

## *Before and After*

Acts 2: 1-21 (May 31, 2020)

### ***Acts 2: 1-21***

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

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

<sup>14</sup>But Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed them, “Men of Judea and all who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and listen to what I say. <sup>15</sup>Indeed, these are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only nine o’clock in the morning. <sup>16</sup>No, this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel: <sup>17</sup>‘In the last days it will be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams. <sup>18</sup>Even upon my slaves, both men and women, in those days I will pour out my Spirit; and they shall prophesy. <sup>19</sup>And I will show portents in the heaven above and signs on the earth below, blood, and fire, and smoky mist. <sup>20</sup>The sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood, before the coming of the Lord’s great and glorious day. <sup>21</sup>Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.’

### ***Historical Context***

Pentecost as a major festival day did not originate with the Christian church. It was a Jewish festival commemorating the giving of the Law, its occurrence fifty days after Passover corresponding with tradition that Moses received the Ten Commandments fifty days after the Exodus. Acts takes a core story of liberation from slavery and the continuing presence of God and adds a new dimension of liberation from death (the resurrection) and its continuing impact on individuals and communities of believers who are open to God’s Spirit.

### ***Theme: Before and After***

Notice two things to begin with—the condition of the church before the wind and the condition of the church after. Before the storm, Acts 2:1 says, “they were all together in one place.” In other words, they had been conducting the business of the church, decently and in good order and with deep dependence on God. The church at the beginning of Acts 2 before the storm was a neat, tidy, well-run, devoutly prayerful little band of genuine believers in Jesus Christ who loved to get together to do the proper business of the church.

Then the wind blew. What was the church like at the end of Acts 2, after it blew? Well, they, too, were all together. They were still devoted to the teaching of the apostles and to each other and to prayer and to the celebration of communion. But it doesn't sound like the same bunch. For one thing, there were 3000 more of them now. They were no longer shut up in the upper room. Now they have gone public, out in the temple, where the people and their enemies were. And they were spilling over into each other's homes, eating together with glad and sincere hearts. Miracles were happening, not the least of which was a sacrificial generosity. People were selling their possessions and giving to anyone who had need. Everyone was praising God. Even non-believers were speaking well of them. It was a holy, happy hubbub, a big, boisterous love-in. And the Lord kept adding daily to their number those who were being saved.

What had happened? We know the answer. The wind of God blew and that wind produced two great miracles. The two greatest miracles of Pentecost are the fact that the church began to testify about Jesus out in the world and the world responded with repentance and faith. The wind of God blew open the church's mouth and the world's heart. Thus, Pentecost is about new possibilities for the church and the world, for you and me and the unbelievers we love and the unbelievers we don't even know.