

Holy Spirit and the Crisis of Pentecost - Part 5

by T. Austin-Sparks

The book of Acts is a book of Genesis in the new creation, showing the beginning of the new and spiritual creation, and is centered on the encounter with God and the lordship of Jesus Christ.

Duration: 1:05:11

Scripture: Genesis 1:2-4, Matthew 6:33, Acts 2:14-36

Topics: "Pentecost"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the importance of being prepared to let go of worldly things and fully surrender to God. The early disciples, including the twelve apostles, had to grapple with this challenge. Despite their initial confusion and chaos, they were united and poised for the upcoming events. The speaker draws parallels between the chaos in the world after Jesus' crucifixion and the chaos in the initial creation described in the Old Testament. The sermon emphasizes the foundational truth that the Bible begins with the primary fact of God's existence.

Transcript

In the book of the Acts, chapter 2, and the first verse, and when the day of Pentecost was in the course of fulfillment, of being fulfilled, we are in these gatherings having our attention taken up with the crisis of Pentecost and the significance of the Holy Spirit. We continue with that this morning. Now when we take up the Bible, we find that there are two books which are the seed plot from which many succeeding generations take their character and their explanation.

They are the two books of Genesis. One in the Old Testament, which in the English version goes by that name. The other in the New Testament, which goes by the name of the Acts.

You must remember that the writer of this second book never gave to it the title of the Acts of the Apostles. To him it was simply the Acts. Others have appended definitions.

In that very fact, you have the first similarity of beginnings. Genesis, the books of the Acts of the Lord. Both of these books, one in the Old Testament, the other in the New, are books of the beginnings of creation.

The first, the beginnings of the material creation. The second, the beginnings of the new and spiritual creation. That's a very simple statement.

It's one to keep in mind always. Because, especially this book of the Acts, so often taken up on its fragments, its parts, its components, and looked at, handled and dealt with as things in themselves. We treat on the various incidents, spend a lot of time with the details of the books, the chapters and their contents, the movements and the happenings.

That's quite right. We shall continue to do so more and more. But we shall be particularly helped if we always keep this in mind.

That this whole book is a book of Genesis. As truly a book of Genesis in the new creation, as the other is the book of Genesis in the material creation. No one would take one part of the Old Testament book and look upon it, I refer to the first chapters particularly, as something in itself.

We look upon all that we have there in the first two chapters of Genesis as of one piece, all making up the creation. We have to do that with the book of the Acts. See that everything here belongs to this new order which has been introduced on the day of Pentecost.

Both of these books follow a certain clearly defined line, the same line. The one in material things, but the other exactly the same line in spiritual things. The spiritual principles are the same in both books.

In the one those principles are perhaps hidden, enshrined, embodied, in temporal things, in material things, in earthly things. In the other they are manifestly spiritual things. We might say nakedly spiritual things, but in principle they are identical.

That for one simple reason and yet profound reason, that they both come from one mind. They both emanate from a single mind with a single purpose. There is not one purpose in the material creation and another in the new creation.

Behind them both is the one thought and one purpose, as I think we shall see. Now if you just make a summary of some of the major features of the beginnings in the Old Testament, it is not difficult to make your transition to the new. That we shall do.

In the Old Testament book you have these seven beginnings. The beginning of the revelation of God. The fact of God and the knowledge of God begin there.

Secondly, the fact and the layout or constitution or order of the universe. Thirdly, the fact of the nature of man. Fourthly, the fact of corporate life and its nature.

Fifthly, the fact and nature of sin. Sixthly, the cause and the occasion of nations. And lastly, the promise and principles of salvation.

All those seven things are at their beginning in the book of Genesis in the Old Testament. In our thought then we pass over to the book of the Acts. And here we are confronted with that first and primary fact of the Bible.

Unmistakable. In the beginning, God. In the beginning, God.

That's where the Bible begins. That's where the old creation begins. With the primary fact of God.

Do you remember that when the Apostle Paul made his so rich, full statement that in Christ Jesus there is a new creation. The old things have passed away and all have become new. He was careful to add, but all

things are of God as truly in the new creation as in the old.

It begins with God. It all comes out of God. And when we come to this book of the Acts, we are encountering God at every point and at every time.

It is God with whom we have to do in this book. In the days of these happenings, these many wonderful happenings, that was the thing that was being brought home more and more to everybody. The encounter with God.

We might just pause to remember that in the Old Testament statement, in the beginning, God, the word is Elohim. The triune God. The triune God.

It's the plural term. You come to the book of the Acts. There is no doubt about it that you're dealing with the triune God.

And they are so one, and yet so distinct, that sometimes you don't know which of the Trinity you are dealing with. There's no doubt you're dealing with God the Father here. For the book begins with the ascension or receiving up of the Lord Jesus.

And all the teaching about that is that God raised him from the dead and set him at his own right hand. The position in which you find the Lord Jesus throughout this book is the direct act of God. And to take the words of the writer of the Hebrew letter, and of the son he sent, thy throne, O God.

And it was just at least the possibility that it might be so, that brought that pause when Gamaliel warned, warned, said, Let these men alone. If this thing be of God, you might be found to be fighting against God. We would like to think that it was not just a philosophical statement, a bit of human wisdom, but that Gamaliel was seeing or discerning or sensing something in this movement.

It was more than human. But whether that was so or not, the fact remains. And it remains that what we have here is the encounter with God, and God's encounter with man.

On the one side, it did prove to be fighting against God. And there are a few people in this record who found that that is at least a precarious thing to do. Herod, outstandingly, found that.

The Lord smote him. Ananias and Sapphira discovered that. Simon the Sorcerer discovered this fact, that here it is not just God's representative, not apostles, not a new teaching, not a new religious system, not a new cult, but God.

Immediately. Directly. God.

Dear friends, we do not hurry on just to accumulate truth and material. I'm sure you agree that the need today, above all needs, is that men should encounter God in the church, encounter God in the preaching, that it should be the bringing of God into the scene and the situation. The impact of God.

The triune God. We need to recover that sense. For we meet together.

For when they met together, that was the dominating consciousness. And when others came in, they fell down and said, God is in the midst of you. In the beginning, God.

Out of that, everything takes its rise and its character. We're dealing with God. It's a very solemn thing.

A very solemn thing. Should it be less real now than it was then? Is this another dispensation? Have we moved out of the dispensation of the Holy Spirit? Of the book of the Acts? No. We're still in that age.

We're still under that age. But oh, for this recovery, this restoration of the tremendous solemnity of the personal presence of God in everything. Of course, we believe these things.

But we take so much for granted, don't we? We assume so much. If we had the consciousness that they had of God, the presence of God, the Spirit of God, if our belief was a living belief, which means that the thing was real to us, how much more careful we should be? We would take the warnings from these tragedies of this book and walk softly before God. That's on the one side.

There's a warning in this. Any company of people, be they but 120, for that was all in that room at that time, just 120, might be even fewer. Don't have to have 120.

You can have a dozen or less. But any company anointed with the Holy Spirit has to be regarded as having the presence of God, as meaning that God is there. And as it worked out in this book, not only in the company and the companies, but in the individuals.

The individuals, and they were not all Apostles of the Twelve. That's why you dare not call this book The Acts of the Apostles, because the Apostles are hardly mentioned. Only one or two of them figure in this book.

People who do figure here in outstanding service were not Apostles. But they were filled with the Holy Spirit. They were anointed.

And what result it was that when men met them they met God and had to reckon with God. To touch them was to touch God. Pentecost means that, you see, right at the beginning.

It's the beginning of things and the beginning of things. And you get nowhere until this is recognized. For all comes out of this, the beginning.

Let us pray earnestly for a recovery and restoration of the sense and power and holiness of God. In our own personal life, in our own personal life, know ye not that your bodies are a temple of God. That's personal or individual.

To the same people the Apostle addressed the word as to the corporate, know ye not that ye are a temple of the Holy Ghost. That's corporate, a company in Corinth. Now in the Old Testament we do know, especially at the beginning before the great apostasy, what the tabernacle and the temple meant in this respect.

It was glorious. It was joyous. But it was terrible.

Now we speak about that side because it is very important, dear friends, that we had a new sense of God. But on the other side, the presence of the Lord in His presence, in His presence. The joy.

There's gladness. When the Lord filled, the song began. The song of the Lord.

Well I need not, and I'm not going to enlarge upon this. The first of these many features are beginnings out of which everything else comes. But notice, first and the primary factor in the new creation is God.

Nothing cheap about this. Nothing commonplace about God. Nothing ordinary about God.

Perhaps our God is too small. Perhaps we have made Him like ourselves. And we do.

We do think of the Lord as being according to our own minds. I so often have to remind people who come to me and tell me of their deplorable state that they have done this and done that or they have failed to do this and that and therefore they've fallen out of the favor of God and they have lost their salvation and when I come to say what is it you've done? They focus it all down to some fault, some mistake, some thing and I have to say is that the size of your God? Is He no bigger than that? Is He not capable to deal with a thing like that? To handle a matter like that? He has been handling tens of millions of things like that all through the centuries and clearing them up. Is He so small as your one delinquency? Is that the size of your God? Now in many other respects dear friends we need to get the true dimensions of God as the background of everything.

We'll not get through unless He's an adequate Lord. Unless He is God over all. And that's what this book has as its background.

The second characteristic or feature of the creations, the two creations is the brooding spirit. Spirit of God brooded over the face of the deep. That's the Old Testament statement.

You come to the book of the Acts you cannot but if you are entering into the spirit of it, the atmosphere of it dwelling with it, not just reading on to read a book or a story, a narrative you are quietly thinking and feeling your way from the beginning giving time, you cannot but feel that in chapter one of this book and there were no chapters when Luke wrote it just moves quietly from phase to phase in one unbroken narrative but in what is in our arrangement chapter one there is a pause but a very pregnant pause. There is something suspended and something going to happen. I think if you had been with the 120 there that would have been the thing that you would have felt.

We are in a kind of parenthesis. We are in a pause. We are holding our breath.

Something is going to happen. There is something, as we would say, in the air. It's only in the book of the Acts, remember that we know anything about the 40 days after the resurrection.

Although Luke wrote his gospel brought us to the time of the Lord's ascension he never said anything about 40 days plus 10 when he wrote the Acts he put that in period between two periods a parenthesis but a waiting an expectation a wondering a sense of something going to happen.

Quite sure that that is exactly what obtained in the Old Testament when over the chaos the spirit brooded was not just negative nebulous abstract there was something of attention something there with a meaning something positive in its way something is going to happen whether that was so or not there is no doubt about it here this waiting this waiting this tarrying commanded by the Lord tarrying in Jerusalem was a tarrying which had a positive element in it you see, if you are waiting for something if you have been told it is going to happen you might go out shopping while you are waiting you might take a walk around the country while you are waiting well we have got to wait you are just waiting, that's all so you occupy the time but they were not like that they were on poise they were

together it says they were all together they are under the government of something which is about to take place the brooding spirit creating this sense of suspense if you like, even tension but note again the correspondence in the old testament in the first material creation spirit brooded over a state of chaos of

unorder forgive me creating a word I prefer it to disorder unorder you look at everything from the moment that the Lord Jesus crucified died you find something akin to chaos all integration has been lost things have gone to pieces no one knows what to do where to go how to behave there is no pattern no plan no ability to do anything everybody is governed by one big question what does it all mean where is it leading well in mind and heart they were truly in chaos you can see it

all of them like that no order no system no assurance certainty confidence all at a loss to know what to do spirit brooding over it all so it was as this new creation is about to be brought into being so it was as this new creation is about to be brought into being I wonder what was happening during that pause of fifty days of course from the old testament we have some indications on the types that is the presenting of the first fruits to God before the harvest we have all that but have we not something more than that I trust this is not imagination I think there is scripture for this there is that that statement made by the writer of the Hebrew letter about the Lord Jesus and you know that that letter is about him and particularly in its beginnings about the son and having tasted death

and may he be made perfect through suffering which crowned with glory and honor there is this statement whom he appointed heir of all things whom he appointed heir of all things that appointment may have been made before the first creation but it would seem to be like this that before God came out in creative activity in the first creation before he began what we have in that first book of the bible and its first chapters he had appointed his son heir of all things then through whom he made the world the creation demanded and required that the son should be in the divinely appointed place nothing can be done until that happens he was the heir a usurper came in and stole the inheritance but the son came forth and cast out the usurper and recovered the inheritance in his cross and now takes

his place divinely appointed place as heir of all things and from that the spirit of God proceeds to secure unto him a new creation in Christ Jesus what was happening during those ten days in particular we have intimations that even during the forty days he was appearing in the presence of the father we'll not make everything of that during the ten days after he'd gone was he taking his place divinely appointed from all eternity was he being given the place at God's right hand which was his by right the heir of all things I think that's what the word teaches very clearly that's what is happening and then he is in his place as the heir of the whole created universe spirit begins the new creation in Christ Jesus and the rest of this book is the spirit proceeding to give to the son his

rights in this universe the appointing of the heir of all things from eternity through rejection now installed forever we'll have more to say about that probably later on but note so soon as the son the heir is in his place established where Stephen saw him the son of man one little thing that's the only time after Jesus used that title of himself that it's used in the New Testament son of man standing where Paul saw him seated on the right hand of the majesty of life when he is there the heir in his place the suspense is ended the parenthesis is blotted out the spirit and what a breaking of suspense it must have been what shattering of tension it is as though everything in the universe said this is what we have been waiting for and when we say that what an abundance of scripture rushes

in the promise of the father the promise made to Abraham the promise made to David all fulfilled on the day of Pentecost the promise was the promise of the spirit promise made to Abraham that we might receive or that upon the Gentiles we might receive the spirit when he is there the suspense is broken brother was saying something to us yesterday afternoon about this it's still true it's still true in spiritual experience your life and my life may be in a state of suspense the Lord may have purpose the Lord may

be wanting the Lord may be on his side prepared but the son is not in his place and everything is in suspense how much is held up on this one thing that Jesus is not yet absolutely not he is saviour now yes, but that's what we get we're quite happy about him being saviour because

that's for us Lord means what he gets this isn't always so pleasant do you notice this book is just the book of the absolute lordship of Jesus Christ as they went down before him as they proclaimed him Jesus Christ as Lord something broke something broke it's a principle dear friends of the spiritual life the individual spiritual life the lordship of Jesus Christ is the key to so much release so much release and what is true of the individual may be true of the company of the Lord's people anywhere in the company together as a whole without one of it's parts standing out resisting, rebellion acting contrary where there's a company with Jesus as Lord completely you'll find release but where it is not so there's suspense there's suspense Lord just cannot find his way cannot go on he is

bound by this is the spirit the spirit of God the spirit of Christ he's bound to the lordship of Jesus Christ he's committed to that he will not depart from it he will have it utter and he will say yes on seven points you acknowledge it and accept it but there are three points where you don't on nine points but there's one point where you don't many of you if you did not know him know of him and I speak of Dr.

F.B.

Meyer man greatly used of God undoubtedly those of us who knew him personally knew the fragrance of Christ in that life do you know how he came to be such a fragrant life and such a used servant he tells his own story indeed he was never tired of telling his own story giving his own testimony and it's on record now that I heard him tell it personally he said up to a point in my life as a minister I was very earnest I was very sincere I gave myself with all my might to preaching and to working for God and there was a considerable amount of blessing but I knew that it was not all well in my own heart I knew there was something that was standing in the way of what I felt ought to be the fullness of the spirit I longed for the fullness of the spirit I prayed for the fullness of the spirit and

this great craving and longing steadily brought me lower and lower until the day came when I cast myself at the feet of the Master and said Lord I hand up the keys of my life and put them into your hands and said the Lord looked at the bunch of keys and said there's one missing one missing he said I thought I was getting away with it with the Lord I thought that I was going to get through and I knew about that one key in my life that I hadn't included that I had kept back that I had taken off the bunch and was holding in reserve and the Lord knew it as well the Lord said we're not going to get any further until you bring that key always a large bunch of keys all this you offer me all these things you will do for me and be for me but and the whole is held up for the one thing we're not

going to get through until it is a complete surrender now I happen to know what that one key was I'm not going to mention it because it might not be your key at all it might just divert the point and say oh well that's not my trouble but it might be something else but my let go he broke there and he said Lord here it is you take it I give it I have nothing more in reserve that day the blessing came into his life wonderful blessing it was for he got a new lease of life for twenty years twenty years and some of us saw the tremendous change that took place at that point and what was afterward our fruitfulness now I'm not concentrating upon a matter of an experience like that but I'm simply concentrating upon the principle of the old and the new creation it is the heir of all things not nine

tents but all things in his place as heir whom he appointed heir of not this and that few things or many things or most things but all things when that is so the spirit proceeds as he did at that time Jesus was Lord and I may not stay with too much detail but you if you will just look into it will see that there were two sides to this matter there was what took place in heaven in the exalting and the instating of Jesus as Lord but you know there have been quite a lot of things amongst these very people the hundred and twenty even the twelve that they were not prepared to let go of some have said Lord we have forsaken all for thy sake what shall we have? what shall we have? what are we going to get out of this? there have been enquiry for the top place in the kingdom a quest for that you

see there were jealousies and rivalries and it all amounted to personal interests didn't it? personal interests even in the kingdom of God the Lordship of Jesus had to come upon all that come upon all that when that was settled the spirit went on if we would take one further feature this morning it's quite clear we're not going to get through this morning we're dealing with a universe you want more than an hour or so but the next the third feature in these creations is what we may call the divine fear the divine fear and God said let light be and there was light that's in the old material creation starting point real activity down here when things are right in the presence of God sun is in his place in his appointment then down here things begin and there was this divine fear and God said

let light be and there was light we can leave the Old Testament and see the correspondence to this in act there is no mistaking this that the day of Pentecost was a day of revelation of marvelous illumination I immediately Peter stood up with the eleven he said men of Israel be it known unto you that's a new movement for Peter be it known unto you the day of the beginning of a new revelation and then you go through his discourse his discourse what a revelation isn't it he's taking up the Old Testament if Peter had really seen all this before Calvary he would never have denied his Lord but it's broken upon him now and he begins to use the Old Testament in an altogether new way the book has become alive and alight these are not drunken as he supposed but this is that which was spoken by the

prophet Joel this is that that's something new to Peter he knew Joel but he'd never seen Joel and he goes on goes on with David what a large section in that discourse there is about David David what David said and what the Lord said to David leading right up to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus David saying thou wilt not leave my soul in Sheol neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to seek corruption and Peter says all this is before you now fulfilled his Bible has leapt into life and light God has said let light be the spirit of revelation had come his eyes were opened and how profound is his insight when he says that the things which had happened at Jerusalem were all according to what? the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God oh Peter Peter you denied the Lord Jesus because

you were afraid that you might be involved in the trouble Peter is it you speaking that all that which caused you the utmost consternation and made you go to the utmost limits to save yourself from being involved in it is it you speaking Peter this was according to the foreknowledge predeterminate counsel of God this was all planned and meant long long before it happened in the council yes truly this was the day of the breaking of the light for a new creation now that is not all words friends not all words believe me it is true it is true to principle it is there is such a thing as the Bible leaping into life which was a closed book and because it was a closed book it never led you it never saved you it never meant very much to you but something happens something happens God says let

there be light and the Bible becomes a new book what we call an open heaven it lives it lives, it thrives many things still we don't understand but the thing is living our understanding is growing there is light I bid

you read this discourse of Peter again you can see the light that this man has got from the Bible and in the Bible it's just wonderful just wonderful there it is spirit brooding the air in his place the divine fear let there be light and there was light the effects the effects the very first effect of the Holy Spirit coming Pentecost over this sea in this realm to begin with the 120 and then moving out the first effect was to change all their sense of disorder or unorder and chaos into a mighty sense of purpose and plan they are now an integrated people they are now a one

people I want to dwell more fully upon that at some time but they are not all fragments bits scattered here and there they are not only gathered in one upper room they are gathered now under one mighty spirit making them inwardly a unit and what is it that does it? by the spirit they have become possessed of this consciousness we are in a mighty movement of God in a mighty going of God in a mighty plan of God there is meaning in life there is meaning in things very simple but there it is you don't get anywhere until you have this sense, this strong sense that you are called according to purpose and you never have that sense until the Holy Spirit comes in and the Holy Spirit never comes in until Jesus is Lord that's the sequence of things sense that we are now we are now saved from a state

of disruption and disintegration and emptiness and void meaninglessness we are now in something within something oh that every life and every young life here this morning might come under this tremendous effect of the Holy Spirit that you become governed by a sense God has called you for something laid hold of you for something that there is a meaning in things that you are in a movement and a purpose of God, you got that it's an early thing where Jesus is Lord it's an early thing where the Holy Spirit is in possession meaning then order I'm following Mark Hughes, the Old Testament line after the meaningfulness came in to that erstwhile meaningless creation or state then a new order began to emerge wonderful order, beautiful order what the prophet calls the ordinances of the heavens and

the ordinances of the earth beautiful order about everything isn't it it's an order of creation and when you get order you always get growth order and growth come together we do know that disorder is a very paralyzing thing disorder disorder well if it means growth at all it means the growth of more disorder and confusion and regrets but a real divine order produces a wonderful development, increase so it was in the natural creation so it is in the spiritual look at it not through this second chapter so called before you find it they continued steadfastly in the apostles teaching in fellowship in breaking of bread prayer, lovely order introduced and it goes on and growth and growth so it should be under the aegis of the Holy Spirit fruitfulness and reproduction surely they are

characteristics of the book of the Acts aren't they, spontaneous fruitfulness and reproduction striking absence of a lot of things from this book that men today think necessary to get results and fruit reproduce no mention of any organized campaigns no mention of any machinery set up no mention of any committees or boards no mention of all these things it happened, it came about spontaneous fruitfulness spontaneous reproduction very beautiful very simple and not very costly in terms of material things and expenditure there is to get a little result but here it is oh for recovery of this we'll have to pray again very much and earnestly about this whole matter and seek from the Lord whether this is right doctrine or not, I don't know but I don't care but let us seek from the Lord a renewed

fear from Heaven a renewed act of God to bring this new creation on to the bases and ground that it was on at the beginning and make it possible for us really and honestly and truly to say as it was in the beginning and ever shall be we must break off there, not half way through that section but it's enough

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