

4th June 2017

The Day of Pentecost

or

Whit Sunday

Red



Collect

God, who as at this time taught the hearts of your faithful people by sending to them the light of your Holy Spirit: grant us by the same Spirit to have a right judgement in all things and evermore to rejoice in his holy comfort; through the merits of Christ Jesus our Saviour, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen**

Acts 2:1-21 English Standard Version (ESV)

The Coming of the Holy Spirit

2¹ 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^[a] 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.”

Peter's Sermon at Pentecost

14 But Peter, standing with the eleven, lifted up his voice and addressed them: “Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let

this be known to you, and give ear to my words. ¹⁵ For these people are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day.^[b] ¹⁶ But this is what was uttered through the prophet Joel: ¹⁷ “And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit on 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 on my male servants^[c] and female servants in those days I will pour out my Spirit, and they shall prophesy. ¹⁹ And I will show wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below, blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke; ²⁰ the sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood, before the day of the Lord comes, the great and magnificent day. ²¹ And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.’

Footnotes: a. or *And tongues as of fire appeared to them, distributed among them, and rested.* b. that is, 9 am. c. Greek *bondservants*; twice in this verse.

COMMENT: This dramatic event on the Jewish Feast of Pentecost, fifty days after the Passover (hence the name – meaning fifty), marks the formal beginning of the Christian Church and its mission in the world. Several themes stand out in the story: 1) The gift of the Spirit gave the apostles power to witness to their experience of the resurrection of Jesus, the key to their faith and our faith. 2) The witness of the apostles was to be universal, i.e. to all people. 3) The gift and the mission were the fulfilment of God’s promises to Israel recorded in the Hebrew Scriptures. The apocryphal Book of Jubilees represented Pentecost as a covenant-renewal ceremony linked to the covenant with Noah. Later Judaism celebrated it as the day on which the Torah was given. For Christians, it represented the beginning of the in-gathering of people in every nation into the realm of God’s sovereign love.

John 20:19-23 English Standard Version (ESV)

Jesus Appears to the Disciples

¹⁹ On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews,^[a] Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, “Peace be with you.” ²⁰ When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. ²¹ Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you.” ²² And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit. ²³ If you forgive the sins of

any, they are forgiven them; if you withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld.”

Footnotes: a. Greek *Ioudaioi* probably refers here to Jewish religious leaders, and others under their influence, in that time.

COMMENT: Unlike other the other gospels and Acts, this is a different account of the way Jesus gave the Spirit to his disciples. This occurred on the evening of the day of his resurrection as the disciples cowered in fear behind locked doors. Several previous references (e.g. 7:39; 16:7) in John’s Gospel said that the Spirit could only come after Jesus’ ministry had been completed with his death and his glorification through resurrection had taken place.

Psalm 104:1, 24-35 *Benedic, anima mea* Grail Psalter

✠ Send forth your Spirit, O Lord, and renew the face of the Earth.

¹ Bless the Lord, my soul!

Lord God, how great you are,
clothed in majesty and glory. ✠

²⁴ How many are your works, O Lord!

In wisdom you have made them all.
The earth is full of your riches. ✠

²⁵ There is the sea, vast and wide,
with its moving swarms past counting,
living things great and small.

²⁶ The ships are moving there
and the monsters you made to play with. ✠

²⁷ All of these look to you
to give them their food in due season.

²⁸ You give it, they gather it up:
you open your hand, they have their fill. ✠

²⁹ You hide your face, they are dismayed;
you take back your spirit, they die,
returning to the dust from which they came.

³⁰ You send forth your spirit, they are created;
and you renew the face of the earth. ✠

³¹ May the glory of the Lord last for ever!
May the Lord rejoice in his works!

³² He looks on the earth and it trembles;
the mountains send forth smoke at his touch. ✠

³³ I will sing to the Lord all my life,
make music to my God while I live.

³⁴ May my thoughts be pleasing to him.
I find my joy in the Lord.

³⁵ Let sinners vanish from the earth
and the wicked exist no more.
Bless the Lord, my soul.

✠ Send forth your Spirit, O Lord, and renew the face of the Earth.

**Glory be to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit,
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,
world without end. Amen.**

COMMENT: This whole of this psalm celebrates God's providential works in creation and the natural environment. This portion of it emphasises the life-giving and life-sustaining gift of spirit without which no creature can exist (verse 29). Scientists in our day may or may not hold a hypothesis about the origins of the universe which includes a divine act of creation. Yet as more the mysteries of the universe are revealed, many are forced to conclude that a spiritual initiative lies beyond the beginning which science now describes as the Big Bang. Was it just happenstance that triggered the evolutionary process 14 billion years ago? Knowing nothing that could be now regarded as 'science,' but with deep faith, the psalmist had penetrated these same mysteries and concluded that he was observing Ultimate Reality. His meditation on what he saw around him drove him to make this faith statement and to offer praise to God for what he saw.

Short Preface

And now we give you thanks that, after he had ascended far above all heavens, and was seated at the right hand of your majesty, he sent forth upon the universal Church your holy and life-giving Spirit; that through his glorious power the joy of the everlasting gospel might go forth into all the world.

Post Communion

Faithful God, who fulfilled the promises of Easter by sending us your Holy Spirit and opening to every race and nation the way of life eternal: open our lips by your Spirit, that every tongue may tell of your glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

Blessing

The Spirit of truth lead you into all truth, give you grace to confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, and strengthen you to proclaim the word and works of God; and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, rest upon you now and forever. **Amen.**