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Acts 2:1-21: A *MIND-BOGGLING EVENT*: May 20, 2018

Introduction:

The opening and closing ceremonies choreographed for the Olympics and Commonwealth Games are amazing and often require an explanation. Those who are eye-witnesses of such events have vivid memories of the details for years afterwards.

The coming of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost was a unique and extraordinary event re-told by Dr. Luke in Acts 2. It required an explanation too. This all happened 50 days after Jesus had been raised from the dead and happened this way:

- The 12 Apostles including Matthias, who had replaced Judas the betrayer, were together in one house in Jerusalem.
- Suddenly, there was a sound like a violent wind from heaven & it filled the house where they were sitting.
- They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them.
- They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages as the Spirit enabled them.
- The Jews who heard this sound were there for the Feast of Pentecost. They were from many different countries and spoke many different languages and yet they could all understand what the Apostles were saying, despite the fact that the Apostles were from Galilee. They heard them declaring the glories of God.

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- The reaction of the crowd was mixed. They were understandably amazed and perplexed and some asked one another *What does this mean?* Others however ridiculed the Apostles and said *They have had too much wine!*

An explanation is given:

The Apostles became aware of the reaction of the crowd and they stood together in solidarity as Peter spoke loudly on behalf of the group, preaching the very first sermon of the early church. What did Peter say?

- Firstly, he denied that they were drunk as it was only nine in the morning!
- Secondly, he was enabled by the Holy Spirit to recognise that what was happening was spoken by the Old Testament Prophet Joel over 700 years previously.
- Joel foretold that in the last days, God would pour out His Spirit on His people. All who turned to the Lord in repentance would be saved.
- Further on in Peter's sermon (22-36), he quoted from Psalms 16:8-11 and 110:1, in which King David, 1,000 years earlier, also looked forward to this time. His words were fulfilled in Jesus' death and resurrection and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

It's all about Jesus.

I hope that you'll take time later today to read on in Acts 2, to see what else Peter said in his sermon and how his hearers responded.

The big picture of his sermon is that the coming of the Spirit is further evidence that Jesus is both Lord and Christ. (Verse 36) In other words, he is God come in human form and is the promised Messiah or Saviour:

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- Jesus was accredited by miracles, signs and wonders.
- The Jewish people handed him over to be crucified, by God's set purpose and foreknowledge and that he was killed by Jews and Gentiles (Romans).
- But God raised him from the dead and we 12 Apostles are witnesses of this fact. They saw him alive many times over a period of 40 days.
- Jesus was exalted to God's right hand from whence He poured out the Holy Spirit, as he said he would.

The crowd respond to Peter's sermon:

Every time we watch a TV advertisement we respond. We might use the 'mute' button as a way of saying "I'm not interested" or make a note to buy a particular product. This crowd in Jerusalem responded as well:

- They were *cut to the heart* and asked the twelve Apostles *What shall we do? When were you last cut to the heart when you heard a sermon or read the Bible?*
- Peter explained and pleaded with them that they should *repent and be baptised in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of their sins. Then they would receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.*
- Those who accepted his message were baptised and about 3,000 were added to their number that day! Wow! Imagine that happening in our district!
- The new Christians were serious about their faith and others joined them. They devoted themselves to learning more of God's truth, joining regularly in fellowship with other Christians, being regular in prayer and remembering the Lord's death on their behalf as they celebrated the Lord's Supper. (42-47)

What about us?

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This is not just an ancient history lesson. In Peter's sermon he said in verse 39: *The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off- for all whom the Lord our God will call.* That includes us! We are *far off* from the first century and may be *far off* from God.

God calls on us to repent and trust in Jesus as our Saviour. When we do this, we receive the Holy Spirit who helps us live for the Lord.