

# Listening for the Promise

WEEKLY DEVOTIONAL

Day of Pentecost – May 31, 2020

*“Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said,  
‘Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.’”*

–John 7:38–

## Fire, Water, and the Healing of the Nations

When Jesus spoke these words, “Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, ‘Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water,’” he was promising his followers that when he was raised from the dead and after he ascended into heaven, they would be given the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit was absolutely vital to the formation of the new church and it filled the hearts and minds of the apostles on whom its flames touched. The very power of God would empower, sustain, and lead the apostles as they set out into unknown territory.

The fire of Pentecost was not something new and different in all ways. In this moment it had a specific and powerful purpose, but God had previously revealed his holy presence in fire, always with rich meaning. In the Old Testament, God led his people by a pillar of cloud and fire. At Sinai, this pillar fell upon the mountain in the form of a fiery cloud. It later fell upon Solomon’s temple to mark it as God’s dwelling place. Finally, the fire recalled the prophetic ministry of Elijah. At Pentecost the same fire fell upon the people, showing that God was leading his people forth, writing his law upon their hearts, and dwelling within them as his new temple.

If we focus upon the temple, we see the connection to Jesus’ words above. In Ezekiel’s vision, he saw life giving waters flowing out from the temple. And in Revelation 22, the waters of life flow out from the New Jerusalem for the healing of the nations. This is the purpose of Pentecost and the promise of the Spirit fulfilled.

By grace God’s Spirit dwells within us as his temple and writes his law upon our hearts. By grace he is leading us forth as his prophets, priests, and kings. By grace the Spirit is making rivers of living water flow out from our hearts to the world. It is ultimately for the healing of the nations and the restoration of creation in God’s good time.

**Prayer:** By the power of your Spirit, Lord, make us instruments of your healing power in the world. Amen.

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