



May 19, 2002

Prayer of the Day

God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, as you sent upon the disciples the promised gift of the Holy Spirit, look upon your Church and open our hearts to the power of the Spirit. Kindle in us the fire of your love, and strengthen our lives for service in your kingdom; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Acts 2:1-21

{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. {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.'

1. Pentecost: The Feast of Weeks occurred seven weeks (a week of weeks plus one day, or fifty days) after the presentation of the first sheaf of the barley harvest at Passover (Leviticus 23:15-21). It is the second of the three festivals (Passover, Weeks and Booths; Leviticus 23) of the Jewish calendar, an agricultural festival marking the end of the wheat harvest. The date was associated with the arrival of the Israelites at Mt. Sinai at the time of the Exodus, and therefore with the giving of the law (Exodus 19:1).

they were all together: About 120 people, cf. Acts 1:15. See also Luke 24:33; Acts 1:6, 14: The whole of the Christian community shared this definitive experience.

one place: Cf. Verse 2: "the house where they were sitting".

3. tongues, as of fire: Luke 3:16: "I baptize you with water.... He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit" (*hagios pneumatos*, "holy wind") and fire." Also Acts 1:5: "John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from

now." "This is their baptism. It is the moment when their apostolate becomes pneumatic or Spirit graced; from this point on all that the apostles do will be under the guidance of the Spirit." [1]

4. *began to speak in other languages*: This is one kind of speaking in tongues. The other, ecstatic glossalalia, is described in 1 Corinthians 14:2-19.

5. *devout Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem*: They are living there at least for the festival of Pentecost. Some of the places from which they have come are mentioned in verses 9-11.

6-7: The apostles, Galileans, are contrasted with the devout Jews from every nation under the sun.

8. "...the miracle seems at first to have been auditory not vocal, in that the assembled Jews were each enabled to hear them speaking 'in his own language,' but v 4 has already described it as a vocal miracle, produced by the Spirit given to the Galileans. Whether auditory or vocal, the miracle conveys the idea that the gift of the Spirit transcends all bounds: the Christian message is to be borne to people of all languages and cultures." Those who heard in their own languages were not people of "all cultures." [2] They were all devout Jews! This is really only the first step on the way to the universal church. In Acts 10 Luke tells how the Gospel was preached to Gentiles, and describes their response in terms similar to these, "the Holy Spirit fell upon all who heard the word. The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astounded that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles, for they heard them speaking in tongues and extolling God "(Acts 10:44-46a).

13. *They are filled with new wine*: The grape harvest occurred after the grain harvest, and was celebrated with its own festival fifty days after Pentecost. "Luke may have... alluded to the Pentecost of New Wine, when speaking...of the Pentecost of New Grain." [3]

14. *the eleven*: Peter and the eleven, including Matthias, who was chosen to replace Judas, makes twelve.

14b-21: In his "sermon" Peter explains what was seen and heard. The apostles are not drunk. They are the fulfillment of the prophecy of Joel 2:28-32. Fitzmyer outlines the speech as follows:

"Introduction 2:14b-15

OT Quotation to Clarify the Situation 2:16-21

Kerygma 2:22-24, 32-33

OT Quotation to Relate Jesus to David 2:15-31, 34-35

Climactic Conclusion: Testimony 2:36

Hortatory Conclusion 2:28-39" [4]

17. *In the last days it will be, God declares*: Joel 2:28-29. In Joel the specification is "afterward." "Luke thus gives to the quotation a new eschatological orientation and ascribes the prophets words to God himself." [5]

Or

Numbers 11:24-30

{24} So Moses went out and told the people the words of the LORD; and he gathered seventy elders of the people, and placed them all around the tent. {25} Then the LORD came down in the cloud and spoke to him, and took some of the spirit that was on him and put it on the seventy elders; and when the spirit rested upon them, they prophesied. But they did not do so again. {26} Two men remained in the camp, one named Eldad, and the other named Medad, and the spirit rested on them; they were among those registered, but they had not gone out to the tent, and so they prophesied in the camp. {27} And a young man ran and told Moses, "Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp." {28} And Joshua son of Nun, the assistant of Moses, one of his chosen men, said, "My lord Moses, stop them!" {29} But Moses said to him, "Are you jealous for my sake?"

Would that all the Lord's people were prophets, and that the LORD would put his spirit on them!" {30} And Moses and the elders of Israel returned to the camp.

25. *some of the spirit that was on him*: No earlier passage explicitly says that Yahweh had put his Spirit on Moses. See Numbers 7:89 for a description of the close association between Yahweh and Moses.

put it on the seventy elders...they prophesied: The "spirit" is envisaged as something material which can be "put on" a person. At the same time the power of the spirit is expressed in prophecy, the ability to know and express the intentions of Yahweh.

26. *Eldad...Medad*: These two prophesied within the camp of Israel, in contrast to the elders who prophesied at the tent of meeting. This is apparently unexpected and unwelcome because they had not been authorized by Moses.

29. *are you jealous for my sake*: Moses believes that the objection is concern that Moses' authority will be jeopardized if others are allowed to demonstrate the power of the Spirit without his authorization.

If Numbers 11:24-30 is read as the first lesson, Acts 2:1-21 should be read as the second lesson.

Psalm 104:24-34, 35b

{24} O LORD, how manifold are your works! In wisdom you have made them all; the earth is full of your creatures. {25} Yonder is the sea, great and wide, creeping things innumerable are there, living things both small and great. {26} There go the ships, and Leviathan that you formed to sport in it. {27} These all look to you to give them their food in due season; {28} when you give to them, they gather it up; when you open your hand, they are filled with good things. {29} When you hide your face, they are dismayed; when you take away their breath, they die and return to their dust. {30} When you send forth your spirit, they are created; and you renew the face of the ground. {31} May the glory of the LORD endure forever; may the LORD rejoice in his works-- {32} who looks on the earth and it trembles, who touches the mountains and they smoke. {33} I will sing to the LORD as long as I live; I will sing praise to my God while I have being. {34} May my meditation be pleasing to him, for I rejoice in the LORD. {35b} Bless the LORD, O my soul. Praise the LORD!

26. *Leviathan that you formed to sport in it*: The name Leviathan occurs 6 times in the Old Testament. See Job 41:1-34 for an extensive description of Leviathan as a terrifying sea-monster. This the usual picture of the Leviathan. However, in the Psalm Leviathan is created by Yahweh to play in the sea. Leviathan's fearful might described as playfulness gives shape to Yahweh's immeasurable wisdom and power. Even Leviathan depends upon Yahweh for sustenance and even existence.

27-30. *you give them their food...you hide your face, they are dismayed...you send forth your spirit...you renew the face of the earth*: The fortunes of the creation and its creatures depend completely on Yahweh. The earth is full of Yahweh's creatures; they are result of his *pneuma*, his wind, breath, Spirit. The singer praises Yahweh for his wisdom and creative power, and promises to sing his praises as long as he/she lives. Within the liturgy the Psalm is the congregation's response to the mighty acts of God, and by declaring God's greatness we join our intent to that of the singer.

[34a. *Let sinners be consumed from the earth, and let the wicked be no more*: Jesus said we should "bless not curse" those who curse us (Luke 6:28), also Paul (Romans 12:14). The editors of the RCL have bowledrized the verse, but they did not sanitize Psalm 68:2 for Easter 7 which prays, "As smoke is driven away, so driven them away; as wax melts before the fire, let the wicked perish before God."]

1 Corinthians 12:3b-13 or Acts 2:1-21 (above)

{3b} No one can say "Jesus is Lord" except by the Holy Spirit. {4} Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; {5} and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; {6} and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. {7} To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. {8} To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, {9} to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, {10} to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the discernment of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. {11} All these are activated by one and the same Spirit, who allots to each one individually just as the Spirit chooses. {12} For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. {13} For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body--Jews or Greeks, slaves or free--and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.

3a: The first half of the verse has been omitted from the reading. It reads, "Therefore I want you to understand that no one speaking by the Spirit of God ever says 'Let Jesus be cursed!'" Those who seek to speak or act for Jesus apart from the leading of the Spirit are, in effect, saying, "Let Jesus be cursed!" How can we test the words and acts of others? By the norm of his words in the Word.

3b. *No one can say, "Jesus is Lord" except by the Holy Spirit:* The phrase is a confession of faith, and such a confession can only be under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. In the explanation of the Third Article of the Creed Luther wrote: "I believe that I cannot by my own energy or effort believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to Him, but the Holy Spirit has called me by the Gospel...."

4-7. *varieties of gifts...services...activities...it is the same God who activates them all in everyone:* Everything comes from God! If there is anything good, it is from God, even if the one who does it does not know it, or even repudiates God. It is especially true within the fellowship of believers.

12: The metaphor of the community as one body with many members is expanded in 12:14-30. In verse 27 Paul writes, "Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it."

13: The unity of the church is the product of our baptism in the Spirit. It includes all kinds of people: Jews or Greeks, slaves or free.

John 20:19-23

{19} When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." {20} After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. {21} Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." {22} 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 retain the sins of any, they are retained.

19. *the first day of the week:* "Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark" Mary Magdalene had gone to the tomb." Genesis 1:3-5: God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light. And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day. With the resurrection comes also a new creation. With the death of the logos the old creation is in the process of dissolution. The new creation has already begun. Both are inexorably in process of reaching their

respective goals.

21-23: Jesus greets his disciples with Peace, blesses them with the Spirit, and empowers them to forgive sins (on behalf of God who will endorse their decisions).

22. *he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit.* This passage has already been used as part of the Gospel for the Second Sunday of Easter. In its use on Pentecost the emphasis is on these words in verse 22. This places the baptism of the disciples with the Spirit on Easter rather than Pentecost. The passage connects the giving of the Spirit with being sent by Jesus (verse 21), and with the authority to forgive or retain sins (verse 23).

Or

John 7:37-39

{37} On the last day of the festival, the great day, while Jesus was standing there, he cried out, "Let anyone who is thirsty come to me, {38} and let the one who believes in me drink. As the scripture has said, 'Out of the believer's heart shall flow rivers of living water.'" {39} Now he said this about the Spirit, which believers in him were to receive; for as yet there was no Spirit, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

(Also used on The Vigil of Pentecost ABC.)

37. *On the last day of the festival:* This was "Sukkoth," the festival of Booths or Tabernacles (see John 7:2), beginning on the 15th day of the seventh month for seven (Leviticus 23:33-36). "Along with Passover and Pentecost, Sukkoth was one of the three great festivals of the Israelite year. The festival included a prayer for winter rains (water) and for the renewal of sunlight (light)." [6] "Coming on the last day of the Feast of Sukkoth and in the temple, this declaration of Jesus suggests that he is the life-nurturing water for which pilgrims prayed..." [7] Jesus' significance as light is the subject of John 8:12-20, the next pericope in the Gospel.

38. *As the scripture has said:* The source of the quotation is uncertain. Since Zechariah 14 was read at the Festival, Zechariah 14:8 is one possibility. But this refers to living waters flowing out of Jerusalem.

Out of the believer's heart: The Greek is: "out of his belly." Rather than "out of the believer's heart," a more likely reference would be "Out of Jesus' heart...." See, for example, 1 Corinthians 10:4, where Jesus is the source of spiritual drink in the wilderness."

39. *he said this about the Spirit:* What Jesus has said about the Spirit is that *he*, Jesus, is the source of the Spirit for the believers.

as yet there was no Spirit, because Jesus was not yet glorified: "John does not mean to deny the earlier existence of the Spirit, nor indeed that he was active in the prophets.... He means rather that the Holy Spirit was not given in the characteristically Christian manner and measure until the close of the ministry. This corresponds with the almost complete silence of the synoptic gospels regarding the Spirit.... The Spirit was a gift of the new age...; in John's idiom this is expressed by saying that after Christ's return to the Father, Father and Son send the Holy Spirit...."(John 14:16, 26; 15:26). [8]

Reflection

Each of the lessons reflects an aspect of the Holy Spirit: Numbers is a reminder that God's Spirit is not given only to believers in Christ. Moses, the seventy elders, even Eldad and Medad prophesied under the power of the Spirit of Yahweh. In the passage from Acts we hear the story of the first Christian Pentecost, a spiritual harvest fifty days after Easter. The Psalmist recites the majesty and power of Yahweh and calls attention to Yahweh's provision for all the needs of his creatures. They live only when Yahweh

sends forth his spirit. For all that Yahweh is and has done the Psalmist vows to praise him as long as he lives. Paul reminds us that we can only confess Jesus as our Lord through the gift of the Holy Spirit, and further that each of us has been given gifts through the Spirit for the good of the body of Christ. In the Gospel we hear again (see the Gospel for the Second Sunday of Easter) that Jesus breathed the Holy Spirit on his disciples on Easter Sunday evening, and gave them the power to forgive and retain sins. The lections reflect on the giving of the Spirit, to Moses and the elders, to all creatures, to the disciples and to all Christians. The point is not that we have been blessed, but that we are now charged with a mission and empowered to accomplish it.

Hymns [9]

With One Voice (e.g. 762v), *Hymnal Supplement* 1991 (e.g. 725s) and *LBW* (e.g. 32).

E=Entrance; D=Hymn of the Day; I=First Lesson, P=Psalm; II=Second Lesson; G=Gospel

161 E--O Day Full	758v II--Come to Us	703v II--
163 D--Come, Holy Ghost,	-Draw Us in (763s)	
472 D--Come, Holy Ghost,	710v II--One Bread	
682v I--Praise the Spirit	755v II--We All Are One	
(751s)	715v II--Open Your Ears	
827s P--All Things Bright	246 G--The First Day	
(767v)	749s/686v, 18, 162, 388,	
820s II--Many Are the	719v/777s, 775v, 756v/748s	

Prayers of the People [10]

P or A: In the last days the Spirit will be poured out on all flesh, our daughters and sons will prophesy, the young will see visions, the old will dream dreams. Let us pray for those days, for our salvation and that the needs of all will be supplied by God's providence until that day, saying, "Come Holy Spirit," and responding, "Jesus is Lord."

A: Energize the one body and all its members. As we all were baptized into the one body of Christ, tear down all barriers between Christians. Enliven our witness and joy in the unity you give us. Come, Holy Spirit. Jesus is Lord.

A: Renew the world and dazzle us with the sight of how manifold are the works of God! Cleanse and refresh the earth and teach us to treasure and preserve it as your varied and amazing work. Come, Holy Spirit. Jesus is Lord.

A: Give peace to those who are brutalized by war, violence and bloodshed. Beat weapons into plowshares and take away the terror of those whose homes are destroyed and whose people are perishing without hope. Come, Holy Spirit. Jesus is Lord.

A: Grant life and wholeness to any who are diminished by abuse, depression or sickness. We remember by name _____. O Giver of Life, do not abandon your own to the power of death. Come, Holy Spirit. Jesus is Lord.

A: Gift us in whatever way you choose for the common good. Show us again and again that there are varieties of gifts but the same Spirit, varieties of service but the same Lord. Let us outdo one another in honoring one another's gifts. Come, Holy Spirit. Jesus is Lord.

P: Hear our prayers and grant them as is best for all. Teach us always to call upon the name of the Lord and be saved, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Or [11]

Presider or deacon

The Spirit of God aids us in our weakness and teaches us to pray. In the power of the Spirit let us offer prayers to God for the needs, concerns, and hopes of all the world.

Deacon or other leader

For peace from on high and for our salvation.

For the peace of the whole world, for the welfare of the holy churches of God, and for the unity of all.

For this holy gathering and for those who enter with faith, reverence, and fear of God.

For the newly baptized illumined by the light of Christ.

For our bishop and the presbyters, the deacons and all who minister in Christ, and for all the holy people of God.

For the world and its leaders, our nation and its people.

For all those in need, the suffering and the oppressed, travelers and prisoners, the dying and the dead.

For ourselves, our families, and those we love.

Remembering our most glorious and blessed Virgin Mary and all the saints, let us offer ourselves and one another to the living God through Christ. **To you, O Lord.**

Presider

Blessed are you, O Lord our God, who transforms our lives and makes us new. Hear our prayers which we offer in confidence and breathe upon us with your Holy Spirit. Glory to you for ever and ever.

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Notes

[1] Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, New York: Doubleday, 1998, p. 235.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 240.

[3] *Loc. cit.*

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 249.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 252.

[6] Bruce J. Malina and Richard L. Rohrbaugh, *Social-Science Commentary on the Gospel of John*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998, p. 140.

[7] *Ibid.*, p. 154.

[8] C.K. Barrett, *The Gospel According to St John: An Introduction with Commentary and Notes on the Greek Text*. London: S.P.C.K., 1962, p. 272.

[9] <http://www.worship.ca/text/rcla0102.txt>

[10] http://www.worship.ca/text/int_a2.txt

[11] <http://members.home.com/oplater/prayer.htm>