

The Coming of the Holy Spirit

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Acts 2:1–13

[1] When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place. [2] And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. [3] And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. [4] And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.

[5] Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven. [6] And at this sound the multitude came together, and they were bewildered, because each one was hearing them speak in his own language. [7] And they were amazed and astonished, saying, “Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? [8] And how is it that we hear, each of us in his own native language? [9] Parthians and Medes and Elamites and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, [10] Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, [11] both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians—we hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God.” [12] And all were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, “What does this mean?” [13] But others mocking said, “They are filled with new wine.” (ESV)

- Jesus had asked the disciples to wait for the promise of the Father. They didn't know exactly what this would be like.
- They weren't sure what to expect. But they were excited – and they were obeying His commands, devoting themselves to prayer, and submitting themselves to the counsel of the Word of God.
- Now we read of their experience of the promise of God – the coming of the Holy Spirit!
- Pentecost was a major Feast in the life of the Israelites.
- Pentecost was 50 days (thus the term) after Passover.
- Jesus was crucified on Passover. He sent the Holy Spirit on Pentecost.
- Pentecost was also called the Feast of Firstfruits.
- This is significant
 - It was a Thanksgiving-like feast.
 - People gathered in Jerusalem to give thanks to God for the harvest.
 - How appropriate that the Feast was called Firstfruits, for that is now what God is giving – the first fruits of the New Covenant Era.

- He was putting His Spirit in all of His people.
- The Feast of Firstfruits was also recognized to be the anniversary of the giving of the Law of Moses on Mount Sinai.
- So at one point in redemptive history God gave Moses the Law. And now He was establishing a new covenant with His people, and He was giving His Spirit.
- His Spirit would write the law of God on the hearts and minds of His people.

Jeremiah 31:31–34

[31] “Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, [32] not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the LORD. [33] For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. [34] And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.” (ESV)

- So at Pentecost, the reviving wind of the Spirit came upon God’s people with power and joy.
- And, it was on this day that the firstfruits of the work of God in the new covenant age had begun, as 3,000 people were saved.
- There was joy, excitement, zeal in the air! God had come in His Holy Spirit to dwell with His people!
- All in one place, there were 120 of them. Twelve apostles and 108 people.
- They were there together. Having obeyed His command to wait, they were praying earnestly, waiting on the Lord and seeking Him through the Word
- Three things we see in this passage – Wind, Fire, Proclamation.

1. Wind

“When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place. And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting (verses 1-2).”

- A mighty rushing wind descended upon them from heaven.

- This was the gift of the Holy Spirit from heaven itself.
- The Greek word for spirit is “pneuma”
- It also means wind, breath.
- In the OT, the breath of God is synonymous with His life-giving spirit.
- In the upper room, the mighty power of the Holy Spirit came rushing into the room filled with all the people, so that they could receive power from heaven to fulfill their earthly calling to be His witnesses.
- This wind is representative of the breath of God, of the Holy Spirit.
- What was the Holy Spirit’s role in the OT?
- Was the Holy Spirit even around in the OT?
- Yes, the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity, has eternally existed with God the Father and God the Son.
- In fact, in Genesis 1:2, we see the activity of the Holy Spirit as He hovered over the face of the waters.
- The Holy Spirit was an active agent in the creation of the world.
- It is the breath of God that gives life to Adam, for without the wind or breath of God, Adam would have been lifeless.
- Apart from the breath of God, we are dead.
- Throughout the OT, then, the Holy Spirit is at work in redemption.
- In particular, the Holy Spirit
 - Gifted prophets to speak the oracles of God .
 - Empowered priests to intercede for God’s people.
 - Enabled kings to lead Israel against its enemies.
- If you were an OT Israelite, your experience of the Spirit would have been largely mediated through the ministry of others .
- But now, in the New Covenant Age, the Spirit is come to personally indwell all of God’s people.
- This is a fulfillment of the OT promise:

“And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules (Ezekiel 36:27).”

- Now every believer was given the Holy Spirit.
- In fact, the Holy Spirit is active in the process of regeneration.
- Giving spiritual life to people to repent and believe the gospel.
- And at the dawn of a New Covenant, which God was now establishing, the Spirit of Christ was coming to each believer

The Spirit’s work in the new covenant centers on Christ and the church. It is by the Spirit that Jesus Christ was conceived and born of a virgin, anointed to fulfill his

earthly ministry, empowered to offer his life as a sacrifice, and raised in resurrection power. After Christ ascended to the Father's right hand, the promised Holy Spirit descended at Pentecost and ushered in the new era of the Spirit's fullness, indwelling believers and empowering them for life and service. – SG Statement of Faith

- God the Holy Spirit came to indwell these believers and to empower them to fulfill the commission He had given them – to spread the gospel over all the earth!

2. Fire

“And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them (verse 3).”

- With this great rushing sound of wind was accompanied another unusual occurrence.
- What they saw was the appearance of small tongues of fire over each one.
- All throughout the OT, fire was the most common manifestation of God and of His holy presence.
- There are many instances in the OT, but let me mention three.
 - Moses and the burning bush – out of which God spoke.
 - Mt. Sinai - When God gave the law on the mountain, there was fire – displaying the holy majesty/power/glory of God
 - Pillar of cloud and fire – God led the people to the promised land (Exodus 13:22).
- Fire also has an illuminating aspect
- For most of human history, fire has illuminated homes
 - And one of the main jobs of the Holy Spirit is to illuminate the Scriptures to us – to open up the Word of God, to help us to understand it.
- Fire spreads warmth
 - The HS also brings a passion for the name of God, a passion that others would know Him!
 - Hebrews 12:29 reminds us that “Our God is a consuming fire”

3. Proclamation

“We hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God (verse 11)”

- The effect of the filling of the Holy Spirit was that their tongues spoke the glories of Christ!
- This gathering and the sounds of it created quite a stir among the other residents of the area.

- So they gathered around and what they heard amazed them.
- Here there were disciples praising the great works of God in the native tongues of the city's visitors!
- The gift of tongues, by the way, is not the exclusive gift of the Spirit
- There are many gifts given by the Spirit – listed in 1 Cor. 12, Romans 12, Ephesians 4, I Peter 4.
- And not one of the gifts are universal to every Christian. God gives the spiritual gifts, by the Holy Spirit, as He sees fit.
- What is universal is that true Christians have the Holy Spirit inside of them.
- These observers, some from other lands, were primed by the Holy Spirit to receive the powerful sermon that Peter would preach.
- And we know how Peter's first sermon went – 3,000 souls were saved!
- That's for next week's message. For today, we focus on the fact that the Spirit had now come to bless and indwell the believers, empowering them for witness and service to Christ

Application

- The point Pentecost is that the Spirit came in power to each believer, to empower us for witness and service to our king.
- Every disciple was filled with the Spirit that day.
- It's God's intention that we be filled with the Spirit – today and every day.
- The NT records the phrase "filled with the Spirit" 14 times. Here's one place:

"Do not be drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit (Ephesians 5:18)."

- The Lord gives the Holy Spirit to those who ask!

"If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!" Luke 11:13

- Ask for more of the Spirit
- The Lord delights to give the Spirit to those who ask!

Questions for Discussion/Application

- Re-read the text, Acts 2:1-13. What initial observations and insights do you have from reading this text?
- What do you think it would have been like to have been there when this event happened--when the Holy Spirit came at Pentecost?
- Pentecost was the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies regarding the coming of the Spirit. In what ways is our experience of the Spirit different under the New Covenant from the Old Covenant believers? In what ways is it the same?
- Re-read the notes above under the section titled "Application." What does it mean to be filled with the Holy Spirit?
- How can we seek daily, to be filled with the Holy Spirit?
- Consider taking time to pray that we would each be more filled with the Spirit and that the Lord would use us together for the spread of the gospel.