

# Pentecost: The Beginning of the End

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Pentecost; Holy Spirit; Church: Fellowship and Unity; Last Day / Acts 2:1–21

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- › Grace, mercy, and peace be yours from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

One of my favorite hymn verses we will sing at the end of the service points to what has been on my mind as we have come to Pentecost: “O Spirit, who didst once restore Thy Church that it might be again The bringer of good news to men, Breathe on Thy cloven Church once more, That in these gray and latter days There may be those whose life is praise, Each life a high doxology To Father, Son, and unto Thee.”

It is Pentecost Sunday and many people have called Pentecost the beginning of the Church, but as I was preparing for this sermon, I read a sermon from another pastor that pointed out that this really misses the point. He points out that in truth, the Church began in the Garden of Eden right after the fall into sin. God promised to Adam and Eve, the Seed of the woman—Christ—who would be their Savior and crush the serpents head. And God made clothes of animal’s skin to cover the nakedness of Adam and Eve.

Adam and Eve were in the congregation they stood in the presence of God in need of his forgiveness. God was the priest, He sacrificed the animals to make the clothes for Adam and Eve and by doing so prophesied the death of Christ to cover all sin. That’s when the church began...all the way back in Genesis 3.

When one reads Genesis and then Peter’s Pentecost Sermon from Acts 2, it’s very clear that Pentecost is not the beginning of the Church. Rather, it’s the beginning of the End. Does the church look different than Genesis 3...yes. Could we call it the beginning of the New Testament Church as we know it today? Perhaps.

When Peter got everyone’s attention he begins his sermon with his text from the prophet Joel:

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17 “ ‘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;  
18 even on my male servants and female servants  
in those days I will pour out my Spirit, and they shall prophesy.  
19 And I will show wonders in the heavens above  
and signs on the earth below,  
blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke;  
20 the sun shall be turned to darkness  
and the moon to blood,  
before the day of the Lord comes, the great and magnificent day.  
21 And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.'

You can clearly hear that St. Peter explains the coming of the Holy Spirit not in terms of the beginning of the Church, but in terms of the Last Day—The End of the Age. So today we mark the coming of the Holy Spirit over 2000 years since Peter preached. We mark this day with fervent hope especially during these grey and latter days - hope for the Last Day. Hope for the coming of the Lord in all of his glory.

We mark this day by calling on the name of the Lord—confident that we shall be saved from all the trials and tribulations of the End of Days. This is where we are at.

Many of the signs that St. Peter and the prophet Joel speak of have already come to pass.

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I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh,

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even on my male servants and female servants  
in those days I will pour out my Spirit, and they shall prophesy

The Spirit of God has been poured out on flesh. Yes for certain in Jerusalem, God poured out His Spirit in a very visible way on the apostles, and then all those who were baptized that day received the very same Spirit...just like you did when you were baptized into Christ.

The Spirit has been poured out on YOU—and your baptism is a sign of the End Times.

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your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,  
and your young men shall see visions,  
and your old men shall dream dreams;

Since that first Pentecost every baptized Christian has prophesied to some degree. Now, we don't get direct revelation from God, but we do share the Gospel of Christ. We tell our children and grandchildren, friends and neighbors about Jesus—and every time we do—we prophesy.

Pastors read the Scriptures in worship and preach the Word of God and every time they do—they prophesy. We all see visions of heaven right here on earth when Christ comes to us in His Word and the sacraments and makes his presence known to us through the means of grace. We dream the dreams of saints when we look forward to the coming of the Lord. By such prophecy and in such hope - we receive the Spirit of the Lord.

By the Holy Spirit we prophecy. We see visions. We dream dreams. And every time we do, we proclaim the Lord's death **Until He comes again at the end of the age.**

When we prophesy by the Spirit. When we see visions in the Spirit. When we dream our dreams of heaven by aid of the Spirit we give our brothers and sisters in the faith and all the unbelieving world we give them a sign of things to come. We give them a sign of the End of the Age, a sign worked by the Spirit IN this world to reveal Christ's coming at the end of the world.

As the End of the Age gets closer and closer The Holy Spirit will keep doing what Christ has given him to do. He will keep guiding us into all truth, speaking the Word of Christ, telling us what is yet to come and Glorifying Christ by taking what is Christ's and declaring it to us.

Until the End comes the Holy Spirit will keep making us ready for the End of the Age and the coming of the Lord. That's what the Holy Spirit does.

The Holy Spirit does everything he does to make you ready for the day of Christ's glorious return. And what a day that will be.

But before that—before Christ returns—the day is coming, Joel says when God will

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show wonders in the heavens above  
and signs on the earth below,  
blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke;  
20 the sun shall be turned to darkness  
and the moon to blood,

During those Last Days when the earth is engulfed in chaos and mystery and signs from God. During those Last Days our enemies will sow chaos in our midst. We can see that we are in these Last Days...there is violence and war, there is trouble and turmoil, there is pestilence.

The enemies of God. The enemies of Christ. Your enemies and the enemies of all Christians will do horrible things as the end comes near. These enemies include the devil, the world, and even our sinful flesh.

Christ says in John 16 that these enemies will put you out of synagogues. It may not be a virus next time. Who knows what the enemy is going to come at us next. We do know it is coming.

As the earth is engulfed in signs and wonders the Church will be engulfed in conflict and much more of it will arise from within. Division in the church will happen. But let it not be done so here. And Pentecost—the coming of the Holy Spirit is God’s sign that these Last Days have begun.

As the Day of the Lord gets nearer and nearer, things will indeed get more and more dangerous, things will get more and more deadly for all the faithful people of God. And that brothers and sisters is precisely why Christ sent His Holy Spirit at Pentecost. It’s exactly why he has given you and me his Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit has called us to faith by the Gospel and brought us into eternal safety in the Church of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Holy Spirit has enlightened us with the gifts of Christ. He has given you forgiveness, life, and salvation with Christ our Lord to sustain us and build us up in the End Times conflict between good and evil.

The Holy Spirit has sanctified us. He has set each of us apart from the blessings of God. He has wrapped us up in the swaddling clothes of the holiness of Christ to protect us from the evil of Satan and his demons.

The Holy Spirit has kept us—and will keep us—in the one true faith and in the one, holy, Christian, and apostolic Church where the devil and hell have no power over us at all.

And even if, God forbid, you or I happen to be killed by our enemies in their twisted efforts to do service to God, even then we will have no fear, because on the Last Day, the Holy Spirit will raise us up with all the dead and give eternal life to us and all believers in Christ.

You may not see the Holy Spirit at work. You may not “feel” him as he goes about fulfilling his mission. You may not even have an “experience” of the Holy Spirit in your soul.

But do not doubt—God has poured His Holy Spirit on YOU! The Holy Spirit puts God’s Word in your ears and in your hearts and on your lips and makes you a prophet of the Lord.

The Holy Spirit gives you visions of heaven right here in this place and he gives you dreams of the heavenly city of God, dreams that will one day come true on that Last and Glorious Day.

The Holy Spirit leads you into all truth by the Word of the Lord and keeps you safe with all the saints in the Church. The Holy Spirit leads you to call on the name of the Lord so that you will be saved.

And he does it all to the glory of Christ who is our Lord and Savior. The Holy Spirit does what he does in these last day to make you ready for the coming of Christ and for the End of the World.

The Spirit's coming at Pentecost was the beginning of the End. And every day that passes brings us closer to that blessed End and to the return of Christ our Lord.

The Spirit will be with you until that great and glorious day arrives—even in these grey and latter days—and then Christ will welcome us all into the blessed life of the New Heavens and the New Earth.

The End is near—So, Come, Holy Spirit—fill the hearts of the faithful and kindle in them the fire of your love. The End is near. We pray for the Spirit to restore the Church That it might be once more the bringer of good news to men. Good News is needed today. The only true Good News is the saving message of Jesus.

We also pray...Come Lord Jesus, Come Quickly.

In Jesus Name. Amen.

- › Now may the peace of God which passes all human understanding, guard your hearts and your minds and keep them focused in Christ Jesus our Lord and Savior. Amen.