

PENTECOST

Drinking the Living Water

Pentecost
June 23, 2024
Revision F

Gospel: John 7:37-52, 8:12
Epistle: Acts 2:1-11

The first part of today’s Gospel lesson (John 7:37-39) is commonly used in the West for Pentecost, but not the rest of John 7. Today’s Epistle lesson is also used in the West for Pentecost (also called Whitsunday). In the West, Trinity Sunday is the Sunday after Pentecost; in the East, Trinity Sunday is Pentecost.

Background for Pentecost

Pentecost, or the Feast of Weeks, was one of the major festivals in the Old Testament along with Passover and the Feast of Tabernacles. Every Jewish man was instructed to appear before the Lord on these three festivals every year to bring their tithes and offerings (Exodus 23:15-17). “Pentecost” is of Greek derivation meaning “fiftieth” since it was the fiftieth day after the Day of Firstfruits (16th of Nisan) where a sheaf of the new barley harvest was brought in as a wave offering (Leviticus 23:15-16). In 30 AD, the 16th of Nisan was a Sunday, the first day of the week when the Lord rose from the dead as the “Firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep” (1 Corinthians 15:20). Pentecost was then the fiftieth day after the Resurrection.

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The feast of Weeks is referred to by other names in the Scripture. On one occasion, it is referred to as the “feast of the harvest of the Firstfruits of your labors” (Exodus 23:16); on another, as “the Firstfruits of the wheat harvest” (Exodus 34:22); and on another as “the day of the Firstfruits” (Numbers 28:26). It is not, however, to be confused with the Day of Firstfruits

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that occurred seven weeks earlier. On that day, which was not a Sabbath, a barley sheaf was brought as a wave offering. On this day, which is a Sabbath, two loaves made from the wheat harvest just completed were brought as a wave offering. In one case, the barley sheaf is the Firstfruits of the barley crop; in the other, the two loaves are the Firstfruits of the wheat crop.

The historical event associated with Pentecost in Jewish tradition is the giving of the Mosaic Law on Mt. Sinai. In Exodus 19:1, the nation of Israel arrived at Mt. Sinai on the first day of the third month (Sivan). Thus Pentecost commemorated the Old Covenant Law. Under the Hebrew calendar, Pentecost could fall on the 5th, 6th or 7th of Sivan depending on whether the first two months (Nisan and Iyyar) had 29 or 30 days. The length of the month varied depending on when the new moon was observed.

But there was also an agricultural event involved. On Pentecost two loaves made from the just-completed wheat harvest (Exodus 34:22) were offered as a wave offering. These loaves were baked with leaven in somebody's household, not at the Temple as was the showbread (1 Chronicles 9:31, 32). Thus, these loaves are different from the unleavened bread eaten during the Passover festival. The meaning of these two loaves is that both Jews and Gentiles are to be partakers of the New Covenant. They are not the elite, or even of a special tribe (the tribe of Levi), but can be uneducated men" (Acts 4:13). Since leaven represents sin (1 Corinthians 5:6-8), this New Covenant is a treasure in earthenware vessels (2 Corinthians 4:7). And just as the Holy Spirit – which is the New Covenant – was poured out on the 120 at Pentecost, 30 AD, so the Holy Spirit was later poured out on:

- An extended group of disciples (Acts 4:31)
- The Samaritans responding to Deacon Philip (Acts 8:14-17)
- Cornelius and the Gentiles in Caesarea (Acts 10:44-46)
- Twelve of John the Baptist's disciples (Acts 19:1-7).

Gospel: John 7:37-52, 8:12

The Gospel lesson begins with a reference to an event that occurred during the Feast of Tabernacles. Whereas Passover refers to repentance, baptism and resurrection, and Pentecost refers to the giving of the Holy Spirit; Tabernacles refers to the Kingdom of God in all its glory. The Feast of Tabernacles took place from the 15th to the 22nd of the seventh month (Tishri) and the first and last days were Sabbaths. In the Gospel lesson, the "last day, that great day of the feast" (John 7:37) was the 22nd of Tishri. This was also the eighth day of the feast and represented the Kingdom of God stretching into eternity.

Part of the 8th day Sabbath was a procession from the pool of Siloam (the drinking water supply of Jerusalem) with a pitcher of water and pouring the water as a libation (or drink offering) at the Temple. This was to commemorate the water flowing from the rock which Moses struck in the desert (Exodus 17:1-7). This is the backdrop for Jesus' announcement in the Gospel lesson: "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink" (John 7:37). Of course, Jesus is referring to the Holy Spirit (John 7:39). Jesus had used a similar illustration of drinking "living water" in His conversation with Photini, the Samaritan woman at the well in Sychar (John 4:10-15).

The connection of the pouring of the water to commemorate Moses' striking the rock must have developed after the return from the Babylonian captivity, since nothing is mentioned regarding this in the Pentateuch. Also, Moses struck the rock during the second month (Iyyar) on the way to Sinai prior to Pentecost, not during the seventh month.

The meaning of the Feast of Tabernacles (i.e. the Kingdom of God in Glory) was generally known to the ancient Rabbis. Simeon, Anna and Joseph of Arimathea are mentioned as looking for this (Luke 2:25, 2:38, 23:51). Old Testament prophecy spoke about how the Spirit of God will be poured out in those days. For example, two readings currently used in the Orthodox Church for Vespers preceding Pentecost are: Joel 2:23-32 and Ezekiel 36:24-28. These speak of the Spirit of God being poured out in the last days and are discussed in more detail under the Epistle lesson.

Jesus also proclaimed, "He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water" (John 7:38). To see this in the Old Testament requires some insight and illumination. Isaiah spoke about "joyously drawing water from the springs of salvation" (Isaiah 12:3); "I will pour out My Spirit on your offspring" (Isaiah 44:3); and "Everyone who thirsts, come to the waters" (Isaiah 55:1). But all these speak of His people receiving the living water, nothing about the living water coming out of their hearts.

If we put these passages from Isaiah together with two of the readings from Pentecost Vespers, we get the connection. Joel had prophesied that the Lord will "pour out His Spirit on all mankind; and your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions" (Joel 2:28). An example of this occurred in another of the readings for Pentecost Vespers. The Lord commanded Moses to choose seventy elders and gather them around the tent of meeting. Then He took of the Spirit which was upon Moses and placed Him upon the Seventy; the Seventy then began to prophesy (Numbers 11:16-17, 24-25). If the living water is the Holy Spirit (John 7:38-39), then the living water flowing out of the hearts of His people represents the words and deeds of the Holy Spirit proceeding from Christ-centered activity.

In this regard, John Chrysostom pointed out¹ that the coming of the Spirit at Pentecost was different than the sending of the Twelve (and the Seventy) out two by two. In sending them out two by two, the Scripture does not say that He gave them the Holy Spirit. It says that He gave them power and authority to do what they did (Mark 6:7, Luke 9:1, 19). The Prophets, on the other hand, had the Gift that was of the Holy Spirit. However, the Prophets were not able to impart the Holy Spirit to others as the Twelve did after Pentecost.

Another tradition² that developed after the return from the Babylonian captivity was a particularly joyful feasting during the Feast of Tabernacle. Many oil lamps were made using as wicks pieces of cast-off clothing of the priests. (This means that the wicks had already been consecrated). These lamps illumined the entire city while the Levites chanted the 15 songs of degrees (Psalms 120-134) accompanied by stringed instruments, cymbals, flutes, etc. There would be dancing in the courtyard of the women all night long. With the illumination of these lamps as a background, Jesus made another announcement recorded in the Gospel lesson: "I am the light

¹ John Chrysostom, Homilies on John, LI, 2.

² See Ralph Gower, New Manners and Customs of Bible Times, Moody Press, Chicago, 1994, p. 358.

of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life” (John 8:12).

These announcements made by Jesus created quite a controversy. Prior to the Gospel reading (John 7:32) the Pharisees had heard the crowd buzzing about what Jesus had been doing, “When the Christ comes, will He do more signs than these which this Man has done?” So the Pharisees sent attendants from the Temple to seize Jesus. But they returned empty handed (John 7:45). When asked why they hadn’t brought Jesus they replied, “No man ever spoke like this Man!” (John 7:46).

Some from the crowds and from the Pharisees argued that Jesus couldn’t be the Christ, since the Christ was supposed to come from Bethlehem, not Galilee. Apparently they presumed that Jesus was born in Galilee, not realizing that He grew up in Galilee because of murder plots by Herod.

As we saw two weeks ago in the Sunday of the Blind Man, Nicodemus is in the center of some of these disputes over Jesus. Here (John 7:50-51), Nicodemus merely pointed out that the Mosaic Law does not judge a man before it hears him out. However, Nicodemus was shouted down and accused of being a Galilean also. The other Pharisees claimed that no prophet had arisen out of Galilee. They had conveniently forgotten that the Prophet Jonah came from Gath Hopher, about three miles from Nazareth (2 Kings 14:25). Thus there is more to the sign of the Prophet Jonah (Matthew 12:39-40) than meets the eye: not only did Jonah spend three days in the belly of the sea monster (as Jesus spent three days in the tomb), but they grew up in the same neighborhood. Jewish tradition states that the Prophet Nahum came from Galilee also.

In all this questioning, we note that no one ever asked Jesus to explain how He could be the Messiah even if He came from Galilee. (The answer is simple: He was born in Bethlehem!) His accusers really don’t want to know that, however. As Chrysostom stated³ it, “we must manifest the desire of thirsty men; for ‘blessed are those (Matthew 5:6) who hunger and thirst for righteousness””.

Living Water

The term “living water” (Greek: *udor zon*) means water that is moving as if alive. It was used synonymously for running water and the spiritual term that Jesus referred to as living water. For example, the servants of Isaac dug a well that contained⁴ “living water” (Genesis 26:19 LXX). Also In the 1st century document, The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles, the Church was given instruction⁵ to baptize in “living water” if at all possible, meaning running water.

Concerning baptism, baptize as follows: Having first said all these things⁶, baptize in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, in living water. But if you don’t have living water, baptize in other water; and if you can’t baptize

³ John Chrysostom, Homilies on John, LI, 1.

⁴ The same root words are used in Genesis 26:19 as in John 4:10.

⁵ “The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles”, Chapter 7, in Roberts & Donaldson, ed., Ante-Nicene Fathers, Volume 7, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA 01961, 1995.

⁶ That is, Chapters 1-6 of the above document.

in cold water, use warm water. If you have neither, pour out water three times on the head in the name of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Before the baptism let the baptizer and the baptized fast, and whatever others can; but you shall order the baptized to fast one or two days before.

Zechariah used the spiritual living water in a play on words with running water also. Referring to the end of this age, “In that day living water shall come forth out of Jerusalem; half of it toward the former sea, and half of it toward the latter sea: and so shall it be in summer and spring” (Zechariah 14:8). Jeremiah stated that the Lord’s people had forsaken Him, the fountain of living water, and created broken cisterns that can hold no water (Jeremiah 2:13, 17:13). The spiritual form of living water will continue into the Age to Come (Revelation 7:17).

What is the Living Water?

“Living Water” centers on the Person and operation of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is not a lesser god than the Father, but like the Son, He is consubstantial – of one Essence – with the Father and the Son. Consider what some of the Church Fathers have had to say about the Holy Spirit and “Living Water”.

Irenaeus of Lyons pointed out⁷ the relationship of the persons of the Trinity to each other, where the Holy Spirit is the living water that Jesus referred to.

“The Word borne by the Father grants the Spirit to all as the Father wills. To some He gives after the manner of creation what is made; but to others He gives after the manner of adoption, that is, what is from God, namely generation. Thus one God the Father is declared, who is above all, through all, and in all. The Father is indeed above all, and He is the Head of Christ; but the Word is through all things, and is Himself the Head of the Church. The Spirit is in us all, and He is the living water, which the Lord grants to those who rightly believe in Him, love Him, and who know that ‘there is one God and Father of all, who *is* above all, and through all, and in us all’” (Ephesians 4:6).

Ambrose of Milan stated⁸ that the living water is the Holy Spirit, and that “the Fount” could refer to the Father, the Son or the Holy Spirit. The Fount and the living water are not created things, but they are the Grace of God. This is the water of the Grace of the Spirit that David thirsted for.

“As the Father is the Fount of Life, so too, many have stated that the Son is signified as the Fount of Life; he says, ‘with You *is* the Fountain of Life; in Your light (i.e. in Your Son) we see light’ (Psalm 36:9). That is the Fount of the Holy Spirit, for the Spirit is Life, as the Lord says, ‘The words which I speak to you are Spirit and they are Life’ (John 6:63), for where the Spirit is, there also is Life; and where Life is, the Holy Spirit is.”

“Many, however, consider that the Father only is signified by the Fount. Let them, however, notice what the Scripture says, ‘With You is the Well or

⁷ Irenaeus, Against Heresies, V, xviii, 2.

⁸ Ambrose of Milan, On the Holy Spirit, I, xv, 172-175.

Fountain of Life'. That is, the Son is with the Father; since the Word was with God, Who was in the beginning, and was with God."

"But whether in this place one understands the Fount to be the Father or the Son, we certainly do not understand a fount of that water which is created, but the Fount of that divine grace, that is, of the Holy Spirit, for He is the living water. Therefore the Lord said, 'If you knew the gift of God, and Who He is that said to you, Give me a drink, you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water'" (John 4:10).

"This was the water for which the soul of David thirsted, like the hart that desires the fountains of waters (Psalm 42:1), not thirsting for the poison of serpents. The water of the grace of the Spirit is living, that it may purify the inner parts of the mind, may wash away every sin of the soul, and may purify the transgression of hidden faults."

"Lest anyone should speak of the littleness of the Spirit, and try to establish a difference in greatness, arguing that water seems to be a small part of a Fount, examples taken from creatures seen are not suitable for application to the Godhead. In this comparison taken from creatures, let them learn that not only is the Holy Spirit called Water, but also a River, as we read, 'Out of his heart shall flow rivers of living water. But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, Whom those believing in Him would receive' (John 7:38-39), who were about to believe in Him".

Cyprian of Carthage, addressing heretics of his day, stated⁹ that the heretics don't have the fountain and river of living water. Heretics claim that the Orthodox are against unity; the Orthodox reply by refusing to accept unity at any price.

"The Lord cries out loud, 'If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water' (John 7:37-38). Where is he to come who is thirsty? Shall he come to the heretics, where there is no fountain and river of living water at all? Or shall he come to the Church, which is one, and which is founded on one who has received the keys of it by the Lord's voice? It is she who holds and possesses alone all the power of her spouse and Lord. In her we preside; for her honor and unity we fight; her grace, as well as her glory, we defend with faithful devotedness. By divine permission we water the thirsting people of God; we guard the boundaries of the living fountains. If we hold the right of our possession, if we acknowledge the sacrament of unity, why are we considered deviators from the truth? Why are we judged betrayers of unity? The faithful, saving, holy water of the Church cannot be corrupted and adulterated, as the Church herself also is uncorrupted, chaste, and modest. If heretics are devoted to the Church and established in the Church, they may use both her baptism and her other saving benefits. But if they are not in the Church, if they act against the Church, how can they baptize with the Church's baptism?"

⁹ Cyprian of Carthage, Epistles, LXXII, 11.

Ambrose of Milan stated¹⁰ that the river flowing from the Throne of God is the Holy Spirit, and we drink from this river when we believe in Christ. This river is not material water, but the Power of God.

“It is not a trivial matter that we read that a river flows from the throne of God. We read John’s words, ‘He showed me a river of living water, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the Tree of Life, which bore twelve kinds of fruits, each *tree* yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of all nations” (Revelation 22:1-2).

“This is certainly the River proceeding from the throne of God, that is, the Holy Spirit, Whom he drinks who believes in Christ, as He Himself says, ‘If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water. But this He spoke of the Spirit’ (John 7:37-38). Therefore the river is the Spirit.”

“The Spirit, then, is in the throne of God, for the water does not wash the throne of God. Whatever you may understand by that water, David did not say that it was above the throne of God, but above the heavens, ‘Let the waters which are above the heavens praise the Name of the Lord’ (Psalm 148:4). Let them praise, he says, not let it praise. If he had intended us to understand the element of water, he would certainly have said, ‘Let it praise’; by using the plural he intended the Powers to be understood.”

Cyprian of Carthage wrote¹¹ about the connection of living water to Baptism. Just as Baptism is done once, so drinking living water quenches one’s thirst forever, since the Holy Spirit is received by Baptism.

“As often as water is named alone in the Holy Scriptures, baptism is referred to, as we see in Isaiah: ‘Do not remember the former things, or consider the ancient things. Behold, I will do new things, which will now spring forth; and you shall know them. I will even make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the dry land, to give drink to My chosen race, My people whom I have preserved to tell forth My praises’ (Isaiah 43:18-21 LXX). God foretold that among the Gentiles, in places which previously had been dry, rivers should afterwards flow plenteously, and should provide water for the elect people of God, that is, for those who were made sons of God by the generation of baptism. Moreover, it is again predicted that the Jews, if they should thirst and seek after Christ, should drink with us, that is, should attain the grace of baptism. ‘If they shall thirst, He shall lead them through the desert; He shall bring water for them out of the rock; the rock shall be split, and the water shall flow, and my people shall drink’ (Isaiah 48:21 LXX). This is fulfilled in the Gospel, when Christ, who is the Rock, is split by a stroke of the spear in His passion. Christ admonished us on what was announced by the prophet, ‘If any man thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water’. That it might be clearer that the Lord is speaking there, not of the cup, but of baptism, the Scripture adds, ‘But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive’

¹⁰ Ambrose of Milan, On the Holy Spirit, III, xx, 153-155.

¹¹ Cyprian of Carthage, Epistle to Caccilius, LXII, 8.

(John 7:37-39). The Holy Spirit is received by baptism; thus those who are baptized, and have attained to the Holy Spirit, attain the drinking of the Lord's cup. Let it disturb no one, that when the divine Scripture speaks of baptism, it says that we thirst and drink. The Lord also says, 'Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness' (Matthew 5:6); because what is received with a thirsting desire is drunk more fully and plentifully. The Lord also speaks to the Samaritan woman, 'Whoever drinks of this water shall thirst again; but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him, will never thirst' (John 4:13-14). By this is also signified the very baptism of saving water, which is once received, and is not again repeated. But the cup of the Lord is always both thirsted for and drunk in the Church."

On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water" (John 7:37-38).

John Chrysostom took¹² a closer look at what Jesus said. The rivers refer to the largeness and abundance of grace. Elsewhere living water is called eternal life, where by "living", He means always working. The grace of the Spirit, when it has entered into the mind and has been established, springs up more than any fountain.

"Why did Jesus do this 'on the last day, that great day'? Both the first day and the last were 'great', while the intermediate days they spent rather in enjoyment. But on that last day they were all collected together. He didn't come on the first day, and told the reason to His brethren (John 7:1-9); He didn't come on the second or third days either, lest His words should be wasted, the hearers being about to over indulge. But on the last day when they were returning home He gave them supplies for their salvation, partly showing to us His boldness, and partly for the greatness of the multitude. To show that He spoke not of material drink, He added, 'He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water' (John 7:38). In another place He says, 'I have not hidden Your truth within my heart' (Psalm 40:10). But where does the Scripture say, that 'rivers of living water shall flow from his heart?' Nowhere! What then does it mean, 'He that believes on Me, as the Scripture says?' Here we must place a stop, so that the, 'rivers shall flow from his heart', may be an assertion of Christ. Because many said, 'This is the Christ' (John 7:26, 41); and, 'When the Christ comes, will He do more signs than these which this Man has done?' (John 7:31), He shows that it is necessary to have a correct knowledge, and to be convinced not so much from the miracles as from the Scriptures. Many, in fact, who saw Him working marvels received Him not as Christ; and were ready to say, 'Don't the Scriptures say that Christ comes of the seed of David?' And they continually dwelt on this. Christ desired to show that He did not shun the proof from the Scriptures, and constantly referred them to the Scriptures. He said, 'Search the Scriptures' (John 5:39); and again, 'It is written in the Prophets, And they shall be taught by God' (John 6:45); and, 'Moses accuses you' (John 5:45); and here, 'As the Scripture has said, rivers shall flow from his heart', alluding to the largeness and abundance of grace. In another place He said, 'A fountain of water springing up into

¹² John Chrysostom, Homilies on John, LI, 1.

everlasting life' (John 4:14); that is to say, 'he shall possess much grace'; elsewhere He calls it, 'eternal life', but here, 'living water'. He calls that 'living' which is always working; for the grace of the Spirit, when it has entered into the mind and has been established, springs up more than any fountain, never fails, doesn't become empty. To signify therefore its unfailing supply and unlimited operation, He has called it 'a well' and 'rivers'; not one river but numberless; He has represented its abundance by the expression, 'springing'. One may clearly perceive what is meant, if he will consider the wisdom of Stephen, the tongue of Peter, the vehemence of Paul. Nothing endured them; nothing withstood them, not the anger of multitudes, not the risings up of tyrants, not the plots of demons, not daily deaths, but as rivers born along with a great rushing sound, so they went on their way hurrying all things with them."

Living Water in Operation

Following are some miscellaneous insights from the Church Fathers into the operation of the Holy Spirit as "Living Water" in our lives.

John Chrysostom compared¹³ Living Water to a ship made up of zeal, earnestness and prayers that we may pass over the sea of this life in quiet.

John Chrysostom also compared¹⁴ the life of the Apostle Paul to living water. Even though he was persecuted and harassed everywhere he went, his life was like sailing a calm sea due to the "winds" of the Holy Spirit.

"Paul's words are like the ocean, but nothing is equal to them. One would not be mistaken in calling Paul's heart a sea and a heaven, the one for purity, the other for depth. He is a sea, having for its voyagers not those who sail from city to city, but those from earth to heaven; if anyone sails on this sea, he will have a prosperous voyage. On this sea, the winds of the Holy Spirit carry souls along; no waves are here, no rock, no monsters; all is calm. It is a sea which is calmer and more secure than a harbor, having a pure fountain sweeter, brighter and more transparent than the sun. He, who wishes to descend into this sea, doesn't need divers, or oil, but much loving-kindness; he will find in it all the good things that are in the kingdom of Heaven. He will even be able to become a king, to take the whole world into his possession, and to be in the greatest honor. He who sails on this sea will never undergo shipwreck, but will know all things well. We need to know the depth, or else not venture. If we are to sail on this sea, let us come well-prepared. Paul said, 'I could not speak to you as to spiritual, but as to carnal, as to babies in Christ' (1 Corinthians 3:1). Let no one who is without endurance sail on this sea. Let us provide for ourselves ships, that is, zeal, earnestness, prayers, that we, may pass over the sea in quiet. For indeed this is the living water. It's like getting a mouth of fire; such a mouth does that man get who knows Paul well."

¹³ John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, LV, Recapitulation.

¹⁴ John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, LV, v. 29.

Athanasius of Alexandria stated¹⁵ that the nearness of Jesus' Divinity brought living water to those close by. His disciples were continually nourished by this and the Canaanite woman came to belief in Him by this, and she was rewarded accordingly.

“Let us be nourished with living bread, by faith and love to God, knowing that without faith it is impossible to be partakers of such bread. When Jesus called all men to him, He said, ‘If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink’ (John 7:37). He spoke of the faith without which a man cannot receive such food; ‘He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water’ (John 7:38). To this end He continually nourished His believing disciples with His words, and gave them life by the nearness of His divinity. But to the Canaanite woman, because she was not yet a believer, He didn’t even reply, although she stood greatly in need of food from Him. He did this not from scorn; far from it; the Lord loves men and is good, and on that account He went to the coasts of Tyre and Sidon where the Canaanite woman lived. Because of her unbelief, and because she was of those who did not have the word, there would have been nothing gained for her to offer her supplication before she believed; but by her faith she would support her petition. ‘He who comes to God must believe that He is, and *that* He rewards those who diligently seek Him’; and ‘without faith it is impossible to please Him’ (Hebrews 11:6). She was an unbeliever before; He shows that, ‘It is not good to take the children's bread and throw *it* to the little dogs’ (Matthew 15:26). She was convinced by the power of the word, and changed her ways, also gaining faith; for the Lord no longer spoke to her as a dog, but conversed with her as a human being, saying, ‘O woman, great is your faith!’ Since she believed, He granted to her the fruit of faith, and said, ‘Let it be to you as you desire.’” And her daughter was healed from that very hour” (Matthew 15:28)

Hilary of Poitiers pointed out¹⁶ that Jesus thirsted in His human nature at the same time that He was giving out living water in His Divine nature. There was no conflict between His two natures.

“It may be said, ‘We find Jesus giving way to weeping, hunger and thirst; must we not suppose Him liable to all the other affections of human nature?’ If we do not understand the mystery of His tears, hunger, and thirst, let us remember that He Who wept also raised the dead to life; He did not weep for the death of Lazarus, but rejoiced; He Who thirsted, gave from Himself rivers of living water. He could not be parched with thirst, if He was able to give the thirsty drink. He Who hungered condemned the tree which offered no fruit for His hunger; but how could His nature be overcome by hunger if He could strike the green tree barren by His word? Beside the mystery of weeping, hunger and thirst, if the flesh He assumed, that is, His entire manhood, was exposed to our weaknesses, even then it was not left to suffer from their loss of dignity. His weeping was not for Himself; His thirst needed no water to quench it; His hunger needed no food to sustain it. It is never said that the Lord ate or drank or wept when He was hungry, or thirsty, or sorrowful. He conformed to the habits of the body to prove the reality of His own body, to

¹⁵ Athanasius of Alexandria, Festal Letters, VII, 7.

¹⁶ Hilary of Poitiers, On the Trinity, X, 24.

satisfy the custom of human bodies by doing as our nature does. When He ate and drank, it was a concession, not to His own necessities, but to our habits.”

Cyprian of Carthage pointed out¹⁷ that living water we experience in this age continues into the age to come. Since the living water is the Holy Spirit, this makes sense! By accepting the living water in this age, we become gods to those around us; we become light just as Christ is the Light of the world.

The Apostle John wrote, ‘I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of living water freely to him who thirsts. He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son’ (Revelation 21:6-7). Also the Psalmist Asaph said, ‘God stands in the assembly of gods; and in the midst *of them* will judge gods’ (Psalm 82:1 LXX). And again in the same place: ‘I have said, you are gods; and all *of you* children of the Most High. But you die as men, and fall as one of the princes’ (Psalm 82:6-7). But if they who have been righteous, and have obeyed the divine precepts, may be called gods, how much more is Christ, the Son of God, God! Thus He Himself says, ‘Is it not written in your Law, ‘I said, “You are gods” ‘? If He called them gods, to whom the word of God came (and the Scripture cannot be broken), do you say of Him whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, ‘You are blaspheming,’ because I said, ‘I am the Son of God’? If I do not do the works of My Father, do not believe Me; but if I do, though you do not believe Me, believe the works, that you may know and believe that the Father *is* in Me, and I in Him’ (John 10:34-38). Also Matthew says, ‘Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel, which is translated, “God with us”’ (Matthew 1:23).

Ambrose of Milan made an analogy¹⁸ between the Old Testament as a deep well of living water that it was difficult to draw from, and the New Testament as a river of living water.

“Elijah went first to Beersheba, to the mysteries and sacraments of the divine and holy Law; next he was sent to the brook, to the stream of the river, which makes glad the City of God. You perceive the two Testaments of the One Author; the old Scripture as a well deep and obscure, where you can only draw with labor. It is not full, for He Who was to fill it had not yet come, Who afterwards said, ‘I have not come to destroy but to fulfill the Law and the Prophets’ (Matthew 5:17). So we are asked by the Lord to pass over to the stream, for he who drinks of the New Testament, not only is a river, but also ‘from his heart shall flow rivers of living water’ (John 7:38). That is, rivers of understanding, rivers of meditation, spiritual rivers, which dried up in the times of unbelief, lest the sacrilegious and unbelieving should drink.”

Hippolytus of Rome pointed out¹⁹ the effect that Living Water had on created water. The substance water had nobility to it compared to other substances, since water was actually placed

¹⁷ Cyprian of Carthage, Treatises, XII, ii, 6.

¹⁸ Ambrose of Milan, Epistles, LXIII, 78.

¹⁹ Hippolytus, Discourse on the Holy Theophany, 1-2.

above the heavens. But even with this nobility, created water had a strong reaction at Christ's baptism when the God of All came to be baptized as if He were a slave.

“Without the element of water, none of the present order of things can subsist, so necessary is the element of water. The other elements took their places beneath the highest vault of the heavens, but the nature of water obtained a seat also above the heavens. And to this the prophet himself is a witness, when he exclaims, ‘Praise the Lord, you heavens of heavens, and the water that is above the heavens’” (Psalm 148:4 LXX).

“This is not the only thing that shows the dignity of the water. That which is more honorable than all is the fact that Christ, the Maker of all, came down as the rain (Hosea 6:3), was known as a spring (John 4:14), diffused Himself as a river (John 7:38), and was baptized in the Jordan (Matthew 3:13). Oh things strange beyond compare! How should the boundless River (Psalm 46:4) that makes glad the city of God have been dipped in a little water? The limitless Spring that bears life to all men, and has no end, was covered by poor and temporary waters in the Jordan! He who is present everywhere, and absent nowhere (who is incomprehensible to angels and invisible to men) comes to the baptism according to His own good pleasure. When you hear these things, beloved, take them not as if spoken literally, but accept them as presented in a figure. The Lord was noticed by the watery element in what He did in secret, in the kindness of His condescension to man. ‘The waters saw You, O God, the waters saw You, and feared; and the depths were troubled’ (Psalm 77:16 LXX). They nearly broke from their place, and burst away from their boundary. Hence the prophet, having this in his view many generations ago, puts the question, ‘What ails you, O sea that you fled? O Jordan, that you turned back’ (Psalm 114:5 LXX). And they in reply said, we have seen the Creator of all things in the ‘form of a slave’ (Philippians 2:7) and being ignorant of the mystery of the economy, we were lashed with fear.”

Ambrose of Milan compared²⁰ the Living Water and the Consuming Fire; he concluded that these are different aspects of the same thing. Both are the work of the Holy Spirit. Fire became water and water called forth fire; spiritual grace burns out our sins through fire, and through water cleanses them. This is the sacred fire which then, as a type of the future remission of sins, came down upon the sacrifice. Though it is changed into the appearance of water, yet it preserves its nature as fire so as to consume the sacrifice. In the time of Elijah, fire came down when he challenged the prophets of the heathen to light up the altar without fire. We are that sacrifice. The breath of the Holy Spirit descends on us, and He seems to burn us when He consumes our sins.

“We cannot leave out of sight that the Lord Jesus baptizes with the Holy Spirit and with fire (Matthew 3:11). Rightly was the sacrifice consumed, for it was for sin. But that fire was a type of the Holy Spirit Who was to come down after the Lord's ascension, and forgive the sins of all, and Who like fire inflames the mind and faithful heart. Therefore Jeremiah, after receiving the Spirit, said: ‘I will by no means name the Name of the Lord, and I will no more at all speak in his Name. But His Word was a burning fire flaming in my bones, and I am utterly weakened on all sides, and no longer able to bear it’ (Jeremiah 20:9 LXX). When the Holy

²⁰ Ambrose of Milan, Duties of the Clergy, III, xviii, 102-109.

Spirit descended upon the Apostles and those others who were waiting for the Promise of the Father, we read that there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and *one* sat upon each of them (Acts 2:3). The soul of each one was so uplifted by His influence that they were thought to be full of new wine (Acts 2:13), who instead had received the gift of a diversity of tongues.”

“What else can this mean — namely, that fire became water and water called forth fire — but that spiritual grace burns out our sins through fire, and through water cleanses them? Sin is washed away and it is burned away. Paul says: ‘Each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is’ (1 Corinthians 3:13). And further on: ‘If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire’” (1 Corinthians 3:15).

“We have stated this, so as to prove that sins are burned out by means of fire. We know now that this is in truth the sacred fire which then, as a type of the future remission of sins, came down upon the sacrifice.”

“This fire is hidden in the time of captivity, during which sin reigns, but in the time of liberty it is brought forth. Though it is changed into the appearance of water, yet it preserves its nature as fire so as to consume the sacrifice. Do not wonder when you read that God the Father said: ‘the Lord your God is a consuming fire, a jealous God’ (Deuteronomy 4:24). And again: ‘For my people have committed two *faults*, and evil ones: they have forsaken me, the fountain of water of life, and hewn out for themselves broken cisterns, which will not be able to hold water’ (Jeremiah 2:13). The Lord Jesus, too, like a fire inflamed the hearts of those who heard Him, and like a fount of waters cooled them. He Himself said in His Gospel that He came to send fire on the earth (Luke 12:49) and to supply a draft of living waters to those who thirst” (John 7:37-38).

“In the time of Elijah, also, fire came down when he challenged the prophets of the heathen to light up the altar without fire. When they could not do so, he poured water three times over his sacrifice, so that the water ran around about the altar; then he cried out and the fire fell from the Lord from heaven and consumed the burnt-offering” (1 Kings 18:22-39).

“We are that sacrifice. Contemplate in silence each single point. The breath of the Holy Spirit descends on us, He seems to burn us when He consumes our sins. The sacrifice which was consumed in the time of Moses was a sacrifice for sin, therefore ‘Moses prayed to the Lord, and fire came down from heaven and devoured the sacrifices, so also Solomon prayed, and the fire came down and consumed the whole burnt offerings. And Moses said, “They were consumed because the sin offering had not been eaten”’ (2 Maccabees 2:10-11). Does it not seem to be consumed for us when in the sacrament of baptism the whole outer man perishes? ‘Our old man was crucified with *Him*, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin’ (Romans 6:6). As the example of the fathers teaches us, the Egyptian is swallowed up — the Hebrew arises renewed by the Holy Spirit, as he also crossed the Red Sea dry-shod — where our fathers were baptized in the cloud and in the sea” (1 Corinthians 10:1-2).

“In the flood, too, in Noah’s time all flesh died, though just Noah was preserved together with his family (Genesis 7:23). Is not a man consumed when

all that is mortal is cut off from life? The outer man is destroyed, but the inner is renewed. Not in baptism alone but also in repentance does this destruction of the flesh tend to the growth of the spirit, as we are taught on Paul's authority, 'For I indeed, as absent in body but present in spirit, have already judged (as though I were present) him who has so done this deed.⁴ In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus'" (1 Corinthians 5:3-5).

We seem to have made a somewhat lengthy digression for the sake of regarding this wonderful mystery, in desiring to unfold more fully this sacrament which has been revealed to us, and which, indeed, is as full of virtue as it is full of religious awe.

Ambrose of Milan also saw²¹ mystical understanding in the feeding of Elijah by the ravens. He first went to the Law to learn it; then he went to the brook Cherith to understand it and received living water. The ravens recognized the Prophet, but the Jews didn't. The brook dried up in times of unbelief so that the sacrilegious might not drink.

"Elijah was sent to the brook Cherith, and there the ravens nourished him, bringing him bread in the morning, for it 'strengthens man's heart' (Psalm 104:15). For how should the prophet be nourished except by mystical food? At evening meat was supplied (1 Kings 17:6 LXX). Understand what you read, for Cherith means 'understanding', Horeb²² signifies 'heart' or 'as a heart', Beersheba also is interpreted 'the well of the seventh', or 'of the oath'".

"Elijah went first to Beersheba, to the mysteries and sacraments of the divine and holy Law. Next he is sent to the brook, to the stream of the river which makes glad the City of God (Psalm 46:4). You perceive the two Testaments of the One Author; the old Scripture as a well deep and obscure, where you can only draw with labor; it is not full, for He Who was to fill it was not yet come. He afterwards said: 'Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill' (Matthew 5:17). And so the Saint is asked by the Lord to pass over to the stream, for he who has drunk of the New Testament, not only is a river, but also 'out of his heart will flow rivers of living water' (John 7:38). These are rivers of understanding, rivers of meditation, spiritual rivers, which, however, dried up in the times of unbelief, lest the sacrilegious and unbelieving should drink."

"At that place, the ravens recognized the Prophet of the Lord, whom the Jews did not recognize. The ravens fed him, whom that royal and noble race was persecuting. What is Jezebel, who persecuted him but the Synagogue, vainly fluent, vainly abounding in the Scriptures, which it neither keeps nor understands? What ravens fed him but those whose young call upon Him, to whose cattle He gives food as we read; 'He covers the heaven with clouds, and gives cattle their food, and to the young ravens that call upon him' (Psalm 147:8-9 LXX). Those ravens knew whom they were feeding, who were close upon understanding, and brought food to that stream of sacred knowledge."

²¹ Ambrose of Milan, Letters, LXIII, 77-79.

²² Horeb is the name of the mountain range of which Mt. Sinai is one of the peaks.

The Garden of Living Waters

The Church is sometimes referred to as a Garden with a well of “Living Water”, such as in Solomon’s Song of Songs. This “Living Water” – being the Holy Spirit – is just not available to those outside the Church. Those outside the Church usually aren’t interested anyway, because they are not interested in God.

Cyprian of Carthage stated²³ that Christ was referred to in the Song of Solomon as a Garden with a well of living water (Song of Solomon 4:12-15). This Garden is enclosed and the fountain is sealed against outsiders – heretics like Novatian. Peter concurred using the figure of Noah’s Ark. Paul stated this also in describing the Church. This well of living water is available to the Church and is not available to the synagogues of heretics.

“The Holy Spirit declares that the Church is one in the Song of Songs, saying, in the person of Christ, ‘My dove, my undefiled, is one; she is the only one of her mother, she is the choice one of her that bore her’ (Song of Solomon 6:9). Concerning which also He says again, ‘A garden enclosed is my sister, my spouse; a spring sealed up, a well of living water’. But if the spouse of Christ, which is the Church, is a garden enclosed; a thing that is closed up cannot lie open to strangers and profane persons. If it is a sealed fountain, he who is outside has no access to the spring, neither can he drink or be sealed. The well also of living water, if it is one and the same within, he who is outside cannot have life and be sanctified from that water of which it is only granted to those who are within to make any use, or to drink. Peter showed this and set forth that the Church is one, and that only they who are in the Church can be baptized. He said, ‘In the Ark of Noah, a few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water; the like figure is that baptism now saves us’ (1 Peter 3:20-21), proving that the one Ark of Noah was a type of the one Church. The Apostle Paul more openly and clearly said the same thing, ‘Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word’ (Ephesians 5:25-26). If the Church is one, which is loved by Christ, and is alone cleansed by His washing, how can he who is not in the Church be either loved by Christ, or washed and cleansed by His washing?”

“Therefore, since the Church alone has the living water, and the power of baptizing and cleansing man, he who says that anyone can be baptized and sanctified by Novatian²⁴ must first show that Novatian is in the Church or presides over the Church. The Church is one, and she cannot be both inside and outside. If she is with Novatian, she was not with Cornelius. But if she was with Cornelius, who succeeded the bishop Fabian by lawful ordination, and whom, beside the honor of the priesthood, the Lord glorified also with martyrdom, Novatian is not in the Church. Novatian cannot be reckoned as a bishop, succeeding no one, and

²³ Cyprian of Carthage, *Epistle to Magnus*, LXXV, 2-3.

²⁴ See <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Novatianism>. Novatian was a priest who opposed the election of Pope Cornelius after the assassination of Pope Fabian in 251 AD. His followers went so far as the elect Novatian as an AntiPope. The major point of difference was over receiving back into the Church those who had lapsed during intense persecution. Novatian said “No!” But the Church, and Pope Cornelius said that the Church must show mercy.

despising the evangelical and apostolic tradition, to spring from himself. He who has not been ordained in the Church cannot have or hold to the Church in any way.”

John Chrysostom stated²⁵ that the grace of the Spirit in the garden of our soul is sometimes “Fire” and sometimes “Water”, referring to its operation. The “Fire” refers to the rousing and warming property of grace and the “Water” refers to the cleansing and refreshment it provides.

“Scripture calls the grace of the Spirit sometimes ‘Fire’, sometimes ‘Water’, showing that these names are not descriptive of its essence, but of its operation; for the Spirit, being Invisible and Simple, cannot be made up of different substances. John the Baptist declares, ‘He shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit, and with Fire’ (Matthew 3:11); Christ also said, ‘Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water’ (John 7:38). ‘But this Jesus spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet *given*, because Jesus was not yet glorified’ (John 7:39). So also conversing with the woman at Jacob’s Well, He calls the Spirit water; for, ‘Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst’ (John 4:13-14). So also He calls the Spirit by the name of ‘fire’, alluding to the rousing and warming property of grace, and its power of destroying transgressions. He calls the Spirit ‘water’, to declare the cleansing wrought by it, and the great refreshment which it affords to those minds which receive it. And with good reason; for it makes the willing soul like some garden thick with all manner of trees fruitful and ever-flourishing, allowing it neither to feel despondency nor the plots of Satan, and quenches all the fiery darts of the wicked one.”

Gregory of Nyssa stated²⁶ that the Living Water and spiritual food were available in Eden, in a way similar to how they will be available when the Lord returns. There will be then a food for the soul that we are only vaguely aware of now. This food in Eden was something worthy of God’s planting, and the same will be true when the Lord returns.

“Someone perhaps will say that man will not be returning to the same form of life, if as it seems, we formerly existed by eating, and shall hereafter be free from that function. I, however, when I hear the Holy Scripture, do not understand only bodily food, or the pleasure of the flesh; but I recognize another kind of food also, having a certain analogy to that of the body, the enjoyment of which extends to the soul alone. ‘Come, eat of my bread, and drink wine which I have mingled for you’ (Proverbs 9:5 LXX), is the bidding of Wisdom to the hungry; and the Lord declares those blessed who hunger for such food as this. He says, ‘If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink’ (John 7:37). ‘Draw therefore water with joy out of the wells of salvation’ (Isaiah 12:3), is the great Isaiah’s charge to those who are able to hear his subtlety. There is a prophetic threatening also against those worthy of vengeance, that they shall be punished with famine; but the “famine” is not a lack of bread and water, but a failure of the word. ‘Behold, the days are coming’, says the Lord God, ‘that I will send a famine on the Land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but a famine of hearing the word of the Lord’” (Amos 8:11 LXX).

²⁵ John Chrysostom, Homilies on John, XXXII, 1.

²⁶ Gregory of Nyssa, On the Making of Man, XIX, 1-3.

“We ought, then, to conceive that the fruit in Eden was something worthy of God’s planting (and Eden is interpreted to mean “delight”), and not to doubt that man was hereby nourished. We should not at all conceive, concerning the mode of life in Paradise, that this transitory and perishable nourishment: ‘of every tree of the garden’ was all there was. ‘The Lord God gave a charge to Adam, saying, of every tree which is in the garden you may freely eat’” (Genesis 2:16).

“Who will give to him that has a healthful hunger that tree that is in Paradise, which includes all good, which is named ‘every tree’, which man has the right to share? In the universal and transcendent saying every form of good is in harmony with itself, and the whole is one.”

Ambrose of Milan pointed out²⁷ that the living water that Jesus spoke of proceeds from the Throne of God. This makes sense; if the living water is the Holy Spirit, of course the Holy Spirit is on the Throne of God with Christ. Ambrose notes that the living water doesn’t wash over the Throne of God and that it is not above the Throne of God. The “waters above the heavens” also refer to the angels around the Throne of God.

“It is not a trivial matter that we read that a river goes forth from the throne of God. We read the words of John: ‘And he showed me a river of living water, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, *was* the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each *tree* yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree *were* for the healing of the nations’” (Revelation 22:1-2).

“This is certainly the River proceeding from the throne of God, that is, the Holy Spirit, whom he drinks who believes in Christ. Jesus Himself says: ‘If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water. But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive’ (John 7:37-39). Therefore the river is the Spirit.”

“This, then, is in the throne of God, for the water doesn’t wash over the throne of God. Whatever you may understand by that water, David didn’t say that it was above the throne of God, but above the heavens, for it is written: ‘Praise Him, you heavens of heavens, and you waters above the heavens! Let them praise the name of the Lord’ (Psalm 148:4-5). Let them praise, he says, not let it praise. If he had intended us to understand the element of water, he would certainly have said, ‘Let it praise’, but by using the plural he intended the Heavenly Powers to be understood.”

“What wonder is it if the Holy Spirit is in the throne of God, since the kingdom of God itself is the work of the Holy Spirit, as it is written: ‘For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit’ (Romans 14:17). When the Savior Himself says, ‘Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and every city or house divided against itself will not stand’ (Matthew 12:25), He adds afterwards, ‘But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you’ (Matthew 12:28). He shows that the kingdom of God is held undivided by Himself and by the Spirit.”

²⁷ Ambrose of Milan, On the Holy Spirit, III, xx, 153-156.

Broken Cisterns versus Living Water

Whereas the Church is described as a Garden with a fountain of living water, synagogues of heretics are described as broken cisterns that can't hold water. Following are some accounts of 3rd and 4th century heretics related to how they differ from the grace of the living water of the Holy Spirit.

Cyprian of Carthage stated²⁸ that the Lord permits heretics to come in order to test our hearts to discern the truth. The end result is that the righteous and the unrighteous are already divided before the Day of Judgment. The heretics promise the grace of living water while they have forsaken the fountain of living water.

“Heresies not only have come frequently, but continue to do so, while a discordant faithlessness does not maintain unity. The Lord permits these things so that, while our hearts and minds are tested to discriminate truth, the sound faith of those that are approved may shine with clear light. The Holy Spirit warns, ‘There must also be heresies among you, that those who are approved may be recognized among you’ (1 Corinthians 11:19). Thus the faithful are approved; thus the treacherous are detected. Thus even here, before the Day of Judgment, the souls of the righteous and of the unrighteous are already divided, and the chaff is separated from the wheat. The heretics are they who of their own accord, without any divine arrangement, set themselves as prelates without any law of ordination, who assume to themselves the name of bishop, although no one gives them the episcopate. These are the ones the Holy Spirit points out in the Psalms as sitting in the seat of pestilence (Psalm 1:1), deceiving with serpent’s tongue, and artfully corrupting the truth. Their speech creeps like cancer; their discourse forms a deadly poison in the heart of everyone.”

“Against people of this kind the Lord cries; from these He restrains and recalls His erring people, saying, ‘Don’t listen to the words of the false prophets; they speak a vision of their own heart, not from the mouth of the Lord. They say to those who reject the word of the Lord, there shall be peace to you. To everyone who walks after their own lusts and to everyone who walks in the error of his heart, they have said that no evil shall come upon him. I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied. If they had stood in My counsel, and if they had listened to My words, then would they have turned my people from their evil practices’ (Jeremiah 23:16-22 LXX). The Lord points out, ‘They have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, and hewn themselves cisterns -- broken cisterns that can hold no water’ (Jeremiah 2:13 LXX). Although there can be no other baptism but one, they think that they can baptize; although they forsake the fountain of life, they promise the grace of living and saving water. Men are not washed among them, but rather are made foul; sins are not purged away, but are even accumulated. Such a nativity does not generate sons to God, but to the devil. By a falsehood they are born, and they do not receive the promises of truth. Begotten of treachery, they lose the grace of faith. They cannot attain to the reward of peace, since they have broken the Lord’s peace with the madness of discord.”

²⁸ Cyprian of Carthage, Treatises, I, 10-11.

Athanasius of Alexandria stated²⁹ that life and wisdom are proper to the Essence of the Fountain of living waters. To say, like the Arians, that “Once the Son was not” is to say that once the Fountain was dry. This is clearly heretical.

“If God is the Fountain of wisdom and life, as He says, ‘They have forsaken Me, the Fountain of living waters’ (Jeremiah 2:13); and again, ‘A glorious high throne from the beginning, is the place of our sanctuary. O Lord, the Hope of Israel, all who forsake You shall be ashamed. Those who depart from Me shall be written in the earth, because they have forsaken the Lord, the Fountain of living waters’ (Jeremiah 17:12-13). And, ‘You have forsaken the Fountain of wisdom’ (Baruch 3:12). This implies that life and wisdom are proper to the Essence of the Fountain; It was never at any time without existence, but was always. Now the Son is all this, who says, ‘I am the Life’ (John 14:6) and, ‘I Wisdom dwell with prudence’ (Proverbs 8:12). Is it not heretical to say, ‘Once the Son was not?’ This is the same as saying, ‘Once the Fountain was dry, destitute of Life and Wisdom’. A fountain it would then cease to be; for what begets not from itself, is not a fountain. What a load of baloney! God promises that those who do His will shall be as a fountain where the water never fails.”

Basil the Great eloquently stated³⁰ that the Arians were shepherds of the Philistines for introducing the terms “unbegotten” and “begotten”, and claiming that there was a time when the Everlasting was not. They have forsaken the Fountain of living water for broken cisterns.

“Friends godly and well beloved, I implore you to beware of the shepherds of the Philistines. Don’t let them choke your wills without your knowledge; don’t let them foul the purity of your knowledge of the faith. This is always their object, not to teach simple souls lessons drawn from Holy Scripture, but to mar the harmony of the truth by heathen philosophy. Is not he an open Philistine who is introducing the terms ‘unbegotten’ and ‘begotten’ into our Faith, and who asserts that there was once a time when the Everlasting was not; that He who is by nature and eternally a Father became a Father; that the Holy Spirit is not eternal? He bewitches our Patriarch’s sheep that they may not drink ‘of the fountain of water springing up into everlasting life’ (John 4:14). Instead they will rather bring upon themselves the words of the prophet, ‘They have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, and hewn themselves cisterns -- broken cisterns that can hold no water’ (Jeremiah 2:13). All the while they ought to confess that the Father is God, the Son God, and the Holy Spirit God, as they have been taught by the divine words, and by those who have understood them in their highest sense. Against those who cast it in our teeth that we are Tritheists, let it be answered that we confess one God not in number but in nature.”

Gregory of Nyssa pointed out³¹ that anytime we put limits on God, such as saying that He is with our group and not with others, we worship what we do not know. This also applied to the heretics that Gregory was dealing with.

²⁹ Athanasius of Alexandria, Four Discourses against the Arians, I, vi, 19.

³⁰ Basil the Great, Letters, VIII, 2.

³¹ Gregory of Nyssa, Against Eunomius, III, 5.

“We know the loftiness of the glory of Him Whom we worship, by the fact that we are not able by reasoning to comprehend in our thoughts the incomparable character of His greatness. That saying of our Lord to the Samaritan woman is brought forward against us by our enemies; but it might more properly be addressed to them. The words, ‘You worship what you do not know’ (John 4:22), the Lord speaks to the Samaritan woman, prejudiced as she was by corporeal ideas in her opinions concerning God. To her the phrase well applies, because the Samaritans, thinking that they worship God, yet supposing the Deity to be corporeally settled in place³², adore Him in name only, worshipping something else, and not God. Nothing is Divine that is conceived as being circumscribed; it belongs to the Godhead to be in all places, and to pervade all things, and not to be limited by anything. Those who fight against Christ find the phrase they use against us turned into an accusation of themselves. Just as the Samaritans supposed the Deity to be compassed round by some circumscription of place, and were rebuked by the words they heard, so one might well say to these new Samaritans. In supposing the Deity to be limited by the absence of generation, as it were by some local limit, they do service to Him as God, but don’t know that the infinity of God exceeds all the significance and comprehension that names can furnish.”

Living Water in the New Jerusalem

The Apostle John wrote, “And He said to me, ‘It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of living water (Greek: *udatos tes zoes*) freely to him who thirsts. He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son” (Revelation 21:6-7). Here the Greek word form “of living water” has different endings, but the same words are involved. Thus the use of “Living Water” continues forever. This makes sense, since “living water” refers to the Holy Spirit.

No Man Laid Hands on Him

John wrote, “Therefore many from the crowd, when they heard this saying, said, ‘Truly this is the Prophet’. Others said, ‘This is the Christ’. But some said, ‘Will the Christ come out of Galilee? Has not the Scripture said that the Christ comes from the seed of David and from the town of Bethlehem, where David was?’ So there was a division among the people because of Him. Now some of them wanted to take Him, but no one laid hands on Him” (John 7:40-44).

From the Scriptures we know that Jesus was born in Bethlehem, even though He lived in Nazareth, due to the taxation registration that was required by Herod the Great (Matthew 2:1-19). Since many people knew that the Christ was supposed to come from Bethlehem, it is remarkable that no one asked Him about this! It may be that they just didn’t want to know!

Irenaeus of Lyons stated³³ that Christ did everything at precisely the proper time, since all things were foreknown by the Father. When Mary asked Him to change water into wine, Jesus replied that His hour had not yet come, since He was waiting for the hour ordained by the Father,

³² That is, on Mt Gerazim.

³³ Irenaeus of Lyons, Against Heresies, III, xvi, 7.

the fullness of time, and His hour for being taken had not yet come'. All this had been predicted by the Prophets.

“With Christ nothing is incomplete or out of due season, just as with the Father there is nothing incongruous. All these things were foreknown by the Father; but the Son works them out at the proper time in perfect order and sequence. This was the reason why, when Mary was urging Him on to perform the wonderful miracle of the wine, and was desirous before the time to partake of the cup of emblematic significance, the Lord, checking her untimely haste, said, ‘Woman, what does your concern have to do with Me? My hour has not yet come’ (John 2:3-5) — waiting for that hour which was foreknown by the Father. This is also the reason why, when men were often desirous to take Him, it is said, ‘No one laid a hand on Him, because His hour had not yet come’ (John 7:30). Similarly the time of His passion, which had been foreknown by the Father; as told by the prophet Habakkuk, ‘O Lord, I have heard Your report, and was afraid: I considered Your works, and was amazed: You shall be known between the two living creatures, You shall be acknowledged when the years draw near; You shall be manifested when the time is come; when my soul is troubled, You will in wrath remember mercy’ (Habakkuk 3:2 LXX). Paul also says: ‘But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law’ (Galatians 4:4). By which it is made clear, that all things which had been foreknown of the Father, our Lord accomplished everything in their order, season, and hour, foreknown and fitting, being indeed one and the same, but rich and great. He fulfills the bountiful and comprehensive will of His Father, inasmuch as He is Himself the Savior of those who are saved, and the Lord of those who are under authority, and the God of all those things which have been formed, the only-begotten of the Father. Christ who was announced, and the Word of God, became incarnate when the fullness of time had come, at which the Son of God had to become the Son of man.”

John Chrysostom pointed out³⁴ that the Apostles experienced a similar benefit as did their Lord: no one laid hands on them either. While the Apostles were given tremendous grace, they also continued steadfastly with one accord in prayer. The gifts of grace shone forth in them, but there was also their own diligence: they gave away their riches and passed their time in fasting. They accepted persecution as part of life, but just like with Christ, no one laid hands on them.

“As men in high repute, the Apostles were about to take their place in honor with the Prophets. The Sadducees, on the other hand, were the most objectionable on the subject of the Resurrection. Someone might say: ‘Why? What man, endowed with such gifts as the Apostles were, would not have been great?’ Consider, however, before they were endowed with the grace, ‘they all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication’ (Acts 1:14), and depending on the aid from above. We, on the other hand, hope for the kingdom of heaven, yet endure nothing! We have received the Spirit, yet we suffer nothing, nor encounter any danger! But the Apostles, before they had breathing-time from their former dangers, were again led into other dangers. Yet there is no arrogance, no conceit; they speak with mildness; this is really good! Not all that they did was the immediate work of grace, but there are many indications of their own zeal as well.

³⁴ John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, XIII, v.33.

That the gifts of grace shone forth in them, this was from their own diligence. Notice from the very beginning, how careful Peter is; how sober and vigilant. Notice how they that believed cast away their riches, had no private property, continued in prayer, showed that they were of one mind, and passed their time in fasting. What grace, I ask, did all this? Therefore it is that He brings the evidence home to the Jewish leaders through their own officers (Acts 5:22-23). Just as in the case of Christ, it was their officers who said, ‘No man ever spoke like this Man’ (John 7:46). These proofs are more apt to be believed than the Resurrection. Observe also the moderation shown by the rulers themselves, and how they give way. ‘The high-priest asked them, saying’ etc. (Acts 5:7). Here the high priest reasons with them in a moderate tone; for he was frightened. To hinder was what he desired rather than to kill, since he was not allowed to do that (John 18:31). To rouse the Apostles, and show them the extreme danger they are in, he said, ‘You have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine and intend to bring this man’s blood on us’ (Acts 5:28). Does he still take Christ to be only a *man*? He wants to make it appear that the injunction was necessary for their own safety. But notice what (Peter) says: ‘Him God has exalted to His Right Hand to be Prince and Savior, to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins’” (Acts 5:31).

Why Wouldn’t the Pharisees Believe?

John wrote, “Then the officers came to the chief priests and Pharisees, who said to them, ‘Why have you not brought Him?’ The officers answered, ‘No man ever spoke like this Man!’ Then the Pharisees answered them, ‘Are you also deceived? Have any of the rulers or the Pharisees believed in Him? But this crowd that does not know the Law is accursed.’ Nicodemus (he who came to Jesus by night, being one of them) said to them, ‘Does our Law judge a man before it hears him and knows what he is doing?’ They answered and said to him, ‘Are you also from Galilee? Search and look, for no prophet has arisen out of Galilee’” (John 7:45-52).

At this time, the Pharisees had witnessed a number of Jesus’ miracles, but it had not dawned on them Who He is. Nicodemus, one of the leading Pharisees had come to Jesus by night, so as to avoid being seen by his fellow Pharisees. He had asked Jesus pointedly, “Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him” (John 3:2). Jesus explained that one needed to be born again in order to recognize Who He is (John 3:3). It is the action of the Holy Spirit on a willing heart that makes this possible, and the Pharisees were not yet willing. In the Early Church, mainly through the teaching of James, many of the priests believed (Acts 6:7). The priests were of the group called the Sadducees; no mass conversion of the Pharisees is recorded.

Athanasius of Alexandria described³⁵ what it was that the officers sent by the Pharisees saw in Jesus that the Pharisees didn’t. They described their encounter with Jesus: “No man ever spoke like this Man!” (John 7:46) What astonished the officers was the boldness and authority that Christ exhibited; this was God communicating with man. The Pharisees, on the other hand, had hardened themselves against this.

³⁵ Athanasius of Alexandria, Festal Letters, XIV, 4-5.

“Moses proclaimed the beginning of the Paschal Feast, saying, ‘This month *shall be* your beginning of months; it *shall be* the first month of the year to you’ (Exodus 12:2). But the Lord, Who came down at the end of the ages (Hebrews 9:26), proclaimed a different day, not as though He would abolish the Law, far from it, but that He should establish the Law, and be the end of the Law. ‘Christ *is* the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes’ (Romans 10:4). As Paul says, ‘Do we then make void the Law through faith? Certainly not! On the contrary, we establish the Law’ (Romans 3:31). Now these things astonished even the officers who were sent by the Jews, so that wondering they said to the Pharisees, ‘No man ever spoke like this Man!’ (John 7:46) What was it then that astonished those officers, or what was it which so affected the men as to make them marvel? It was nothing but the boldness and authority of our Savior. For when of old time prophets and scribes studied the Scriptures, they perceived that what they read did not refer to themselves, but to others. Moses, for instance, ‘The Lord your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your midst, from your brethren. Him you shall hear’ (Deuteronomy 18:15). Isaiah again, ‘Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel’ (Isaiah 7:14). And others prophesied in different and various ways, concerning the Lord. But by the Lord, of Himself, and of no other, were these things prophesied; to Himself He limited them all, saying, ‘If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink’ (John 7:37) — not to any other person, but to ‘Me.’ A man may indeed hear from those concerning My coming, but he must not henceforth drink from others, but from Me.

John Chrysostom noted³⁶ that the Pharisees saw many of Jesus’ miracles and they seemed to be wiser than other men, yet they were always plotting against Christ and refused to believe. But the officers that they sent to arrest Jesus weren’t like that. They heard one short teaching from Christ and they were “themselves bound by wonder” at Him; they were truly enlightened. And they were not shy about saying this to the Pharisees who had sent them! The Prophets had rebuked the Pharisees many times for such hardness of heart, but they were deaf to the words of the Prophets. The Pharisees claimed to know the Law, but they really didn’t; if they really knew it, they would have obeyed it.

“There is nothing clearer, nothing simpler than the truth, if we don’t deal perversely. Just as on the other hand if we deal perversely, nothing is more difficult. Notice the Scribes and Pharisees, who seemed to be wiser than other men, but who were always plotting against Christ. They saw His miracles and read the Scriptures, yet were not profited, but were even harmed. The officers, who could not claim wisdom as one of their privileges, were subdued by one single sermon, and they who had gone forth to bind Him, came back themselves bound by wonder. We must not only marvel at their understanding, that they didn’t need signs, but were taken by the teaching alone. They didn’t say, ‘No man ever performed miracles like this Man’, but, ‘No man ever spoke like this Man!’ (John 7:46). We must not merely marvel at their understanding, but also at their boldness, that they spoke thus to those that had sent them, to the Pharisees, to His enemies, to men who were doing all with a view to gratify their enmity. ‘The officers came, and the Pharisees said to them, “Why have you not brought him?”’ (John 7:45) For the officers to

³⁶ John Chrysostom, Homilies on John, LII, 1-2.

return to the Pharisees was a far greater deed than to have remained with Jesus. If they had remained with Jesus, they would have been rid of the annoyance of the Pharisees; but now they became heralds of the wisdom of Christ, and showed their boldness in greater degree. They didn't say, 'We could not become like the multitude, for they paid attention to Him as to a prophet'. Instead they said, 'No man ever spoke like this Man!' They showed their right feeling. They spoke the words not only of men admiring Christ, but also blaming their masters, because they had sent them to bind Him whom they ought to listen to. Yet they had not heard a sermon either, but a short talk; for when the mind is impartial, there is no need of long arguments. Such a thing is truth! What then did the Pharisees say? When the Pharisees ought to have been pricked to the heart, on the contrary, they retorted a charge against the officers, 'Are you also deceived?' (John 7:47) The officers still spoke properly to the Pharisees; they do not express themselves harshly, yet nevertheless they give signs of anger, and speak sparingly. When the Pharisees ought to have asked what Jesus spoke, and to have marveled at the words, they do not do so, but reason with the officers from a very foolish argument: 'Have any of the rulers or the Pharisees believed in Him? But this crowd that does not know the law is accursed'" (John 7:48-49).

"The charge against the Pharisees is heavier, because the people believed and they didn't. They acted like men who knew the Law; how then are the people accursed? It is the Pharisees that are accursed, who don't keep the Law, not the people who obey the Law. The Prophets rebuked them, saying, 'Listen, you rulers of Sodom; give ear to the Law of our God, you people of Gomorrah' (Isaiah 1:10); and, 'Your princes are rebellious, and companions of thieves' (Isaiah 1:23); and again, 'You rulers of the house of Israel: Is it not for you to know justice?' (Micah 3:1) Everywhere the Pharisees attack the officers vehemently. What other proof can a man bring of his not knowing the Law than his not obeying it? When they had said, 'Have any of the rulers or the Pharisees believed in Him?' and, 'These who don't know the Law', Nicodemus rightly criticizes them, saying, 'Does our Law judge a man before it hears him and knows what he is doing?'" (John 7:51)

"Nicodemus shows that the Pharisees neither know the Law, nor do the Law; for if that Law commands to kill no man without first hearing him, and they before hearing were eager to kill Him, they were transgressors of the Law. Because they said, 'Have any of the rulers or the Pharisees believed in Him?' (John 7:48), therefore John informs us that Nicodemus was 'one of them', to show that even rulers believed on Him. Although the officers didn't yet show fitting boldness, still they were becoming attached to Christ. Observe how cautiously Nicodemus rebukes the Pharisees; he didn't say, 'You desire to kill Him, and condemn the Man as a deceiver without proof'; he spoke in a milder way, hindering their excessive violence, and murderous disposition. Therefore he turned his words to the Law, saying, 'Does our Law judge a man before it hears him and knows what he is doing?' (John 7:51). So not a bare 'hearing,' but 'careful hearing' is required. The meaning of, 'know what he does', is, 'what he intends', 'on what account', 'for what purpose', 'whether for the subversion of the order of things and as an enemy'. Being therefore perplexed, because they had said, 'None of the rulers has believed on him', they addressed Nicodemus, neither vehemently, nor yet with forbearance.

After he had said, ‘The Law judges no man’, how does it follow that they should say, ‘Are you also from Galilee?’” (John 7:52)

“When they ought to have shown that they had not summoned Jesus for judgment, or that it was not fitting to allow Him to speak, they reply rather in a rough and angry manner. ‘Search and look, for no prophet has arisen out of Galilee’ (John 7:52). Why, what did Jesus say? That He was a prophet? No; Nicodemus said that Christ ought not to be slain unjudged. But the Pharisees replied insolently, and as if Nicodemus knew nothing of the Scriptures; as though one had said, ‘Go, learn’, for this is the meaning of, ‘Search, and look’. What then did Christ do? Since they were continually dwelling on Galilee³⁷ and ‘The Prophet’, to free all men from this erroneous suspicion, and to show that He was not one of the prophets, but the Master of the world, He said, ‘I am the light of the world’ (John 8:12). He is the Light of not just ‘Galilee’, not just Palestine, not just Judaea.”

Christ is Light and Life

“Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, ‘I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life’” (John 8:12).

Gregory the Theologian stated³⁸ that we become perfect light and children of the Perfect Light when we put away darkness. We may be chased by the darkness, but when it leaps up in its shamelessness against us, it encounters God and is defeated. This is because we are signed with the True Light, Who is the Light of the World.

“Listen to the Voice of God, which sounds so exceedingly clear to me, who am both disciple and master of these mysteries; would to God it may sound the same to you that, ‘I am the light of the world’ (John 8:12). Therefore approach Him and be enlightened, and let not your faces be ashamed (Psalm 34:5), being signed with the true Light. It is a season of new birth (John 3:3), let us be born again. It is a time of reformation, let us receive again the first Adam³⁹. Let us not remain what we are, but let us become what we once were. The Light shines in the darkness (John 1:5), in this life and in the flesh, and is chased by the darkness, but is not overtaken by it. I mean the adverse power leaps up in its shamelessness against the visible Adam, but encounters God and is defeated. When we put away the darkness, we draw near to the Light, and then become perfect Light, the children of perfect Light. Notice the grace of this Day; notice the power of this mystery. Are you not lifted up from the earth? Are you not clearly placed on high, being exalted by our voice and meditation? You will be placed much higher when the Word shall have prospered the course of my words.”

Cyprian of Carthage noted⁴⁰ that people can say that they are walking in the light but they may not be at all. The key point is whether we imitate the example of Christ Himself.

³⁷ The Pharisees were incorrect about no prophet arising out of Galilee. They neglected the fact that Jonah (2 Kings 14:25) and Nahum both came from Galilee.

³⁸ Gregory the Theologian, *Oration on the Holy Lights*, XXXIX, 2.

³⁹ That is, the condition of man before the Fall.

⁴⁰ Cyprian of Carthage, *Treatises*, X, 11.

“‘He who says he is in the light, and hates his brother, is in darkness until now; he walks in darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes’ (1 John 2:9-11). Whosoever hates, says he, his brother, walks in darkness, and doesn’t know where he is going. He goes unconsciously to Gehenna in ignorance and blindness; he is hurrying into punishment, departing, that is, from the light of Christ, who warns and says, ‘I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life’ (John 8:12). But he follows Christ who stands in His precepts, who walks in the way of His teaching, who follows His footsteps and His ways, who imitates that which Christ both did and taught. Peter exhorts and warns about this, saying, ‘Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that we should follow His steps’” (1 Peter 2:21).

John Chrysostom noted⁴¹ that Jesus and Paul used light/darkness imagery to refer to different things. Jesus referred to the Second Coming as “night” for the unbeliever, but as excess of light for the faithful. Paul used light/darkness imagery a little differently: he referred to night as the place of those who sit in darkness, while light refers to that Day which is to come, but also to a preview of that Light for the believer now.

“Jesus said, ‘The night is coming when no one can work’ (John 9:4). But He shows that even after the Crucifixion He would care for the ungodly, and bring many to Himself. For ‘I must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day’ (John 9:4). But after that, He declares, ‘As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world’” (John 9:5).

“He had said to others, ‘While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light’ (John 12:36). Why then did Paul call this life ‘night’ and that other life when Christ returns ‘day’? He was not opposing Christ, but saying the same thing, if not in words yet in sense; for he also said, ‘The night is far spent, the day is at hand’ (Romans 13:12). The present time Paul calls ‘night’, because of those who sit in darkness, or because he compares it with that Day which is to come. Christ calls the future ‘night’, because there sin has no power to work; but Paul calls the present life night, because they are in darkness, who continue in wickedness and unbelief. Addressing himself then to the faithful he said, ‘The night is far spent, the day is at hand’ (Romans 13:12), since they should enjoy that light; and he calls the old life night. ‘Let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light’ (Romans 13:12). Notice that Paul tells them that it is ‘night’? Therefore he said, ‘Let us walk properly, as in the day’ (Romans 13:13), that we may enjoy that light. For if this light is so good, consider what that light will be when Christ returns! As much as the sunlight is brighter than the flame of a candle, so much and far more is that light better than this. And signifying this, Christ said, that ‘In those days, after that tribulation, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light’ (Mark 13:24). Because of the excess of that brightness, not even the sun shall be seen.”

⁴¹ John Chrysostom, Homilies on John, LVI, 2-3.

THE DAY OF PENTECOST

The Coming of the Holy Spirit

Revision F

Epistle: Acts 2:1-11

Today's Epistle lesson represents the fulfillment of the Old Testament Feast of Weeks and of some Old Testament prophecy.

Old Testament Parables

Several Old Testament readings are used as parables of the coming of the Holy Spirit and are read as part of Great Vespers preceding Pentecost Sunday.

Moses' Seventy Elders (Numbers 11:16-29): The Lord had directed Moses to gather seventy elders to help him "bear the burden of the people." These Seventy were gathered around the Tabernacle when the Lord came down in the cloud. The Lord then took of the Spirit that was upon Moses and placed the same Spirit upon the Seventy. As this occurred, the Seventy prophesied, although they never did so again.

The Spirit Poured out on All Flesh (Joel 2:23-32): Joel prophesied concerning the coming of the Day of the Lord (Joel 2:1) where the earth will be judged with fire (Joel 2:3) using the imagery of an army of locusts (Joel 2:4-11, 25). He called on the people to repent (Joel 2:12-13) and perhaps the Lord will delay His judgment (Joel 2:14).

Yet the righteous have nothing to fear (Joel 2:21-22); they will have plenty to eat, they will praise the Lord and they will never be put to shame (Joel 2:26). The Lord will pour out His Spirit on all flesh, even on the male and female servants (Joel 2:28-29). The old men will dream dreams and the young men will see visions (Joel 2:28). Whoever calls on the Name of the Lord will be delivered (Joel 2:32).

A New Heart and Spirit for God's People (Ezekiel 36:23-27): Ezekiel spoke at a time when Israel had profaned the Lord's Name among the Gentiles wherever they went (Ezekiel 36:22). The Lord, Ezekiel said, was going to vindicate His Holy Name when He gathered His people from all nations and brought them into their own land (Ezekiel 36:23-24). We have a foretaste of this now in the Church. Having done this, the Lord gave His people a new heart and put a new Spirit within them, removing the heart of stone and replacing it with a heart of flesh (Ezekiel 36:26). With the Lord's Spirit within them, they will be clean (Ezekiel 36:25) and will walk in His statutes and observe His ordinances (Ezekiel 36:27).

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The 120 Gather in the Upper Room

As thousands of years of Old Testament history prepared the people of God for Pentecost, the three year public ministry of Jesus prepared His followers for Pentecost, as did the ten days of fasting and prayer in the upper room by the 120 (Acts 1:13-14).

The Day of Pentecost occurred on⁴² either the 5th, 6th, or 7th of Sivan depending on the sighting of the new moon to mark the beginning of the month. In the year 30 AD, this occurred on a Sunday, the first day of the week. Thus there were back-to-back Sabbaths; the weekly Sabbath followed by the Feast of Pentecost, which was also a Sabbath.

Gathered together at this time were the Twelve, most of the Seventy⁴³, the Women plus others totaling about 120 (Acts 1:15). They had been meeting in the upper room where the Twelve had eaten the Passover and Last Supper (Mark 14:15, Acts 1:13). Continuing in prayer and supplication, they were all with one accord in one place (Acts 1:14, 2:1).

Thus, the people we know were involved in the filling of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost were:

- The Twelve Apostles
- The Seventy Lesser Apostles
- The Eight Myrrh-Bearing Women

This leaves 30 others unaccounted for. Probably included among the unnamed 30 were:

- Joseph of Arimathea
- Nicodemus
- Simon the Leper
- Lazarus
- Simon of Cyrene and his sons Rufus and Alexander
- Zacchaeus

All of these 120 people (Acts 1:15) were filled with the Holy Spirit. And all 120 received languages as of fire that were distributed and sat on each one of them. We don't normally think of the Virgin Mary as receiving this gift of languages, but she was there also.

The Effect of the Giving of the Holy Spirit

The pouring out of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost was something special. The reading for Pentecost Sunday Matins is John 20:19-23 where Jesus breathed on His disciples and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit." He then also gave them the authority to forgive sins. This occurred on the evening of the day He rose from the dead. The Twelve had just begun to believe He was raised; they needed the Holy Spirit to sort everything out. As Gregory the Theologian said⁴⁴, "He measured Himself out to them according to their capacity to receive Him". In the 50 days leading up to Pentecost, the Spirit Himself began teaching the disciples.

⁴² A month could have either 29 or 30 days. If both Nisan and Iyyar had 29 days, Pentecost fell on the 5th of Sivan. If both Nisan and Iyyar had 30 days, Pentecost was the 7th of Sivan. If one had 29, the other 30 days, Pentecost was the 6th of Sivan. See Unger, *Bible Dictionary*, p.356.

⁴³ Apollos, one of the Seventy, was absent since he didn't hear about the Holy Spirit until over 20 years later (Acts 18:25).

⁴⁴ Gregory the Theologian, *Fifth Theological Oration*, XXXI, 26.

John Chrysostom noted that Jesus’ breathing on His disciples in the upper room (John 20:22) was not the same as the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. Otherwise He would not have needed to come. Chrysostom suggests⁴⁵ that the breathing on them in the upper room was to prepare them for the main event.

Suddenly there came a sound from heaven like a rushing mighty wind and it filled the whole house where they were sitting (Acts 2:2). The sound was not just a wind blowing horizontally, but “from heaven.” This calls to mind the pillar of cloud by day and pillar of fire by night that led Israel in the wilderness (Exodus 13:21-22). This is also reminiscent of the “strong East wind” that the Lord sent to divide the Red Sea for Moses (Exodus 14:21). It is perhaps no coincidence that the words for wind and spirit are the same in Hebrew (*ruach*) and Greek (*pneuma*).

Jerusalem was crowded for the two day Sabbath (where no work could be done) and the sound of this “wind” created a curiosity among the multitude of devout Jews in town for the feast (Acts 2:6). Sabbath Laws also restricted travel, so all these people were required to be in the locale where they were staying. The sound of the wind was localized to the house where the 120 were staying such that the multitude could easily pinpoint the source of the sound. They had come from Judea as well as from:

Country	Language
Parthia	Arsacid Pahlavi
Media	Median
Elam or Susiana	Elamite
Mesopotamia	Sumerian, Akkadian
Egypt	Coptic, Sahidic and Bohairic dialects
Libya near Cyrene	Berber Libu
Crete	Minoan, Eteocretan
Cappadocia	Cappadocian: a Turkish dialect of Greek
Pontus	Pontic: a distinct form of Greek
Asia	Iawonic, Iawolic and Doric Greek
Phrygia	Phrygian
Pamphylia	Pamphylian: isolated dialect of Greek
Rome	Latin
Arabia	Arabic

Many of these people stayed for about a year until the persecution following the martyrdom of Stephen scattered them (perhaps) back to where they came from.

Taking a closer look at the word “tongue”, the Greek word that is usually translated tongue (*glossa*) means both the fleshly member of the human mouth and a language as being controlled by the human tongue. Rufinus of Aquilea in his commentary on the Apostles’ Creed stated⁴⁶ that,

⁴⁵ John Chrysostom, [Homilies on John](#), LXXXVI, 3, (vv. 22-23).

⁴⁶ Rufinus, “A Commentary on the Apostles’ Creed”, 2, [Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers](#), v.3.

“After Pentecost, they were enabled to speak a variety of different languages such that they found no nation strange to them and no foreign speech beyond their comprehension”.

So how did the speaking in tongues work? There was a miraculous aspect to it. They spoke so that others heard in their own languages, and they understood the languages others were speaking. Paul stated to the Corinthians that he spoke in languages (*tongues*) more than all of them (2 Corinthians 14:18). This was necessary for him. From the thirteen different languages mentioned in Acts 2:9-10, Paul evangelized people speaking seven of them on his various missionary journeys: i.e. people in Judea, Cappadocia, Pontus, Asia, Phrygia, Pamphylia and Rome as well as Crete where he left Titus (Titus 1:5). Thus Paul needed the Gift of Languages in order to do what he did. In the 1st Century, the major use of the Gift of Tongues among the Apostles was for evangelism.

Cyril of Jerusalem wrote⁴⁷ that the Apostles and the women received considerable wisdom. Included in this wisdom, they received was the Gift of Prophecy to understand all mysteries and knowledge (1 Corinthians 13:2).

“What teacher can be found so great as to teach men all at once things which they have not learned? So many years people spend learning grammar and other acts to speak only Greek well; nor yet do all speak this equally well. The Rhetorician perhaps succeeds in speaking well; and the Grammarian sometimes not well and the skillful Grammarian is still ignorant of the subjects of philosophy. But the Holy Spirit taught them many languages at once, languages which in all their life they never knew. This is in truth vast wisdom; this is power divine. What a contrast! Their long ignorance in time past compared to their sudden, complete and varied and unaccustomed exercise of these languages!”

For 120 people to fit into the upper room indicates that the house was fairly large and well-built. Access to upper rooms of houses or the roofs in general was by an outside staircase and also by a staircase from an inner courtyard. There was usually a railing around the edge of the first story roof (required by Law) such that people using the roof of the upper room wouldn't accidentally fall off (Deuteronomy 22:8). The edge of the first story roof, just behind the railing presented an ideal spot for Peter to address a large gathering of people, the eleven standing with him shoulder-to-shoulder (Acts 2:14).

When the multitude was attracted to the house by the sound of the “wind,” they were confused; Cyril wrote⁴⁸ that this was a second confusion in the same vein as that first evil one at Babel (Genesis 11:1-9). For in that confusion of tongues there was division of purpose because their thought was at enmity with God. But here, minds were restored and united, because the object of interest was godly. The confusion occurred because they recognized all or most as Galileans, but heard them speaking the language of their home country (Acts 2:6-7). The recognition as Galileans was easy: Galileans had a characteristic accent due to the way they pronounced (or mispronounced) some of the gutturals of the Hebrew alphabet (Mark 14:70). But for several thousand people (Acts 2:41) to hear 120 other people speak in at least 13 different

⁴⁷ Cyril of Jerusalem, Catechetical Lectures, XVII, 16.

⁴⁸ Cyril of Jerusalem, Catechetical Lectures, XVII, 17.

languages (Acts 2:9-10) all at the same time presents a question of logistics. If we describe the “gift” in terms of Rufinus’ and Cyril’s statements, one person could have spoken while 3,000 different people heard the Word in 13 different languages. If this were the case, the “gift” would not be with the speaking but would be with the hearing. Thus there were likely multiple speakers.

The text states that the sound came from heaven; then, “There appeared to them distributed languages (tongues), as of fire, and one sat upon each of them” (Acts 2:3). Thus, the Holy Women and the Virgin Mary, as well as the Seventy, received this gift also. Later on the same thing happened to Cornelius and the Gentiles (Acts 10:44-46).

John Chrysostom pointed out⁴⁹ that this occurred at the third hour or 9:00 a.m. This meant that it was broad daylight and the “fire” still stood out strongly in the sunlight, and at a distance so all 3,000 could see it.

As the multitude was both amazed and perplexed (Acts 2:12) and wondered what this meant, others mocked the 120 saying that they were drunk with new wine (Acts 2:13). Part of the Old Testament Pentecost liturgy was a new grain offering from the wheat harvest. This was done by offering two loaves of bread with some animal sacrifices and some recently fermented wine, called “new wine” (Leviticus 23:15-18). Thus, the mockers used the illustrations from the Pentecost liturgy to describe the 120: they appeared to the mockers to be drunk with some of the “new wine.”

John Chrysostom stated⁵⁰ that the wind and the fire were always couched in terms of “like as”. These physical phenomena were not the Holy Spirit, but indicated the presence of the Holy Spirit:

“Observe how it is always *like as*; and rightly so, that you may have no gross sensible notions of the Spirit. Also, *as of a rushing, mighty wind*; therefore it was not a wind. For when the Spirit was to be made known to John (the Baptist), then it came upon the head of Christ in the form of a dove. But now, when a whole multitude was to be converted, it is *like as of fire*. And it sat upon each of them. This means that it remained and rested upon them. For the sitting is significant of being settled and continuance”.

If the languages rested on each of the 120 *like as of fire*, there was something visibly different, perhaps like the haloes or glowing spheres around the heads of the saints that are used in iconography. This may have been similar to Moses’ face glowing after he spoke to God (Exodus 34:32-35, 2 Corinthians 3:13). And they each began to speak with other languages as the Spirit gave them utterance (Acts 2:4). The multitude heard the sound of the “wind;” they saw the glow of the “fire” that sat upon each of the 120; and they heard them speaking in their own languages the wonderful works of God (Acts 2:11). The multitude was both amazed and confused at the same time (Acts 2:6-7). When Peter spoke to the crowd of 3,000 people, he quoted Joel 2:28-29 to describe what was happening: “I will pour My Spirit on all mankind. Your sons and daughters will prophesy...”

⁴⁹ John Chrysostom, Homilies on Acts, V, v.14.

⁵⁰ John Chrysostom, Homilies on Acts, IV, v. 3.

This speaking in languages may have appeared similar to the prophesying experienced by Moses' Seventy elders. That this prophesying was unusual behavior and quite noticeable can be seen from two of the seventy elders who were not at the tent of meeting. They began to prophesy in the camp such that Joshua suggested that Moses restrain them. Moses replied, "Would that all the Lord's people were prophets, that the Lord would put His Spirit upon them!" (Numbers 11:26-29).

King Saul experienced this "prophesying" on two separate occasions. The first time occurred just after the Prophet Samuel anointed him king. He met a group of prophets and "the Spirit of God came upon him mightily so that he prophesied among them. When all who knew him previously saw that he prophesied now with the prophets, the people said to one another, 'What has happened to the son of Kish? Is Saul also among the prophets?'" At this time God changed Saul's heart (1 Samuel 10:1-11).

The second time occurred while Saul was hunting down David to kill him. It was reported to Saul that David was with the Prophet Samuel at Ramah. Saul sent messengers three times to arrest David and bring him back. Each time the messengers came to Ramah, they began to prophesy along with the prophets who had Samuel presiding over them. And they returned to Saul empty handed. Finally Saul, himself, went to Ramah and he, too, prophesied all day long, prostrating himself and stripped to his loincloth (1 Samuel 19:18-24).

In other cases, the Apostle John was "in the Spirit" on the Lord's Day (i.e. Sunday) when he received a vision (Revelation 1:10). Again, when he was "in the Spirit," he was taken to heaven to see future things (Revelation 4:1, 2). Peter was in a trance while he was praying and saw heaven opened (Acts 10:10). Similarly, Paul was praying in the Temple in Jerusalem when he was in a trance and saw Christ speaking to him (Acts 22:17-18).

From one of the Old Testament readings for Pentecost Vespers, the Prophet Joel had predicted this, "And it will come about after this that I will pour out My Spirit on all mankind. And your sons and daughters will prophesy; your old men will dream dreams; your young men will see visions. And even on the male and female servants I will pour out My Spirit in those days" (Joel 2:28-29). We note that the text from Joel says that they will prophesy, dream and see visions but not speak in languages. Yet Peter quoted Joel to describe what was happening (Acts 2:14-21). Thus the "prophesying" and the "speaking in languages" must refer to something very similar. This does not mean that the Gift of Languages and the Gift of Prophecy are the same thing. However, since "the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy" (Revelation 19:10), the speaking in languages at Pentecost telling of "the wonderful works of God" (Acts 2:11) can be called prophecy. For more discussions on Prophecy and its implications and uses, see the discussion for the Feast Day of Elijah, July 20th.

The crowd of 3,000 was justifiably both amazed and perplexed at the same time wondering at what was happening. This was a most unusual behavior and circumstances of events.

Peter's reaction to the mockers on Pentecost was to confront them. They couldn't have gotten drunk because it was only 9:00 a.m., i.e. the third hour. (This implies that either the 120 had just concluded a Matins service or an all-night vigil.) Then Peter quoted the above passage

from Joel 2:28 to explain what was happening (Acts 2:16-21); that is, the Holy Spirit was being poured out as Joel predicted. Peter further stated to them (Acts 2:17-36):

- They all knew Jesus of Nazareth, that He was attested by miracles, wonders and signs.
- By God's foreknowledge, He was lawlessly crucified.
- God raised Him up, since death couldn't hold Him.
- We (the 120) were all witnesses of this.
- Now that Jesus is exalted to the Right Hand of God, we have received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit.
- God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.

Hearing this, they were cut to the heart and asked what they should do. Peter said, "Repent and let every one of you be baptized in the Name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call" (Acts 2:38-39). Three thousand souls were then added to their numbers.

John Chrysostom points out⁵¹ the tone of Peter's address as being one of gentleness and humility. He calls them "men of Judea" (Acts 2:14), "men of Israel" (Acts 2:22), "men and brothers" (Acts 2:29), "all the house of Israel" (Acts 2:36), and concludes with "the promise is to you and your children" (Acts 2:39).

Gift of Languages in the Worship Service

In the mid 50's AD, another use of the Gift of Languages had developed in the Church of Corinth in the worship service. It is this use of the Gift of Tongues that began to develop in many Protestant Churches in the 19th and 20th Century.

Some of the Church of Corinth had the Gift of Languages that they received at Pentecost. One of these was the Bishop of Corinth, Silas, who traveled with Paul on the Second Missionary Journey when Paul and Silas founded the Church of Corinth. Silas had been one of the Seventy (Luke 10:1-20) and was in the Upper Room at Pentecost. He was also one of the leading brethren in the Church of Jerusalem (Acts 15:22) and was himself a prophet also (Acts 15:32) prior to the Second Missionary Journey. According to tradition, Peter and Paul met in Macedonia during the Second Missionary Journey and ordained Silas Bishop of Corinth prior to Paul's arrival there. We note Silas' arrival in Corinth with Timothy (Acts 18:5), but Paul is not recorded as leaving Corinth with Silas (Acts 18:18). Tradition lists Silas⁵² as the first Bishop of Corinth.

In writing to the Corinthians about three years after founding the Church, Paul had to correct them in a number of matters, one of which was the use of the Gift of Languages. Corinth's use of the Gift of Languages is somewhat unique and a reference to the Gift of Languages is rarely mentioned in the writings of the Church Fathers from the 1st to the 5th Centuries. Tertullian refers⁵³ to the use of the Gift of Languages in an ecstasy or a rapture of having occurred over the course

⁵¹ John Chrysostom, Homilies on Acts, VII.

⁵² Merrill Unger, Unger's Bible Dictionary, Moody Press, Chicago, 1967, p. 1025

⁵³ Tertullian, Five Books Against Marcion, V. viii

of history to produce psalms, visions and prayers. An example of an “ecstasy” producing a vision is the Apostle Paul at prayer in the Temple in Jerusalem: he was in a trance and saw Christ speaking to him (Acts 22:17-18). No mention of languages is made, but Paul was certainly in an “ecstatic” state. Tertullian implies that this has historically occurred privately, not in the public worship. Lack of reference by any of the Fathers to its use in the worship would lead one to conclude that the Gift of Languages was not of very widespread use in the worship. Miracles, Healing, Prophecy and other gifts are mentioned frequently by the Fathers, but not languages.

Paul’s admonition to Corinth was aimed at getting them to focus on love (1 Corinthians 13:1ff) and on edifying the other members of the Body (1 Corinthians 14:1-19) rather than just edifying themselves (1 Corinthians 14:4). We sometimes misread Paul’s letter to Corinth and assume all the Churches were like them. In fact, the Early Church worship was patterned after the Synagogue worship and had an organized format. Some of the Apostles wrote liturgies also, adapting the synagogue worship to focus on the things concerning Jesus. For example, James, the Lord’s brother (and Bishop of Jerusalem) wrote a liturgy that still exists today⁵⁴. It’s so long that it is rarely used, however. The Evangelist Mark (who evangelized Egypt) also wrote⁵⁵ one that was used primarily by the Egyptian Church and the earliest manuscripts exist only in Coptic. A liturgy is also attributed to Clement of Rome who was Bishop of Rome beginning c.67 AD.

Paul’s comments to Corinth, “Let all things be done decently and in order” (1 Corinthians 14:40) fits hand-in-glove with the existence of a liturgy in the Early Church. The “disorder” at Corinth also contrasts with that among the 120 at Pentecost: “They were all with one accord in one place” (Acts 2:1). Paul continues: “If anyone speaks in a tongue (language), let there be two or at the most three, each in turn, and let one interpret. But if there is no interpreter, let him keep silent in Church, and let him speak to himself and to God” (1 Corinthians 14:28). “God is not the author of confusion but of peace, as in all the Churches of the Saints” (1 Corinthians 14:33).

One significant aspect of the Gift of Languages at Pentecost was a sign for unbelievers (Acts 2:7, 8, 11, 12) that something special was happening. Similarly, Paul said the Gift of Languages was a sign for the Church at Corinth (1 Corinthians 14:22). It is not a “sign” for believers because they don’t need a “sign” to know something special is happening. At Pentecost, Peter spoke up to interpret the sign. Without an interpreter in the Church of Corinth, Paul said, people will think they are out of their mind (1 Corinthians 14:23) just like people thought the 120 at Pentecost were drunk (Acts 2:12-15).

When Peter spoke up and explained what was happening (Acts 2:12-21), he acted as an interpreter to explain to the people that what they were seeing was the fulfillment of the prophecy of Joel, which the people would have had no other way of knowing. Similarly in Corinth; Paul said, “If you bless with the spirit (i.e. speak in tongues), how will he who occupies the place of the uninformed say, ‘Amen’ at your giving of thanks, since he does not understand what you say? For you indeed give thanks well, but the other is not edified” (1 Corinthians 14:16, 17). John Chrysostom stated⁵⁶ that the “uninformed” refers to the laymen who do not hear the words “forever

⁵⁴ Roberts & Donaldson, “The Liturgy of St. James”, in The Anti-Nicene Fathers, Volume 7,

⁵⁵ Roberts & Donaldson, “The Divine Liturgy of the Holy Apostle and Evangelist Mark”, in Anti-Nicene Fathers, v.7.

⁵⁶ John Chrysostom, Homilies on 1 Corinthians, XXXV, 6

and ever” at the end, because they don’t understand the language, and thus don’t join in on the “Amen” as the Liturgy prescribes (Homily xxxv on 1 Corinthians 14).

Chrysostom continued to say that Paul’s specific instructions regarding interpretation of languages (1 Corinthians 14:27-28) and regarding judgment of prophecies (1 Corinthians 14:29-32) had to do with false teachers moving about in the first Century. “He said this that no diviner might throw himself in among them. For of this also at the beginning he warned them to beware, when he introduced a distinction between divination and prophecy (1 Corinthians 12:1-3, compare Acts 16:16). And now he warns them to discriminate and examine the matter, so that no Satanic teacher might secretly enter”.