior** of all who **believe** and **the Judge** of all who do **not believe**. Thus, the Scriptures declare:

"[Whoever you are, wherever you are, God commands you] to repent. For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to all men by raising him from the dead!"

Think carefully about this word, because **your eternal destiny depends on how you respond to it**. Thank you for listening...

God bless you as you think about what the apostle Peter proclaimed, saying,

"All the prophets testify about [Jesus the Messiah] that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins...and...the gift of the Holy Spirit!"