

When the Holy Spirit Comes

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When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. ² And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. ³ Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. ⁴ All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability. ⁵ Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem. ⁶ And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in the native language of each. ⁷ Amazed and astonished, they asked, "Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? ⁸ And how is it that we hear, each of us, in our own native language? ⁹ Parthians, Medes, 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, both Jews and proselytes, ¹¹ Cretans and Arabs—in our own languages we hear them speaking about God's deeds of power." ¹² All were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "What does this mean?" ¹³ But others sneered and said, "They are filled with new wine." ¹⁴ But Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed them, "Men of Judea and all who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and listen to what I say. ¹⁵ Indeed, these are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only nine o'clock in the morning. ¹⁶ No, this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel: ¹⁷ 'In the last days it will be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams. ¹⁸ Even upon my slaves, both men and women, in those days I will pour out my Spirit; and they shall prophesy. ¹⁹ And I will show portents in the heaven above and signs on the earth below, blood, and fire, and smoky mist. ²⁰ The sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood, before the coming of the Lord's great and glorious day. ²¹ Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.'" (Acts 2:1-21)

1. Need to Be Recharged

One of my jobs while traveling in Israel in March this year was to take pictures. I took so many pictures that I went through the batteries. I had to use my cell phone to take more pictures when we visited Magdala. The experience reminded me that the batteries of the electronic devices need to be recharged. Our phones, computers, and cameras all don't work if the battery isn't recharged.

What about people? Do we need to be recharged? Our physical bodies are recharged by eating food and sleeping. Our minds are recharged by reading books, seeing movies, and spending time with others. What about our souls? Our souls are recharged by praying, worshiping the Lord, and reading the Bible. Our bodies, minds and souls need to be recharged every day. When we neglect

to recharge our spirits, we end up running out of creativity and can't do what the Lord wants us to do.

2. Outpouring of the Holy Spirit

Today is the day of Pentecost. Pentecost is called the Feast of Weeks in the Old Testament. According to Deuteronomy 16:16, it is one of three major annual feasts of the Jews. It is the festival of thanksgiving for the harvested crops. Jews who lived in different countries were supposed to visit Jerusalem to celebrate the festival.

Today's scripture Acts 2:1-21 tell us that the Holy Spirit came to the disciples on the day of Pentecost about two thousand years ago. When the Holy Spirit came to the disciples, they experienced miraculous wind, fire, and speaking in tongues. The Greek word *pneuma* means "spirit" or "wind." It also means "breath." The "fire" in the Bible is the symbol of the presence of God in the Old Testament. Exodus 3:2 says, "**there the angel of the Lord appeared to him (Moses) in a flame of fire out of a bush.**" Moses hears God's voice through the burning bush.

The Christian term "tongues" symbolizes the speech and communication of the Lord with his people. When the Holy Spirit comes to the disciples at Pentecost, the disciples speak in languages that they did not know of or learn previously. The disciples declare God's wonders in the native languages of the Jews visiting from the different nations.

There are 15 different countries mentioned in the passage: the Parthian empire, Media, Elam, Mesopotamia, Judea, Cappadocia, Pontus, Asia, Phrygia, Pamphylia, Egypt, Libya, Rome, Crete, and Arabia. These people were the Jewish diaspora who came to Jerusalem to celebrate the festival. These people were dispersed throughout the world through captivity and persecution.

These Jews from other countries were probably bilingual, speaking both Greek and their native languages. Through the coming of the Holy Spirit, the people experience this miracle of God and recognize that the presence of the Lord is among them.

When the Jewish travelers see that something supernatural takes place, they stand in amazement. The people ask, "**Are not all these men who are speaking Galileans?**" (verse 7). The experience of seeing these people speaking in the native languages of peoples from around the Mediterranean has no explanation. The people are puzzled and amazed. Some in the crowd ridicule the disciples saying, "**they are filled with new wine**" (verse 13).

3. Peter's Sermon

In verse 14 and the following, Peter confronts the charge of drunkenness of the disciples. Peter reminds the people that it is too early for anyone to be drunk saying, "**it is only nine o'clock in the morning**" (verse 15). Nine in the morning would have been an hour of prayer. Peter tells the people that the

disciples aren't drunken on wine but are filled with the Holy Spirit, as prophesied by the prophet Joel. Peter cites Joel 2:28-32.

“In the last days it will be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams.”

Peter emphasizes that the speaking of other languages proves the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Peter says that on the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit is poured out on the entire world; men, women, slaves, Jews and Gentiles. This experience would have been radical across the first century world of the Jews.

In Acts Chapter 2, we pay attention to the speaking of different languages, the unexpected miracle. However, I would like to call your attention to the state of Peter and the other disciples leading up to Pentecost. Most of the disciples run away when Jesus is arrested. Peter denies Jesus three times. The disciples are scared of the real threat of being arrested. All of the disciples are in a state of hiding when Jesus is crucified.

Yet when the Holy Spirit comes to the disciples, they become bold and not afraid of anything. Peter and other disciples become new creations. They stand together, boldly in front of the crowd, and Peter preaches with confidence. I don't think that Peter spent the average 20 hours, as many preachers do, to prepare for his sermon at Pentecost. Yet Peter's sermon was inspiring and full of power.

When the Holy Spirit is poured out on Peter, he was able to explain to others about God and what God had been doing for them through Jesus. Peter and other disciples were spiritually recharged by the Holy Spirit enabling them to experience God's amazing power.

When the crowd hear Peter's message, they ask the disciples, ***“Brothers, what shall we do?”*** (Acts 2:37) Peter replies, ***“Repent and be baptized, everyone of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit”*** (verse 38). The Book of Acts tells us that three thousand are baptized when they hear Peter's sermon and become followers of Jesus. Have you experienced the empowering and recharging with the Holy Spirit?

4. Billy Graham Crusade

If you visit the website, Billygrahamlibrary.org, you can read an article about the Billy Graham Crusade on June 3, 1973 in Seoul, Korea. It reads, “June 3, 1973: Billy Graham preaches to 1.1 million in Korea. On this date in 1973, Billy Graham closed his 5-day Seoul, Korea Crusade in front of a crowd estimated by local officials to exceed 1.1 million. Over the course of the Crusade, Mr. Graham preached to more than 3 million, which topped the totals of the historic 16-week, 1957 New York City Crusade.”

When Graham made his invitation to the crowd, saying, “If you are willing to forsake all other gods, stand up,” thousands stood. Counselors visited those who were standing and received 12,000 dedication cards from them that day. Thousands more would come to faith by sending their dedication cards in the mail.

How can we explain such an amazing salvation story? Billy Graham said, “The only comment I have is, Thanksgiving to God for all he did.” Certainly the Holy Spirit had been poured out upon the Koreans on June 3, 1973. I was one of them.

5. Conclusion

The story of the two disciples on the road to Emmaus and the state of the disciples at the crucifixion of Jesus reveal to us that the disciples were disappointed at the death of Jesus. When Jesus rose from the dead, the disciples weren't sure what would come next. Would they be able to continue preaching, teaching, and healing others as Jesus did? Jesus knew that many of his followers would return to their homes and their old lives as fishermen and tax collectors.

So before his ascension Jesus tells the disciples, “***Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised. ... In a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit***” (Acts 1:4-5). “***You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth***” (Acts 1:8).

The outpouring of the Holy Spirit empowers the disciples to become witnesses of the presence of God and Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit is like the electric power that recharges all God's people. We need to be recharged by the Holy Spirit every day so that we can be empowered by the Lord. When the Holy Spirit is poured out, the followers of Jesus would be united and do something unthinkable.

6. Application

Have you experienced the outpouring of the Holy Spirit? Are you filled daily with the power of the Holy Spirit? Do we need to be recharged by the Holy Spirit so that we can do something only God can do?

Yesterday at the yard sale, I did not see anyone speaking in tongues. However, I felt the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon us. Many people from our congregation came and participated in the event. We were united and filled with joy and happiness as we served the people in the community.

When the Holy Spirit comes, we are recharged with the power of the Holy Spirit so that we can experience miracles and be witnesses to the grace and love of our Lord. Thanks be to God for sending us Jesus our savior and the Holy Spirit to empower us to be his instruments of his love and grace. Amen.