

# The outpouring of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost



Acts 2:1–13

On the fiftieth day after Jesus' resurrection, the promised Comforter descended upon the disciples: a great rushing sound, as of a mighty wind, filled the house and tongues like flames of fire appeared above their heads. A number of men and women who were with the Apostles were filled with the power of the Holy Spirit. They started speaking in foreign tongues and praised God as the Holy Spirit inspired them.

In Jerusalem lived also many devout Jews from different nations apart from the many pilgrims who had gathered there for the celebration of the annual harvest-feast. The rushing noise, as of a mighty wind, which signified the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, was heard far and wide. Many people gathered. They marvelled at the Galilaeans who could suddenly speak in foreign tongues. Others mocked, however, and asserted that they were drunk.

The children learn what happened fifty days after Jesus Christ's resurrection, and why we still celebrate Pentecost. They rejoice that God is active through the Holy Spirit.

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The barley harvest has been brought in. Many a farmer looks at his brimful barns with great satisfaction. Sacrifices must be brought to God for this blessing. From all parts of the country and from as far afield as Europe and Africa, believers travel to Jerusalem to celebrate this annual harvest-feast.

Throngs of people crowd the alleys of the city. There is an incredible din. Leaning against a wall, Timon, a young boy, is observing the hustle and bustle with great interest. Jewish men are chatting to one another in the streets. By comparison, the pilgrims in their strange and unusual garb, are easily recognizable. They are heading for the temple. They want to offer two loaves of bread made of the fine, new flour as prescribed by Jewish law. Timon knows Jerusalem very well and allows himself to drift along with the crowds.

Suddenly the boy hears a strange, powerful rushing sound—one he has never heard before. He is very curious to know what it is. When he sees many people flocking to a particular place, he joins them. People are emerging from some of the houses there. They are praising God. Soon they are the centre of attention. The crowd forms a semicircle and waits expectantly to find out

the origin of the strange, rushing sound which they have all heard. In the pushing and jostling crowd, Timon is pressed against a wall and because he is so small, he cannot see what is happening. He looks around for help. "But those are the followers of the Nazarene," someone next to him remarks in surprise. He shakes his head unbelievably as he adds: "They have been hiding here in a house for a long time, and now they are suddenly making such a fuss!" Timon takes courage and asks the man: "What is happening?" Maybe the man is pleased to be able to voice his opinion. In any event, he answers Timon. "They are followers of Jesus of Nazareth who was crucified recently. Since then one has not heard much of them. Without their Master they were afraid and went into hiding in these houses, but now they are all coming out for some reason. Their faces are radiant and they are standing there as if they know no fear at all! Something very unusual must have happened!"

"What are they saying?" Timon enquires with great interest. "They are praising God," replies the pilgrim who is standing in front of Timon. "These men must have been in Egypt at some time or other. They speak the language as well as my wife and I. But yet they don't look like Egyptians." Now other bystanders also start commenting on the proceedings: "You must be mistaken! These are simple men and women. Some of them travelled through Samaria and Galilee with this Jesus, but they definitely did not get any further than that."

"They look so happy! It sounds as if they are speaking

Persian!?"

"That really does me good! I have not heard my mother tongue spoken since my youth!"

"Oh, don't you believe it! They're drunk; that's all."

"They are speaking ..!"

"No, I must know, it is ..." So everyone speaks at once and there is utter confusion. Because these bystanders are speaking different languages themselves, they do not always understand one another very well. Yet all understand what the disciples are saying, Timon too. They are praising God. "What could have caused them to be so joyful and thankful?", Timon wonders.

Timon finally forces his way to the front of the crowd. Small and agile as he is, he eventually manages to get close to the followers of Jesus. Among them he recognizes an acquaint-



tance! It is Justus. He is saying with great enthusiasm: "How great and marvellous God is! How wonderful his works! Everything has happened exactly as his Son promised it would! I am so happy today!"

"But what has happened?" Timon asks, pulling at the young man's sleeve impatiently. Only now does Justus notice him. "I can't begin to describe it to you! When our Saviour returned to his Father in heaven ten days ago, he told the Apostles to remain in Jerusalem and await the Comforter which God would send them. More than a hundred men and women joined them. Together with them I, too, waited and prayed for this promised Spirit of God to descend. Today this Comforter descended! This is what happened: Suddenly a mighty, rushing wind filled the whole house and I saw what looked like tongues of fire! They burnt brightly above our heads, yet not a single hair was singed. It was incredible and wonderful! But the most beautiful part was what one could neither see nor hear: that which happened in the heart. I felt a tremendous power surge inside me. God's Spirit, the Holy Spirit, entered my soul today. I am no longer afraid to profess myself to Jesus Christ. I am so happy!" Timon just stands there listening... Amazed and a little sad he looks at the radiantly happy man. How he would have loved to have been there too!

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*Ten days after Jesus Christ's ascension, God sent the promised Comforter to those waiting in Jerusalem. The power of the Holy Spirit filled them and impelled them to confess Jesus Christ. To the amazement of all present, they were understood by people who spoke a great variety of languages.*

- 1 We let the children tell us what Pentecost means. They can bring in local/regional details. It should be made clear to the children that Pentecost is a great and important day for all God's children. We introduce the story with a few sentences: The word 'Pentecost' is of Greek origin and means 'fiftieth days'. On the fiftieth day after Jesus' resurrection, something wonderful—something that the Lord had foretold—happened in Jerusalem.
- 2 We ask the children to describe the picture. They imagine themselves to be Timon and Justus and re-enact their conversation.—Timon is sad that he has not received the Holy Spirit. How can this be rectified?
- 3 We consider once more why Pentecost is a special day for us. (Birthday of the Church of Christ, great activity of the Holy Spirit, transmission...)