

*When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. 2And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. 3Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. 4All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.*

*5Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem. 6And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in the native language of each. 7Amazed and astonished, they asked, "Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? 8And how is it that we hear, each of us, in our own native language? 9Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, 10Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, 11Cretans and Arabs—in our own languages we hear them speaking about God's deeds of power." 12All were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "What does this mean?" 13But others sneered and said, "They are filled with new wine."*

*14But 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. 15Indeed, these are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only nine o'clock in the morning. 16No, 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. 18Even upon my slaves, both men and women, in those days I will pour out my Spirit; and they shall prophesy. 19And I will show portents in the heaven above and signs on the earth below, blood, and fire, and smoky mist. 20The sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood, before the coming of the Lord's great and glorious day. 21Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.'*

What does a baby see? At first only darkness and light. Colors.

Maybe it is like being too close to a TV screen, color, black and white, but no form. As the baby grows maybe it is like moving back away from the screen, shapes and images appear. A face is fixed in the baby's mind - objects, scenes, structures. But no words, no naming, no sense of a self.

But slowly words are added, probably understood before they are spoken.

Mama, Dada - words that transform the formless void into a world - into people - into things.

And one day that most powerful word of all is added: me.

To name is to have power, to know the name is to be able to call. Mama. Mama.

And when Mama rushes in, the child knows the power of me, my power, power to control with words.

My tribe shares my words. We are just a bigger me - more of me - us.

Before long our tribe teaches me of our God. Our God created everyone and everything. And talks in our language - understands my words - helps when I call.

The members of the tribe were called Jews. They believed their God created everything., all peoples and nations. They believed the direction that all history was moving was toward them, toward their God and their temple, toward their holy city, Jerusalem. Their prophet, Isaiah had spoken of a glorious day with these words: “Arise, shine for your light has come and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you. Nations will come to your light and kings to the brightness of your rising.”

They were like the tribe called Americans. We always think of the world with us at the center and history as moving toward our glory and prosperity and power.

But on the day Israel's God sent God's Spirit this is what happened.

The followers of one named Jesus were gathered in a house. A sound like the rush of a mighty wind filled the house. Divided tongues as of fire appeared, a tongue rested on each of those in the house. And they went out. They went out to where people were - people from all over the world who had come to Jerusalem because they were Jews. They had come to worship the God of the Jewish tribe, who spoke the Jewish language, Hebrew.

Suddenly the men who had received the spirit were speaking to them, not in Hebrew but in the everyday language of these peoples from all over the world.

It would be as if we were to go into a crowd of people from all over the world and you would speak Chinese to the Chinese, and you Swahili and you French. To everyone in their own language we would tell of God. That's what happened.

And the locals thought they were drunk. For the words they heard made no sense, being all in foreign languages.

But Peter spoken to them, and said, "Men of Judea and all who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you and listen to what I say. Indeed these are not drunk as you suppose, for it is only nine o'clock in the morning. No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel, ‘In the last days it will be,’ God declares, ‘that I will pour 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, Even upon my slaves both men and women in those days I will pour out my spirit; and they shall all prophesy.’”

All the boundaries for God were being broken. God would speak in every language, and through every sort of person. Not just priests, male and trained and respected but now women and girls, slaves and the elderly, everyone would be filled with God's own spirit. The nations were not coming to Jerusalem, but God was breaking out into the whole world.

No longer would it be, learn our language, accept our customs, become one of us to worship our God. Now followers of Jesus would learn every language and go to every place and declare a God who belonged to no one tribe, but to whom all tribes belong. "Jesus is Lord over all," they declared.

In every age we want to go back. We want God to be a God of our tribe, who will bring all the nations to us and our way. But God's spirit is for all, and for everyone.

Pentecost - the day God's spirit broke out.

"Whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be saved," declared Peter.

God does not belong to a tribe, speak a language, and think as we think. The prayers God hears from the newborn Vietnamese baby and the newborn Somalin baby and Kelly whom we will baptize are all the same. For these children do not know language or tribe or self, but God knows them all and wants every single one to know Jesus.

God has poured out God's spirit so that no one will be a stranger to God's Son.

Go. Tell.