

## The Age of the Spirit

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Today, we move from tracing the Spirit in the OT to his presence and work in NT. But the transition is more than a shift in testaments; it's a shift in *history*. Series: *Spirit-filled Church*  
What happens when the Spirit is poured? *A new age, a new people, a new mission.*

### New Age

Just prior to our passage, the risen Christ spent 40 days teaching his disciples about the kingdom of God. Then he ascended to the Father. But before leaving, he tells them to stay in Jerusalem and *wait* for the promised Spirit. We pick up, [When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place](#) (Ac 2:1). Who's together? The eleven disciples, the newly selected Matthias to make twelve. Mary, the mother of Jesus, the women disciples who ministered to Jesus, and his brothers. About 120 (1:14-15). What are they doing? They're obediently gathered in a house where they [were of one accord and devoting themselves to prayer](#) (1:14). The word for "one accord" is actually one mind, so they're thinking, talking, *and* praying in unity. It's not an either/or—rational *or* mystical—it's both for the earliest Christians. This is important because today, post-Enlightenment Christians tend to divide into "rational" and "mystical" camps. *They are of one mind and one spirit.* [Suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them](#) (2:2-3). What's happening? The wind and fire of the OT reappear: The pillar of cloud and fire that led the Israelites out of Egypt; the great east wind that parted the Red Sea; the sound of many wings and flashes of fire in Ezekiel's vision of glory; and the rushing wind and fire blazing in the house: *the Holy Spirit on the move*. But this time, the Wind and Fire are different. They're not centralized in the form of a pillar or attached to the temple. Instead, the wind fills the entire room, and the fire is "divided," not just to Peter, or to the 12, but across *all one hundred and twenty*. The presence of the Spirit is democratized not centralized. The 120 is symbolic: the 12 tribes of Israel, now represented by the 12 disciples of Jesus, are multiplied and perfected through the number ten to include "[all nations under heaven](#)" (5). Peter cites the prophet Joel for commentary, "[the Spirit is poured out on all flesh](#) (all kinds)." Up to this point, the Spirit rested on certain individuals for certain seasons, but now the Spirit is poured out on all. The hinge of history is turning. The new age is beginning. He notes these are "[the last days](#)" (17). God creates a new humanity, not restricted to Israel, but redrawn, redefined around the risen Christ to include people from every nation (the word is *ethnos*), every ethnic group (African, Greek, Roman, Turkish, etc.). But why now? Why not sooner? Remember Jesus' instructions? He had to first ascend to the Father before he could send his Spirit. Why? He had to *bear our judgement* at the cross to *plead our innocence* before the Crown. Redemption must be accomplished before it can be applied. This is why John 7 says, [for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified](#). Why the risen Jesus said to Mary, "[Do not cling to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father](#) (Jn 20:17). But now the debt has been paid, the divine Lawyer is making his case—plead our innocence. When we put our faith in Jesus' work, the Spirit applies it to us: forgiven, innocent, righteous. The Spirit and the Son inaugurate a new age populated with a new people! [Draw Chart]

## New People

The Spirit spills out of the house onto the street. They act like new people: 1) speaking new languages and 2) telling new stories. We're told they speak in other "tongues." This isn't an unintelligible prayer **language** (which we'll discuss in a few weeks). It's a comprehensible dialect, "[each one was hearing them speak in his own language](#)" (the word is dialect, 2:6). The early Christians were *rational*, their witness comprehensible to those present. They could hear them telling of the mighty works of God. But it was a *mystical*; prior to that moment they hadn't known these languages. Now, maybe you're thinking "I don't about this. Fire, wind. New age, new people, new language. Sounds pretty irrational to me." But could that be the product of our cultural conditioning? Our culture is obsessed with *reason*: NPR interviews loaded with stats, children driven to perform at school, obsession with the headlines, breakthroughs in Science. All valuable, but we're not brains on a stick. We know there's more to being human. In fact, current research says we're missing a significant part of what it means *to be human*. We're missing the *mystical*, the *transcendent*. Have you noticed? Everyday moments that used to be filled with reflection, pondering, are not stuffed with information. We can't wait for a coffee without checking our texts. Waiting for a green light, every head bowed, every eye closed to transcendence. We are consumed with rational consumption of information. Is it any wonder we struggle to enter into the mystical, moments of transcendence, where we disconnect from things around us and reflect on our lives, on God, on what's true? David Brooks: "[the unconscious mind hungers for those moments of transcendence when the skull line falls away and we are lost in love for another, the challenge of a task or the love of God.](#)" Stuffed with the here and now, we have little to no room for the mystical presence of the Holy Spirit. Filled with rational power, but on "E" in spiritual power. What would it look like to be filled with the Spirit. We'd tell new stories. Up to date testimony of what God has done, is doing. There are thousands around us who are stuck in the old age, have no access to the stories of God's love, no Savior to plead their innocence, no Spirit to prompt new stories! But people of the new age are open to the mystical, are interruptible. I think of people in our church that, when asked by hairdresser how their weekend was, they share how encouraged they were by God's love at church. People who when praised for their kindness or humility, point to the kindness and humility of Christ. People who are interruptible during the day to say a prayer, or send an encouraging text, instead of barreling onto the next task. People who welcome, ask for, the transcendent Spirit. Occasionally, according to verse 17, people have [visions and dreams](#), as a mark of the new age of the Spirit. Now these don't have the authority or reliability of Scripture but they happen. Every winter I go to Colorado and walk a mountain and pray for City Life and this January I sensed the prompting me to pray we would have visions and dreams, not as an end in themselves, but to empower bolder gospel witness. I didn't tell anyone. A few weeks ago my wife had a dream she thought might be from God, which is *not* typical for her. I took it to the elders and asked if anyone had an interpretation. The next morning Peter Craig sent me a text with a possible interpretation. So with the elders' permission we'd like to share this with you [Robie & Peter]. Anyone else have a similar dream? Verse 4 tells us when they were filled with the Spirit [And began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance](#)" The word, utterance means *to speak boldly, to declare with urgency*. They didn't stay in the house; they went out into the street. They weren't quiet; they were bold. Filled with the Spirit spoke

new languages and told new stories. Why? Because they are a new people, living in a new age, with a new *mission*—a mission the world is desperate for!

### **New Mission**

On the street testifying to the works of God, a diverse crowd responds, “[we hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God](#)” (11). It’s literally the greatness of God, the magnificence of God. It’s likely they were so filled with the Spirit they boldly praised God for great things he had done. Can I get a witness? How has God been great in your life? Shout it out! This is marvelous, mystical, but it’s also unclear. So Peter stands up and explains the mystical greatness of God through a rational sermon. The Spirit has been poured out on all flesh. It’s a new age. But judgment, blood and fire is coming. We crucified Christ, but God raised him up. We deserve judgment, but Jesus pleads our innocence. We deserve death, but he shows us the path of life. They were cut to the heart, not just the head. Mystical and rational; Spirit and truth; glory and gospel. God is letting us in on the new age to restore our humanity, to put us not just in touch but in fellowship with the God of glory. Why? A new mission. Anyone can get in on this, [Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins](#), (Buddha doesn’t forgive, Allah doesn’t forgive; Jesus bears your judgment and pleads your innocence before a holy God.) Believe in him [and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit](#) (2:38). Three thousand were added that day. Some doubted (some always will) but many believed. We’re not responsible for the response, just for the story. No one else can tell this gospel story. No one else has the fire and the wind, but we do. Let’s be the church God created us to be! One mind, one heart; devoted to prayer and to witness to tell greatest story on earth.