

# CARRYING THE TORCH

## YOU WILL BE MY WITNESS

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*'We cannot stop telling about everything we have seen and heard.'* (Acts 4: 20, NLT)

### A Turning Point For The Disciples

#### Acts 2:1-7, 14-18 and 37-41

1. *'This was spoken by the prophet Joel'* (Acts 2:16): The Old Testament fulfilled in the New Testament (Isaiah 44:3; Ezekiel 36: 26-27, 39:29).
2. *'All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit...'* (Acts 2:4): The in filling of the Holy Spirit.

*"The Hebrews of the Old Testament era lived in a time when the Holy Spirit was not in or upon each person all the time. They did not enjoy the continuing inner presence of the Holy Spirit that we Christians do. The common Israelite of Old Testament times did not experience the empowerment of the Spirit. This privilege was reserved for special people like prophets, national leaders, kings, wise men and appointed artisans and even such encounters were limited. Now, thank God, all His people can become familiar with the blessed Holy Spirit!"* (Ernest Gentile)<sup>1</sup>

The in dwelling of the Spirit remained a persistent feature of the lives of the disciples. (Acts 4:8, 31; Acts 6:3).

3. *'I will pour out my Spirit on all people'* (Acts 2:17).

The outpouring of the Spirit is for men and women, young and old and for every nation. No longer would there be a divide between Jews and Gentiles (Acts 10:45). The Holy Spirit was liberally poured out (Luke 11:13 – *'how much more'*).

4. *'All of them ... began to speak in tongues...'* (2:4): The Gifts of the Spirit.

#### 1 Corinthians 12:7-11, 14:12; Galatians 5:16, 22-25

5. *'And they will prophesy...'* (2:18): Transition from Old Testament Prophecy to New Testament Prophecy.

Throughout the Old Testament, God chose to speak through specific individuals. In Acts 2, Peter indicated something about the new role of prophecy in the church *"your sons and daughters will prophecy"*. The office of the 'prophet' is now part of the five-fold ministry in the church (1 Corinthians 12:28), but in addition some will have the gift of prophecy (1 Corinthians 12:10) and others still may prophecy as the Spirit inspires. Prophecy is therefore a vital part of the local church, but should be done in an orderly way (1 Corinthians 14:29-33, 40); done to edify, exhort and comfort the church (1 Corinthians 14:3); done under the authority of our pastors; and must be proven (1 Thessalonians 5:20-21) since we *'know in part and prophecy in part'* (1 Corinthians 13:9).

<sup>1</sup> Ernest Gentile (1999) *Your Sons and Daughters Shall Prophecy: Prophetic Gifts in Ministry Today*. Grand Rapids: Chosen Books. pp.145-6

6. *'Then Peter stood up, raised his voice and addressed the crowd...'* (2:14): Empowered to be His witnesses

### **Acts 1:8, Romans 1:16**

7. *'When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart ... and about 3,000 were added to their number that day'* (Acts 2:37-41)

*"What the church needs today is not more machinery or better, not new organisations or more and novel methods, but men and women whom the Holy Ghost can use, men and women of prayer, men and women mighty in prayer. The Holy Ghost doesn't flow through methods, but through men and women."* (E.M. Bounds)

What the disciples were saying was not popular with everyone. In the face of opposition, the disciples were not dissuaded from speaking but simply prayed for more boldness and courage (Acts 4:29-31). We can be popular for a moment or favoured for eternity (Revelations 22:12).

8. Peter spoke with wisdom and discernment, he saw beyond what people asked and told them what they needed to hear (Acts 3:18)

### **Ordinary People Used By An Extraordinary God**

*'The members of the council were amazed when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, for they could see that they were ordinary men with no special training in the Scriptures. They also recognised them as men who had been with Jesus.'* (Acts 4:13, NLT)

### **1 Corinthians 1:27-29; 2 Peter 1:3**

The Holy Spirit:

- Guides us into all truth (John 16:13).
- Teaches us all things (John 14:26, 1 Corinthians 2:13, Jeremiah 33:3).
- Reminds us of everything Christ has said (John 14:26).
- Counsels (John 14:26).
- Comforts (John 14:16).
- Gives the words to say at the very moment we need them (Luke 12:12).
- Shows us how to pray (Romans 8:26-27).

### **What Does It Mean For Us Today?**

1. *'...Be filled with the Spirit'* (Ephesians 5:18)

*"...Being filled with the Spirit is not presented as an option, but an imperative. ... It speaks of being inwardly pervaded. This means that "to completely or copiously fill and imbue and influence."* (Dick Iverson)<sup>2</sup>

*"The Early Church embraced an astounding belief, one that could revolutionise today's Church if we would accept and but it as our own. They were convinced that the Jesus who had walked among humankind in a literal body now resided among them in the invisible Person of the Holy Spirit."* (Ernest Gentile)<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Dick Iverson (1976) *The Holy Spirit Today: A Concise Survey of the Doctrine of the Holy Ghost*. Portland, OR: Bible Temple Publishing. p27

<sup>3</sup> Ernest Gentile (1999) *Your Sons and Daughters Shall Prophecy: Prophetic Gifts in Ministry Today*. Grand Rapids: Chosen Books. p161

### **Ephesians 1: 19-20; 2 Peter 1:3**

2. Desire spiritual gifts (1 Corinthians 14:1) and use them in an orderly way, under authority and to edify the church (1 Corinthians 14: 12).
3. Remain in Jesus.

One of the most remarkable things is that Jesus spoke to 500 believers encouraging them to wait for the gift he had promised (1 Corinthians 15:6), but only about 120 followers (Acts 1:15) remained. 1 Corinthians said some just ‘fell asleep’.

*“For my people have done two evil things: They have abandoned me, the fountain of living water. And they have dug for themselves cracked cisterns that can hold no water at all!” (Jeremiah 2:13, NLT)*

*Jesus replied, “If you only knew the gift God has for you and who you are speaking to, you would ask me, and I would give you living water.” (John 4:10, NLT)*

*On the last day, the climax of the festival, Jesus stood and shouted to the crowds, “Anyone who is thirsty may come to me! Anyone who believes in me may come and drink! For the Scriptures declare, ‘Rivers of living water will flow from his heart.’” (When he said “living water,” he was speaking of the Spirit, who would be given to everyone believing in him. But the Spirit had not yet been given, because Jesus had not yet entered into his glory.) (John 7:37-39, NLT)*

4. Be His witnesses (2 Corinthians 2:15, 3:2-3, 4:18)

*‘But how can they call on him to save them unless they believe in him? And how can they believe in him if they have never heard about him? And how can they hear about him unless someone tells them?’ (Romans 10:14)*

*“For I am not ashamed of this Good New about Christ. It is the power of God at work, saving everyone who believes...” (Romans 1:16)*

*‘...They have turned the world upside down...’ (Acts 17:6, NKJV)*