

Acts 2:1-21 When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. ² And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. ³ Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and *one* sat upon each of them. ⁴ And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. ⁵ And there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven. ⁶ And when this sound occurred, the multitude came together, and were confused, because everyone heard them speak in his own language. ⁷ Then they were all amazed and marveled, saying to one another, "Look, are not all these who speak Galileans?" ⁸ "And how *is it that* we hear, each in our own language in which we were born?" ⁹ "Parthians and Medes and Elamites, those dwelling in Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, ¹⁰ "Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya adjoining Cyrene, visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, ¹¹ "Cretans and Arabs-- we hear them speaking in our own tongues the wonderful works of God." ¹² So they were all amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "Whatever could this mean?" ¹³ Others mocking said, "They are full of new wine." ¹⁴ But Peter, standing up with the eleven, raised his voice and said to them, "Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and heed my words. ¹⁵ "For these are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is *only* the third hour of the day. ¹⁶ "But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: ¹⁷ 'And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, That I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, Your young men shall see visions, Your old men shall dream dreams. ¹⁸ And on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days; And they shall prophesy. ¹⁹ I will show wonders in heaven above And signs in the earth beneath: Blood and fire and vapor of smoke. ²⁰ The sun shall be turned into darkness, And the moon into blood, Before the coming of the great and awesome day of the LORD. ²¹ And it shall come to pass *That* whoever calls on the name of the LORD Shall be saved.'

We have come to the festival of Pentecost, to the outpouring the Spirit, to the fellowship of the Church and the giving of the ministry of the reconciliation. This day we have received the fullness of the word. And yet for many people all they can think of is speaking in tongues and miracles of healing. Such people miss the depth of the gifts that the Holy Spirit has poured out upon us. They are like people who pass over a prime T-bone steak for a McDonalds hamburger, or choose chicken nuggets rather than Grandma's homemade fried chicken with mashed potatoes and apple pie. The gifts which the Holy Spirit gives are so much greater than simply speaking in tongues, which was after all merely a means to an end.

The Spirit gives life

The English word spirit is boring and empty compared to the Greek and Hebrew. The Hebrew word is Ruach and the Greek Pnaumatos. In the Hebrew Ruach means breath, wind, spirit.

The Spirit of the Lord is the breath of life. It was He who gave life to the world. It was He who breathed life into Adam and Eve. Ruach means the breath that gives life.

The wind is often closely associated with the Spirit. When the Lord spoke to Job (Job 38:1), He spoke out of the Wind. It was the wind and not the chariot that bore Elijah to heaven. When Ezekiel (Ezekiel 1:4) saw the vision of the four living creatures they were born on a mighty wind. Most importantly in Ezekiel 37:4 ff, it was the breath of the Lord, the Spirit of the Lord which gave life to the valley of dried up dead bones. In the New Testament also the Lord reminded Nicodemus:

" The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes." **John 3:8**

So it was on Pentecost that the breath of the Lord filled the house where they were. This was his calling card so to speak, His way of telling all, the Spirit of the Lord has come to give life to a valley of dry bones.

It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and *they* are life. **John 6:63**

And so the Spirit entered the house with a great sound with a mighty wind because He came to give life to all those who believe in the name of Jesus.

King Saul because of his stubborn refusal to listen to the word of the Lord lost the Spirit. From then on his life was misery and death. The only small joy he had left in his life was when David would play music and that would calm his soul for a little while.

David on the other hand was filled with the Spirit. Being filled with the Spirit he slew Goliath. He went from victory to victory. Even more important he learned the peace and joy which comes from daily walking with the Lord. Filled with the Spirit he had joy even when he was hiding in caves. The Spirit gives life.

Elisha received a double portion of the Spirit, and he raised the dead. He healed Naaman the leper. He came out and stood without fear before the King of Syria because he could see the armies of the Lord that stood between him and them. The Spirit gives life.

The house was filled with the sound of a great wind so that everyone would know that the Spirit had come and he had come to give life. He gives life to us too. As many as call upon the name of the Lord.

Even to dry bones, even if we are dead in our sins. He gives life even if we have spent so many years ignoring the Lord and staying away from his word so that the faith of our youth is dried up. Yet even still the Spirit gives life even to those who are dead in their sin.

After the wind came the tongues of fire

Fire also was a symbol commonly associated with the Lord's presence. It was a pillar of fire that led the children of Israel in the wilderness. It was a flaming sword that guarded the gate to Eden, and a fiery chariot that separated Elijah from Elisha. But the picture that the Israelites would undoubtedly most closely associate with these tongues of fire would be the burning bush, out of which the Lord spoke to Moses.

So here the fire signified that the Lord had come down to speak to men as he once spoke to Moses. This time the fire was over the disciples so that everyone would know that Lord spoke through these men. Where once the Lord spoke from a burning bush now he speaks from men.

These "tongues of fire" were given most likely to all the disciples, all 120 that we heard about in the last chapter. He doesn't speak to His people through one man, as He did at the time of Moses. He speaks through all His disciples. Thus was fulfilled the prayer of Moses spoken 1,500 years ago,

Oh, that all the LORD'S people were prophets *and* that the LORD would put His Spirit upon them!" **Numbers 11:29**

So it is that the Spirit gives us the Word of God. First he speaks it to us through the mouth of apostles, prophets, pastors, teachers, fathers, mothers etc. Through them He speaks to us the word that give us the life. The truth about Christ risen from the dead and ascended into heaven. The truth about the forgiveness of sins through His name. He gives us the word and through that word He gives us life.

But then also He gives us the word to speak to others. We also receive metaphorically the flames of fires on our heads, so that we should go and God should speak through us as He once spoken to Moses through that burning bush

¹⁷ `And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, That I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, Your young men shall see visions, Your old men shall dream dreams. ¹⁸ And on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days; And they shall prophesy. **Acts 2:17-18**

in this way the prayer of Moses and the prophecy of Joel are fulfilled.

Now all things *are* of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, **2 Corinthians 5:18**

Thus we receive both this word that we are reconciled . That is He who was our enemy is now our friend. What a wonderful thing that is when you have reconciled with someone. Perhaps a spouse, perhaps a friend, for some reason you were angry and then your found a way to let go of that anger and embrace again in love. Here it is the Lord who is reconciled to us through the death of Jesus. We have received this reconciliation and the ministry of the reconciliation. That is that this word is given to us to speak to others.

And the holy Spirit gives to us this word of peace and forgiveness. He speaks it to us through others, then he speaks to others through us.

It is the Spirit who gives life, and the word of the Lord, and life is given through that word.

after the tongues of fire came the glossia, or the speaking in tongues

But the glossia was only a means to an end. The important thing is not that they spoke in tongues but that anything that hinder the message of Jesus risen from the dead. Here the Spirit gives not only the words to speak but also the ability to speak that word.

Notice that our text says they spoke, "as the Spirit gave them utterance." These men did not yet know how to speak the Word of God. They did not know as Paul did later how to "prove from scripture that Jesus was the Christ."

They lacked the courage. They lacked the knowledge. They lacked practice. They even lacked the language skills. There were men here gathered from every corner of the World. They didn't know any of these languages. But whatever they lacked the Spirit provided. He provided them the words to speak. He provided the courage to stand up and speak to these people. He provided the ability to speak in all these different languages. All for one purpose, so that they might tell everyone present the wonderful news that Jesus who was dead is now risen from the dead and reigns with the Father.

In this way the promise of Christ was fulfilled, "I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you." **Matthew 17:20**

Every disciple, everyone who had faith no matter how small, any mountain that blocked his ability to preach Christ was removed.

And so the message was proclaimed to the Persians and the Egyptians and the Romans and the Greek.

Notice that the Spirit had not been idle, for all these men were already, "Godly men," that is to say they were proselytes. They were people from every corner of world who had already heard about the Lord and had already come to faith. Now they were told about Jesus and they took this good news back with them. So that only 50 days after Pentecost the gospel was carried into every corner of the known world.

Their line has gone out through all the earth, And their words to the end of the world.

Psalms 19:4

Thus Jesus promised they would be, "endued with power from on high." Power is the ability to get something done. If you are the president of the United States you have power to get things done. At least some things. Those who have received the Spirit have power from on high for the work of the ministry. Nothing may impede the message Christ has given to us to share. If you have faith like a

mustard seed you will say to this mountain move and it will be moved. That is to say any obstacle that stands in the way of the message of the Gospel will be removed.

The Spirit gave to the disciples and to us everything that is needed so that the name Jesus should be preached to every corner of the Earth.

The Spirit gives life. He gives the word of Life. He gives us the ministry. He gives the power that is the ability to speak these same words of Life.

This same spirit is ours through baptism, and he gives to us the same gifts, life, word, ministry, and power.

May the prayer of Moses be our prayer, "**Oh, that all the LORD'S people were prophets *and* that the LORD would put His Spirit upon them!**"

Amen