
THE PENTECOST

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THE PENTECOST



Cover photo: North Vancouver, BC

Above photo: Squamish, BC

The Pentecost is back! We have taken a long break and would like to thank our readers for you understanding. Issue 101 begins with the topic of spiritual hunger. Are you hungry for God? We also are beginning a series of studies in the book of Ephesians by Jake Balzer, my father in law.
God Bless you.

Shawn Stevens

Jesus Christ is God who desires to have relationship with us. He is a Holy God so the more we get to know Him the more we desire to be like Him. We cannot do this solely through our own effort but by asking Him He teaches us. In this issue we will dive deeper into that. What it looks like to desire to know Jesus and how He meets us in that. The scriptural text for this issue is Ephesians chapters 1 and 2 where we learn these principals are also emphasized through the life of a man named Paul.
God Bless you.

Ramona Stevens

HUNGERING AND THIRSTING FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS

Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.

Matthew 5:6

Bible commentator Mathew Henry says that, "Righteousness is here put for all spiritual blessings"¹ It is the spiritual blessing of greater communion with the Lord that we are after. This is not a selfish request. The Lord created us to worship and know Him. Adam, the first man, had a beautiful relationship with God. Sadly, the fall of man broke this communion. Fortunately, through God's redemptive act, a provision for the mending of that break has been made. When Jesus died and rose again he opened a whole new world up to mankind. The doorway to God's kingdom was mercifully thrown open and men and women began entering. The temple in Jerusalem had two curtains. One hung in front of the Holy Place and the other partitioned off the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place. When Jesus died on the cross, this second curtain was torn from top to bottom. This symbolized that God had made a provision so that man could again pass through the barrier into fellowship with God. Christian, how far have you stepped inside this curtain? How deep have you gone in God and how hungry

are you to go deeper? Just as we hunger for food to sustain us and water to refresh us, communion with the Lord has the same effect spiritually for the Christian. This hunger can be seen in the life of the young 18th century missionary, David Brainerd. Deep in the woodlands of America, Brainerd prayed his heart out to God. His journal records hungry and thirsty words such as these:

I retired pretty early for secret devotions; and in prayer God was pleased to pour such ineffable comforts into my soul that I could do nothing for some time but say over and over, 'Oh my sweet Savior! O my sweet Savior! Whom have I in heaven but Thee? and there is none upon earth, that I desire beside Thee.' If I had a thousand lives my soul would gladly have laid them all down at once to have been with Christ. My soul never enjoyed so much of heaven before.²

Friend, do you desire to give up your soul to the Lord afresh? Do you hunger to encounter Him today? Do you thirst to have Him fill your life with His Spirit? How do you get hungry? Cry out to God and ask for hunger. Ask for an experience with Him. Experience will make us hungry for more. God is the source of spiritual hunger; He is also the source of spiritual food and spiritual fulfillment. He is also the one who has said of those who hunger and thirst for righteousness that "... they shall be filled."

Spiritual hunger causes us to keep our perspective right. It causes us to lose our desire for the rat race we are caught up in and, instead, gain a heart for God's kingdom. For the spiritually hungry, all of the lesser things of this world become dim and even unattractive compared to the spiritual riches of Christ. Spiritual hunger causes us to cry out to God, asking for Him to make His

presence known.

Some would question, "Why ask God to descend and make His presence known when He is everywhere anyway?" It is true that God is an omnipresent God.

However, He is still present in some places in a specific way that He isn't in other places. For example, He is present in the hearts of His children in a way that He isn't in those who do not yet know Him. In a similar way, God is here in our workplace, schools and community. However, there is a greater awareness of God when He makes His presence known and when we experience Him in a special way. So, we cry out for Him to come.

In the 1904 Welsh Revival, a miner walked in on a service and was gripped by an awareness of God. He cried out, "Oh, God is here." He stood in the doorway for a time, too afraid to come in the door or to leave the building. We have been going it alone for too long. We need the Lord to fill us with His Spirit. We need for Him to meet with us. We need communion and encounters with Him. All things are possible. God has granted communion to others who have sought Him. He has communed with His called-out ones. Again, we read from the diary of Brainerd:

At night, God enabled me to give my soul up to Him, to cast myself upon Him, to be ordered and disposed of according to His sovereign pleasure; and I enjoyed great peace and consolation in so doing.

My soul took sweet delight in God; my thoughts freely and sweetly centered on Him. Oh that I could spend every moment of my life to His glory.³

Brother and sister, we can drink of heaven while living on earth. How hungry are you? How hungry am I for this experience? Let us pray:

Oh Lord, who fills the hungry with good things, we come to You now. We want to go deep behind the veil. We want to go as deep in You as Your grace will allow. May our lives be like the Holy of Holies. Lord, we want to follow You ardently as others have done. May there be examples from our generation of those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, and may we be they. Bring the things of Your kingdom near to us. We give up our souls to You afresh. Have us wholly and make us holy. Fill us with Your Spirit. Fill us with Your righteousness. Our eyes are looking upward to You, who have promised to fill the hungry. None of the lesser things of the world will satisfy this inner ache. You, Oh Lord, are a rewarder of them who diligently seek You. May this be our hour of visitation. Make Your presence known. Your presence is healing to us. Your presence is life to us. Give us the faith to lay hold of You. We are now asking to be enriched with this spiritual blessing of deep communion with You. Be glorified in us and in the witness of You living in us. Amen.

Shawn Stevens

Works Cited

1 Matthew Henry, Matthew Henry's Commentary On The Whole Bible, Vol V., (Iowa: World Bible Publishers,n.d.),50.

2 David Brainerd, The Life And Diary Of David Brainerd, ED Johnathan Edwards (Grand Rapids:Baker Book House, 1998) 83.

3 Ibid 83.

King James Bible

A TREATISE ON THE BOOK OF EPHESIANS

JAKE BALZER

EDITOR :SHAWN STEVENS

PREFACE

The Book of Ephesians is truly one of the mountain tops of holy Scripture. In it, the Apostle Paul discusses the eternal purposes in Christ for the body of Christ, His Church. It teaches on God's election, salvation by grace through faith, the unity of Christ's body, walking in the light, marriage, family relationships and much more. Ephesians calls us to walk worthy of the calling that we have received, to put on the new man that was created in true righteousness and to be imitators of God.

I trust that you will be inspired as you journey through this book and as Jake Balzer takes us on a study of its precious truths.

Shawn Stevens

REFERENCE :

Full Life Study Bible. Grand Rapids: Life Publishers, International. Zondervan, 1992. Pg 1842.

STUDY OF THE EPHESIAN

EPISTLE

INTRODUCTION :

Several commentators consider the epistle of Ephesians the queen of the Pauline epistles. we have both a theological and a devotional nature in this epistle. The first three chapters are more theological and the last three chapters are more devotional. Note : It is estimated that from the 155 verses in Ephesians, 75 verses are clearly, or rather clearly, paralleled in Colossians. Thus we can conclude that both epistles are written by Paul to different groups of believers.

It is estimated that Paul wrote the epistle to the Ephesians some seven years after spending two years ministering to them in Ephesus. He likely wrote this epistle about 62 A.D.

TEXT : EPHESIANS 1:1-14

1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus:

2 Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:

4 According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:

5 Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,

6 To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.

7 In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;

8 Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence;

9 Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself:

10 That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him:

11 In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:

12 That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ.

13 In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,

14 Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.

TOPIC: GOD'S GREAT PLAN OF SALVATION

THERE ARE THREE BOOKS IN THE BIBLE THAT SPEAK ABOUT PRE-HISTORIC EVENTS

1. Genesis 1.1 "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth."
2. Gospel of John 1.1 relates "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."
3. Ephesians speaks about God choosing those in Christ before the foundation of the world. (See 1:4)

PAUL SAYS IT WAS GOD WHO CALLED HIM TO BE AN APOSTLE. IT WAS NOT OF HIS OWN CHOOSING

In order to get some perspective of God's great plan of salvation, let's first of all look at it from God's view point of salvation which is real and practical to us who need His salvation.

THERE ARE SOME SEVEN THINGS GOD DID IN ORDER TO MAKE THIS PLAN

1. God chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless in His sight. (See 1:4). "in Christ" occurs 164 times in Paul's epistles.
2. God placed us in position as His sons and daughters in accordance with His pleasure and will. (See 1:5).
3. God bestowed grace on us accepting us in the beloved. (See 1:6).
4. God redeemed us through the blood of His Son by paying the ransom for our sins, providing forgiveness. (See 1:7).
5. God imparted to us wisdom and insight to understand His purpose in Christ. (See 1:8,9).
6. God predestined and chose us in Jesus Christ according to His plan. (See 1:10-12).
7. God affirmed the deposit of his Holy Spirit in believers. (See 1:13,14).

NOW WHAT IS OUR PART IN PERSONALLY EXPERIENCING THIS GREAT SALVATION?

1. We must hear the good news. (See 1:13).
2. We must believe in and respond to Christ. (See 1:13).

TEXT : EPHESIANS 1:15-23

15 Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints,

16 Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers;

17 That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him:

18 The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,

19 And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power,

20 Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places,

21 Far above all principality, and power, and

might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come:

22 And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church,

23 Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

TOPIC: PRAYER FOR SPIRITUAL AND EXPERIENTIAL GROWTH

Paul is very encouraged to hear that their faith in Jesus Christ has translated to their love for fellow believers of Jesus Christ. (See 1.15-16).

In the following verses Paul expresses that he is praying for them to experience the divine experiential dimension. (See 1.17).

– That they might receive from the Lord the ability to see things from the spiritual perspective or from the spiritual viewpoint. Paul wants for them that they might become an integrated person with a spiritual centre to become an integrated personality.

SOME HAVE THEIR PERSONALITY FOCUSED ON SELF-CENTEREDNESS, OR PLEASURE, OR VOCATION, OR THEIR ACHIEVEMENTS, OR SOME HAVE THEIR PERSONALITY FOCUSED ON JESUS CHRIST.

We need the glorious Father to give us the spirit of wisdom and revelation, thereby enabling us to integrate our whole personality around Jesus Christ as our central focal point.

Remember when a follower of Jesus Christ chooses a central focal point that militates against his commitment to Jesus Christ he experiences major conflicts.

Having Jesus Christ in the centre means He is Lord of our lives and we seek to screen everything through His prompting and enabling. Our constant prayer should be:

“Lord open my eyes to behold the wonders in Your Word that will guide me in all Your ways.”

2. THE FOLLOWER OF JESUS CHRIST'S EXPERIENTIAL DIMENSION

(SEE 1:18-23)

Furthermore, we need the Holy Spirit to enlighten the eyes of our heart in order to experientially know the hope to which He has called us.

2.1 EXPERIENTIALLY KNOW THE HOPE TO WHICH JESUS HAS CALLED US BELIEVERS.

- hope regarding your past – God has accepted us. We are His sons and daughters.
- hope in the present – God will continue to empower us to live as His faithful sons and daughters.
- hope in the future – God will continue the work out what He has begun and will bring us to the glorious return of Jesus Christ.
- for we by faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. (See 1 Peter 1:5).

– Hebrews 6:19 says; “Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil;”

2.2 EXPERIENTIAL KNOWLEDGE OF OUR GLORIOUS INHERITANCE.

(See 1:18b)

– We are joint heirs with Jesus Christ. (See Romans 8:17).

– We will receive our due reward for what we have done.

-We will receive spiritually

transformed sinless bodies.

2.3 EXPERIENTIAL KNOWLEDGE OF HIS EXCEEDING GREAT POWER AT WORK TOWARD US. (See 19-23)

– The great power that raised Christ from the dead (See vs 20).

– The great power that seated Christ at God's right hand (See vs 20).

– The great power that appointed Christ to be the head over everything for the Church which is His

body (See vss 21-23).

TEXT : EPHESIANS 2:11-22

11 Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands;

12 That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world:

13 But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.

14 For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us;

15 Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace;

16 And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby:

17 And came and preached peace

*to you which were afar off,
and to them that were nigh.*

*18 For through him we both
have access by one Spirit
unto the Father.*

*19 Now therefore ye are no
more strangers and
foreigners, but
fellowcitizens with the
saints, and of the
household of God;*

*20 And are built upon the
foundation of the apostles
and prophets, Jesus Christ
himself being the chief
corner stone;*

*21 In whom all the building
fitly framed together
groweth unto an holy
temple in the Lord:*

*22 In whom ye also are
builded together for an
habitation of God through
the Spirit.*

TOPIC: GOD IS BUILDING HIS CHURCH

INTRODUCTION :

From the Old Testament to the New testament we have what is called “**the progressive revelation**,” that is, God progressively reveals more and more of His great plan of salvation as we move through the Old

Testament into the New Testament.

Take note of how God progressively has revealed His great plan of salvation.

TO INDIVIDUALS – ADAM AND EVE AFTER THEY SINNED

Genesis 3:15 “And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.”

This is the first promise of the Messiah who would come and defeat Satan and provide personal salvation for all mankind.

TO A FAMILY – NOAH AND HIS FAMILY BEFORE THE FLOOD.

Genesis 6:8 “ But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD.”

Genesis 9:9 “And I, behold, I establish my covenant with you, and with your seed after you;”

Genesis 9: 12-13 “And God said, This is the token of the covenant which I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual generations:

I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth.

TO A NATION – ABRAHAM AND HIS DESCENDENTS

Genesis 12:2 “And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing.”

TO THE WHOLE WORLD

Genesis 12:3 “And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.”

THROUGH JESUS CHRIST

1 Timothy 2:5 “For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;”

Hebrews 1:1-2 “God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;”

To summarize God’s intent in providing His great plan of salvation to all mankind who desperately needed it we could say it this way:

God had a twofold purpose for all mankind in providing salvation through His Son Jesus Christ.

1. To provide forgiveness of sins and restore all who repent and believe thus bringing them back into fellowship with Him.

2. To provide forgiveness and restoration to all who repent and believed in order to bring brothers and sisters in Christ into fellowship with each other.

In our scriptural passage these

two dimensions are clearly taught. Let’s examine them to discover God’s overall plan from before creation.

IN OUR TEXT WE WILL SEE THAT GOD IS BUILDING HIS CHURCH IN TWO SPECIFIC YET RELATED WAYS.

1. God is building His Church (See 2:11-19).

by creating a “new man” from both the Gentiles and the Jews.

2. God is building His Church (See 2:20-22).

by joining together a living temple in which God lives by the Holy Spirit.

1. God is building His Church by creating a “new man” from both the Gentiles and the Jews. (See 2:11-19).

When God creates something He makes it totally new in a spiritual sense.

When we create something we make it out of something physical that all ready exists. For example, when we build a house we use materials that are already in existence.

When God creates a “new man” he adds a spiritual dimension which is total new to both the Gentiles and the Jews. Let’s examine our passage to see how God created a “new man” from both Gentiles and Jews.

WHAT DID GOD DO FOR THE GENTILES?

**NATURAL
SITUATION
CONVERTED SITUATION**

1. Separated from Christ (See 2:12) Brought near by the blood of Christ (See 2:13).

2. Excluded from citizenship of Israel (See 2:12) Fellow citizens with God's people (See 2:19).

3. Foreigners to the covenants of promise (See 2:12). Both have access to the Father by one Spirit (See 2:18).

4. Without hope and without God in the world (See 2:12b).

Members of the household of God (See 2:19).

**WHAT DID GOD DO FOR THE
JEWS?**

**NATURAL
SITUATION
CONVERTED SITUATION**

2. Dividing wall partition (See 2:14) God abolished the enmity in His flesh (See 2:15).

**HOW DID GOD BRING THE GENTILES
AND JEWS TOGETHER?**

**JESUS PREACHED PEACE TO BOTH
GENTILES AND JEWS PROVIDED
ACCESS TO GOD BY ONE SPIRIT. (See
2:17-18)**

Note :

1. God did His part in making one man from both the Gentiles and Jews.

2. Jesus did His part in making one man from both the Gentiles and Jews.

3. The Holy Spirit did His part in making one man from both the Gentiles and the Jews.

4. But the challenge now lies with the followers of Christ. Both converted Gentiles and Jews need to do their part in becoming one man through the enabling of the Holy Spirit who knows both the mind of God and Jesus Christ.

What are you and I doing to bridge the gap between followers of Christ who find it difficult to become one with us in the Church of Jesus Christ?

We must continually keep in mind God's purpose for His Church. Namely, He wants us, as followers of Jesus Christ, to follow His example in bringing together both Gentiles and Jews, creating a "new man" who now learns to live the empowered life by the Holy Spirit and learns how to love and respect each member of the body of Jesus Christ.

**2. GOD IS BUILDING HIS CHURCH AS A
LIVING HOUSEHOLD IN WHICH GOD
LIVES BY THE HOLY SPIRIT. (See 2:20-
22)**

God by the Holy Spirit is joining His followers together, placing them where He wants them to function. This is where real body life begins and grows.

2.1 THE CHURCH IS BUILT ON THE FOUNDATION OF THE APOSTLES AND PROPHETS WITH JESUS CHRIST THE CHIEF CORNERSTONE. (See 2:20)

Jesus said to Peter, before he was an apostle; "And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." (Matthew 16:18). "From the passage in Ephesians, it appears that the Church is built on the foundation of apostles too." (Shawn Stevens). The prophets probably were those in the first century who also became part of the Church foundation.

2.2 BUILT TOGETHER IN CHRIST TO BECOME A DWELLING IN WHICH GOD LIVES BY THE SPIRIT (See 2:22)

In Solomon's day much time was spent in shaping and fitting the stones together. In fact, when the actual temple was built there was no sound of a hammer.

When God is building His Church He spends a lot of time shaping and molding the "lively stones" (see 1 Peter 2:5) that become His dwelling place. In order for God to effectively mold and shape us he needs our total commitment and trust in Him to know what is best in training us to love and respect each other.

Jake Balzer

Scripture taken from King James Version