

Sound, Sight and Speech

Լսեցին, Տեսան եւ Իսուեցան

Acts 2:1-12

How in the world, these simple people, fisherman, tax collector, and so on became bold evangelists like Billy Graham?

How did they do it?

What happened?

They were simple people; they were not wealthy; they did not have political power and influence; they did not go to seminary. YET... Something happened...

-They were different; they were changed; they were transformed...

A group of people, apostles, disciples, in the upper room there was also mother of Jesus and other people... made a difference in church history, they changed the world.

- I am reading a book by **Michael Green**; the of the book is “**Thirty Years that Changed the World**”, starting from Jerusalem, to Samaria, to Antioch, to Ephesus, to Corinth and ultimately to ROME... and to Hayasdan and to Fresno...

- Strange, they did not have the Internet, printing machines, microphones and loudspeakers, airplanes, cars... all the stuff we use. Yet, they did it...

It is possible...

The Kingdom of God is at work. It is new era.

It is the beginning of **God's new creation** in which heaven and earth will come together in a new way.”¹

In coming months, we will study together the work of **God's Spirit** in bring **change in the world**. I pray this sermon series will inspire you to walk closely with God. It will challenge you to be a WITNESS, become a MARTYR for Jesus.

Let us dig in His Word:

When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. (Acts 2:1 NIV11)

-The Feast of Pentecost.

It happened when they were gathered during the **feast of Pentecost**.

John Stott explains this feast in the following:

“This feast had two meanings, one agricultural and the other historical. Originally, it was the middle of the three annual Jewish harvest festivals, and was called either the **Feast of Harvest**, because it celebrated the **completion of the grain harvest**, or the **Feast of Weeks or Pentecost**, because it took place **seven weeks or fifty days** (*pentēkostos* means ‘fiftieth’) after the Passover, which was when the grain harvesting began.”²

This was very important feast for the Jews who come together from all over the world. There was 3000 people says the bible.

-Think about this feast: **Passover**, God rescued the Israelite (Exodus). God fulfills His promise to Abraham. After **fifty days from Passover**, they are in **Mount Sinai**, and God gave them the LAW.

- Fifty days after **Good Friday, and Resurrection**, God keeps His promises to **bring salvation**, FREEDOM, redemption, not only to the Jews, but to the entire humanity. God pours out His Spirit over humanity. (Ezek. 36:26; Jer. 31:33).

“The Greek word *pneuma* not only means ‘spirit’, but it also means ‘wind’ and ‘breath.’ We find the same meanings in the Hebrew word *ruah*.”³

At creation the **Ruah of God was at work**. God’s breath also made humans. When God’s breath (*ruah*) is at work life generates, things change.

“From the beginning of the Scriptures in the Old Testament, the breath of God is associated with his life-giving Spirit. It is associated with the power of creation, the energy of divine operation. In the Greek New Testament, another word used to describe the work of God's spirit is *dunamis*, from which we get *dynamite*, an explosive power.”⁴

-Three signs happened:

² Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. ³ They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. ⁴ All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them. (Acts 2:2-4 NIV11)

Sound, Sight and Speech

1. **Sounds like violent wind** that filled whole house...

2. **Tongues as of fire** rested over them (**they saw that**)

3. They were filled with the **Spirit** and **spoke** in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.

Please notice Luke does not write pages on those signs. It is a brief description of the event. It does not mean they were not important.

-Luke did not draw a dramatic picture. **Sound, Sight, and Speech** (I used to listen a band called Earth, Wind and Fire).

-The event itself is so powerful.

A. The Wind (spirit) of God, *ruah* of God at work,

B. The tongues like fire, symbolized the **presence of God, which like fire, consumes and purifies everything....**

-let me repeat: Fire is also a symbol of the **powerful presence of God**, as both the fire at the burning bush (Ex. 3:2–5) and the pillar of fire at night (Ex. 13:21–22) indicate.⁵

...On Mount Saini, God's fire was on that burning bush and it was not consumed, God's voice came saying: **"Do not come near; take your sandals off your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground"** (Exod. 3:5 ESV).

God gave to Moses His commandments ... the LAW

- **Fire also represents light**. Those days they lit the room with fire. It gives light to the dark world; it illumines our mind to understand God and His Word; with those words they gave speeches; God gave them words to speak, words that were cognitive, understandable to the people who came from all over.

What is going on?

The point is this:

-Luke's emphasis is on **theophany**; God is touching humanity... God is there...

God's Spirit appeared and there was a **spiritual transformation**.

-This reminds me also Ezekiel 37, when the wind blows over the dry valley and gives life to the dry bones.

Brothers and sisters, **God is at work**. Heaven and earth come together; this is a NEW era.

What happened in the **Tower of Babel**? Confusion.

At Pentecost the Spirit of God reversed the confusion of the Tower of Babel. Every nation understood the message in their language.

-Who was the audience?

Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. ⁶ When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard their own language being spoken. ⁷ Utterly amazed, they asked: “Aren’t all these who are speaking Galileans? ⁸ Then how is it that each of us hears them in our native language? ⁹ Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, ¹⁰ Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome ¹¹ (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs—we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!” ¹² Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, “What does this mean?” (Acts 2:5-12 NIV11)

This is not just random people coming together.

God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven...

Also, God fearing non-Jews who accepted YAHWH as their God.

From where?

From all over...

Five groupings, from East to West. JW Stott explains:

First, he mentions ***Parthians, Medes and Elamites*** and ***residents of Mesopotamia*** (9a), that is, peoples from the **Caspian Sea westwards**

Secondly, in verses 9b–10a, Luke refers to five areas of what we call **Asia Minor or Turkey**, namely ***Cappadocia*** (east), ***Pontus*** (north), ***and Asia*** (west), ***Phrygia and Pamphylia*** (south).

Because ***Judea*** (9) comes oddly between **Mesopotamia and Cappadocia**, some commentators think Luke is using the word to refer to a wider area like the whole of **Palestine and Syria, even including Armenia**, (p65)

The third group (10b) is **North African**, namely ***Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene*** (its chief city),

the fourth (10c–11a) is ***visitors from Rome across the Mediterranean (both Jews and converts to Judaism)***,

the fifth, which looks like an afterthought, is ***Cretans and Arabs*** (11b).⁶

-What was the reaction of the audience?

-Some mocked the disciples thinking they were intoxicated. (11)

“...some were amazed because each one heard their own language being spoken. “

“Aren’t all these who are speaking Galileans? (6b-8)

Maybe you can ask why Jews are from all these countries?

Exile, Jews were scattered all over those places...

Jews were scattered all over. They were hearing the languages of the nations they came from. F. Bruce explains that Jews were allowed to recite their liturgical texts in different languages, like Shema, or Eighteen Benedictions.

“... hearing the praises of God in a foreign language was a common occurrence during the great festivals, when so many pilgrims from the Diaspora were present in the city.

Now to their surprise, these pilgrims hear the praises of God in all the tongues of the Diaspora being uttered by Galileans of all people! The event was surely nothing less than a reversal of the curse of Babel.”⁷

Application

1. They were all together in one place, միարձանութիւն

Gathering together in one place. They were waiting for what Jesus promised to them.

The Bible does not tell us what they were doing together. Yet, from the context of Chapter 1, see the apostles and several others such as Mary the mother of Jesus immediately went up to the upper room, and spent they time praying. **“... with one accord were devoting themselves to prayer” (1:14)**

Therefore, I assume they spent the next 10 days waiting for the promise together.

The Spirit of the Lord came over the group who were in prayer, one body in prayer...ONE BODY...

God’s Spirit can come over one person alone, yet, coming together in prayer and worship is an important element in our collective life.

one body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father (Eph. 4:5)

2. Everyone Heard the Message in their own language

The Pentecost experience of speaking in tongues is different from 1 Cor. 12. Here the **gift of tongues was given for clarity, not confusion**. Some do have the experience speaking in tongues; that is personal between the individual and God. Here, in this event, the languages were for each nation.

How about now? This is something happened in history for that day. Now we live in 21st century and there is need for missionaries to take the Good News of the Bible to every nation and tribe.

“Wycliffe Bible Translators was founded in 1942 by William Cameron Townsend. The name was in memory of John Wycliffe, who was the first to translate the whole Bible into the English language from Latin.” (Brian Morgan)

-Do we need new translators?

-Do we need people to go and help some tribes to have an alphabet?

-Did we translate the Bible to all the languages of the world?

As of 2022, according to [Wycliffe Global Alliance](#), all of the Bible has been translated into 724 languages, the [New Testament](#) has been translated into an additional 1,617 languages, and smaller portions of the Bible have been translated into 1,248 other languages. Thus, at least some portions of the Bible have been translated into 3,589 languages.⁸ I read that there are still more than 1500 languages with no translations.

-Armenians have *Krapar* (old classical) translation; It was translated by Mesrob Mashdots]] early-5th-century translation. (it is called queen translation)

-Armenian vernacular translation was much latter by American missionaries..... .

So what is your role now?

It is important that we should be aware of this and pray, give, learn languages....

Ask yourself: How will God use me concerning Pentecost?

Fifteen years ago, group of us (four guys) started an Armenian Christian Radio on the Internet called *Bashde* (worship). A few some years later, we started a Persian Christian Radio, *Parastande* (to worship). After that we aimed the Turkish people and we started Turkish Christian Radio called *Ovguler* (compliment-praise-

tribute). Lastly, we started an Arabic Christian Radio called *tasabih* (to Praise God).

You don't need to start a Radio, or be translator to experience Pentecost. Ask God, "Lord, may your spirit lead me to be your voice in this world."

May we ask the Spirit of God to come and fill each of us like a strong wind, like a fire, and give us words to be witness for Jesus Christ.

Prayer:

Jesus, thank You for sending Your Spirit to be with us at all times. Because You are with me today, I know I can have freedom in every area of my life. Holy Spirit, help me to break loose from anything that's holding me back. Only You can define who I am—and because of You I am no longer restricted by painful things in my life. Amen.

1. N.T. Wright, For Everyone Bible Study Acts. P 6
2. John R. W. Stott, Bible Speaks Today: The Message of Acts To the ends of the earth P62,63
3. R.C. Sproul, You Will be My Witnesses to the End of the Earth, Acts. P 21
4. *ibid* p 21
5. Ajith Fernando, The NIV Application Commentary, Acts P 65-66
6. John R. W. Stott, Bible Speaks Today: The Message of Acts To the ends of the earth P 65-66
7. F. F. Bruce, The Book of Acts; NICNT P 64.
8. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bible_translations#:~:text=As%20of%202022%20all%20of,according%20to%20Wycliffe%20Global%20Alliance.