

## The Wonderful Works of God

Unser Herr lebt, Issue 35, 2015  
 Gotthold Beck

神の大きなみわざ  
 主は生きておられる 35 号  
 ゴットホルド・ベック

When the day of Pentecost was being celebrated, all of them were together in one place. Suddenly, a sound like the roar of a mighty windstorm came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw tongues like flames of fire that separated, and one rested on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages as the Spirit gave them that ability. - Acts 2:1-4. [International Standard Version]

Jewish and proselyte visitors from Rome, Cretans, and Arabs, listening to them talk in our own languages about the great deeds of God? - Acts 2:10-11.

Fellow Israelis, listen to these words: Jesus from Nazareth was a man authenticated to you by God through miracles, wonders, and signs that God performed through him among you, as you yourselves know. After he was arrested according to the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified this very man and killed him by the hands of lawless men. But God raised him up and put an end to suffering of death, since it was impossible for him to be held by it. - Acts 2:22-24.

It was this very Jesus whom God raised, and of that we are all witnesses. He has been exalted to the right hand of God, has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit, and has caused you to experience what you are seeing and hearing. - Acts 2:32-33.

“Therefore, let all the people of Israel understand beyond a doubt that God made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah!” When the crowd that had gathered heard this, they were pierced to the heart. They asked Peter and the other apostles, “Brothers, what should we do?” Peter answered them, “Every one of you must repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus the Messiah for the forgiveness of your sins. Then you will receive the Holy Spirit as a gift. - Acts 2:36-38.

The New Testament describes the seven remarkable works of God as absolute historical facts. These are Christmas, Lent, Easter, the Ascension Day, Pentecost as well as the Advent of the Lord Jesus and the “Marriage of the Lamb.” In this article, I

would like to explain these seven events. Among these, the Pentecost will be discussed in finer detail than the others as it is apparently the most important celebration for us.

### 1. Christmas

The first celebration is Christmas. Needless to say, this is to celebrate the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ. However, unlike the birth of humans, the Nativity does not mark the beginning of the life of the Lord Jesus, but is the day when he appeared in this world. The Lord Jesus is present from the beginning of time until the end of time and all things were created by him.

### 2. Lent

The second celebration is called Lent. This is to commemorate the death of the Lord Jesus on the cross. The life of Jesus in this world was 33 years, and for the first 30 years, he worked as a carpenter. Then, during the last three years, he spread the gospel, healed the sick and brought the dead back to life. Because of the jealousy of the high priests and the Pharisees, he was sentenced to death, stripped naked and nailed to the cross.

The Lord Jesus testified that he was the Son of God, the promised and prophesied Savior. He also made it clear that it was to die that he came down to this world. Since humans were far removed from God, they had to face the punishment of death and were destined to walk the path heading toward eternal destruction. However, because the Lord God so loved mankind, he sent Jesus to this world in order to give them an opportunity to receive salvation. The Lord Jesus said that he would die and sacrifice himself on behalf of mankind.

### 3. Easter

Thirdly, Easter is to celebrate the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. The Lord Jesus did not wish to remain dead long, but chose to come back to life after three days. The resurrection of the Lord Jesus is the best proof of the fact that he was truly the Son of God. The Lord Jesus is the true Son of God and the promised Savior. Furthermore, the resurrection of the Lord Jesus provides proof that the redemption through his death on the cross came into effect and was strong enough to cover the whole world.

### 4. The Ascension Day

The fourth event is the Ascension Day, which is a celebration to commemorate the elevation of the Lord Jesus. Ascension Day took place 40 days after Easter. The Lord Jesus revealed himself to his disciples for 40 days after the resurrection, during which he had fellowship and meals with them. After

he was witnessed by more than 500 people, he ascended to heaven as his disciples were watching.

After saying this, Jesus was taken up while those who had gathered together were watching, and a cloud took him out of their sight. While he was going and they were gazing up toward heaven, two men in white robes stood right beside them. They asked, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up toward heaven? This same Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you saw him go up into heaven." - Acts 1:9-11.

## 5. Pentecost

The fifth celebration is Pentecost. It is held on the 50th day after the resurrection. This is to celebrate that the Holy Spirit was poured out on the earth only once in history. Jesus clearly promised to his disciples (Luke 24:49), "I am sending to you what my Father promised, so stay here in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high." As we can see from the first chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, this came to be true.

While he was meeting with them, he ordered them, "Don't leave Jerusalem. Instead, wait for what the Father has promised, about which you heard me speak. For John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit a few days from now." - Acts 1:4-5.

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. - Acts 1:8.

The second chapter of the Acts of the Apostles describes four things about the Holy Spirit that was poured onto the earth on the day of the first Pentecost. Firstly, a sound like the roaring of a mighty windstorm filled the whole house. This was a proof of the presence of the Holy Spirit.

Secondly, people saw flames of fire like tongues that separated, and one rested on each of them. Then, all of them received the Holy Spirit.

Thirdly, all of them were filled with the Holy Spirit. Not only did they receive the Holy Spirit, but the Holy Spirit now began to control them. Then fourthly, they received the gift of the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages that they had never learned or even heard.

The Pentecost has only occurred once in history. The Holy Spirit has been living on this earth since the time of the first Pentecost and he still dwells inside each true believer. The Lord Jesus accomplished perfect salvation for all mankind. But

more importantly, this salvation has to be personally experienced by each one of us. It can only be achieved by the work of the Holy Spirit.

Thus, our attitude toward the Holy Spirit is extremely important. It is not just a matter of having knowledge about it, but rather, we need to pay special attention to our attitude which is a far more important factor. Whether our lives end in eternal destruction or we obtain eternal life—for us there can be nothing more important than this.

For example, French philosopher, Sartre wrote in his autobiography, "My life came to an end for which I can't do anything anymore." This is a dreadful confession, isn't it? He ended up as a man with no hope, no joy. Why did it have to be this way for him? He explained in his confession when he wrote, "I caught the Holy Spirit in the wine cellar and I chased him out." As a result, he had to live a purposeless life. Yet he listened to the gospel and sensed the work of the Holy Spirit, and then he neglected it on purpose and hardened his own heart toward it. He corrupted himself and ended up as the most pitiful man. We can see it clearly from his own words, telling us that his life was a failure.

The famous American author Hemingway once discussed his own life and said, "It was a dark passage which led to nowhere, then to nowhere, then again to nowhere, once again to nowhere, always and forever to nowhere, heavy on the elbows in the earth to nowhere, dark, never any end to nowhere, hung on all time always to unknowing nowhere." His life ended with killing himself.

The Holy Spirit was sent so that our lives shall not be a purposeless dark passage. The Holy Spirit is not merely a concept that symbolizes the influence, strength or intention of God—it is a true entity. The Holy Spirit, as the God Creator and Jesus, is himself the Lord God.

The Holy Spirit is called by many names in the Scripture; the Spirit of truth, the Spirit of grace, the Spirit of life, the Spirit of promise, the Spirit of strength, the Spirit of love, the Spirit of abstention, the Spirit of purification, the Spirit of wisdom, the Spirit of revelation, the Spirit of glory, the Spirit of faith, the Spirit of the Lord, and so on.

### Work of the Holy Spirit on Non-believers

Now, what will happen to non-believers when the Holy Spirit works on them? It is explained in this verse.

When he comes, he will convict the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment. - John 16:8.

Let us begin with this verse to explain the meaning of

“he will convict the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment.” We are all sinners. This is how the Lord God sees us as we can see from The Romans, chapter 3, verses 10 and 12: “Not even one person is righteous. All have turned away. They have become completely worthless.” However, humans do not judge themselves this way. It takes the work of the Holy Spirit for humans to realize their wickedness and how they are covered with sins. There will absolutely be no salvation unless our eyes are opened through the works of the Holy Spirit. Not until the Holy Spirit makes us realize that we have no hope for salvation and we have no place to escape, will we begin to call upon the name of the one who gives salvation.

Secondly, it is also the Holy Spirit that opens our eyes to 'righteousness.' The righteousness refers to the fact that the salvation is provided by the Lord Jesus and there is no other righteousness for us other than believing in him. We can be justified only through the faith that believes in Jesus.

The Messiah Jesus, who for us has become our righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. - 1 Corinthians 1:30.

Whoever trusts in Jesus and accepts him will be justified. We can be justified before the sacred Lord, not by any human deeds or human efforts, but only by our belief in the Lord Jesus.

Thirdly, the Holy Spirit works on us and opens our eyes to the judgment of God. Those who refuse to accept the Lord Jesus personally and intentionally will have to stand trial. They have to remain separated forever from the Lord God, who is the fountain of love, the spring of life. All humans commit sins and as sinners, they are all destined to eternal death. However, Jesus sacrificed himself for humans and took the punishment of the Sacred Lord God. Anyone can be regarded as righteous by the grace of the Lord Jesus, only if they put faith in him. But those who refuse to accept this wonderful gift walk the way they want to walk. They will never be able to enter the salvation but will have to face the 'judgment.'

The Holy Spirit works to bring out this truth to us. Those who meekly accept this truth will have the true repentance which will lead them to the recognition of their sins. When people confess their sins and promise to stay away from them, they come to believe in the Lord Jesus. We can see from the Bible that when people repent and accept the Lord Jesus, they will receive the Holy Spirit as a gift. Receiving the Holy Spirit is to be born into a new life.

Jesus replied to him, “Truly, I tell you emphatically, unless a person is born from above he cannot see the kingdom of God.” “Truly, I tell

you emphatically, unless a person is born of water and Spirit he cannot enter the kingdom of God. - John 3:3,4.

'Twas not for deeds that we had done, but by his steadfast love alone, he saved us through a second birth, renewed us by the Spirit's work. - Titus 3:5.

Therefore, if anyone is in the Messiah, he is a new creation. Old things have disappeared, and—look!—all things have become new! - 2 Corinthians 5:17.

Wherever the Holy Spirit works, there is new creation. Without the Holy Spirit, there will be no hope, no salvation.

You, however, are not under the control of the human nature but under the control of the Spirit, since God's Spirit lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of the Messiah, he does not belong to him. - Romans 8:9.

I would like to use one real-life example to summarize what was discussed above. Once, there was this evangelist called Henhöfer, who initiated the great revival movement in Germany in the era of Hitler. One day, he preached about the blessing of the Lord God, how people were stained with sins, the necessity of repentance and similar topics. But, the audience complained and requested him to teach the ethical commandments they should obey in their lives, such as “You shall not steal, you shall not kill.” Henhöfer explained plainly, using the analogy of a pear tree in a garden. Suppose you want to have the sweet fruit, pear. You won't get sweet fruit by commanding the pear tree every day, “Make a fruit, bear a fruit!” What you need to do to harvest very good pears is to cut off the trunk and graft from another tree that bears good fruits. Likewise, without the work of the Holy Spirit, we have no chance to be reborn or bear good fruit.

### Work of the Holy Spirit on Believers

Needless to say, the Holy Spirit works on believers too. For believers, it is critical not just to receive a gift from the Holy Spirit, but to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

All those who received the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost were filled with the Holy Spirit. Such fulfillment of the Holy Spirit is generally transitional and throughout their lifetime, they were filled with the Spirit again and again. The Holy Spirit is given only once as gift, and once it is given, it will never be lost. In contrast, the fulfillment of the Holy Spirit is transient, and we need to be filled repeatedly. Believers in Ephesus had a gift of the Holy Spirit. Nevertheless, they were warned that they needed to

keep on being filled with the Spirit (Ephesians 5:18).

So now, let's look at the difference between "the gift of the Holy Spirit" and "the fulfillment of the Holy Spirit." First of all, the gift of the Holy Spirit and the personal regeneration is only given once in our lifetimes and it lasts forever, while the fulfillment of the Holy Spirit comes as a consequence of our wholehearted devotion and thus is transient in nature.

Second, we are born into new life—which is a gift of the Holy Spirit—and are reborn as new men, but we are filled with the Holy Spirit when our old selves are put to death.

Third, true believers are born as gifts of the Holy Spirit and the believers are transformed into the image of the Lord Jesus by being filled with the Holy Spirit.

Fourth, our battle against God is put to an end when we accept the gift of the Holy Spirit and the fulfillment of the Holy Spirit triggers the battle against the devil.

Fifth, we are given "peace with God" as a gift of the Holy Spirit and when we are filled with the Holy Spirit, we have the "peace of God himself" who is our Lord.

Sixth, the gift of the Holy Spirit exempts us from the punishment for our sins, while being filled with the Holy Spirit prevents us from committing sins.

Seventh, we are given the gift of the Holy Spirit when we surrender our sin-stained lives to the Lord. But, we are filled with the Holy Spirit by our sincere devotion and service.

As we have seen, there are remarkable differences between the gift of the Holy Spirit and fulfillment by the Holy Spirit.

Although so many people receive the gift of the Holy Spirit by believing in the Lord Jesus, very few of them are filled with the Holy Spirit. Being filled by the Holy Spirit is to be dominated by the Lord. So many people have accepted the Lord Jesus, but only a few of them walk with the Lord Jesus. The Bible tells us;

**So then, just as you have received the Messiah Jesus the Lord, continue to live dependent on him. - Colossians 2:6.**

Coming into the light is not all that is necessary for believers, but we need to keep walking in the light. As we can see from this verse, "If we keep living in the light as he himself is in the light (1 John 1:7)," it is important not only to come to the Lord Jesus, but to stay within the Lord and walk in the Lord Jesus. "The one who says that he abides in him must live the

same way he himself lived (1 John 2:6)." It is not just enough to have a new life. We need to take a new step with this new life. It is not just enough to come close to Jesus with faith. It is more important in our daily lives to keep walking with faith instead of depending upon something tangible. Instead of just having a gift from the Spirit, we need to continually be filled with the Spirit, and walk along with the Spirit.

**So I say, live by the Spirit. - Galatians 5:16.**

Once you have been called to the Lord, you need to walk in a way that is worthy of the calling. Just knowing the love of the Lord Jesus from experience is not enough. We are expected to walk within His love.

Are we driven by the Holy Spirit? Is the Holy Spirit working on all aspects of our thoughts and deeds? Or, are we affected by other people more than the Holy Spirit? Can we say that the love of the Lord Jesus is the primary thing in our lives?

Let me give you an example. Suppose that there was a copper line on this table. To some people, it looks like a common wire, while to those who recognize its value, it is a highly conductive and thus very valuable electric cable. A common wire and high-voltage electric cable are totally different in terms of their values. Likewise, we believers are either valueless wire or the one that transmits huge power.

Or, let us imagine that we are looking at a piece of paper. It may look like a valueless waste paper to some people, but to a bank officer, it is a bank check for the amount of millions of yen. Similarly, according to whether the Holy Spirit can use us at his will or not, we can be a piece of scrap paper or a bank check of an enormous amount.

**You know that your body is a sanctuary of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have received from God, don't you? You do not belong to yourselves, because you were bought for a price. Therefore, glorify God with your bodies. - 1 Corinthians 6:19-20.**

I believe that this discussion has made clear the extreme importance of our attitude toward the Holy Spirit.

I would like to explain the two last celebrations before the end of this article. Although these two events have not occurred yet, just as five incidents mentioned above have already occurred, they will absolutely take place in the future of mankind.

## 6. Advent of the Lord Jesus

The sixth celebration is the Advent of the Lord Jesus.

It is the coming back of the Lord Jesus to this world. What this will bring about is something that could never have been achieved by political efforts in the past; it will bring true 'righteousness' and 'peace' onto this earth. When this occurs, the Lord Jesus will make an appearance into this world, which will be the real celebration for all believers. It will be the greatest glory for us to be there when the Lord Jesus appears. The Bible says that we will become more like the Lord Jesus when this happens.

As all of us reflect the glory of the Lord with unveiled faces, we are becoming more like him with ever-increasing glory by the Lord's Spirit. - 2 Corinthians 3:18.

We all ought to aspire every day for this day of celebration. This exactly will be the strength to live for us.

### **7. The marriage supper of the lamb**

The seventh and last celebration is the greatest one. It is the marriage of Jesus, the lamb. It is stated in the Book of Revelation, 19:9, "How blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the lamb!" Marriage with the lamb is for us believers to be one with Jesus completely and forever. This is beyond all imagination.

No eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no mind has imagined the things that God has prepared for those who love him. - 1 Corinthians 2:9.

All these seven events we have been discussing are God's works of love towards us, mankind. What a wonderful grace it is!

Let us rejoice, be glad, and give him glory. - Revelation 19:7.

End