

The Promise of the Father

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Recorded on May 21, 2022

At the end of Christ's ministry on earth, after He was resurrected but still spending His forty days with the apostles and His followers, before He ascended up to the Father, He made several comments. He was going to be bringing to them what He called the "promise of the Father". We're going to talk about this promise and how the meaning of this was fulfilled. This ties directly into the meaning of the Feast of Pentecost that we will be observing in just a few weeks. I thought it would be good to take a look at this promise. How it all ties in and is fulfilled. Christ was referring to a promise that God the Father made to Abraham. How all the world would be blessed through his descendants and that it's specifically tied to how salvation was going to be offered to all of mankind through Christ, as a descendant of Abraham. If you'd like a title for this sermon it's:

The Promise of the Father

We're going to look at this promise today and how this promise was fulfilled. To begin, look at some of the comments made about this in Luke 24. We're going to look at both of the comments and where Christ references these. They actually occurred after He had already been killed and was resurrected back to eternal life, during the time that He spent those forty days after He was resurrected with His followers before He ascended to the Father to sit at the Father's right hand.

Luke 24:46 *Then He said to them, "Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, 47) and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. 48) And you are witnesses of these things. (NKJV)*

Notice in particular verse 49.

49) Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high." (NKJV)

He mentions they need to stay in Jerusalem to receive the *Promise of the Father* and makes a reference to them being given power. We're going to see He is referring to them receiving the Holy Spirit and the power of the Holy Spirit. Notice also in the context He also talks about the forgiveness of sins being preached. We're going to see how both of these ties in together to the fulfillment of the promise of the Father. The forgiveness of sins and the offering of the Holy Spirit.

He makes another comment like this later, in Acts 1. This is literally right before He ascends to the Father. So, the context of the timing in Acts 1 is approximately about forty days after Wave Sheaf Sunday and about ten days prior to when Pentecost would have occurred. Acts 1:4.

Acts 1:4 *And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, "which," He said, "you have heard from Me; 5) for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."* (NKJV)

He's connecting the promise of the Father and being baptized with the Holy Spirit and telling them to wait in Jerusalem for this to happen.

6) Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, "Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" (NKJV)

I always get a chuckle when I read this verse, because, isn't that oftentimes our focus as church members?

"When is the end going to come? Tell us prophecy, when is the end going to come so we can set the date and we can write it down."

Christ doesn't answer that question; He says they need to be focused on something more important.

7) And He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority." (NKJV)

In other words, that information is on a "need to know" basis and you don't need to know. But here's what is important in verse 8.

8) But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." (NKJV)

He makes several comments here.

He tells them first of all to wait around in Jerusalem to receive all this. Ten days later it was going to be Pentecost—that's what they need to stay in Jerusalem for.

He says, you are going to receive power from the Holy Spirit. You are going to be baptized with the Holy Spirit and you are going receive the "Promise of the Father".

These are basically getting at the same thing. These were going to be fulfilled that day.

Let's look first of all, at why He referred to this as the "Promise of the Father". What is significant about that? If this was a promise that was made several thousand years prior to Him making these comments; if this was a promise that God the Father made to Abraham, how would all the world be blessed through his descendants and specifically through Christ being a descendant of Abraham? We're going to see how this ties together. To put this puzzle together, we will go to Genesis 12, where we will see when God the Father first started working with Abraham.

Genesis 12:1 *Now the LORD had said to Abram: "Get out of your country, From your family And from your father's house, To a land that I will show you. 2) I will make you a great nation; I will bless you And make your name great; And you shall be a blessing. 3) I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you; [notice the last part of this verse] And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."* (NKJV)

As we have been taught in the church of God for many, many years, there were physical and spiritual promises wrapped in these statements. Obviously, there were Abraham's direct descendants, not only within the Promised Land, but also the nations which have descended today, such as Western Europe, U.S., Canada and Australia—the nations descended from Abraham, have received great prominence and have been very big players in terms of world history. They have been a physical blessing on the rest of the world in terms of how that played out. There are many more important aspects of this as well, which are the spiritual promises that are connected with this.

We see more in Genesis 22, in the middle of a context. I'm sure this is a story most of us are pretty familiar with, where God tells Abraham, that the son he had waited for all this time and had finally received, he was to take him to the mountain and kill him. It was a test on Abraham to see if in his faith, he would put God above everything else in his life, including his own family. As we know, Abraham obeyed the instructions, took Isaac up to the mountain and was ready to kill him and sacrifice him when he was told *"No, stop—We didn't really want you to kill him we just wanted to see if you were going to do it and obey."* But after Abraham passes this test, more information is provided that helps to clarify a little more about the promise of the Father and how this would play out.

Genesis 22:15 *Then the Angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time out of heaven, 16) and said: "By Myself I have sworn, says the LORD, because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only son— 17) blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies.* (NKJV)

Notice in particular verse 18.

18) In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice." (NKJV)

The book of Galatians is going to directly tell us this—we don't have to speculate or guess at all—the seed being referred to here, when He says through *your seed, all the nations of the earth will be blessed*, He is specifically referring to Christ. We're going to see that directly stated in Galatians 3—we don't need to speculate. It's going to tell us directly and quote this verse and say "the seed" being referred to is Christ. It's talking about the fact that Christ would be a descendant of Abraham and it would be through Christ and His sacrifice and all that will accomplish, that salvation could be offered to all mankind. That's why it's *"all the nations of the earth"* will be

blessed through this. This wouldn't just apply to Abraham's descendants; it would apply to everybody. Christ's sacrifice would be applied to all who are willing to accept it.

We will pick up the verse I'm referring to in Galatians 3. The comment I just referred to is in verse 16 but we're going to start in verse 1 to see the entire context. The entire context that leads up to this statement even being made. What is being discussed is the whole issue of salvation being offered, of being able to receive forgiveness of sins and the Holy Spirit. That's the entire context of what is being discussed when Paul then, specifically mentions the seed being referred to in Genesis 22 was Christ.

Galatians 3:1 *O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you that you should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed among you as crucified?*

2) This only I want to learn from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? (NKJV)

The whole issue he is talking about is, how did you receive this spirit? how did you receive forgiveness of sins and become converted? That's the context being discussed.

3) Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now being made perfect by the flesh?

4) Have you suffered so many things in vain—if indeed it was in vain?

5) Therefore He who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you, does He do it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?—

6) just as Abraham “believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.”

7) Therefore know that only those who are of faith are sons of Abraham.

8) And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, saying, “In you all the nations shall be blessed.”

9) So then those who are of faith are blessed with believing Abraham.

10) For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them.”

11) But that no one is justified by the law in the sight of God is evident, for “the just shall live by faith.”

12) Yet the law is not of faith, but “the man who does them shall live by them.”

13) Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree”),

14) that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith. (NKJV)

The whole subject here is how we receive the Holy Spirit.

15) Brethren, I speak in the manner of men: Though it is only a man's covenant, yet if it is confirmed, no one annuls or adds to it.

16) *Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, "And to seeds," as of many, but as of one, "And to your Seed," who is Christ. (NKJV)*

We were going to read in Galatians that, where it refers to *through your seed*, in Genesis 22 that is specifically referring to Christ. We have it right on the page what is being referred to here.

17) *And this I say, that the law, which was four hundred and thirty years later, cannot annul the covenant that was confirmed before by God in Christ, that it should make the promise of no effect.*

18) *For if the inheritance is of the law, it is no longer of promise; but God gave it to Abraham by promise. (NKJV)*

When Christ refers to the "Promise of the Father", this is the promise He is referring to. The promise that God the Father made to Abraham, that through his descendants and specifically, Christ being one of his descendants, salvation would be offered to all mankind. The forgiveness of sins and the ability to receive the Holy Spirit would be made available through the sacrifice of Christ and that sacrifice being applied to mankind. This is what He is referring to when He says, wait around until Pentecost, you're going to receive the "Promise of the Father"—this is what He was talking about.

The Bible specifically refers to people who had the forgiveness of sins, the sacrifice of Christ applied to them and received the Holy Spirit. They are referred to as heirs according to the *promise* and children of the *promise*. The *promise* being referred to is the "Promise of the Father, which is the promise of salvation being offered to mankind through Abraham's seed Who is Christ. Notice this in verse 26.

26) *For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.*

27) *For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.*

28) *There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.*

29) *And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. (NKJV)*

When do we become heirs according to the promise? When we are baptized and have the sacrifice of Christ applied to us and receive the Holy Spirit. You then have the forgiveness of sins and the Holy Spirit dwelling within you. At that point you are heirs according to the promise. In other words, you have received the "Promise of the Father". We also see that those who received this are referred to as "*children of the promise*". We see that in Romans 9:6.

Romans 9:6 *But it is not that the word of God has taken no effect. For they are not all Israel who are of Israel,*

7) *nor are they all children because they are the seed of Abraham; but, "In Isaac your seed shall be called."*

8) *That is, those who are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God; but the children of the promise are counted as the seed. (NKJV)*

In other words, it's not the children of flesh, it's not being a physical descendant of Abraham that is important, it's being counted as part of *the seed* from receiving the sacrifice of Christ and receiving the Holy Spirit. It's someone who has received forgiveness of sins and the Holy Spirit. They have received the promise of the Father because they are now *children of the promise*. They are heirs according to the promise because they have received this. This is why Christ was telling them, wait until Pentecost and you're going to receive this promise because that's what was going to happen on Pentecost.

Notice in the first scripture we talked about in Luke, Christ said "*I will be bringing you the promise of the Father, I will be part of delivering this.*" We have already seen one application of that through Christ being the descendant, Christ being the seed and His sacrifice being applied—one of the major ways that this was fulfilled. There's another aspect this applies to in Acts 2. On Pentecost Peter made a comment in his sermon that directly applies to Christ being the one to deliver the "Promise of the Father", just like He had said.

Acts 2:32 *This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses. 33) Therefore, being exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out this which you now see and hear. (NKJV)*

We're going to talk a little later about the miracles that took place on Pentecost and that played out when the Holy Spirit was being delivered to everyone. Just notice what Peter was saying. When these miracles started happening, people were befuddled by what is taking place. They were like, "*What's going on? Maybe these men speaking in tongues are just drunk, maybe that's what's going on.*" Then Peter had to explain that this is the fulfillment of what Joel was talking about—the pouring out of the Holy Spirit. He basically explained what was happening. He's telling them that the man who a lot of them knew and saw, and Who died for our sin had now ascended to heaven and He's now pouring out the Holy Spirit on us all. That was what was taking place.

Notice the three-step process that Peter mentions. We're going to pay attention to this and put this puzzle together. It plays exactly into the mechanics of how this played out and was fulfilled. What he says is Christ sat down at the right hand of the Father and received the promise of the Holy Spirit and He now pours it out upon all of them. Pay attention to that order because we're going to see that is significant. Let's pick up and follow the story now in verse 34.

34) For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he says himself: The LORD said to my Lord, "Sit at My right hand ... (NKJV)

As we know this is a direct quote from Psalms and it's the Father talking about placing Christ at His right hand. Verse 36.

36) "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ."

37) Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?"

38) *Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.*

39) *For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call."* (NKJV)

He refers to this again as *the promise*. It's the Promise of the Father that he is talking about. Notice what is being included. He says repent and be baptized for two things; forgiveness of sin and the receiving of the Holy Spirit. This is the offering of salvation that would come as a result of this. He refers to it as the promise. You'll see a number of scriptures—we have only scratched the surface—of the number of verses in the Bible that refer to the promise, or use that phrase in one way or another. It's all tying back to this promise that God the Father made to Abraham that is about how salvation would be offered to mankind. The very purpose of why mankind was created and that Christ would be a descendant of Abraham and through Him and His sacrifice, salvation would be offered to everyone.

I mentioned a moment ago to notice the three-step process that Peter gave. He was explaining that this Christ that a lot of us all knew and personally saw and was killed, is the Son of God. He ascended to heaven and is now delivering this promise that He made to us by pouring out the Holy Spirit. In saying this he mentioned a three-step process. He said Christ has ascended to the right hand of the Father, He's received the promise of the Holy Spirit, He's now pouring it out. With that in mind let's look at another comment that Christ made in John 7 that connects with this whole puzzle. We're going to read a section of scripture that is specifically referring to the eighth day and the meaning of the eighth day. But there's a comment made in the context that is going to help clarify the mechanics of how all this plays out.

John 7:37 *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.*

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

What I always love about these verses is we don't have to speculate in any way whatsoever about what Christ is saying in verse 37 and 38. To understand exactly what He meant all we need to do is read verse 39 because it directly tells us and explains exactly what He meant.

39) *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.* (NKJV)

This is standard on the eighth day and refers to the meaning there as specifically what is being talked about. But we can also gain some insight into this subject if we understand what is being said in verse 39. It mentions that the Holy Spirit had not yet been given, which was generally true at that time in the book of John. Christ hadn't died yet, He hadn't been the sacrifice, none of this had occurred because it specifically mentions that Christ was not yet glorified. We need to understand what it means when it says Christ was not yet glorified. I have to admit for much of my life I looked at this and thought it meant He hadn't died and been resurrected yet.

Glorified means “being resurrected back to eternal life”. That would be being glorified. But that’s not exactly what it means. Let me share with you the Greek word that is translated into English as *glorified*. It’s transliterated into English *doxazo* and is Strong’s #1392. The definition I’m going to give you is from The Complete World Study Dictionary of the New Testament by Spiros Zodhiates. “*To glorify, the consequential meaning from the opinion which one forms is to recognize, honor, praise, invest with dignity, give anyone esteem or honor by putting him into an honorable position.*”

Let’s think about that for a moment. Does the Bible talk a lot about an honorable position that Christ is placed into? We could look at this and say, Him being resurrected from being a human being back to being a God Being that is being glorified. You could make that argument. But there’s another explanation for this that the New Testament spends a lot of time talking about. This honorable position that Christ is put into and it’s directly something that Peter mentioned when he talked about Christ receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit because what did he say? He sits down at the Father’s right hand, He receives the gift of the Holy Spirit, He is now pouring it out.

The Bible talks repeatedly, again and again and again—it’s even mentioned in Psalms which we won’t look at today—about Christ being exalted to the right Hand of the Father. We’ll see this again and again and again. There are a handful of scriptures that mentions this for us to see that, but we’re not even going to scratch the surface on all the scriptures that talk about this. The New Testament repeatedly talks about this honorable position that Christ has been placed into at the Father’s right hand and why He is over all of the rest of creation and the angelic world. It’s always emphasized Him sitting at the Father’s right hand. Let’s notice a number of scriptures that refers to this because this is a theme all throughout the New Testament. Acts 5:29.

Acts 5:29 *But Peter and the other apostles answered and said: “We ought to obey God rather than men.*

30) *The God of our fathers raised up Jesus whom you murdered by hanging on a tree.*

31) *Him God has exalted to His right hand to be Prince and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins.*

32) *And we are His witnesses to these things, and so also is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey Him.” (NKJV)*

As I mentioned, this is something mentioned numerous times throughout the New Testament. Time wouldn’t allow us today to go through all the scriptures that mention this, but just to see a few of them.

Ephesians 1:15 *Therefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints,*

16) *do not cease 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 to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him,*

18) *the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,*
 19) *and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power,*
 20) *which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His 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 age but also in that which is to come.*
 22) *And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church,*
 23) *which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all. (NKJV)*

Notice another example, in Hebrews 1:1.

Hebrews 1:1 *God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets,*
 2) *has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds;*
 3) *who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high*
 4) *having become so much better than the angels, as He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. (NKJV)*

Notice again, as we see this, it keeps talking about how He has been placed above everything. He is Head of the church, He is over all the angels, He is over basically everything except the Father. What is always emphasized is that He sat down at the right hand of the Father. In other words, He is only second to God the Father. We keep seeing this emphasized again and again and again. We'll see the timing of this is very important as we look at more scriptures. In 1 Peter 3 we see one more example of this.

1 Peter 3:21 *There is also an antitype which now saves us—baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ,*
 22) *who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers having been made subject to Him. (NKJV)*

His honorable position is at the right Hand of the Father and everything is placed under Him. This is significant in the timeline and the mechanics of how all this plays out because the Bible tells us *when* Christ was placed at the Father's right hand. We'll see it directly tells us this. After He was crucified for us and was resurrected after three days and three nights in the heart of the earth on wave sheaf Sunday He went up to heaven and fulfilled the meaning of the wave sheaf. He went before the Father, presented Himself as a sacrifice for all mankind and officially atones for the sins of mankind so that can be applied to all of us. We know later that He spends another forty days back on earth interacting with the apostles and other followers of His. We have some of the accounts at the end of the gospels that talk about this telling us specifically when He sat down at the right hand of the Father. Mark 16.

occurred specifically at the end of the forty days that He had spent on earth with mankind before He ascended to the Father. It's at the end of this when He officially ascends to the Father, that He sits down at the right Hand of the Father. This is in Mark 16:19.

Mark 16:19 *So then, after the Lord had spoken to them, He was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God.*

20) And they went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word through the accompanying signs. Amen. (NKJV)

He doesn't go up and fulfill the wave sheaf and then sit down at the Father's right Hand. That's not what happens, He goes up, fulfills the wave sheaf, He comes back down to earth and He is interacting with human beings, appearing to the apostles later that same day. This also helps us to understand another comment that Christ made specifically to the apostles about what needed to occur for them to receive the Holy Spirit. In other words, for them to receive the promise of the Father. For this to happen, Christ made another comment in John 16, that if we understand the context laid out, we can understand what He is referring to here.

John 16:5 *But now I go away to Him who sent Me, and none of you asks Me, Where are You going?*

6) But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart.

7) 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. (NKJV)

Notice what He just said. The helper He is referring to is the Holy Spirit. He says, I have to go away, I have to depart from you for you to receive the helper, which is the Holy Spirit. If we just keep reading the next couple of verses, He is going to clarify more what He means by going away. It's not just referring to Him dying and being the sacrifice as we know is required as well. It's not just Him fulfilling the wave sheaf, as we know is required too. That's not exactly what He is getting at and if we just keep reading, we will see that.

8) And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:

9) of sin, because they do not believe in Me;

10) of righteousness, because I go to My Father and you see Me no more;

11) of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged. (NKJV)

Notice He mentions, I have to go away for you to receive this and then He further clarifies, I go away and you see Me no more. When He went up to fulfill the wave sheaf, yes, He left them and ascended to the Father, but they saw Him just hours later. He was back on earth and interacting with humans the same day. You can put the puzzle together of how He fulfilled the wave sheaf. After He's been resurrected from death and back to life again, before He ascends to the Father, He tells other humans, "You can't touch me I have not ascended to My Father yet." Later that same day He is allowing human beings to touch Him. So obviously He has ascended to the Father, He has now returned and they can touch Him because He has ascended to the Father. After He did that, it wasn't a case of "I go away and you see

Me no more.” because they saw Him a few hours later, the same day. But when He actually ascended to the Father as we read in Mark 16, at the end of the book He goes up and sits down at the Father’s right Hand and they saw Him no more. If you put all this together, you see when Peter was giving his sermon on Pentecost and says, Christ had to sit down at the Father’s right hand, He received the gift of the Holy Spirit, He pours it out to us—that’s the order of events of how *the Promise of the Father* was fulfilled and it matches everything else that Christ said and ties together here.

When we were reading Acts 1 that Christ talked about receiving the power of the Holy Spirit and of receiving the promise of the Father, He also equated this with the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Let’s notice that and see that the meaning of this all ties into the same thing. Back to Acts 1 verse 4.

Acts 1:4 *And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, “which,” He said, “you have heard from Me; 5) for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.” (NKJV)*

This statement was made just about ten days prior to Pentecost. That’s when He says, not many days from now is when it’s going to happen and it happened ten days later on Pentecost. What exactly does He mean by baptism with the Holy Spirit? If you notice His comment that Christ made to them, if we look in Acts 11 we see Peter cite this exact verse; he’s going to quote directly from this and he’s quoting in the context of relating the story of the Gentiles—the Holy Spirit being made available to the Gentiles—and a number of Gentiles been initially converted, receiving the forgiveness of sins and the Holy Spirit. He quotes this verse how the realization came to him that this is now being offered to the Gentiles and not just the Israelites. In Acts 11, we break into the story, starting in verse 13. This is Peter relaying the story of what took place and a little later we’re going to look in Acts 10 and read the actual event.

Acts 11:13 *And he told us how he had seen an angel standing in his house, who said to him, ‘Send men to Joppa, and call for Simon whose surname is Peter, 14) who will tell you words by which you and all your household will be saved.’ 15) And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell upon them, as upon us at the beginning. 16) Then I remembered the word of the Lord, how He said, [notice this is a quote directly from Acts 1] John indeed baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit.’ 17) If therefore God gave them the same gift as He gave us when we believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could withstand God?” 18) When they heard these things they became silent; and they glorified God, saying, “Then God has also granted to the Gentiles repentance to life.” (NKJV)*

In other words, He’s offering forgiveness of sins and the receiving the Holy Spirit to the Gentiles. Notice when this occurred, we know we’re obviously talking about initial

conversion here, being offered to the Gentiles—that’s the whole context of the story—and Peter is quoting Christ’s comments to them about being baptized with the Holy Spirit. Obviously, this is what is being referred to as being baptized with the Holy Spirit. It’s when we receive the Holy Spirit, we are initially converted. We can confirm this in 1 Corinthians 12, we’ll also see baptism of the Spirit being referred to.

1 Corinthians 12:12 *For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ.
13) For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body [we’re talking about baptism of the Holy Spirit and what does that do, it places into the one body, the ecclesia which is the church]—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.
14) For in fact the body is not one member but many. (NKJV)*

In other words, the baptism of the Holy Spirit is receiving the forgiveness of sins is what he is referring to here. Notice another significant factor in this whole picture. In Acts 2 with Pentecost and in Acts 10, the Holy Spirit was offered to the Gentiles. Miracles accompanied both of these events. There’s a very important reason for this in the context of the Bible. Our test of credibility today when we preach, is typically the words people often equate with Mr. Armstrong of, “Don’t believe me, believe the Bible.” The test of credibility is, here’s the Word of God, it’s recorded, compare what we teach and what we do to this book and if it matches, then there’s credibility and if it doesn’t then there isn’t credibility behind it because it contradicts. If you’re the people writing the Bible and establishing new concepts it wouldn’t do any good for Peter or Paul to say, believe what I wrote because I’m the one who wrote it. That doesn’t give any credibility. Whereas, you see all throughout the biblical record, one of the things God typically did when someone was coming in His name and introducing new things as one of His representatives, oftentimes miracles accompanied him. This gave people evidence that these weren’t just crazy men making wild claims, this was real and God was behind it and His power was behind it and it became evident to everyone as a result of these signs. We’ll see that’s what happened in both of these cases. In Acts 2 we’ll read through some of the story of the initial Pentecost with the New Covenant church. Acts 2:1.

Acts 2:1 *When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.
2) And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting.
3) Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them.
4) And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.
5) And there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven.
6) And when this sound occurred, the multitude came together, and were confused, because everyone heard them speak in his own language. (NKJV)*

There’s “stuff” that is getting everybody’s attention This is very unusual. This isn’t just an ordinary day, they are all marveling and going, “What is going on? What is taking place here?” They are all taking notice of this.

- 7) *Then they were all amazed and marveled, saying to one another, "Look, are not all these who speak Galileans?"*
- 8) *And how is it that we hear, each in our own language in which we were born?*
- 9) *Parthians and Medes and Elamites, those dwelling in Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia,*
- 10) *Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya adjoining Cyrene, visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes,*
- 11) *Cretans and Arabs—we hear them speaking in our own tongues the wonderful works of God."*
- 12) *So they were all amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "Whatever could this mean?"*
- 13) *Others mocking said, "They are full of new wine." (NKJV)*

In other words, they're all just drunk. These are just crazy and drunk, that's all that's happening here, there's nothing miraculous taking place. Then Peter has to jump in and explain what is taking place. He specifically tells them in the book of Joel it was prophesied when the Holy Spirit would be poured out that there would be lots of miracles that would accompany this and why would that be? So that they would know that it's real. Anyone can come and claim the Holy Spirit has been poured out on these people. Ok, I'm supposed to just take your word for it? That's a wild claim to say that the Spirit essence of the very Creator God of the universe is going to come and dwell in these carnal human beings. That's an incredible claim to make. God made sure there were such supernatural miracles taking place that they had to realize something supernatural was going on; this wasn't just a bunch of crazies making wild claims because they couldn't have pulled this off, or made this stuff up. They had seen this with their own eyes. That's what was happening here. If we keep reading, this is what Peter is explaining.

- 14) *But Peter, standing up with the eleven, raised his voice and said to them, "Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and heed my words.*
- 15) *For these are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day.*
- 16) *But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel:*
- 17) *And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, That I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; [notice what was going to accompany this spirit being poured out] Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, Your young men shall see visions, Your old men shall dream dreams.*
- 18) *And on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days; And they shall prophesy.*
- 19) *I will show wonders in heaven above And signs in the earth beneath: Blood and fire and vapor of smoke.*
- 20) *The sun shall be turned into darkness, And the moon into blood, Before the coming of the great and awesome day of the LORD.*
- 21) *And it shall come to pass That whoever calls on the name of the LORD Shall be saved. ' (NKJV)*

He was saying that the Holy Spirit is going to be poured out, but it wasn't going to be just some every day event, like—I got the Holy Spirit and it was not big deal—it's going to get everybody's attention and they are all going to know that something unique happened today. We can't explain what took place other than God was moving and performing these miracles. It made it obvious to anyone who was there and they were able to go and relay the stories of what they saw. This validates this whole claim that the very spirit essence of the Creator God is going to come and dwell in these carnal, physical human beings. That is an incredible claim to make. This is a new concept being laid out to the people, this hadn't occurred on any wide scale before. To validate this the miracles made everyone take notice. The exact same thing happened when the Holy Spirit was poured out to the Gentiles as well. In Acts 10 is actually the account of the story that Peter was relaying in Acts 11 which we have just read. Notice in Acts 10:44 what took place.

Acts 10:44 *While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard the word.*

45) And those of the circumcision who believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also.

46) For they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God. Then Peter answered,

47) Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?"

48) And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then they asked him to stay a few days. (NKJV)

It mentions that those of the circumcision, in other words the Israelites saw this and they were astounded. Think of their historical context at the time. God works with the Israelites; He doesn't work with those heathen Gentiles—that would be their mind set. They then see these same miracles playing out with the Gentiles receiving the Holy Spirit as they had witnessed when it was poured out on the Israelites. As a friend mine used to joke, this is stupid proof. This is so obvious; we cannot deny what is taking place. Obviously, God is offering forgiveness of sins and the Holy Spirit to the Gentiles even though that stretches our paradigm, our view of the world—that He only works with Israel. He's obviously working with the Gentiles because the same miracles are taking place here as we saw when He poured it upon us. We can't argue with that. This gets all of their attention. This is why these miracles often accompanied things like this.

Just to further talk about this particular point, as most of you know hearing this, I grew up in the church of God from birth—all of my life—I've heard of what I will call a well-intentioned notion mentioned numerous times throughout my life; I'm not trying to make fun of those who believed this. In earlier years of my life, I believed it as well, it's a well-intentioned notion, but completely and totally wrong. It's the notion that, if we just had the faith today like the people back in biblical times did, we could see all the miracles that they experienced. If you look back at all the miraculous things in the Old Testament and in the New Testament and these dramatic miracles that God performed—if we just had that faith, we could see that too. Faith plays its role and we have to have faith in God, but in reality, the vast majority of the time that is the exact opposite of the truth. The reason I say that is, oftentimes the miracles

were not because these people had such faith that God was blessing them with all these miracles, it was if He don't perform all these miracles, they were not going to believe anything that was being said to them, because they didn't have faith in this. An example of this in Exodus 4. In Exodus 3 is the burning bush incident where God reaches out to Moses and tells him that He has a job for him, He is going to send him to lead the Israelites out of slavery and lead them to the Promised Land. In Exodus 4, Moses mentions to God that "Yes, I can go and tell them this story but why are they going to believe a word I'm going to say? I'm going to sound like some crazy man telling wild stories and they're not going to believe me."

Let's notice how God solves that problem.

Exodus 4:1 *Then Moses answered and said, "But suppose they will not believe me or listen to my voice; suppose they say, 'The LORD has not appeared to you.' "*

2) *So the LORD said to him, "What is that in your hand?" He said, "A rod."*

3) *And He said, "Cast it on the ground." So he cast it on the ground, and it became a serpent; and Moses fled from it.*

4) *Then the LORD said to Moses, "Reach out your hand and take it by the tail" (and he reached out his hand and caught it, and it became a rod in his hand),*

5) *"that they may believe that the LORD God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has appeared to you."*

6) *Furthermore the LORD said to him, "Now put your hand in your bosom." And he put his hand in his bosom, and when he took it out, behold, his hand was leprous, like snow.*

7) *And He said, "Put your hand in your bosom again." So he put his hand in his bosom again, and drew it out of his bosom, and behold, it was restored like his other flesh.*

8) *Then it will be, if they do not believe you, nor heed the message of the first sign, that they may believe the message of the latter sign.*

9) *And it shall be, if they do not believe even these two signs, or listen to your voice, that you shall take water from the river and pour it on the dry land. The water which you take from the river will become blood on the dry land."*

(NKJV)

Notice why God is telling Moses to perform these miracles.

"It's not because the Israelites have so much faith that I'm going to reward them with these great miraculous miracles that they can see—it's the exact opposite."

Moses' concern is, "I can go tell them that you talked to me and told me to lead them out of there, but they're just going to think I'm crazy. They are just going to think I am some crazy nut trying to get a following and telling them these wild stories I made up."

He is giving Moses the ability to perform these miracles as evidence that God sent him to do this and that all of this is legit. This is the same thing, the same principle that was playing out in Acts 2 and 10. It's one thing to get up and make these wild claims that the Creator God is going to actually come down and live in these

individuals and give them His Spirit. He is going to forgive their sins and affect their understanding by giving them the ability to change their character and the essence of who they are. Why should they believe that? That's a wild claim to say that this is going to take place. He does it with miracles and they see all these incredible miracles and say there must be validity to this because look at what is happening. Obviously, God is doing something and it gets everyone's attention. That's how we know that all of this is legitimate. Christ bringing forward the promise of the Father, not only did it play out exactly as He said, He made it very obvious through all the miracles, making it obvious when it took place.

As I mentioned at the beginning of this sermon, the fulfillment of the "Promise of the Father" ties directly into the meaning of the Feast of Pentecost which we will be keeping in just a few weeks. Another thing we often say about the Feast of Pentecost, we often refer to Pentecost as being the day when the establishment of the New Covenant church took place. There's a reason why we use that terminology. Notice as I mentioned throughout this sermon that the Promise of the Father gets down to two things being offered to mankind; the forgiveness of sin and receiving the Holy Spirit—the offering of salvation—but both of those come together. These are also the distinguishing factors of the New Covenant. These are the identifying signs that makes the New Covenant something new. Hebrews 8:7.

Hebrews 8:7 *For if that first covenant had been faultless, then no place would have been sought for a second.*

8) *Because finding fault with them, He says: "Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah—*

9) *not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they did not continue in My covenant, and I disregarded them, says the LORD.*

10) *For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My laws in their mind and write them on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.*

11) *None of them shall teach his neighbor, and none his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD, for all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them.*

12) *For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more."*

13) *In that He says, "A new covenant," He has made the first obsolete. Now what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away. (NKJV)*

He's specifically referring to establishing a new covenant and what are the distinguishing factors that make this new covenant different from the Mount Sinai covenant? The two main points He brings out is the forgiveness sins—I can wash away their previous sins and forgive them of those—and I will write my law in their heart—I will give them the Holy Spirit that will change how they think and enable them to actually be able to obey. What was the problem with the first covenant? They didn't have the heart to follow it, they constantly broke it and walked away from it because they didn't have the heart in them. He said, I'm going to resolve those two issues with this new covenant. This is why we say that Pentecost is the establishment of the new covenant church because these are the distinguishing

factors in the new covenant church. What happened on Pentecost? They received the promise of the Father. What was that? The forgiveness of sins and the giving of the Holy Spirit.

You can see how all of this ties together into the fulfillment of the Holy Day that we will be keeping in just a few weeks. With that in mind I just wanted to cover all of this as we continue our countdown to Pentecost just a few weeks away. We can go into this Holy Day understanding the significance of it.

This is something that God the Father had literally been orchestrating and working out for several thousand years. Going back to Genesis 12, where He made the promise to Abraham of what would take place, after Abraham almost got to the point of killing Isaac, He told them, what was going to happen. Through your descendant and your seed, being Christ, salvation is going to be offered to all mankind. This was fulfilled a couple thousand years later on the Feast of Pentecost and was delivered by Christ just like He said. Not only through His sacrifice but He was literally the One who poured out the Holy Spirit on all of us.

As we go forward and look forward to this Holy Day, we can be very grateful for the *Promise of the Father* knowing that Pentecost pictures our receiving this. The fall Holy Days we keep later on the year, picture that same promise being offered to all of mankind.