



**Acts 2:1-21**

**“The Spirit Is For All”**

May 19, 2013  
Pentecost Sunday

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**“Following Christ from City Center”**

## ACTS 2:1-21 "THE HOLY SPIRIT IS FOR ALL"

1:13-14//Lk. 11:9-13 Prayer For Spirit Is Dramatically Answered

### I. 2:1-4 THE HOLY SPIRIT'S COMING UPON A UNIFIED COMMUNITY. 1:4, 8, Great Anticipation

Sinai/Exodus Typology/ Fulfillment Of Prophecy, vv.1-13

#### A) v.1 Preparation = All Together In One Place (Ex. 19:16-19). Covenant Making Typology, Lk. 22:20

Divine Theophany, Intrusion //Giving Of Law On Sinai, Jubilees 1:1 (3<sup>rd</sup> Month)

1 When the day of *Pentecost* (i.e. fiftieth day) had come, *1 Cor. 16:8*, "Fully Arrived," Preceded By Prayer, Lk. 11:13// Acts 1:13-14 they (i.e. 120 disciples) were **all** together in one place. 1/3 Pilgrim Festivals: 1 Day Wheat Harvest → Torah Association

3<sup>rd</sup> Month/Yr., *Feast of Weeks*: Ex. 23:16, 34:12, Dt. 16:7-12, Lev. 23:15-21, Acts 20:16

#### B) v.2 Audition = Something Heard: Like Sound From Heaven (Ex. 19:16-19 LXX).

Theophany = Divine Intrusion, Ex. 19:16-17, Dt. 5:4-5, I Kg. 19:11-12, 2 Kgs. 2:11

2 And suddenly a sound came from heaven = From God! Fulfills Prophecy Of Lk. 3:16, 22; 24:49, Acts 1:5-8

like the rush of mighty wind, Invisible, Perceptible Sound, Not Wind (Simile), Sudden Force Of Spirit Upon Them

and it filled **all** the house were they were sitting. Renewed Divine Presence, Fulfills Lk. 3:16, 24:49, Acts 1:5, 8, 2:4

Participants Are Aware Of Spirit's Infilling: Experiential Phenomena

#### B') v.3 Vision = Something Seen: As Tongues From Heaven (Ex. 3:2, 13:21-22 LXX).

Philo, *Decalogue* 9:33, 46, 11:46, *Special Laws* 2.31.186-189

3 And there appeared to them tongues Vision From God, Appeared To Them, To The 120 Disciples

as of fire, Not To Crowd, "As Of" Fire- Not Fire (Simile), Ps. 104:4

distributed and resting on **each** one of them. Communal & Individual, LXX Psalm 28:7, New Torah From God

Sound, Fire, Speech: Sinai Theophany = Divine Intrusion Into Earthly Realm

Visions/Audition: Acts 9:4-16, 10:3-15, 12:7-8, 16:9-10, 23:11, 27:23-24

#### A') v.4 Action = All Receive The Holy Spirit = Empowered To Do God's Will In Speech.

//Lk. 3:21-22 Jesus' Empowerment Before Mission, Unveil The Trinity!!

4 And they were **all** filled with the Holy Spirit, = baptized, Philo, *On The Decalogue* 9:33, 11:46 For Parallels At Sinai

and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance. Languages = Xenolalia, Not Glossolalia: I Cor. 13:1

On Tongues Of Angels, see *Testament of Job*, 48-52

Ezek. 11:17-20, Barrier Breaking, Filling Is Repeatable: Acts 4:31; 8; 9; 10-11; 19

New Spirit, Ezek. 11:19, Baptism = Filling = Receiving Spirit, Trinitarian Revelation

### II. 2:5-13 RESPONSE TO PHENOMENA AND QUESTIONS FROM THE CROWD.

A World Audience: Missionary Proclamation

#### A) v.5 Jews From Every Nation (Noted Only).

Parallel Luke 3:23-38 After Jesus' Baptism

Not Pilgrims But Residents

5 Now there were dwelling (living) in Jerusalem Jews, God Begins With Pious Jews, 6:9

devout men from every nation under heaven. Acts 6:9, Clearly Hyperbole

Miracle Of Communication, Proclamation, Spirit Preaches!

#### B) vv.6-8 Event, Response, Two Questions (Answered in 2:1-4).

Sound = Tongues/ Proclamation

6 1 At this sound the multitude came together, and they were *bewildered*, Event & Response

because **each one** heard them **speaking in his own language** Xenolalia, lit. *mother tongue*

7 2a And they were *amazed and wondered* saying: Response: *Amazed, Bewildered*

1) "Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? Notorious, Answer = Yes, Acts 2:1-2, 4:13

8 2b 2) And how is it that we hear **each of us** **in his own native tongues**?" Answer ? = Spirit, 2:4

*Tanbuma* 26C; Philo, *The Decalogue*, 11:46 On Universal Tongues

#### A') vv.9-11a Jews From Every Nation (Listed Fully:15 Tongues). Josephus, *Ant.* 1.6.1-4 (//50%)

//Genesis 10:2-31, Literary Device = Table Of Nations: Diaspora

9 a Parthians and Medes and Elamites and residents of Mesopotamia, (East) //Genealogy Lk. 3:23-28

10 b Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, (North) Palestine And Asia

c Egypt and the parts of Lybia belonging to Cyrene, (West) North African Coast

11 d and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes (i.e. Jewish converts), Those Not Dwelling In Jerusalem

Cretans and Arabians, (South) Counterclockwise Listing

Ezek. 11:17-20, International Reach From Start, Great Commission, Miracle

#### B') vv.11b-13 Event, Response, Two Questions (Answered in 2:14-36).

Ambiguous Phenomena, Needs Interpretation

1 We hear them telling **in our own tongues** the mighty works of God." Dt. 11:2, Event

12 2a And all were *amazed and perplexed*, saying to one another, Response

1) "What does this mean?" (Jesus is alive! See 2:22-36) Questions

13 2b But others mocking said, Ecstatic Religious Behavior Conventionally Dismissed

2) "They are filled with new wine!" (Incorrect. It's the Spirit! See 2:14-21)

In Antiquity Wine & Religious Ecstasy Were Often Mixed

**III. 2:14-40 PETER'S SERMON ANSWERS QUESTIONS IN REVERSE ORDER.**

Correct Prophetic Interpretation Of Phenomena Is Needed

**A. 2:14-21 Part One Answers The Wine Question (2:13).** Lk. 22:32, Error Corrected

Forensic Rhetoric, Inspired In Greek, Not Ecstatic

**1) vv.14-15 What It Does Not Mean: They Are Not Drunk.** 1/3 Of Acts = Speeches

Standing = Posture Of A Rhetorician Before Speaking

14 But Peter, standing with the eleven, Double Authority, Matthias Included  
lifted up his voice and addressed them, Double Speech: In Greek?  
"Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, Double Audience  
let this be known to you and give heed to my words. Double Appeal

Inspired Speech// 2:4

15 For these men are not drunk, as you suppose, Answer From Reason, Then Answer From Scripture  
since it is only the third hour of the day (i.e. 9:00am); Sober Intoxication! Begins With Humor

No Debauchery Before 9:00AM, Cicero, *Phillippics* 2.41.104

Scripture Had Authority For Jewish Listeners, Programmatic For Acts

**2) vv.16-21 What It Means: God Is Fulfilling Prophecy (Joel 2:28-32, 3:1-5 LXX).**

Age & Gender Inclusive For All, Numbers Rabbah 15:25

16 but this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: Divine Continuity = Theophany Fulfills Prophecy

Peter Answers From Scripture/ Midrash Style

17 1 "And *in the last days* it shall be, God declares, Last Days Begun With Resurrection (1)

2 that I will pour out my Spirit on **all** flesh, Pour Spirit, Image Of Water(2)

3 and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, Inspired Speech, Prophecy (3)

4 and your young men shall see visions, Signs Of Revelation, Guidance (4)

And your old men shall dream dreams; Gender & Age Inclusive

Numbers Rabbah 15.25, In The New Age All Jews Prophecy

18 1' Yea, and on *my* menservants and *my* maidservants in those days, Those Days (1')

2' I will pour out my Spirit; Pour Spirit (2')

3' and they shall prophesy, Speak God's Word, Prophecy (3')

19 4' And I will show wonders in the heaven above Signs Of End (4')

and signs on the earth beneath: blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke;

20 And the sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon into blood,

before the Lord comes, the great and terrible day. Deut. 34:10-12(Moses)

Eschatological Age Has Begun, Christian Movement Launched

21 And it shall be Prophetic Spirit Now Restored, Great Promise

that whoever calls on the name of the Lord (i.e. Jesus) shall be saved." //1:24, 2:36, 38, Rom. 10:13

Climactic Promise/ Call To Repent, See 2:37 For Fulfillment, The End Is Still Future

Signs And Wonders Throughout Acts, Followers Receive Same Power As Jesus Did At His Baptism

All Are Empowered For World Missions, Succession Now Complete From Founder To Followers, His Spirit Is Now Theirs

That A Spirit-Empowered Community Witness To The Risen Jesus Christ Is God's Will Till The End Of The Age

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**Affirmation of Faith Confirmation Class 2013**

We believe in God's math- 1+1+1=1, God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit equals ONE God.

We believe our God is the creator of all things. We were created in His image. God sent His son to die on the cross to save us. He is loving, caring, perfect, all-powerful, and all-knowing.

We believe that Jesus is God's son, who was born to die on the cross for us. He was truly human and perfect at the same time. He worked miracles. He is our teacher, healer, and friend. He is the lamb of God.

We believe the Holy Spirit roars like fire and breathes life into us. The Holy Spirit guides us, protects us, teaches us, comforts us, and advocates for us. The Holy Spirit is an ever-present wind within us and leaves us with an everlasting fire.

We believe that we, the people, are the church. We are one big family that worships together, helps and guides each other, prays together, and has fun together.

We believe we are all called to be ministers to everyone.

## A Brief Treatment Of Acts 2:1-21

Acts 2:1-21 is part of the larger thought unit 2:1-47 which details the coming of the Holy Spirit upon the unified company of Jesus' followers fifty days after Easter and ten days after Jesus' ascension. As commanded, they've been waiting in unified prayer for his promise of the Spirit to be fulfilled (Lk. 3:16, 22, 24:49, Acts 1:5-8). They know the Jesus tradition from three years of following; in addition, they have had numerous resurrection appearances and conversations with the risen Lord during forty days. They are both fully instructed and completely convinced. So what's missing? The filling of God within each and all; if they are to bear faithful witness to Jesus' life, death, and resurrection across the street and around the world, the one who empowered him must flood and fill them inwardly. The church has the content of divine revelation, but it is not self-powered. The initiative and convincing power come from above.

The event of Pentecost as the visible revelation of the Holy Spirit is briefly described in 2:1-4 which is shaped as a 4:2 concentric pattern with the audition (b. v.2) and vision (b' v.3) at the center. The Spirit is not given to some but to *all* (vv. 1, 2, 4) and *each* (v.3). Luke deliberately evokes parallels with the Sinai theophany of Ex. 19:16-17 as Pentecost had by this time become a celebration of the giving of the law to Moses. The new covenant is being enacted. At times the invisible God shows up and shows off with a sound and light show, first on top of Sinai and now over each of the disciples. The theophany commences with sound, not the sound *of wind* but a sound *like wind* which filled *all the house where they were sitting*. Likewise, in the visual manifestation, it was not *tongues of fire* but *tongues as of fire* which appeared over each and then moved inwards to *they were all filled with the Holy Spirit*. The effect in the disciples is that they speak in new languages not known to them. The miracle is one of languages, and here we find that God speaks the heart language of all the nations gathered in Jerusalem.

The second paragraph, 2:5-13, details responses to the dramatic events. We begin in v.5 with a report that Jerusalem was full of pious Jews from around the diaspora who'd come to the city to live and die at the geographic center of Judaism. The sound was loud enough to be heard in the streets and draw a bewildered crowd- which means it was more than momentary. Each nationality heard the proclamation of God's works in their mother tongue. This was an amazing event that left them stunned and asking about the Galilean accents of all (v.7) and the variety of languages (v.8). What's going on here? A table of nations is inserted in vv.9-11a, and the order of the fifteen ethnic groups is not random. It falls into four clusters and moves in a counter-clockwise direction from East to South. By circling the four points of the compass Luke indicates this message is for all the world. As with all the works of God, some are curious (v.12), others mocking (v.13). The second question is answered first in Peter's speech, 2:14-21.

Peter acts as spokesman for the church as the eleven apostles stand with him (v.14a). His opening words are solemn and highly rhetorical in a series of three paired statements: *lifted up his voice // addressed them, men of Judea // all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known // give heed to my words*. This is followed by the humorous remark that no one gets drunk this early in the morning. His next move is to invoke a lengthy and slightly revised quote from Joel 2:28-21, 3:1-5 which asserts that *this* (the visible manifestation of God) is *that* (what God promised through Joel). It's the same God doing a new thing! The quote falls into two parallel segments (v.17 // vv.18-20) which emphasize that the old barriers are now gone. God's indwelling Spirit is for men and women, slaves and free, young and old. This democratization of the Spirit is a sign the last age of history has arrived, and with it a wonderful opportunity, "whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved." The heart of God is open to all.

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## THE HOLY SPIRIT IS FOR ALL

*“And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit....”*

A C T S 2 : 4 a

To follow Jesus and be filled with his Spirit is our common legacy.

**I**n a little pamphlet on being filled with the Holy Spirit, the late Dr. Bill Bright of Campus Crusade tells the story of *Yates Pool*, a famous oil field:

“During the Great Depression Mr. Yates was a sheep rancher. He wasn't able to make enough to pay his mortgage and was in danger of foreclosure. With little money for clothes or food, his family lived on a government subsidy like many other depression folk.

As he grazed sheep over the West Texas hills, a seismographic crew from an oil company told him there might be oil on his land. They asked permission to drill a wildcat well, and he signed a lease contract.

At 1,115 feet they struck a huge oil reserve. The first well came in at 80,000 barrels a day. Subsequent wells were more than twice as large. Thirty years after the discovery, a test of one of the wells showed it still had the potential flow of 125,000 barrels a day.

And Mr. Yates owned it all! The day he'd purchased the land he also claimed the oil and mineral rights. Yet, he'd been living on relief. The problem? He didn't know the oil was there even though he owned it.”<sup>1</sup> It took an outsider to introduce him to his own riches.

That is an apt parable for much of the American church: living on much less than is already ours because of ignorance. Living in spiritual poverty when the wealth of the Holy Spirit's energy and gifts are part of our birthright and near at hand for discovery and

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<sup>1</sup> PreachingToday.com word search under *Pentecost*.

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exploration. God has more for us than we've yet experienced or understood. In the Holy Spirit given to the church as a body we have all we need to do all God has called us to do. The Jesus who was *then-and-there* in Palestine is made *here-and-now* in Greenwood through the same Spirit that empowered and guided him. Jesus is God become touchable within history, and the Holy Spirit is the divine go-between and living link between the faithful, the Father, and the Son.

I believe that to reduce Christian faith to assent to correct doctrine and the living of a moral life is like reducing marriage to a license and a stern resolve not to commit adultery. Sure they're important, but they are not the life of the thing itself. Marriage is designed as an intimate adventure, an in-depth, full-bodied communication, the blending of two lives in a passionate and enduring union. And we, the church of Jesus Christ, are to live an adventurous faith led by the Holy Spirit. When duty replaces delight between a man and a woman, that marriage is in trouble. When programs and traditions squeeze out the surprises and interruptions of the Holy Spirit, a church is in trouble.

The church I grew up in was a lot like this one. Conventional in its ways, predictable and a bit suspicious of vivid religious experience. I remember having a clear sense of God the Father associated with creation. I loved to sing the hymn "This is my Father's world, and to my listening ears, all nature sings and round me rings, the music of the spheres," whatever *the spheres* were. God the Father was something like my dad standing beside me: wise, strong, an admired expert, but at a superior distance, watching and hoping I grew up to be responsible man. I also had a fairly clear sense of who Jesus was. Bible stories. Posters. Hymns like "What a Friend We Have in Jesus" and "Fairest Lord Jesus" were my favorites. I knew he was supposed to have died for my sins, but at times I could not think of enough sins- so naive was I- to make it worth him dying for.

But this Holy Spirit thing was always confusing. Casper on TV was a *ghost*, so was the *Holy Ghost* (as we called him then) something like that? Or, was it something more like a flow of energy or divine electricity, more *it* than *who*. I don't remember any hymns or preaching on the Spirit, and nothing at all on the gifts. In towns like Cheraw and Greenwood, such exotic matters were left to the Pentecostals and other *holy rollers* as we called them in the 50's and 60's. We explained their religion sociologically and psychiatrically. The poor needed a place to vent and experience catharsis. How shallow we were in our supposed superiority. They were simply reading parts of the Bible we'd long dismissed as irrelevant to the modern world. We Methodists were on our way up the



prosperity and sophistication ladder and not a little nervous that some of the experiences associated with our early days might break in upon us again.<sup>2</sup> Some wag once commented that the reason you’ll always find an lightning rod on top of Methodist churches was that we had a historical memory of what it once was like to be struck by God and wanted to make sure it never happened again!<sup>3</sup> We were officially Trinitarian but functionally *binitarian*. God the Father above us receiving praise, Jesus at our side as friend and protector, but the Holy Spirit was always held at a safe distance lest something happen not approved by the minister and not in the bulletin. So there were few testimonies of changed lives and no reports of miracles or revelations.

On the other hand, early Methodism was an incubator of vivid conversions and new life in the spirit. We had a vital doctrine of the Holy Spirit and were user-friendly to forms of faith that was heavily experimental and highly experiential. The truths of the faith found in Scripture and summarized in doctrines were a foundation for a living encounter with God in which you were inwardly illumined by the Holy Spirit to receive the forgiveness of sins and an assurance of salvation, meaning you were made right with God and given new life through Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit took the truths of the faith and made them a pressing, inward reality. It was, in the very best sense of the word, an *enthusiastic* style of faith, since the word *enthusiasm* is Greek for being *in God: en-theos*, thus *enthusiasm*. The Holy Spirit is the divine agent who brings the benefits of Jesus Christ and applies them to the deepest core of the person. Then, from the heart outwards, the whole self comes under divine rule. The mind is claimed and illumined; affections are kindled; the will is brought into alignment, and the body and its multiple powers are offered to God for service. But these days we seem to be asking, Where did God go? and, Where did the people go?<sup>4</sup> No program, workshop, or management technique can supply

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<sup>2</sup> See Daniel R. Jennings, *The Supernatural Occurrences Of John Wesley* (Sean Multimedia, 2005), for extracts from Wesley’s journal on supernatural occurrences.

<sup>3</sup> For a review of these themes, see Charles Wallace, “Wesley as a revivalist/ renewal leader;” Randall Stephens, “The holiness/pentecostal/charismatic extension of the Wesleyan tradition,” in Randy L. Maddox, Jason E. Vickers, editors, *The Cambridge Companion to John Wesley* (Cambridge: University Press, 2010), 81-97, 262-281.

<sup>4</sup> On the history and influence of revivals, see Malcolm McDow & Alvin Reid, *Firefall: How God Has Shaped History Through Revivals* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 1997); Stuart Piggin, *Firestorm of the Lord : The History of and Prospects for*

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what’s lacking. What is required is an ache for God that only God can satisfy.

The vitality of classic Christian faith must be rekindled in each generation, and such life comes through the Holy Spirit. So let’s examine the story of the first Pentecost, when the risen Lord poured the Spirit on the waiting disciples who’d been in prayer for ten days awaiting what Jesus promised. As you listen, ask: What would it mean for us to seek and welcome the presence of the Spirit into our church in a greater way?

**TURNING TO THE TEXT**

**1) 2:1-4 The Holy Spirit’s Coming Upon A Unified Community.**

In most of our day-to-day experience the realms of earth (visible reality) and heaven (invisible reality) function separately. Even if they “overlap and interlock,”<sup>5</sup> the relationship is not always apparent. Because God wishes to be known by faith and love through obedience, heaven as the place where God dwells is normally invisible, though never far away. God- as it were- hides from sight and leaves a trail of hints in creation and conscience for us to follow on the way to Christ who brings the two realms together in one person.<sup>6</sup> Jesus is the human outlet for the divine life.

But there are times when the invisible realm envelops us, when God draws back the veil to give sight and insight. The name for this is a *theophany* or *epiphany*, a visible manifestation of the mysterious presence of God. It happened on Sinai when the law was given to Moses; here we read of effects *heard* (something like wind) and *seen* (something like tongues of fire). The church has been immersed in God, ears and eyes opened in a corporate vision with internal and communal effects! The risen Jesus- who ascended and was for ten days experienced as absent- has now come to live in and among his people in

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*Revival in the Church and in the World* (U.K.: Paternoster Press, 2000).

<sup>5</sup> A favorite expression of N.T. Wright for the relationship of the two domains of creation: our realm (earth) and God’s realm (heaven) [*Simply Christian* (San Francisco, CA: Harper One, 2006)]. What is denied here is God as an occasional intruder..

<sup>6</sup> This is not to say that natural theology alone is enough. It is to claim that the longings of the human heart and the curiosities of the human mind raise questions and set us off on intellectual and religious quests only Jesus Christ can satisfy.

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the person of the Holy Spirit. The fullness of the Trinity has now been visited on the church; we have been welcomed back into the life of the living God. First God the Father- featured in the Old Testament and who sent God the Son in the life of Jesus as recorded in the four gospels; now a fiery display of God the Holy Spirit as Jesus’ constant companion. The church now has experiential knowledge of who God is, a unified communion of three divine persons.<sup>7</sup> The Spirit of the risen Jesus is now let loose among us! From *Jesus on the outside*- as it was with the disciples during the ministry, to now *Jesus on the inside* of each. We were designed to be *indwelt* by God.

Just before his ascension and the formal ending of the resurrection appearances,<sup>8</sup> Jesus reminded the disciples of a word given years before by John the Baptist concerning himself, "...he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire."<sup>9</sup> In other words, the Messiah- when he comes- will plunge God’s people in the purifying presence of their holy God. That promise is now fulfilled as the risen Lord opens the fountains of heaven and unleashes the fiery flows of the Holy Spirit. Luke describes the scene:

"When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly a sound came from heaven *like* the rush of a mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them tongues *as* of fire, distributed and resting on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak in tongues (or *other languages*) as the Spirit gave them utterance."

Yes, the Spirit was given to individuals, but not to isolated ones, only to those who were part of the community devoted to Jesus- 120 at the time. They were now immersed in the same personal presence that empowered Jesus for public ministry beginning at his baptism. The Jesus for whose promise they waited now took up residence within each and all through the filling of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit was the divine glue and living link that bound them to Jesus and one another, and the effects were both vocal and visible. The 13<sup>th</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> On the role of the Holy Spirit, see Michael Green, *Thirty Years That Changed the World: The Book of Acts for Today* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002), Chapter 14, "What of the Holy Spirit," 247-267.

<sup>8</sup> The example of Paul in Acts 9 being the sole exception for Luke.

<sup>9</sup> Luke. 3:17.

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century mystic Jan Ruysbroeck wrote of this ongoing phenomena:

"God makes his friends to be happily foolish. Spiritual inebriation is this: that a man receives more sensible joy and sweetness than their heart can contain.... Spiritual inebriation brings forth many strange gestures. In makes some sing and praise God because of their fullness of joy and some weep with great tears because of their sweetness of heart."

Many of you know what it's like to be intoxicated, some of you much too often so that you are approaching or already trapped in the bondage of alcoholism. But what I speak about as an analogy to being Spirit-filled is much less severe.<sup>10</sup> What people seek in intoxicants of all kinds- release, freedom, joy- is not found where they're looking; it is temporary with debilitating side effects. What you seek is found in God, not to have your faculties impaired by substances but heightened by the infilling of God's presence. New light in the brain, new joy in the heart, new words on the tongue! It happens; it's a gift of God, not under church control.<sup>11</sup> On the day of Pentecost all one hundred and twenty were filled to capacity and more. The ecstasies of the Holy Spirit give birth to missionary preaching in multiple languages! The church is multi-cultural from the start.

It was not enough that outsiders hear in the Greek trade language they shared in common; God wanted all to hear in their *mother tongue*, the language they spoke as children. God speaks the language of every heart, even gets the accents right!

There are at least two kinds of miraculous speech in the New Testament:

- 1) *xenolalia*: speaking in a human language you never learned (as if I was to begin speaking fluent Russian), and
- 2) *glossolalia*: speaking in an unknown or heavenly tongue.

Paul speaks of both in I Corinthians 13:1, "Though I speak in the tongues of men (an

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<sup>10</sup> Based on the analogy of Paul in Ephesians 5:18, "And do not get drunk with wine..., but be filled with the Spirit...."

<sup>11</sup> This is the error of Simon Magus in Acts 8. Spirit phenomena cannot be purchased and vended out for a fee. God is not manipulated but prayed to and waited for.

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**Acts 2:1-21 ..... 11**

earthly language) and of angels (a heavenly language)...” Here in Acts 2 it’s the first type, *xenolalia*- other known languages.<sup>12</sup> It is a divine act of downloaded languages for the sake of missionary preaching. It happened to one hundred and twenty men and women simultaneously and involved fifteen languages. The church is *global* from the start.

Pentecost is a repeatable phenomena as the Book of Acts demonstrates. God revisits the church with power for each new wave of missions and spiritual warfare. A fresh challenge requires a fresh supply. You can be filled and then regularly refilled with the Holy Spirit. When a lady once asked me why one filling wasn’t enough; I replied, “Because we leak!” We cannot program the Spirit. We wait; we pray; we seek; we trust God to answer the cry of the church with holy presence and holy power.

Sixty years ago Leslie Weatherhead was the most famous Methodist preacher in London. He helps us understand why the Spirit works in some churches more than others:

"If in this pulpit I stood on a thick mat of dry India-rubber, I could lift up my hand and touch a live cable carrying on thousand volts without any harm to myself, for the simple reason that electricity will not come in unless it can go out. The same is true of the Holy Spirit. If I try to make my religion a soul-saving smug little bit of self-satisfaction for myself... my devotion will become so self-centered and stagnant that I shall be self-poisoned. Power *comes in* when it can *get out*."<sup>13</sup>

The Holy Spirit delivers God's felt presence and power to those places where it can move through the church to the world for evangelism and missions. Religious experience-glorious as it is, intoxicating as it can be- is never an end in itself. It is not just *to us for ourselves* but *to us and through us* for a world of many languages that needs to hear of Jesus Christ. The quickest way to grieve the Holy Spirit and kill a church is to withdraw from missions and focus on internal affairs. Every time we open ourselves to needs inside and outside our doors, we open ourselves in a fresh way to the inspiration and resources of the Spirit who brings the riches of heaven down to the church for the sake of the world.

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<sup>12</sup> Charles Talbert, *Acts* (Atlanta. GA: John Knox, 1984), 15.

<sup>13</sup> *Key Next Door* (Nashville, TN: Abington, 1960), 166.

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**2) vv.5-13 Questions From The Crowd.**

So fifty days after Easter- as promised- the divine presence of God the Holy Spirit enveloped the church, then immediately moved out along the transmission lines of multiple languages to Jews gathered from all over the Empire. The holy huddle became a hundred and twenty evangelists, not only Peter and the men but the women, even the Lord’s mother. Think about it! The same Mary who was the human vehicle of the Lord’s incarnation now became a missionary evangelist. Mary was flooded with a wind of holy fire and spoke in a new language the mighty works of God. People in whose tongue she preached were converted and baptized.<sup>14</sup> The one who bore the Lord quietly in her womb now bore witness to her Son aloud in the streets. The Mary who once *pondered these things in her heart* now went blazingly Pentecostal. The Spirit who once touched her womb now filled her heart to overflowing. She who bore Jesus now preached him to the nations!

So it is with the gifts of the Holy Spirit; they flow to us and through us for the sake of ministry to others. The fruit of the Holy Spirit grows in us over time; the gifts pass through us in a moment, and both are important. Over time we must take on the character of Jesus, and we must again relearn how to cooperate with the continuing power ministry of Jesus. It’s not a solo or a hero but a team sport; they learned it together and so we must we. “Everyone gets to play.”<sup>15</sup> Wherever Jesus is loved and followed, there the Spirit moves and illumines and gifts and energizes and surprises.

We are told by Luke- as well as other ancient sources- that Jews from all around the Mediterranean had come to live out their days in Jerusalem and be buried in the holy city. The fifteen nations Luke cites in verses 9 through 11 circle the compass in a counter-clockwise direction beginning with the East, as if to say, “The whole world was there.” God then manifested the divine presence in a way that attracted the attention of those near enough to hear. The purpose of the languages was so each group could hear the good news of Jesus in their mother tongue. It was publicity *Holy Spirit style*, customized for each ethnic grouping! Set the church on fire, then let the world ask questions. That was- and is still- the divine method, the question being: Does Main Street want to be set on fire by the

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<sup>14</sup> See Acts 2:41-47 for the results.

<sup>15</sup> A favorite slogan of John Wimber, *Everyone Gets To Play* (Boise, ID: Ampelon, 2008).

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disturbing divine presence? Are we willing for God to make us this international? What if we were a people it took God to explain? I know how to pile up kindling; I am a good, professional fire-wood collector: teach and preach Scripture, celebrate sacraments, pray, fast, lead the church as best I can, stay out of trouble and scandal, care for people when allowed, but what I seek- and what we need- I cannot provide, and that is divine fire and holy wind. After nearly three centuries the Methodist coals have burned low and been covered with ashes- at least here in America. But what if the wind again blew upon them? In the early days of our movement Charles Wesley wrote a Pentecostal hymn:

“See how great a flame aspires, Kindled by a spark of grace!  
Jesus’ love the nations fires, Sets the kingdoms on a blaze:  
To bring fire on earth He came; Kindled in some hearts it is:  
O that all might catch the flame, All partake the glorious bliss!”<sup>16</sup>

*Glorious bliss!* I’d like a dose if you have any! When the church experiences a fresh visitation of the Spirit, gathering a crowd won't be a problem. The first sick person healed, the first scoundrel saved, the first addict delivered, the first who prophesy or receive words of knowledge will do more for our reputation than a hundred road signs. The streets of Jerusalem were buzzing, "Are not all these who are speaking Galileans (translated *red necks*)? And how is it that we hear each of us in his own dialect? What does this mean?" Outsiders to the reality were bewildered and amazed. Some mocked them as a bunch of drunks. Who can explain it?

**3) vv.14-21 Peter’s Explanatory Word.**

The risen Jesus had promised his followers, "The Spirit will come. Stay where you are; wait. My work cannot be done unaided; human effort is not enough."<sup>17</sup> So they prayed and waited till they wondered if anything was going to happen. It was a ten day retreat, ten days to retell the stories of a Jesus now gone. But it was not time wasted; waiting on God together was their job, and in a world of get-busy-quick-and-make-something-happen-because-you-are-paid-to-be-the-preacher, nothing is any harder for Christian leaders than creative waiting. Then the power came, and Peter the coward- the one who denied Jesus

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<sup>16</sup> *U.M. Hymnal*, No. 541.

<sup>17</sup> 1:8.

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three times- stood with eleven colleagues and preached the first Christian sermon to the same crowd who seven weeks earlier cried to have Jesus done in. Now the fear is gone; Peter is changed. No longer is Jesus a reality external to himself that Peter stumbles and bumbles to follow; the Spirit has now brought Jesus *inside* as an indwelling presence!

We're often so serious we miss the humor. Peter answers their last question first, "Bunch of drunks, that's what they are. Nothing but new, sweet wine."

"Aw, come on," says Peter, "no one gets drunk this early. It's only 9:00am." The ferment of divine joy was bubbling inside Peter. It came out as a wise crack, "Even KA's don't start this early!"

So it was on the Day of Pentecost. God invaded his people with divine presence, and outsiders did not understand. How could they? They were not Jesus' followers; they had not been through three years of daily discipleship, the trauma of the cross and the surprise of the resurrection. But isn't that what we all tend to do with the spiritual experiences of others we do not understand or that offend our middle-class values of control and predictability? We mock and make fun of them.

Peter took their mockery as the cue. Once he hooked them with humor, he explained the current events in terms of an ancient prophecy from Joel. It was something new based on something old. It was clearly from God because it correlated with Scripture:

"What you see and hear," said Peter, "is what God promised long ago through Joel. The experience of the Spirit is no longer limited to special leaders: to prophets, priests, and kings. It's now for everyone: sons and daughters, slaves and free, young and old. God is pouring out the Holy Spirit on all flesh, starting with his covenant people, we Jews. It's a wonderful time. God is here now; anyone who calls on the name of the Lord (Jesus) will be saved. We know God through Jesus Christ and the Spirit's power, and so can you!"

Three thousand accepted Peter's challenge that day.

**Conclusion**

You've all seen the commercial from several years ago of a Mercedes colliding with a cement wall. Someone then asks the spokesman why the company doesn't enforce their



patent on the energy-absorbing car body, a design copied by other companies. His reply? "Because some things in life are too important not to share."

The proof of Pentecost is not that we get a little more enthusiastic or expressive, though that's not a bad thing. It is that all kinds of people speaking all kinds of languages come to the Lord and into his flock through baptism and the gift of the Spirit. You know that you have been baptized in the Spirit when you reach across a cultural or linguistic or racial barrier to share the good news of Jesus with someone who's not yet a believer.

Meanwhile, the visions and the dreams and the prophecies and the tongues and healings and ecstasies and all the charismatic phenomena which are so endlessly fascinating are *all for the sake of the mission*. They are the tools of the trade to get kingdom work done. God is doing something *in us* and *to us* so that he can do something *through us* for the sake of a world. And I don't particularly care which end you start with. Start with the mission, and it will drive you back to the resources of the Spirit when your own resources run out- as they soon will. Start at the other end with the experience of the Spirit, and it will drive you into mission, unless short-circuited. Either way, sitting still and soaking is not an option.

There's work to be done, and human smarts and energy are not enough. Only God can do this work, and God has chosen to do it through people like us who seek the will of the Father and walk in the way of the Son and welcome the presence of the Spirit. Let us become a people who are hungry for God. Come Holy Spirit! Revive your church, and how about start with us!



**2:1-47 Surface Structure**

**1. 2:1-4 INTRODUCTION: THE SPIRIT'S COMING UPON A UNIFIED COMMUNITY.**

- A) v.1 All Together In One Place.
- B) v.2 Something Heard: Wind From Heaven.
- B') v.3 Something Seen: Fire From Heaven.
- A') v.4 All Receive The Holy Spirit.

**2. 2:5-13 RESPONSE TO PHENOMENA AND QUESTIONS FROM THE CROWD.**

- A) v.5 Jews From Every Nation.
- B) vv.6-8 Event, Response, Two Questions (Answered in 2:1-4).
  
- A') vv.9-11a Jews From Every Nation.
- B') vv.11b-13 Event, Response, Two Questions (Answered in 2:14-36).

**3. 2:14-36 PETER'S SERMON ANSWERS IN REVERSE ORDER.**

- A. 2:14-21 Part One Answers The Wine Question (v.13).
  - 1) vv.14-15 What It Does Not Mean: They Are Not Drunk.
  - 2) vv.16-21 What It Does Mean: God Is Fulfilling Prophecy (Joel 2:28-32).
  
- B. 2:22-36 Part Two Answers The Meaning Question (v.12).
  - 1) vv.22-24 Address: "Men of Israel": This Jesus- You Crucified, God Raised.
  - 2) vv.25-28 "For": David/Resurrection Proof-text (Psalm 16:8-11).
  - 3) vv.29-31 "Being Therefore A Prophet": Comment On Psalm.
  - 4) v.32 This Jesus: God Raised And We Are Witnesses.
  - 3') v.33 "Being Therefore Exalted": Comment On Following Psalm.
  - 2') vv.34-35 "For": David/Resurrection Proof-text (Psalm 110:1).
  - 1') v.36 Address: "House of Israel": This Jesus- God Made Lord, You Crucified.

**2' 2:37 RESPONSE TO THE PREACHING AND QUESTION FROM THE CROWD.**

**3' 2:38-40 PETER ANSWERS THE QUESTION IN TWO PARTS.**

- A. vv.38-39 Part One: Conversion And Sacramental Initiation.
- B. v.40 Part Two: Holy Living: Separation From A Twisted World.

**1' 2:21-47 CONCLUSION: THE NEW COMMUNITY THE HOLY SPIRIT CREATED.**

- A. v.41 Church Growth Described: A Great Influx.
- B. v.42 Marks Of The Community: Internal Perspective.
- C. v.43 The Miracle Of God's Power.
- C' vv.44-45 The Miracle Of Their Generosity.
- B' vv.46-47a Marks Of The Community: External Perspective.
- A' v.47b Church Growth Described: A Steady Flow.