

QUESTION: Was the room used for the last supper the same as the upper room on Pentecost?

ANSWER:

On this issue, there are differences of opinion regarding the location of the descent of the Spirit on the Day of Pentecost, even by people who regularly take people on tours of the Holy Land. As I have written in my commentary on Acts, I think the place mentioned is the upper room, and here's why:

1) The phrase "where they were sitting" (2:2) is exactly the same in Greek phrase as "where they were staying" (1:13), and here in 1:13, the location is very clearly "the upper room" (1:13);

2) There is no discernable "scene (location)-change" between chapter one and chapter two, and Luke is normally VERY good at indicating such things in Luke-Acts for the benefit of his readers;

3) The posture of "sitting" is atypical for the temple--only the King had the prerogative of sitting in the temple (Mishnah Sotah 7:8; cf. Ps 24:3; Tosefta Sukkah 3:18; Tosefta Rosh HaShanah 1:12; Tosefta Sanhedrin 4:3).

4) In Luke's 52 (often very LONG) chapters in the NT, he NEVER uses any version or derivative of the word *oikos* (Acts 2:2) to refer to the temple. While it is true that this usage does appear in the speech of Stephen (Acts 7:47), these are Stephen's words and vocabulary--Luke is merely quoting what STEPHEN said. Also, Stephen is, in turn, reflecting biblical vocabulary as seen in texts like 1 Kgs 8:13, and he even quotes Isa 66:1-2 where the word "house" is used to refer to the temple (Acts 7:49). But again, this is Stephen and his quoting of and reference to the OT; it is NOT Luke and his preferred manner of referring to the temple. When Luke is speaking for himself, he uses the term *heirus* some 41 times and he uses the term *oikos* zero times when referring to the temple in Jerusalem.

5) Consequently, the hermeneutical rule of "Immediate Antecedent" has to be invoked, and that, in turn, takes us directly back to 1:13, "the upper room, where they were staying," and the phrase "upper room" takes us back to Luke 22:12, the original upper room of Jesus last meal/Pasover supper with His disciples.

6) There are first century remains below the current building, some of which are reused pieces of the temple after its destruction in AD 70. These appear to form part of the foundation of a very early church marking a significant meeting location for early Jewish Christians immediately following the Roman destruction of Jerusalem.

7) The earliest tradition we have (which is admittedly late) identifies the Dormition Abbey as the location of the Last Supper and the descent of the Spirit On the Day of Pentecost.

For these reasons, I think it best to think of the descent of the Spirit as taking place on the Western Hill (today called Modern Mt. Zion; in the first century referred to as the Essene Quarter).

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