

"The First Gospel Sermon"

The church began in the first century with its first messages of salvation. Hello, I'm Phil Sanders, and this is a Bible study "In Search of the Lord's Way." We're going to look at the beginning of the church and explore the first gospel sermon. Stay with us.

Welcome to In SEARCH of the Lord's Way! We're here to search the Scriptures for the will of God. The Bible opens for us doors of understanding. It helps us to see things as they really are from God's point of view. If all we hear is what the world thinks or what some religious leader believes, we may miss hearing God for ourselves. If all we believe is what we experience or feel, we may miss hearing God's bigger picture. God has spoken in His Word the things we most need to know about life and godliness. Thanks for taking time with us today. We want to be a part of your life each week.

Jesus made a promise to the apostles in Acts 1 verses 6 to 8. They had asked him, "Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" (and) He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." Jesus promised they would be filled with power of the Holy Spirit, and serve as witnesses to all the earth.

The Scriptures reveal how this promise began to be fulfilled in Acts 2. The book of Acts shows how the apostles took the gospel to Jerusalem, to Judea, to Samaria, and to the world. What they said in the beginning is essential to our understanding of Christianity. Their first century message is for all people in all time and in all places. For this reason, we must pay close attention to what Luke by inspiration preserved for us in this Acts chapter 2. This is what God wanted the people of Jerusalem to know about Jesus and what He wants us to know as well and how we should respond to our sins.

Now we offer this study on the first gospel sermon free. If you'd like a printed copy or a CD of our study and you live in the United States, mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to searchtv@searchtv.org. Or, you can call our toll-free telephone number. That number is 1-800-321-8633. We also have materials free on line at www.searchtv.org. The Edmond church will now worship in song, we'll read from Acts 2:1 to 4, and then we'll explore our need to do what God says.

Our reading today comes from Acts chapter 2 the first four verses. And this is at the beginning of the church. And it's the beginning and the setting for this first gospel sermon.

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.

This tells us of the great miraculous power of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost. Let's pray together. Oh, Father help us always to love You and to look to You for the truth, for the blessing of life and health. And Father we pray that You will help us to do Your will on earth as it is in heaven. In Jesus' name, Amen.

The day of Pentecost was one of the three required feasts that the Israelites had to attend.

The day fell 50 days after the day of Passover and was originally a harvest festival. Now this feast also commemorated Moses' giving of the Law on Sinai. This Pentecost was just 50 days after the crucifixion of Jesus. And so His disciples had spent forty days with Jesus after His resurrection. And this

first day of the week, on the day of Pentecost, marked the beginning of the church. Now three visible miracles occurred together that made the coming of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost an unmistakable and unique event: first, the rushing, mighty wind; second, the visible flames that rested on the apostles; and third, the apostles speaking in “other tongues.” Now these “tongues” were recognized as the “native languages” of the visitors and strangers who’d come to Jerusalem for the festival.

Acts 2 verses 5 to 11 says, “Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven. And at this sound the multitude came together, and they were bewildered, because each one was hearing them speak in his own language. And they were amazed and astonished, saying, “Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each of us in his own native language? Parthians and Medes and Elamites and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians—we hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God.”

Now Acts 2:12 to 15 tells of an accusation and then how Peter answers it. “And all were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, “What does this mean?” (talking about them speaking in the tongues) But others mocking said, “They are filled with new wine.” But Peter, standing with the eleven, lifted up his voice and addressed them: “Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and give ear to my words. For these people are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day.” You know some will mock anything they don’t understand; but Peter answers their objections first from a practical standpoint (that it’s only 9 am) and then second from a biblical prophecy.

Peter explains what has taken place in Acts 2. And he says this in verses 16 to 21. He said, “But this is what was uttered through the prophet Joel (that is in chapter 2 verses 28 to 32. He said): ‘And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams; even on my male servants and female servants in those days I will pour out my Spirit, and they shall prophesy. And I will show wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below, blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke; the sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood, before the day of the Lord comes, the great and magnificent day. And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.’

Well, the Jews knew this prophecy and they knew the day would come when God’s Spirit would be poured out and people could be saved. Peter then turns to speaking about Jesus and what this means and he does this in Acts 2 verses 22 to 23. Peter says, “Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know—this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men.”

Now the miraculous works Jesus performed were very well known. In fact, the chief priests were worried about Him. After Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered the council and said in John 11:47 to 48, “What are we to do? For this man performs many signs. (that is miracles and) If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation.” You see they decided to kill Jesus and then they incited the people to join in crucifying Him at the hands of Pilate. The people knew this.

But the death of Jesus was not the whole message. Peter with the eleven boldly said, in Acts 2:24 to 28 that , “God raised him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be

held by it. For David (this is in Psalm 16 verses 8 to 11 says concerning him,) "I saw the Lord always before me, for he is at my right hand that I may not be shaken; therefore my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced; my flesh also will dwell in hope. For you will not abandon my soul to Hades, or let your Holy One see corruption. You have made known to me the paths of life; you will make me full of gladness with your presence."

Peter explains that David wasn't speaking about himself in this prophecy. Acts 2:29 to 32 says, "Brothers, I may say to you with confidence about the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. Being therefore a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that he would set one of his descendants on his throne, he foresaw and spoke about the resurrection of the Christ, (the Messiah,) that he was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption. This Jesus God raised up, and of that (that is the resurrection) we all are witnesses." The apostles had seen Jesus, touched Him, heard Him speak, and ate with Him. Acts 1 and verse 3 says that Jesus "presented himself alive to them (that is the apostles) after his suffering by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God."

Someone asked where is Jesus now? Well, Acts 2:33 to 36 says, "Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing. For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he himself says (and this is from Psalm 110 verse 1), 'The Lord said to my Lord, 'Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool.' Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom (he spoke to them, whom) you crucified."

Peter argued clearly that Jesus is indeed an historic person and the Messiah, and the people knew Him and the miracles that He'd worked! That Jesus was crucified and then they were witnesses that He rose from the dead. Peter preached the Scriptures prophecy his death and resurrection. And fulfilling these passages Jesus is indeed God's Christ, God's Messiah. And He is Lord and King!

Well, Acts 2 and verse 37 says, "Now when they heard this, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, 'Brethren, what shall we do?'" J. W. McGarvey, a scholar from the nineteenth century wrote in his commentary on Acts:

"That in this exclamation, what shall we do, they tacitly confessed their belief of what Peter had preached; and the statement they were pierced made them a, pierced to the heart and this shows that they felt keenly the remorse which the facts that they now believed were intended to inspire. Since Peter began to speak, a change has taken place in both their convictions and their feelings. They now believe that Jesus is the Christ, and they are pierced to the heart with the thought that they have murdered him." The people heard and received this message, and it brought them to faith. Romans 10:17 stands true, "So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ."

Now these guilty men asked, "What shall we do?" They knew they had crucified the Lord Jesus Christ. And, if they had not believed what Peter said, they would surely have never asked what they could do to get rid their great sin and guilt. What they were asking was, "What shall we do to be saved, or to be forgiven of this sin?" This is the first time under the reign of Christ, who is on the throne with the Father, that people in sin asked this momentous question; and this is the first time that an inspired answer is given.

Peter said to them in Acts 2 verses 38 to 39, "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. "For the promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself." In verses 40 to 41 they continue: that "with many other words he (that's Peter) bore witness

and continued to exhort them, saying, "Save yourselves from this crooked generation." So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls."

Now whatever the right answer in earlier days may have been, whether during the days of the Old Testament or during the earthly ministry of Jesus, Peter by the direction of the Holy Spirit gave this true and infallible answer at the beginning of the reign of Jesus upon the throne at the right hand of the Father! And this answer from that time forward to the end of the world is the right answer to everyone in every place! This not only taught them what to do; it also teaches us today what to do to be delivered from the guilt of our own sins. Now if you wish to have forgiveness of sins, repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. This is God's inspired message.

The commandment "be baptized" or "be immersed" is a passive imperative, meaning that one must allow someone to act upon him or her. The human baptizer is acting upon the baptized person, who is passive and receives the action; in the same way God is acting spiritually upon us when we're baptized. In baptism we're not the ones acting; God is acting upon us. It is God who forgives, God who adds us to His church, God who causes us to be born again, God who makes us His child, and God who buries us with Christ, God who raises us up with Christ to walk in newness of life, and God who saves us. Repenting, confessing our faith in Jesus Christ, and being baptized is when we submit to His will, merely responding to what He has commanded us. I tell you God is active in our baptism and our salvation, and we are passive. God acts upon us, and we receive His blessing. He saves us through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit according to Titus 3 and verse 5. My friend, that's what God does in baptism: God is washing us clean in the blood of Jesus and giving us new life! In baptism we are regenerated or born again!

Peter with many other words "bore witness and continued to exhort them, saying, 'Save yourselves from this crooked generation'" (Acts 2 and verse 40). Peter taught them what they needed to know and encouraged them to act. Some say that we can do nothing toward our salvation, but Peter told them to "Save yourselves!" No one can save themselves by themselves; oh no, no we're saved by the grace of God. But we do, however, act in obedience in order to accept his promised blessing. Why? Because He asks us to. This doesn't mean that we earn salvation but it does mean that we accept and act upon His required conditions to be forgiven and to become children of God.

Now who were the 3,000 that gladly received his message, that wanted to be saved, and be baptized? They weren't infants who couldn't understand or believe. They were believers who were old enough to believe and repent. They were young and old, educated and unschooled, priests and common Jews! Whoever they were, they knew that they were sinners in need of the grace of God. My friend do you need the grace of God? Let's pray together. Oh Father help us to be obedient to Your will in all that we do because we love You. This we pray in Jesus' name, Amen.

You may wonder, "What about Acts 2:21?" It says, "And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." Well, doesn't that teach one can be saved by simply praying for forgiveness? Well, many people believe that, but we've got to examine the Scriptures to see how one calls upon the name of the Lord. First, let's consider Acts 22:16. Ananias told Saul of Tarsus, "And now why do you wait? Rise and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on his name." Well, calling on the name of the Lord occurs when one is baptized into Christ. Second, let's examine 1 Peter 3 and verse 21: "Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ." You see baptism appeals to God for a good conscience. One's conscience is still in need of cleansing prior to baptism. In baptism we receive from God the gift of forgiveness, which gives us a clean conscience.

One thing is sure: the Scriptures never invite one to pray the “sinner’s prayer” to be saved. You see this is a modern innovation, not a Biblical instruction. Paul prayed for three days (Acts 9 and verse 11), and yet he still needed his sins washed away (Acts 22 and verse 16).

The people at Pentecost didn’t debate with Peter about how to be saved. All 3000 understood his message alike and obeyed. They gladly received Peter’s message in Acts 2 and verse 38, “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.” Well, I pray that you too will gladly receive the gospel message, that you’ll repent of your sins, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins.

Well we hope that this message on the first gospel sermon will pierce your heart just as it did the people at Pentecost. If you live in the United States and want a free printed copy or a CD of this message, mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to searchtv@searchtv.org. Or, you can call the Search office toll-free at 1-800-321-8633. Now you can download these lessons or a newsletter online at our website: www.searchtv.org. There’s also a schedule of programs and a map with the location of churches in your area. We hope also you’ll subscribe to our You Tube channel. That’s “SearchTVMinistry” on You Tube and watch the program. We also offer free Bible Correspondence courses. Well, as always we’re here to help you get to heaven so get involve with a church. If you’re looking for a healthy church home, let us know.

God bless you and we love you from all of us at In Search of the Lord’s Way.