

## THE PROPHET'S SPIRIT

Pentecost was actually the name of a holiday / a celebration; however in the church domain, it's perceived to mean the coming of the Holy Spirit.

According to the account in Acts, God's Spirit did come to and indwell in the followers of Christ who were waiting at the celebration of Pentecost.

Once filled with God's Spirit, the believers were emboldened and empowered to do amazing things in the name of Christ.

At the time of Pentecost, there were only a 120 believers in Jesus.

After receiving the Holy Spirit, that number rapidly grew. The Spirit filled Christians, with God's inspiration, went about proclaiming the Gospel and writing their experiences down, and they also shared and lived the love of Christ.

Even so, Pentecost was Not the beginning of God's Spirit affecting people.

It was Not the first occasion that God's Spirit moved and inspired people.

There are many citations in the Old Testament that refer to God's Spirit, sometimes called the breath of God or Ruah.

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Nevertheless, it does state in our John 7 text that Jesus was referring to The Spirit that believers would eventually receive. The writer even states, "for as yet there was no Spirit, because Jesus was not yet glorified."

God's Spirit was, no doubt, in Jesus, and I think the glorification of Jesus includes flavouring God's Spirit with the essence of Christ.

The Holy Spirit that the New Testament writers talk about is God's Spirit that poured through Jesus, and that radiates the nature and passion of Christ.

This new understanding, this new perspective made it worthy to consider the post-Jesus Holy Spirit as something radically new.

And, it was; it was the first time people were filled with God's Spirit through the understanding and with the passion of Christ.

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Yet, to be sure,.....God's Spirit has existed since and before God first gave breath to the first human.

As Psalm 104 notes, God's breath gives life to the body,....and more.

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Prophets are credited with being inspired by God's Spirit.

They are said to have God's breath, Ruah,...God's Spirit in them.

From the power and influence of the Spirit, prophets speak for God.

They often have the gift of visions--of seeing / perceiving how things will unfold / what is to come.

Thanks to the Spirit in them Prophets illuminate and inspire people as they preach, and they also point out injustices, sins and errors of humanity.

In addition, they challenge people to also receive God's Spirit. Ezekiel and the valley of dry bones is one example.

To be moved, guided and influenced by the Holy Spirit is to have the nature of a prophet.

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We are prone to think that such infusion is only for a few select people / that prophets are rare--the exception.

And unfortunately, that seems to be the reality, or.... maybe our definition of a prophet is too lofty?

However, our text from Numbers contradicts the assumption that the Spirit of a prophet is only given to the limited few.

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The story in Numbers says that Moses Did select 70 elders to join in a holy moment. They gathered at a sort of large sweat lodge.

God's Spirit came to Moses, and God also shared God's Spirit on the 70. It rested upon them, too. When that happened they prophesied,.....for a short while.

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More on what that means in a moment.

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Interesting, two men of the group who remained back at the main camp and were not part of the 70, were suddenly touched by God's Spirit. God's Spirit rested on them.

This was a surprise. It wasn't controlled, planned or under adult supervision / or Moses supervision. This spontaneous eruption of God's Spirit on the two, greatly disturbed a young observers, and he ran and told Moses.

Even Joshua, upon finding out what was happening insisted that Moses put a stop to this uncontrolled experience.

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This episode is very telling, and for one, it tells us that God's Spirit **isn't** controlled by us, nor can it be. It is God's doing, and Moses realized that, too.

Moses was keenly aware that God bestows Ruah / God's Spirit when, where and to whom God pleases. We can **Not** conjure up the Spirit. At best, we can **invoke**: say an invocation petitioning God's Spirit to come to us. Plus, none of the men who received God's Spirit were Christian.

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Moreover, when Moses was told to stop / to hinder God's Spirit, Moses replied, If only "all the Lord's people were prophets, and that the Lord would put God's Spirit on them" all.

And, why not? Why does this Not happen?.....  
.....or can it happen? .....or does it happen,...for short periods like what happened in this text?

Can people be touched by God's Spirit for a few moments,... and become prophets for a brief time?

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A bit more on what happened under the influence of the Spirit, in this passage; some insight is helpful to grasp this short-term prophesying.

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In the Old Testament, there are two types of prophesying.

One type yields the familiar role of the prophet, such as Isaiah, Jeremiah or Ezekiel. This type is God's Spirit enabling the person / the prophet to see beyond the present / to discern what is unfolding and the consequences, and thus speak the passion and will of God.

This kind of prophesying tends to be long term/ a calling, and it usually includes the gift of proclamation.

It is prophesying for the collective / for the community / for the people. It is seeing the big picture, which includes justice, for all people.

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The Hebrew word for prophesying in this passage from Numbers means a different kind of prophesying.

It is more personal, and the indwelling causes a person to be ecstatic / extremely overjoyed.

Yet, it is not just a hyped up emotion that music can stir up, nor is it like the excitement that rises from a circle dance.....or winning the Grey Cup.

This euphoric state / this type of prophesying comes only from God's Spirit,..... and it seems to only last a short while.

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I believe this ecstatic prophesying has the same base characteristics as the traditional, more staid form of prophesying.

Both include the gift to see beyond the present / to see the big picture / to see how life is unfolding,.....it's just that the ecstatic version is **Personal!**

When people are touched by God's Spirit in this way, they can see / grasp life with God unfolding before them and beyond them.

It includes a touch of understanding tomorrow.

This could be a moment of divine awe/ a flash of unexplainable peaceful content / a metaphysical realization that all is well.

It could erupt into tears, a giggle or a joyous warm inner glow.

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Have you ever experienced such a thing?

Have you, for a passing moment, felt God's reassuring touch of complete peace?

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It is a gift from God. It is God's way of reminding us to keep going.

God's Spiritual touch, in this fashion, gives us a nugget to carry that will empower us to keep living in faith and to continue to follow the way of Christ.

I think Moses is right. I think this could happen to any or all of us.  
Although we can't conjure up God's Spirit or fabricate it, we Can be open and ready for the surprise touch.

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God is Not controlling everything in life. God is Not in control, .....but what if..... what if, for a brief moment,..... we realized that God is influencing events / that God is at work,...leading and guiding us. What if we could see, just for a few seconds, our life unfolding before us,.....with God striving to clear our pathway?

What if, in an instant, we saw God was there in our past and lead us to this point?  
What if,....no matter how high the hurdles are, no matter how tragic events have been or will be.....everything.... everything will be okay? What if we saw, understood what love is really about?

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What if we lived each day,....."Just as I am" knowing God loves us, regardless?

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That awareness,.....is the Prophet's Spirit.