

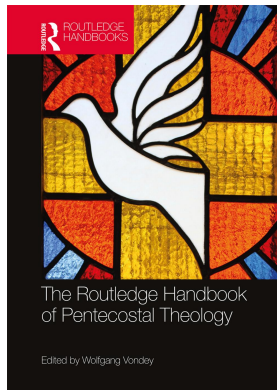
This article was downloaded by: 10.2.97.136

On: 22 Mar 2023

Access details: *subscription number*

Publisher: *Routledge*

Informa Ltd Registered in England and Wales Registered Number: 1072954 Registered office: 5 Howick Place, London SW1P 1WG, UK



The Routledge Handbook of Pentecostal Theology

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Revelation

Publication details

<https://test.routledgehandbooks.com/doi/10.4324/9780429507076-8>

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Published online on: 20 Apr 2020

How to cite :- Rickie D. Moore. 20 Apr 2020, *Revelation from: The Routledge Handbook of Pentecostal Theology* Routledge

Accessed on: 22 Mar 2023

<https://test.routledgehandbooks.com/doi/10.4324/9780429507076-8>

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5

REVELATION

The light and fire of Pentecost

Rickie D. Moore

When considering the sources of Pentecostal theology, it is best to begin where all things Pentecostal begin, with Pentecost, which, for Pentecostals, is both a biblical narrative (Acts 2) and a personal, existential experience of divine revelation. Pentecostals have long been accused of basing their theology upon experience rather than Scripture. However, this is a criticism that greatly misunderstands just how deeply saturated, soaked, and steeped in Scripture Pentecostals generally are (see Chapter 6), and furthermore, it is a criticism that greatly underestimates just how fundamental and determinative experience (or its absence!) has been and continues to be for *every* theological tradition. Nevertheless, it is true that, historically, characteristically, and consciously, Pentecostalism has put more weight on experience than have most other faith traditions (see Chapter 8). And there is good reason for this emphasis, indeed *scriptural* reason. Pentecost itself begins with a sudden, overwhelming experience of divine manifestation and revelation, no matter whether we are talking about the biblical Pentecost or the Pentecost subsequently reiterated and reactivated in the lives of believers. In this chapter, I argue that the Pentecostal understanding of revelation is a reflection of and participation in the day of Pentecost. I begin with a discussion of Pentecost and how it relates to Pentecostal hermeneutics before explaining how Pentecostals view revelation as witness of the Spirit, the Word, and the community in the apocalyptic light and fire of Pentecost.

Pentecost and hermeneutics

The event of Pentecost comes first of all as an experience beyond words, thus bursting the boundaries of language to usher in speaking “with other tongues” (see Acts 2:4)—tongues so utterly “other” (*héteros*) as to traverse boundaries between heaven and earth (v. 2), and thus between “every nation under heaven” (vv. 5–6). The story itself begins with the reporting of a sudden, heavenly (v. 2) manifestation of divine presence experienced by the followers of Jesus who are gathered in Jerusalem soon after his ascension. This manifestation features both auditory (“the sound of a mighty rushing wind,” v. 2) and visual (“divided tongues of fire,” v. 3) phenomena, which immediately result in all disciples being “filled with the Holy Spirit” and beginning “to speak with other languages as the Spirit gave them ability” (v. 4). At the sound of this revelation, a crowd of devout Jews “from every nation under heaven” (v. 5) quickly gathers, and they are amazed to hear, in the midst of all the commotion, a

group they can identify as “Galileans” speaking “in our own languages . . . about God’s deeds of power” (v. 11). In their amazement and bewilderment, some quickly dismiss what they see and hear as no more than a display of public drunkenness (v. 13), while others raise the question, “what does this mean?” (v. 12).

Those on the receiving end of this Pentecost experience have been responding to such reactions by outsiders ever since—reactions that often reach the conclusion that “this” is no more than a merely *human* experience, if not drunkenness, then perhaps distress or dementia (see Chapter 7). However, insiders know differently, and thus they cannot resist being claimed by what is *proclaimed* by Peter: “This is what was spoken through the prophet Joel: ‘In the last days it will be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh’” (Acts 2:17; Joel 2:28). Pentecost marks the revelation of God’s Spirit.

“This is that” is the initial and essential hermeneutical move of Pentecost now extended through the Pentecostal movement (Stibbe 1998; Vondey and Green 2010). Pentecostals, in effect, are saying of their own spiritual experience: “This is what was spoken by the apostle Peter.” This move has deep scriptural roots, specifically in Moses’ words in Deuteronomy when he is remembering the Sinai or Horeb revelation—the very revelatory event and antecedent that the feast of Pentecost came to commemorate:

The LORD our God made a covenant with us at Horeb. Not with our ancestors did the LORD make this covenant, but with us, who are all of us alive here today. The LORD spoke with you face to face at the mountain, out of the fire.

(*Deut.* 5:2–3)

This claim is tantamount to Moses saying, “In the light and the fire of Horeb, this is that!” It is as if the consuming fire of God that burned at Horeb (Deut. 4:11–24) is consuming the boundaries of space and time and bringing the face-to-face divine revelation, which was spoken out of the fire there, to “all of us, who are alive here today” (Moore 2011, 35–55). One can draw from Peter’s (and Moses’) “this is that” hermeneutic two implied points that have much significance for Pentecostal theology.

First, Peter’s words can be taken to indicate: “This” experience is all about “that” Scripture (*viz.*, Joel’s prophecy)—hence, we find no playing off Scripture against experience here, for the experience is respected for its actualizing of Scripture, while Scripture is honored for its illumination of the experience. In fact, one can see here the beginning of a pattern that characterizes, drives, and even defines the entire narrative of Acts. In accord with the Greek term that signifies its very title, “*Praxis* of the Apostles,” the unfolding dynamic of this narrative is the *praxis* constituted by the dialectical interplay between the actions and experiences of the apostles (and others) and the biblical and theological reflections, interpretations, and discernments that witness to the Spirit’s will, works, and wonders to the ends of the earth (e.g. Acts 15:1–35; Thomas 2000). This kind of narrative-praxis theology, which is inaugurated in Acts 2 and extended through the book of Acts, has come to characterize what is undoubtedly most distinctive, dynamic, and significant in Pentecostal theology (Land 1993, 58–121). Yet this emphasis did not come about because of some conscious recognition and sophisticated analysis by Pentecostals of this praxis—only much later did Pentecostal scholars take note of this dynamic (Johns 1993; Land 1993). Rather, it came about partly because Pentecostals in their formative years looked so frequently and tracked so closely with the Acts narrative. But this close following of Acts most likely happened because of an even more fundamental cause. And *that is this*: when one’s life is suddenly interrupted and upended by an overwhelming encounter of inexpressible glory and wonder, it has a way of spontaneously

generating testimony or narrative (Moore 2011) that entails reflection on the meaning of the event, like when needy persons in the Gospels had glorious encounters with Jesus, even when Jesus subsequently commanded them not to tell anyone. The narrative–praxis pattern, so prominent and continually generated in the narrative of Acts, simply and irrefreably explodes forth out of an event like *this*. And this dynamic leads to the second aspect to be drawn from Peter’s hermeneutic. “This” is not, as some suppose, a merely *human* experience of garbled human communication but rather “that,” which is none other than *divine revelation*. Pentecost is divine revelation of a distinct and particular kind, constituted by God pouring out his Spirit and thereby inspiring prophetic utterances, signs, and wonders. It is the aim of this chapter to focus primarily on this distinctive and particular locus of divine revelation in its narrative setting of Acts 2 in view of how this narrative and this revelatory experience have combined to function as such a primal and generative source for Pentecostal theology.

Revelation as witness

The topic of divine revelation, of course, covers a broad range of areas in the history of theology. Yet it is not my purpose here to attempt to address the many categories of revelation except to take note of strategic junctures at which Scripture points to a revelation beyond itself (Vondey 2010, 47–77) and thus becomes both gift and challenge to Pentecostal theology. Several Pentecostal theologians have recently produced major theological works that have begun to show how Pentecostal perspectives, especially in relation to pneumatology, can be brought to bear on the wide range of revelatory means (Yong 2002, 2005, 2014; Macchia 2006; Vondey 2010; Kärkkäinen 2014). As the subtitle for this chapter indicates, my aim here is focused upon the revelation that comes “in the light and fire of Pentecost.” For Pentecostals, this revelation is worthy of singular and even primary attention, because Pentecost is arguably the source of divine revelation that most effectively illuminates and ignites interaction with all other theological sources. These other Pentecost-illuminated sources include Scripture, for sure, but they even include the ultimate source of revelation, Jesus, as they surely did in the book of Acts for Jesus’ disciples, who through (and only through) the revelation of Pentecost, in accord with Jesus’ own prediction (Acts 1:8), were inspired, empowered, and ignited to become witnesses of Jesus to the ends of the earth.

My phrase “in the light and fire of Pentecost,” merits further comment. Reflecting the experience of Moses with God, noted earlier, my use of it here traces from a keen observation put forward by Pentecostal theologian Chris Green in a response to Craig Keener’s book, *Spirit Hermeneutics: Reading Scripture in Light of Pentecost* (Keener 2016; Green 2018, 214–15). Green suggests that thinking and speaking in terms of the “light of Pentecost” (cf. Vanhoozer 2015) can easily play into the hands of our enlightenment obsession with *knowledge that informs us*, but is an orientation that can be significantly expanded and intensified by speaking in terms of the “fire of Pentecost,” which, in accord with Acts 2 (“tongues of fire,” v. 3), more readily points to the divine force that transforms us (Green 2018, 214–15). Fire not only illuminates but also changes the form of what it touches in a way that light alone does not—a point which cannot be far from what John the Baptist highlights in his prediction of the one coming after him who “is more powerful than I . . . He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit *and with fire*” (Luke 3:16; emphasis added). Pentecost comes with the expectation (of Jesus, no less) that those experiencing it will be radically changed, not merely *informed* but *transformed*, (“you shall receive power,” Acts 1:8, and be “clothed with power from on high,” Luke 24:49), not merely *doing* something new but *being* something that they were not before—“my witnesses,” says Jesus, “to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8). Revelation is transformation!

Peter is the prime example (indeed the initial evidence!) of this transformation. Not long before Pentecost in the Luke–Acts narrative, we can see Peter “following at a distance” and then “sitting by the fire” in the high priest’s courtyard, committing his epic failure to be a witness for Jesus, even to the point of denying that he knew Jesus (Luke 22:54–60). However, with the coming of Pentecost when “divided tongues, as of fire, appeared . . . and rested on each of them,” we see Peter “standing with the eleven” (Acts 2:14) and lifting up his voice, and thus actually, truly, and finally being the empowered “witness” that Jesus had predicted that both he and the others would be “when the Holy Spirit has come upon you” (Acts 1:8). Pentecost marks the transformational turning point in the narrative from the wayward actions of the disciples to the wondrous acts of the apostles.

The term “witness” (*mártur*), which is a significant term throughout the New Testament, is especially important in the Acts narrative. It is the term used both by Jesus in his promise in Acts 1:8 and by Peter, in explicit reference to himself and his companions, in his Pentecost message: “This Jesus, God has raised up, and of this we are all witnesses” (Acts 2:32). With this reference, Peter makes a direct connection with Jesus’ promise and shows that he knows himself to be a fulfillment of it. Earlier, in the courtyard, he was mortally afraid of being a witness, a *mártur*, indeed of *becoming a martyr*. However, on the day of Pentecost, Peter now stands up in the court of public opinion and knows and declares himself to be a witness, a *mártur*, a disciple no longer “following at a distance” (Luke 22:54) but rather following close enough to Jesus *to become a martyr himself*. He expresses explicit awareness that he bears witness before those who had had a hand in executing Jesus (Acts 2:23) and who could reasonably be expected now to intend the same for him. Yet Peter also expresses awareness that Jesus had been “raised up” (v. 32) by the same One who has empowered Peter to *stand up* as a witness, a *mártur* (v. 24), and thus who could reasonably be expected to raise him up from the grip of death itself. Indeed, when Peter says of Jesus, “God raised him up, having freed him from death, because it was impossible for him to be held in its power” (v. 24), he is saying something here that he just as easily could have been saying about himself and what had just happened to him there in the middle of Jerusalem. And the same could be said of what Peter says next, quoting from the Psalmist’s words, which Peter sees as referencing Jesus:

I saw the Lord always before me,
for he is at my right hand that I may not be shaken;
therefore my heart was glad and my tongue rejoiced;
my flesh also will dwell in hope.
For you will not abandon my soul to Hades,
or let your Holy One experience corruption.
You have made known to me the ways of life;
you will make me full of gladness with your presence.

(vv. 25–28; Psalm 16:8–11)

Peter’s Pentecost message concludes with a final convicting salvo on God’s exaltation of “this Jesus whom you crucified” (v. 36), which evokes a new question from the onlookers who are “cut to the heart” and so ask, “What should we do?” (v. 37). Peter’s response is, as Pentecostals would say (Vondey 2017, 37–58), to give an altar call: “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (v. 38). It is a “way of life” (v. 28) that Peter himself only recently had followed—one that had taken him from “following at a distance” (Luke 22:54) to becoming a close follower, close enough to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit that had empowered him to become even close enough to be a *mártur*, indeed identifying with

Jesus unto the point of death and of resurrected life. Peter now sees and is a living witness, a *mártur*, to the revelation of the cross and the revelation of the resurrection that Pentecost has freshly revealed.

This narrative of revelation accords with Green's admonition that "coming into Pentecost, we do not leave Good Friday behind. Life in the Spirit is a life of continually sharing in Christ's sufferings, allowing his death always to be happening in us" (Green 2018, 216), and also with the words of Frank Macchia:

Pentecostal theology is the seamless flow of events assumed from the cross to Pentecost, a flow of events that had the impartation of the Spirit at its very substance. The cross was not an abstract event that reconciles God to humanity totally apart from us but rather an all-sufficient power for regeneration, sanctification, healing, and empowered (Spirit-baptized) witnessing in that it had the resurrection and Pentecost at its horizons as parts of the seamless flow of events by which the Spirit is mediated.

(Macchia 2008, 3)

Peter points to this "seamless flow of events" in his quote from Psalm 16:11, "You have made known to me the ways of life" (Acts 2:28). Yet Peter knows that the path of life comes with a hard call to repent, just like it did for him when Jesus, a short time earlier, had predicted:

"Simon, Simon, listen! Satan has demanded to sift all of you like wheat, but I have prayed for you that your own faith may not fail; and you, when once you have turned back [i.e., repented], strengthen your brothers." And he said to him, "Lord, I am ready to go with you both to prison and to death!" And Jesus said, "I tell you, Peter, the cock will not crow this day, until you have denied three times that you know me".

(Luke 22:31–34)

Obviously, Peter had followed Jesus closely—closely enough, so he thought, that he was already prepared to be a *martyr* with him, but Jesus knew better. He knew what Peter comes to know only with the outpouring of the gift of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost. You could say, as Peter is issuing an altar call, he is answering the altar call that Jesus earlier had put to him, for in standing up in this way before those he earlier had mortally feared, he is laying down his life, and yet taking it up again. Peter now knows that he is losing his life and yet finding it, in accord with Jesus' earlier words to his disciples (Luke 17:33; cf. 9:24).

In the light and fire of Pentecost, Peter comes to know also that this same path of life and this same gift of the Holy Spirit are now being offered to *everyone* who receives his word (Acts 2:38–40). Pentecost is not a prophetic gift for the few. In accord with Joel's words, "all flesh," it is radically inclusive, pointing to nothing short of a "prophethood of all believers" (Stronstad 1999). "For the promise is unto you . . .," Peter declares, but his altar call is not quite finished yet: ". . . and to your children, and to all that are afar off" (v. 39; KJV).

- afar off in space, indeed "unto the ends of the earth;"
- afar off in time, indeed even to "children" throughout all generations;
- as far off as Peter was on the night he thought he was following closely, only to come to the bitter revelation that he was woefully far from Jesus and indeed "following at a distance," as the narrative, so we noted earlier, says about Peter in Luke 22:54, using a form of the same word (*makrós*) now used by Peter and rendered "far away" in Acts 2:39;

- as far off as those of us who are modern biblical scholars, following the text of Acts 2 but only while carefully and endlessly maintaining, practicing, and promoting our enlightened historical-critical *distance*;
- or as far off as those of us who are post-modern readers and who eagerly promote “close readings” of the narrative but only as long as it does not entail our own narrative and our own mail being read (Moore 2016).

Yet, further still, Peter seems to know that *his* altar call to “all who are far off” goes only so far, and so he must finally defer to *God’s own altar call* by adding one more far-reaching line to the promise, “everyone whom the Lord our God calls” (Acts 2:39). The verb at the end of this line makes explicit that this revelation can appropriately be termed an altar “call” (*kaléo*). If Peter’s call yields to God’s call, then perhaps we should also say that God’s call has taken up Peter’s call and propelled it now, quite literally, to the ends of the earth and to the end of these, now quite conceivably, *very* “last days.” It is as if God’s revelation—the revelation beyond words that was born in Peter on the day of Pentecost so that he, with inspired words, could bear witness to it and then witness the bearing of its first-fruits in 3,000 souls on that day (Acts 2:41)—has now, after over twenty centuries of human history, generated an unending succession of generations, a truly Petrine succession, through the proclamation, propagation, amplification, and, yes, canonization of Peter’s witness.

Spirit, word, and community

But let us not forget the *actualization* of the “acts of the Apostles,” or one could say, the “*praxualization*” of the “*praxis* of the Apostles.” The Pentecost narrative concludes with a final paragraph that notes how a vibrant, dynamic community was immediately formed and activated from the Acts 2 experience of divine revelation (vv. 42–47; Wenk 2000), forged and propelled forward in the fire of Pentecost. It was in no way a merely one-off event for these 3,000 souls, but rather a sustained, continuing, growing (v. 47), erupting revelatory dynamic in their midst, where “awe came upon everyone, because many wonders and signs were being done by the apostles” (v. 43).

This culminating paragraph on the *community* rounds out an overall shape to the Pentecost narrative that could be described as highlighting, first, *the coming of the Spirit*, then *the coming forth of the Word* through Peter, followed by *the coming together of the community*. There is something obviously and theologically right and proper about seeing these three important realities of Spirit, Word, and community in this sequence and order, for the Holy Spirit is God, yet Scripture and the ecclesial community, as important and holy as they may be, are not.

Pentecostal scholars, who have played a leading role in recognizing the significance of this triad of Spirit, Word, and community, have well understood that seeing these three only in this sequential and segmented way can altogether miss the dynamic of interrelationship, intersection, and interaction among them. Indeed, the emergence and development of Pentecostal hermeneutics could, in large part, be traced from Pentecostal scholars first noting this triadic dynamic (Moore 1987, 1989), then biblically expositing it (Thomas 1994), then historically tracking it through the interpretative practices of the Pentecostal movement (Archer 2001, 2004), and then extensively explicating it theologically and hermeneutically in ways engaged with and for the benefit of global ecumenical theology and ecclesial practice (Yong 2002, 2005; Vondey 2010; Kärkkäinen 2014).

The Pentecost narrative itself, when followed closely (especially with the closeness that comes from engaging with it in *praxis!*), reveals Spirit, Word, and community not just in

terms of three separate and sequential segments of the story and the experience, but rather in dynamic interplay all along the way. For instance, the presence of community comes not just at the end of Acts 2 but also from the beginning with the believers gathered together “all with one accord in one place” (v. 1; KJV). The Word also is implicitly present from the beginning of the Pentecost account in the prophetic words of Jesus, which had already directed these disciples to remain in Jerusalem (Luke 24:49), and in the Scriptures Peter cites from Joel and Psalms (Acts 2:16–21, 25–28, 34–35), which already exist in the background of the story and, we can be sure, in the ready memory of the Pentecost tongue-speakers and devout Jewish onlookers long before Peter ever preaches. And the Spirit is obviously present not only in the coming down from heaven of a rushing mighty wind, but also in the raising up of Peter to be a witness for Jesus, as Jesus’ promise of the Spirit’s empowerment had earlier foretold (Acts 1:8). Thus, the dynamic synergism of Spirit, Word, and community flows through the entire narrative and experience of divine revelation, providing the prime example of how the narrative mode of discourse is especially well suited to weave together, hold together, and reflect this nuanced interplay, as Pentecostal scholars, recognizing the importance of narrative and story for Pentecostalism, have been especially keen to show (see Chapter 4).

However, this second-order recognition of and reflection upon the interactive relationship of Spirit, Word, and community in the light of Pentecost, significant as it is, should not be allowed to blur and to blunt a paramount point of the Pentecost narrative and experience of revelation. At the heart of it all for those on the inside—that is, the inside of the erupting encounter of what is being narrated and experienced, which goes well beyond merely *seeing in the light of Pentecost* to *being in the fire of Pentecost*—the primary and ultimate focus of attention is not on the synergism and “trialectical” interactions of Spirit, Word, and community (Yong 2002). Rather the focus is completely, utterly, dreadfully, and joyously upon nothing other than “the mighty acts of God” (Acts 2:11)—the divine revelation that alone brings about the activation and actualization of the Acts of the Apostles.

There are many moving pieces in the movement of Pentecost and undoubtedly even more in the Pentecostal movement. Like with metal filings being scattered across a table, it can be difficult to grasp all the diversity, complexity, and disunity. And like that scattering of filings, it can resist our best efforts to organize, analyze, systematize, and get handles on it all. However, when a powerful magnet comes down above all those many filings with all of its mysterious power, this is the move above all movements, the one that will cause all of the fragments to come together in one accord and to do this so suddenly and spectacularly that it can seem altogether like magic—the kind of magic that folks like Simon Magus, the magician want to purchase, manipulate, and wield (Acts 8:9–24). And this is a temptation and motivation that has insidiously appeared in the wake of the revelation of Pentecost from the apostles’ day to our own (Hocken 1994).

Revelation as apocalyptic light and fire

The day of Pentecost entails the revelation of a day that we do not and absolutely cannot ever own—because it is none other than the day of the Lord. This brings us finally to an extremely important dimension of the divine revelation that comes in the light and fire of Pentecost, namely, the apocalyptic dimension. It is a crucial part of the Pentecost event and experience that has often been overlooked or downplayed, even by many Pentecostals. This was not as much the case for Pentecostalism in its earliest years, where we see a movement much more apocalyptically oriented and on fire, and much more attuned to the specific connection between Pentecost and apocalyptic revelation (Land 1993; Faupel 1996; Althouse

2003). This dimension of the revelation of Pentecost might just be the one most in need of being freshly illuminated in Pentecostal thought and newly ignited in Pentecostal life—or perhaps better put, the one most capable of freshly illuminating Pentecostal thought and re-igniting Pentecostal life (Moore 2020, 131–34).

In Peter’s quotation of Joel’s words, “‘In the last days it will be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh’” (2:16–17), early Pentecostals seized upon Peter’s phrase, “in the last days,” which puts heightened apocalyptic emphasis on Joel’s less eschatologically charged time reference, “afterward” (Joel 2:28). And yet this variation does no disservice to the thrust of Joel’s message, for the essence of his prophecy, from start to finish, is all about “the coming of the Lord’s great and glorious day” (Moore 2020, 128–31), as Joel himself announces, and as Peter’s quotation of Joel includes just a few lines later (Joel 2:30; Acts 2:20). Thus, Peter recognizes that “the day of Pentecost” has now initiated “the last days,” which culminate in “the day of the Lord.” And in the light and fire of this revelation, Peter takes up Joel’s pronouncement of “portents in the heavens above, and signs on the earth below, blood, and fire,” (yes, *fire!*) “and smoky mist. The sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood, before the coming of the Lord’s great and glorious day” (Acts 2:19–20). Thus, the day of Pentecost is a revelation of the day of the Lord. As Pentecost functions as a defining paradigm for divine revelation in Pentecostalism, then through the lens provided by Joel and Peter it surely appears in a thoroughly and fiery apocalyptic light. It appears as a blazing sign and signal of “the last days,” indeed the end of days.

The prophets, like Joel, Isaiah, and Moses, found out early on, that to experience a revelatory encounter with God is to die (cf. Deut. 5:24–26), to see the end of self (cf. Isaiah 6:5) and thus to foresee, in that overwhelming revelation, the end of the world—something the modern worldview is incapable of seeing, even dead set on not seeing *by any means* in order to sustain its own self-perception as “Enlightenment,” the ultimate phase in the ascendancy of human progress, of which there can be no end. Modern scholarship’s long practiced reflex of marginalizing the apocalyptic in the biblical canon (ascribing it to late redaction or some foreign influence) and theology, appears as but a reflection of modernity’s long-practiced marginalization of all apocalyptic perspectives and movements in the interest of sustaining its own grand worldview. However, of late this worldview has itself fallen under the shadow of apocalypse in the looming and uncertain specter that is *post*-modernity. Perhaps this fall brings with it a rare opportunity at last for a wider audience to see the apocalyptic revelation of Pentecost in a whole new light.

For Pentecostals, then, the Pentecost revelation points forward to the book that is entitled “Revelation,” *apocalypsis* (in the Greek)—the biblical book that has the most extensive and elaborate focus upon “the last days” and apocalyptic revelation with all of its intense elements of visionary experience, theophanic encounter, and disclosures of the end time that are associated with this important biblical term.

The term “witness” (*mártur*), which we saw to be very significant in the Pentecost narrative, provides another key connection between Pentecost and the Apocalypse. Forms of this same word are used to introduce John and his “witness” at the beginning of the book of Revelation: “John, who testified (Greek, *marturéo*) to the word of God and to the testimony (*marturía*) of Jesus Christ, even to all that he saw” (Rev. 1:1–2) . . . “I, John, . . . was on the island called Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony (*marturía*) of Jesus” (Rev. 1:9). John, like Peter, has become a witness (*mártur*) unto the end—bearing witness to the resurrected Jesus (Rev. 1:13–16). And John’s words immediately after this statement add still more to the Acts 2 connection, “I was in the spirit on the Lord’s day” (Rev. 1:10). The inspiring source of John’s witness, like Peter’s witness, is God’s Spirit—the Spirit who opens

up a revelation of the last days, the end times, or in Joel's phrase, referenced by Peter, "the day of the Lord," to which John's phrase here, "the Lord's day," is quite likely alluding (see Rev. 16:14; Thomas 2012, 39–41).

All of these striking connections between Revelation 1 and Acts 2 further highlight the apocalyptic dimension of the divine revelation that comes in the light and fire of Pentecost. Revelation as a source of Pentecostal theology is always eschatological and apocalyptic. It is revelation of the Spirit that inspires witness unto the end:

- unto the end of the earth;
- unto the end of time;
- unto the end of the life of the inspired witness, the *mártur*;
- unto the End, the Omega Himself, who bears final witness that this revelation of the end is only the beginning.

Conclusion

The Pentecostal understanding of divine revelation is a reflection of and participation in the day of Pentecost deeply connected with the revelation of God's Spirit. This essay has argued that revelation comes in the light and fire of Pentecost forged by Spirit and Word in the community of those who have encountered God. Revelation is an apocalyptic disclosure of the day of the Lord, a transforming testimony of the mighty acts of God from beginning to end. Revelation is light and fire because it illuminates and transforms all who encounter God to become inspired witnesses to Jesus Christ. Revelation demands human experience and response in the way of a divine altar call confronting the world with the gospel because we ourselves have been transformed by its fire and light. Thus, in the *light* of Pentecost, it is little wonder that revelation is the primary source of Pentecostal theology. And in the *fire* of Pentecost, it is little wonder that this revelation continues to be the source of greatest and endless wonder, indeed signs and wonders beyond words.

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