

Pentecostal Worldview and Eschatology

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1. Introduction

- a. The closing scene of chapter 4 in J. R. R. Tolkien's *The Return of the King* has powerful imagery and symbolism. In what I just read to you, with my biblically trained and Pentecostally tuned ears I heard echoes and picked up on the symbolism of some of the key aspects of the Gospel of Jesus Christ – Perhaps you heard some of it as well. Of a dark lord of death and the abyss that awaits him; of the rooster crowing – reminding of Peter's failure but also of dawning of the sun and the victory that would come with the resurrection on the dawn of the third day; and of the blowing of horns – trumpets – I hear the trumpet call of the angel, when Christ comes again to receive his own unto himself and so shall we always be with the Lord.
- b. Now I don't know if Tolkien intended for all that to be gleaned from that small section of his book, but I see and hear that because I have a biblical and Pentecostal worldview that causes me to see things in a certain way. When I hear of a dark lord and an abyss – I'm going to think of the imprisonment of Satan in Revelation 20. When I hear of the crowing of a rooster signaling the coming of the dawn breaking through the shadows of death, I'm going to think of the resurrection. When I hear of the blowing of horns/trumpets sounding the arrival of a long awaited ally to the north who comes just in the nick of time – I'm going to think of the return of Jesus Christ and rapture of the church.
- c. Three Goals, One Question, and the Text
 - i. Goals
 1. Establish a Pentecostal Worldview & Theology – both of early and modern Pentecostals
 2. Establish the basics of AG Doctrine as it pertains eschatology
 3. Help you understand the basics of what you need to know concerning the end
 - ii. Question - What does speaking in tongues have to do with the return of Jesus Christ?
 - iii. Text - **Ephesians 1:13-14** In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation-- having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, ¹⁴ who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God's own possession, to the praise of His glory.

2. Pentecostal Worldview & Theology - connecting Pentecost and tongues to Christ's Return

- a. Pentecostals

i. Intro

1. As Pentecostals, we see things differently. Our worldview is conditioned by the personal and powerful experience of the Holy Spirit in our lives.
2. The presence of the spirit changes the way we live in personal holiness, look at the world as ripe unto harvest, and even listen to the Scriptures believing that if God did it then and there – he can do it here and now!

ii. Early Pentecostals & the Latter Rain

1. **Deuteronomy 11:13-14** It shall come about, if you listen obediently to my commandments which I am commanding you today, to love the LORD your God and to serve Him with all your heart and all your soul, ¹⁴ that He will give the rain for your land in its season, the early and late rain, that you may gather in your grain and your new wine and your oil.
2. **Joel 2:23** And He has poured down for you the rain, The early and latter rain as before.
3. **Joel 2:28** It will come about after this That I will pour out My Spirit on all mankind;
4. Basically, the scriptures say that if God's people are obedient, he will send the needed rain for their crops both at the beginning and the end of the season.
5. Joel takes that to a new level and says God will do that with his Spirit.
6. For early Pentecostals, this concept of early and latter rains “presented the broad framework for the movement's world-view.”¹
7. Pentecostals believed that “God's sovereign acts at the close of an age duplicated the pattern demonstrated at the beginning of an age.”² (period of time determined by God)
8. Meaning, that because God poured out his spirit at Pentecost at the beginning of the age of the Spirit/Church, he would do so again at the end of the age prior to his return.
9. This meant a great harvest of souls could be expected

¹ D. William Faupel, *The Everlasting Gospel*, 32.

² D. William Faupel, *The Everlasting Gospel*, 33.

10. This also meant a restoration of Apostolic practice, apostolic faith, apostolic power, and an apostolic message in what was called the full or five-fold gospel which proclaimed Jesus Christ as Savior, Sanctifier, Baptizer, Healer, and Coming King.
11. Spirit baptism and speaking in other tongues served as a sign for early Pentecostals; They saw, they believed that the end of the age was very close, time is short, God was calling workers to bring in the final harvest
12. Eschatology was and still is at the heart of the Pentecostal movement

iii. Theological Framework - Tongues and the end of all things

1. Let me develop this a little more, bring it closer to us and add a theological framework to it.
2. From the time mankind sinned, God has been at work to redeem humanity and really all of creation back to himself.
3. We see this in various covenants and places of his presence such as the tabernacle and temple.
4. During the time of Israel's destruction and deportation to Babylon, the prophets begin to speak of a new covenant in which God would place his spirit within them
5. **Jeremiah 31:33** ³³ "But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days," declares the LORD, "I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.
6. **Ezekiel 36:26-27** ²⁶ "Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. ²⁷ "I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances.
7. **Joel 2:28-29** ²⁸ "It will come about after this That I will pour out My Spirit on all mankind; And your sons and daughters will prophesy, Your old men will dream dreams, Your young men will see visions. ²⁹ "Even on the male and female servants I will pour out My Spirit in those days.
8. The difference with Joel is that the spirit will be poured out on "all mankind." Men and women, young and old, even on the lowliest of society – the servants – those who had no voice – God was going to empower them to speak.

9. **Acts 2:5-8, 11-12** ¶ Now there were Jews living in Jerusalem, devout men from every nation under heaven. ⁶ And when this sound occurred, the crowd came together, and were bewildered because each one of them was hearing them speak in his own language. ⁷ They were amazed and astonished, saying, "Why, are not all these who are speaking Galileans? ⁸ "And how is it that we each hear *them* in our own language to which we were born? ...-- we hear them in our *own* tongues speaking of the mighty deeds of God." ¹² And they all continued in amazement and great perplexity, saying to one another, "**What does this mean?**"

iv. What does this mean? We are living in the last days – (for the last 2000 years!)

1. **Acts 2:16-17** ¹⁶ but this is what was spoken of through the prophet Joel: ¹⁷ 'AND IT SHALL BE IN THE LAST DAYS

2. Three Elements of the “Last Days”

a. Advent of the Messiah

- i. **Isaiah 61:1-2** The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, Because the LORD has anointed me To bring good news to the afflicted; He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to captives And freedom to prisoners; ² To proclaim the favorable year of the LORD And the **day of vengeance of our God**; To comfort all who mourn,

b. Resurrection of the Dead

- i. **Daniel 12:2** ² "Many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to **everlasting life**, but the others to disgrace *and* everlasting contempt.
- ii. **Daniel 12:13** ¹³ "But as for you, go *your way* to the end; then you will enter into rest and rise *again* for your allotted portion at the **end of the age**."

c. The Renewed Presence of the Spirit

- i. **Joel 2:28-31** ²⁸ "It will come about after this That I will pour out My Spirit on all mankind; And your sons and daughters will prophesy, Your old men will dream dreams, Your young men will see visions. ²⁹ "Even on the male and female servants I will pour out My Spirit in those days. ³⁰ ¶ "I will display wonders in the sky and on the earth, Blood, fire and columns of smoke. ³¹ "The sun will be turned into darkness

And the moon into blood **Before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes.**

- d. Each of these OT texts connect in some way to the end.
 - e. The early church from the viewpoint of their scriptures (our OT) would have equated the last days with the end of the age, judgment day, and the consummation of all things.
 - f. However, in the person and life of Jesus Christ each of these three indicators of the last days has become a reality – The messiah had come, the dead had been raised, and God had renewed his presence with his people via the New Covenant and the baptism of the Holy Spirit – But the “end” is not yet here.
- v. The “tension” in the Kingdom – the Already/Not Yet – Power Point Slide
- 1. Paradox – **Matthew 28:19** Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations; **James 5:7** Therefore be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord.
 - 2. “The dynamic tension between the ‘already’ and the ‘not yet’ is integral to biblical eschatology: the kingdom is present and coming.”
 - 3. We are living in the blue box – the kingdom has arrived in the person and work of Jesus Christ but we are still waiting for the king's return and the fulfillment of the Kingdom.
 - 4. **Ephesians 1:13-14** In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation-- having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, ¹⁴who is given as a pledge (first installment, deposit, down payment) of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God's own possession, to the praise of His glory.
 - 5. The Spirit is our pledge, first installment, deposit of our future inheritance.
 - 6. The author of Hebrews says **Hebrews 6:5** and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come,
- vi. So, what do tongues have to do with the return of Jesus Christ?
- 1. Tongues serve as the evidence of the baptism of the holy spirit – evidence that God's presence has been renewed among his people, which the renewed presence was a sign that the last days have arrived.

2. For early Pentecostals, they saw the fresh and worldwide outbreak of tongues as the latter rain spoken of by Joel signaling that the end was near and it was time to bring in the harvest.
3. Tongues function as the evidence of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, which is an empowerment for service in bearing witness to the risen lord. It is not God's will **2 Peter 3:9** for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.
4. I find it fitting that Christ commissions his church in **Matthew 28:19** to "Go and make disciples of all the nations" and the accompanying sign that they have been empowered to preach the gospel to the nations of the world is the languages of the nations!
5. When we hear tongues, that is a sign of the Spirit in our midst. The spirit in our midst is as our text says a "pledge of our inheritance." There is more yet to come! The Spirit in our midst points us back to Pentecost, calls us today to take the Gospel to every tribe, tongue, people, and nation, and forward to the fullness of the kingdom that will be revealed when Jesus comes back.

vii. Application moment –

1. you are here at Northpoint – ministry may seem far off – or it may seem too close for you seniors. In many ways you have your own tension of "already/not yet." Already ministry has begun you are not quite there yet.
2. May I advise you as James does to "Therefore be patient."
3. You are in a time of training – train well and train faithfully. Don't rush and cut corners to get to where you think you need to be.
4. We live in the time between the advents of Christ – many call it the age of the spirit. You need more of the spirit in your life and you are in the best place to receive Him.
5. Knowing that you are empowered by the Spirit; knowing that Jesus is coming back; knowing that you only have a few years here to prepare – some of you need to begin to change the way you are preparing.
6. Some of you are more worried about what the future looks like at the expense of the present and you need to begin to open your eyes and ears and begin to hear what the Spirit is trying to teach you now.
7. Some of you need to spend some time in prayer later today.
8. Some of you need to make better choices with your time. Less video games and movies and more prayer and schoolwork.

9. So as much as I am telling you to be patient, I'm also telling you to get to work.

3. What does the AG believe and what are the Basics elements of eschatology that are important for me to know?

- a. AG Doctrine – These statements came into being in 1916. When they were written, they weren't dealing with eschatological issues – although the final 4 deal with the end – the issue of the day was the Trinity. If you look at that Fundamental truth, it is much longer and involved than these.
- b. 13. The Blessed Hope
 - i. The resurrection of those who have fallen asleep in Christ and their translation together with those who are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord is the imminent and blessed hope of the church.
- c. 14. The Millennial Reign of Christ
 - i. The second coming of Christ includes the rapture of the saints, which is our blessed hope, followed by the visible return of Christ with His saints to reign on earth for one thousand years.
- d. Constitution and Bylaws
 - i. In 1937 (about 20 years later) the AG added article 9 to the bylaws.
- e. ARTICLE 9. DOCTRINES AND PRACTICES DISAPPROVED
 - i. B. LIST OF DOCTRINES AND PRACTICES DISAPPROVED
 - ii. b. *Setting a date for the Lord's return.*
 - iii. c. *Post-Tribulation Rapture.* The General Council of the Assemblies of God has declared itself in the Statement of Fundamental Truths that it holds to the belief in the imminent coming of the Lord as the blessed hope of the Church; and since the teaching that the Church must go through the Tribulation tends to bring confusion and division among the saints, it is recommended that all our ministers teach the imminent coming of Christ, warning all to be prepared for that coming, which may occur at any time, and not lull their minds into complacency by any teaching that would cause them to feel that specific Tribulation events must occur before the rapture of the saints.
 - iv. d. *Amillennialism.*
 - v. e. *Credentials jeopardized if made an issue.* We recommend that those ministers who embrace any of the foregoing eschatological errors refrain from preaching or

teaching them. Should they persist in emphasizing these doctrines to the point of making them an issue, their standing in the Fellowship will be seriously affected

- f. This is about as officially Pre-Trib as you can get without saying so. The AG is “officially” pre-trib in their position paper, but ministers are not bound to the position papers, we are bound to the Statement of Fundamental Truths and the Constitution and Bylaws.
- g. The bylaws state that we don’t want you teaching and preaching a Post-Trib rapture
- h. Why? Because we want people to live with the mentality that Jesus could return at any moment. That is so important. Specifically they say that if you teach there are things (signs) that must take place – Abomination of desolation for instance – before Christ comes back then there are going to be people who will live lives of complacency.
- i. That is human nature – live like I want to until I know I need to change
- j. I am often asked the question “Pastor Ben, can people get saved during the Tribulation?”
 - i. Forgive me for what I am about to say if you have asked me this question, but that is a stupid question and I want to tell people that. But I’m sure I’d get in trouble, so I don’t.
 - ii. What that Question is really asking is, “can people waste their lives and fool around with God’s grace but still make it into heaven after it’s too late?”
 - iii. That is why the AG made a stance theologically

4. Essentials of Eschatology

- a. Scripture indicates a period of great tribulation marked by the rule of the Antichrist and in which God pours out his wrath upon the unrighteous. The Church is not the recipient of God’s wrath and therefore will not be present during this time.
- b. The Church will be raptured prior to the great tribulation – this event will be the beginning point of the great tribulation.
- c. The Rapture is unexpected and without warning; no signs precede it to warn
- d. A two phase return of Christ, once at the rapture when he comes as far as the clouds and again at the second coming when he returns fully to earth.
- e. When he comes fully to earth he will defeat his enemies, including putting Satan away in the bottomless pit.
- f. Christ will then rule and reign on earth, and we with him, for 1000 years; followed by a final rebellion, and then the great white throne judgment where all the wicked stand before God to receive their final punishment in the lake of fire.

- g. Once death, hell, and Satan himself are cast into the lake of fire – this current earth will pass away and God will bring about a new heavens and new earth – no more darkness or sin.
- h. And then eternity begins. Our home is the New Jerusalem.
- i. **Revelation 22:3-4** There will no longer be any curse; and the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and His bond-servants will serve Him; ⁴ they will see His face

5. Application

- a. God is on the Throne, Jesus is coming back, Live in light of His return
- b. If you know room checks are today, then you have cleaned your room.
- c. If you know Jesus is coming back today, your life gets in order quick. You don't know when Jesus is coming back – so you need to live in expectancy as though he will today. This is a lifestyle.
- d. Are you doing your best here at school? Are you preparing well, or coasting?
- e. Are you living to prepare yourself for Jesus' return?