

## **PENTECOST: IN FAITH WE RECEIVE THE HOLY SPIRIT**

**The Day of Pentecost**

**May 27, 2007**

**Genesis 11:1-9**

**Psalm 104:24-34, 35b**

**Acts 2:1-21 or Romans 8:14-17**

**John 14:8-17 [25-27]**

### **Transformation**

In Genesis 11:1-9, God chose to intervene in human lives to fulfill the plan of salvation. God had blessed humankind and instructed them to be fruitful and fill the earth (Genesis 1:22). However, it was humankind's desire to remain in one place, to "move up," to build a tower as a monument to themselves instead of "moving out." So God confused their one language, and the people separated and settled into different language groups.

This was a necessary act to preserve the human race. The monumental activity of the Holy Spirit, thousands of years later, would be a necessary act to empower God's people to "move out," to "go." A universal message to proclaim Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord "everywhere in the world" (Acts 1:8, *CEV*) would be the culmination of God's work in reconciling humankind through the power of the Holy Spirit.

On the Feast of Pentecost, the day of the coming of the Holy Spirit, one message – the gospel of Jesus Christ – was heard by many different people of many different languages. By the power of the Holy Spirit, Peter's sermon (Acts 2:14-36) transformed each one who heard and believed into a follower of Christ with all of the fruits, gifts, and attributes necessary to live out a Christian witness.

As the fruit (Christian qualities) of the Holy Spirit becomes evident in our lives, we reflect Jesus, and the lives of those around us are transformed (Galatians 5:22-23; 2 Corinthians 5:17-18). The Holy Spirit transforms the many believers into one body, the Church of Jesus Christ. Thus, the Church is empowered by the Holy Spirit to carry out the mandate of the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20).

Christ has sent a Mighty Helper to "walk alongside" the Church, individually and collectively (John 14:16-18; 16:8-15). The Holy Spirit is described as a Comforter, one who is desperately needed in these days as we endure events that, in previous times, were considered unimaginable. The Holy Spirit consoles, intercedes, protects, teaches, and loves. We are sustained through testing, turmoil, and tribulation. Others witness the power of God in our lives, and desire to experience similar transformation in their lives.

Let us be reminded by these readings not to settle for the comforts of the familiar, of staying put, of keeping God's Holy Spirit. Rather, let us be challenged to "move out" and share the great gift of this Spirit with those around us. May we be transformed into powerful witnesses of the power of God, reflecting Jesus to those who watch us most closely. So let it be.

This week's Reflection was prepared by the Rev. Diane M. Ritzie, who serves as a consultant for the American Bible Society and who served as editor of the *Jubilee Bible*, published by ABS in 1999.

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**This week we remember to pray for the work of the Bible Societies in: Argentina** – With thanks to God for the ongoing holistic project, *Medicine for the Body and the Soul*, through which medicines and the Scriptures are distributed to indigenous health centers, and with prayers for the Wichi literacy project and for the Scriptures that will be distributed through the *Lectio Divina* project to those who belong to the Roman Catholic Church; **Chile** – With thanks to God for the first Bible Selection for the hearing impaired and that October 31 has officially become the Day of the Evangelical People of Chile, and with prayers that a day every September may become Bible Day.

**Activity Corner:** Pentecost "Prayer Doves"

Supplies needed: Bible; white construction paper (8-1/2" x 11"); dove pattern (approximately 5" x 8"); scissors; pens or pencils; hole puncher; white yarn or string.

The dove is considered a symbol for the Holy Spirit based on the Holy Spirit descending like a dove on Jesus at his baptism (Luke 3:22). Invite everyone in your household to trace a dove on a sheet of white construction paper and then cut it out. The Day of Pentecost and the gift of the Holy Spirit empower Christians to tell everyone about Jesus.

On one side of the dove, write the words "Holy Spirit" in a language other than English. Assign a different language to each member of your household. Some examples are:

French	Saint-Esprit
German	Heilige Geist
Greek	Pneuma Hagion
Italian	Spirito Santo
Navajo	Nilch'i Diyinii
Norwegian	Den Hellige And
Polish	Duchem Swietym
Portuguese	Espirito Santo
Romanian	Duhul Sfint
Spanish	Espiritu Santo
Swahili	Roho Mtakatifu
Tagalog	Espiritu Santo
Tamil	Parisuta Aavi (phonetic spelling)

On the other side of the dove, encourage everyone to write a prayer, thanking God for the gift of the Holy Spirit and listing ways they will tell others about Jesus. Punch a hole at

the top of the dove and add yarn or string. Hang the doves where you gather for family devotions and incorporate these prayers into your devotions throughout the week.

Read together Genesis 11:1-9 and Acts 2:1-13. Discuss how the Day of Pentecost compares with the “day of confusion.” In what ways is the Acts passage a “reversal” of the Genesis passage? Conclude by singing “There’s a Sweet, Sweet Spirit in This Place,” or one of your favorite Pentecost hymns.