

Today we shall let Peter, the other apostles and disciples give us some background to Acts chapter 2.

We have been in the Old Testament and while some of it is fresh in our minds let us see it refreshed and deeply ingrained in the minds of these people and the effect it had on them.

Some incredible things happened to them in those days between our Lord's resurrection and His ascension and these are too often overlooked.

We all know the tradition which says Pentecost was the birthday of the "church". Accompanying this tradition is the teaching that the disciples were either confused regarding the Feast of Pentecost or at least unaware of what was about to happen. Apparently they were a sad and unfulfilled group who were finally made aware of God's "real" purpose when the Holy Spirit gave them the enlightenment. But is this true?

The book of Acts was written by Luke and his gospel happily overlaps events of that time for our clearer understanding.

Here are some verses from the last chapter where our Lord had revealed himself to the two on the road to Emmaus and later the other disciples. In both cases He confirming some things to them;

Luk 24:25 Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken:

Luk 24:26 Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?

Luk 24:27 And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself

Luk 24:44 And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me

The resurrected Saviour said, suffering must be endured before glory. The suffering was all foretold in the OT and the glory that was to surely follow was foretold in the OT as well. It will help us to see that the two on the road to Emmaus had Israel in mind;

Luk 24:21 But we had trusted that He was the One who was about to redeem Israel. And besides all this, today is the third day since these things were done.

This should begin to prepare us for the fact that disciples had Israel in mind and not once did the Lord correct this. Perhaps the glory the Lord spoke about was for Israel as well.

Then the Saviour did something marvelous for them, He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures;

Luk 24:45 And He opened their mind to understand the Scriptures.

The disciples had their intellect opened to comprehend the very Scriptures our Lord had been using to describe the glory that was to come. No doubt they would now be asking about "the church". But this is not true and it is near to ridiculous to suggest that the disciples had no idea what Pentecost was all about. Christ opened their minds to the OT Scriptures and the OT Scriptures of glory were to take place as assuredly as the sufferings. So does the OT speak about "the church"? Not really, it speaks about redemption and salvation, but the plan and purposes of God in the OT are centred on Israel. Pentecost was a Feast given to Israel.

The disciples are now intellectually attuned to the glory soon to follow and we note at the end of Luke a statement is made concerning their emotional state:

Luk 24:51 And it happened as He blessed them, He withdrew from them and was carried up into Heaven.

Luk 24:52 And worshiping Him, they returned to Jerusalem with great joy.

Luk 24:53 And they were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God. Amen.

Let all Christians note, the disciples were not dejected and confused, nor uncertain in any way of what was about to happen but were filled with great joy, in the Temple, praising and blessing God.

The opening chapter of Acts adds further evidence that the disciples were not ignorant of the Lord's purposes or confused or dejected or downhearted;

Act 1:1 Truly, O Theophilus, I made the first report as to all things that Jesus began both to do and teach

Act 1:2 until the day He was taken up, having given directions to the apostles whom He chose, through the Holy Spirit;

Act 1:3 to whom He also presented Himself living after His suffering by many infallible proofs, being seen by them through forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.

Pentecost was the 50th day from the wave offering in the Feast of Unleavened Bread. For forty of those days the Lord, after he had opened their understanding, spoke to them of the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God.

Some Christians think that the term "the Kingdom of God" really means "the church". However we note that after all

this speaking by the Lord and His command to tarry in Jerusalem until they were baptized in the Holy Spirit, the disciples had one question and one question only. And this question is asked in the light of Pentecost, the baptism of the Holy Spirit, which was about to befall them;

[Act 1:6](#) Then, indeed, these coming together, they asked Him, saying, Lord, do You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?

Tradition links this baptism of the Holy Spirit with “the church” but the educated and illuminated disciples linked it with the restored Kingdom to Israel. Which is true?

Tradition says the disciples had no idea of what was going on at Pentecost. Tradition inadvertently believes our Lord Christ didn’t open their minds. Tradition implies our Lord Christ was one of the worst teachers the world has ever seen. Tradition implies the disciples must be listed as the dumbest followers of Christ ever because they asked a question totally off the mark. But friends it is the tradition of men which creates all these problems.

Perhaps the Apostles were now able to accept with great joy the words of the Lord specifically to them;
[Mat 19:28](#) And Jesus said to them, Truly I say to you that you who have followed Me, in the regeneration, when the Son of Man shall sit in the throne of His glory, you also shall sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

We must stand with the Word of God. The disciples were correct in their question and later, speaking under the inspiration of the Spirit Peter says this;

[Act 3:17](#) And now, brothers, I know that you did it through ignorance, as also your rulers did.

[Act 3:18](#) But those things which God before had shown by the mouth of all His prophets, that Christ should suffer, He fulfilled in this manner.

[Act 3:19](#) Therefore repent and convert so that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord.

[Act 3:20](#) And He shall send Jesus Christ, who before was proclaimed to you,

[Act 3:21](#) whom Heaven truly needs to receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of His holy prophets since the world began.

We do not restore, regenerate, or refresh anything by bringing in something entirely new or different.

Peter refers to the times of “refreshing” or revival for Israel the very times of “restoration” the prophets spoke about. The prophets did not speak of the birthday of “the church”; they spoke about the restoration of Israel. This is the glory the Lord confirmed was to come. It was to follow the suffering. The question in Acts 1:6 and Peter’s statements in Acts 3:17-21 confirm tradition has missed the mark. There was no church born at Pentecost.

Next time we shall let the Word of God prove there were no Gentiles at Acts 2. Please read Acts 10 and 11.