A BRIEF HISTORY & DOCTRINE of THE APOSTOLIC CHURCH





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Compiled by
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The Birth of the Apostolic Church

The Apostolic Church was born in Jerusalem, as recorded in the second chapter of Acts. Jesus instructed His followers to go to Jerusalem and remain there until they received power from on high. The account states:

"And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." (Acts 2:1-4)

As this newly born-again group emerged from the upper room and onto the streets of Jerusalem, people began to ask, "What does this mean?" Some accused the believers of drunkenness, to which Peter replied:

"For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day. But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh." (Acts 2:15-17)

Later, Peter preached the new birth message:

"Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." (Acts 2:38)

The Spread of the Church

From Jerusalem, the church spread throughout the world. The soul-saving message of repentance, baptism in Jesus' name, and the infilling of the Holy Ghost, evidenced by speaking with tongues, was experienced throughout the book of Acts (see Acts 2, Acts 8, Acts 10, Acts 19).

Since Pentecost, the Apostolic Church has embraced this Pentecostal experience as God's plan of salvation. The church endeavors to live according to the teachings of Jesus Christ and exemplify the actions of the apostles. The Apostolic Church accepts the New Testament record of the apostles' experience and doctrine as the authority for its history and as the foundation of its doctrine:

"And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone." (Ephesians 2:20)

The Modern Pentecostal Movement

The American Pentecostal movement traces its history to the early 1900s at Stone's Folly in Topeka, Kansas, and the Azusa Street Mission in California. From these beginnings, the Holy Ghost experience began to spread across the United States and around the world.

However, divisions arose among members of the Pentecostal movement, with some baptizing their converts using the Trinitarian formula of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, while others adhered to the method of the Acts church, baptizing by immersion in the name of Jesus Christ. The Apostolic Church continues to baptize its converts by immersion in Jesus' name for the remission of sins to this day.

The Doctrine of Oneness

The Apostolic Church teaches a strong doctrine of monotheism or the "oneness" of God:

"Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God is one Lord." (Deuteronomy 6:4)

"I, even I, am the Lord; and beside me there is no saviour." (Isaiah 43:11)

Jesus Christ is recognized as the one true God manifested in flesh:

"And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory." (I Timothy 3:16)

While Trinitarian doctrine defines one God in three separate yet equal persons, the Oneness doctrine defines one God in three manifestations: Father in creation, Son in redemption, and Holy Ghost in regeneration—one person fulfilling three offices. As Paul stated in Colossians 2:9:

"For in him [Jesus] dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily."

The Essentiality of Holiness

The Apostolic Church emphasizes the essentiality of holiness before God:

"Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord." (Hebrews 12:14)

This holiness is exemplified in all areas of life, including dress, actions, and attitudes.

Worship and Evangelism

The Apostolic Church is characterized by vibrant worship, joyous singing, anointed preaching, and high-energy services. Great emphasis is placed upon the preaching of the Word and personal evangelism.

Numerous Oneness Pentecostal organizations, including but not limited to the Worldwide Pentecostal Fellowship, the United Pentecostal Church International, and the Assemblies of the Lord Jesus Christ, as well as thousands of independent Apostolic churches, continue to preach the Book of Acts message around the world.

Conclusion

The Apostolic Church, rooted in the experiences of the early believers, remains a vibrant and essential part of the Christian faith. Through adherence to the teachings of Jesus and the practices of the apostles, the church continues to fulfill its mission of spreading the Gospel and living out the truths of the Pentecostal experience.