

The Spirit Gave Them Ability

June 9, 2019

Acts 2:1-4

1 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.

Today is Pentecost. It is a significant event in Bible. It is always 7 weeks, after Passover. It is known to us as the birthday of Christian church. Today we celebrate the gift of the Holy Spirit coming upon the church body.

In the Old Testament, Pentecost is a Jewish holiday and celebration that has a very important significance. It has a historical significance celebrating the giving of the law to Moses on Mount Sinai. It also had a sacred significance. There are three major festivals - Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles - that honor God and celebrate the blessings bestowed upon the people. Every male Jew living within 20 miles of Jerusalem was legally bound to come to these three festivals. Due to its sacred significance no work was to be done. This is revealed in the Bible in **Leviticus 23:24** *you are to proclaim a sacred assembly and do no regular work* and **Numbers 28:26** *On the day of first fruits, when you present to the Lord an offering of new grain during the Feast of Weeks, hold a sacred assembly and do no regular work.* These Scriptures also reveal the agricultural significance. A nation of God is giving thanks to God and celebrating God for blessing them with the food that they have. It is gratitude for the harvest. Due to its agricultural significance it is also called the *Feast of 1st Fruits* and the *Feast of Harvest*. It is a festival of gratitude thanking God for the harvest.

The New Testament Pentecost is a very significant Christian holiday. It is so significant that it is foretold by John the Baptist **Luke 3:16** *I baptize you with water for repentance, One more powerful will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.* It is also foretold by the risen Jesus **Acts 1:5** *for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.* The disciples gathered together during the sacred Pentecost festival and something truly amazing and special happened. The Holy Spirit came to the Disciples and enabled them to go out into the world speaking in the native languages of the various people.

In today's Scripture all of the disciples were gathered together in one place. The violent wind is figurative. The sound of the wind signifies the power. It is the power, influence, and work of the Holy Spirit. It was not a violent wind but the extent of the awesome power sounded like violent wind. Fire is a scripture based symbol of divine presence and judgment. It was not fire but as of fire. Tongue means they spoke in other languages not unknown languages. They were all able to speak a foreign language with no previous education as the spirit guided them.

These three elements (wind, fire, and tongue) represent the Holy Spirit. It is the spirit that gave them special ability for a significant purpose. Their divine mission is to spread the Good News to the world. It is the Holy Spirit that gave them ability. They did not do anything on their own power and ability. What was achieved was from the power of the Holy Spirit. It was an international crowd. There were people from different nations that spoke different languages. Now the disciples are able to speak in foreign languages fluently. This miracle extends beyond the realm of communication. Visitors heard the gospel message in their own native language. This makes worldwide communication of the gospel possible. One key aspect is that the disciples were transformed from their human weaknesses. It is revealed in the gospels that they

fail to heal, fail to understand, competed against one another, denied Christ, slept when Christ needed them the most, and even fled. From human weakness to transforming power they are now empowered by the Holy Spirit for a purpose driven divine mission.

Where do we fit in? Where are we in our Spiritual development? As an individual are you on fire for Jesus? Are you empowered by the Holy Spirit? Do you seek God? As a church do we stand out as the body of Christ? Do we follow the teachings of Jesus and make disciples? The Holy Spirit will help if you seek it. Imagine it happened right here today in this sanctuary. Imagine this tremendous sound and experience of the wind and the fire and the tongues. Imagine the Holy Spirit came into us today right here and right now and empowered us like that. Imagine what could be renewed and reborn and empowered by God's Spirit. Your missions would be the talk of the town. Your ministry to the community would be so great everybody would point to it. Well, the spirit gave them ability and the spirit gives you ability, all you have to do is act upon it.