

Guess Who?

Elijah

Part 2 – January 12, 2014



Elijah is the prophet who threw down a challenge to the evil King Ahab, put down his priests, called down fire on Mount Carmel, and tossed down his cloak to Elisha when he was taken up in the whirlwind! Here's the account of Elijah's ... *departure*.



... suddenly a chariot of fire and horses of fire appeared and separated the two of them, and Elijah went up to heaven in a whirlwind. ... [When Elisha returned across the Jordan (where Jesus was baptized)] The company of the [fifty] prophets from Jericho, who were watching, said, “The spirit of Elijah is resting on Elisha.” – 2 Kings 2:11b, 15a NIV



Elijah ends with the 50 prophets wandering the wilderness by the Jordan for three days, crying out “Elijah! Where are you? You left your spirit!” Thinking ...

“Perhaps the Spirit of the Lord has picked him up and set him down on some mountain or in some valley.” – 2 Kings 2:16b NIV

900 years later, John the Baptist in the spirit and power of Elijah (Luke 1:17) cries out from that same wilderness for he who has ears.

And, for he who had eyes, John wears a hairy garment and leather belt (Mat 3:4) that matches the description of Elijah's. (2 Kings 1:8) **John has come to prepare for the One who will send His Spirit.** That OT passage has an incredible parallel in the New.

Suddenly a sound like **the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven** and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They **saw** [NAS/NKJ: *there appeared*] what seemed to be **tongues of fire** that **separated** and **came to rest on each of them**. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them. – Acts 2:2-4 NIV

The only thing that doesn't seem to match is the “**horses of fire**” with the “**tongues of fire**”. *It's a riddle! What's the connection between tongues and horses? It's in the book.*

When we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we can turn the whole animal. ... Likewise the tongue is a small part of the body ... Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark. The tongue also is a fire ... It corrupts the whole person, sets the whole course of his life on fire ... no man can tame the tongue. – James 3:3-9 NIV *condensed*

We must allow God's *Spirit* to do that. **Great evidence of the Spirit's indwelling presence is the taming of the tongue.**



The Spirit comes to rest, to give *my tongue of fire* a rest! My prayers used to be, **“Lord, help me to speak up.”** But, the more I grow up and wise up, my prayers are more like, **“Lord, help me to *shut up*.”**



“Elijah was a man just like us.” (James 5:17) Yep. He ran from his fears, hid in isolation, and assumed God’s power was found in earth shaking fire and wind; but, turns out **God prefers the gentle whisper of a controlled tongue. The Spirit rested on them, and filled them, and empowered them to speak Jesus’ *life and peace* – the Lord’s *shalom*.** When Jesus declared the Spirit’s coming, He said, **“My peace I give you.”** (John 14:27)

“I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.” – Luke 24:49 NIV



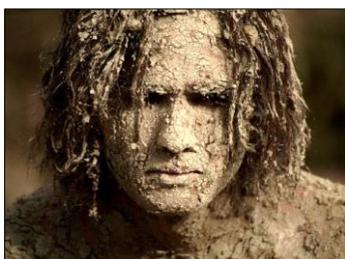
What’s the promise and power? At Pentecost, Peter quotes Joel. (2:28)

In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. – Acts 2:17 NIV



Is *that* the promise and the power? **Aren’t there ample examples of the Spirit doing those things *before* Pentecost?** John was filled with Spirit from his mother’s *womb*, (Luke 1:15) yet, Jesus said ...

... **“there has not risen anyone greater than John the Baptist; yet he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.”** – Matthew 11:11b NIV



We’re told how to get what makes us *greater*.

Peter replied, **“Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call.”** – Acts 2:38-39 NIV

What’s the promised gift of power that’s tied to repentance?

[We got’a go back ... *way back*] ... the Lord God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being. – Genesis 2:7 NIV

Mankind lost his breath! We traded our breath for death. (Gen 3:2-3) or rather, *God’s* breath.

So the Lord God banished him from the Garden ... – Genesis 3:23a NIV

To *where?* *Here!* The Wilderness Land outside Garden Land, with one way back in: **the fiery sword of judgment, posted at the gate** (Gen 3:24) **and demonstrated on Mount Carmel (i.e. Garden Land).**

[Paul says] Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God — through Jesus Christ our Lord! – Romans 7:24b-25a NIV

... the One utterly consumed by God’s righteous, fire-sword of justice and judgment, as the complete sacrifice for every sin ever, so that we “may have life, and have it abundantly.” (John 10:10)

The Hebrew word *ruwach*, [ROO’akh] (Strong’s H7307) depending on context, translates as **God’s Spirit, man’s spirit, wind, or breath. Prophecy, visions, and dreams went wild with the outpouring of the promised Spirit, but the gift itself is *resuscitation!***

I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you ... – Ezekiel 36:26-27a NIV

As mightily used by the Spirit as John was, it couldn’t rightly replace the breath of life he’d lost until Jesus paid the price. If you don’t grasp the dark riddle of this wilderness world, you won’t see your desperate need for **what was lost in the Garden, restored on the cross, and now offered through God’s Holy Spirit.** And, **God’s shalom that tames you, and guides you, will elude you.**

Another disciple said to him, “**Lord, first let me go and bury my father.**” But Jesus told him, “**Follow me, and let the dead bury their own dead.**” – Matthew 8:21-22 NIV

In this world there is *no life outside of Christ.* There’s just two types of *dead*: the *temporarily breathing* and the *not*. Peter, (1 Pet 3:18) Paul, (Rom 6:10) and Hebrews (9:28) all say that **Christ died once for all. But, when did that occur?**



[Jesus Christ is and was] ... the Lamb that was slain from the creation of the world. [When He entered the wilderness to be with us] – Revelation 13:8 NIV

So, what did Jesus do on the cross? Exactly what you think, just not exactly *how* you think. There’s only *breathing* and *not*. So ... “With a loud cry, Jesus breathed his last.” (Mark 15:37 and Luke 23:46) Matthew (27:50) and John (19:30) say He gave up His spirit. **No Gospel account of *that moment* uses the words *death, died, or dead.*** And Jesus puts a spotlight on a certain widow Elijah was sent to.

“I assure you that there were many widows in Israel in Elijah’s time, when the sky was shut for three and a half years [the time between Jesus’ baptism and resurrection] and there was a severe famine throughout the land. Yet Elijah was not sent to any of them, but to a widow in Zarephath in the region of Sidon.” – Luke 4:25-26 NIV

... the son of the woman who owned the house became ill. He grew worse and worse, and finally stopped breathing. She said to Elijah, “**What do you have against me, man of God? Did you come to remind me of my sin and kill my son?**” [Jesus is the Son of *Man*, so I think **we’re the woman**] “**Give me your son,**” Elijah replied. He took him from her arms, carried him to the upper room where he was staying, and laid him on his bed. Then he cried out to the Lord, “**O Lord my God, have you brought tragedy also upon this widow I am staying with, by causing her son to die?**” Then he stretched himself out on the boy three times and cried to the Lord, “**O Lord my God, let this boy’s life return to him!**” The Lord heard Elijah’s cry, and the boy’s life returned to him, and he lived. Elijah picked up the child and carried him down ... – 1 Kings 17:17b-23a NIV

When Jesus cried out on the cross, **“Eloi, Eloi!”** some bystanders thought he was calling on Elijah, and said, **“Let’s see if Elijah comes to take him down,”** (Mark 15:36b)

I do wonder what role he played. **Who spoke to Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration?** Moses and Elijah. **Why?** They represented the Law and the prophets. **What were the three of ‘em discussing?**

They spoke about his departure, [interesting word; lit. *exodus* (G1841)] which he was about to bring to fulfillment at Jerusalem. – Luke 9:31b NIV

The reason the bystanders were watching for Elijah, is because the religious leaders were saying Jesus couldn’t be the Messiah because Elijah hadn’t come first, as Malachi (4:5-6) prophesied.

The disciples asked him, **“Why then do the teachers of the law say that Elijah must come first?”** Jesus replied, **“To be sure, Elijah comes and will restore all things. But I tell you, Elijah has already come, and they did not recognize him, but have done to him everything they wished. In the same way the Son of Man is going to suffer at their hands.”** Then the disciples understood that he was talking to them about John the Baptist. – Matthew 17:10-13 NIV

John was to King Herod and Queen Herodias, who had him beheaded, what Elijah had been to King Ahab and Queen Jezebel.

Ahab told Jezebel everything Elijah had done and how he had killed all the prophets with the sword. So Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah to say, **“May the gods deal with me, be it ever so severely, if by this time tomorrow I do not make your life like that of one of them.”** – 1 Kings 19:1-2 NIV

Jezebel’s wish was concluded in the execution of John and the crucifixion of Christ, a sword of metal for the one who prepared the way, a sword of fire for *the Way*, the Truth, and the Life.



The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord. Again Jesus said, “Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.” And with that he breathed on them and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit.” [He couldn’t wait for Pentecost!] – John 20:20-22 NIV

This is the power of the Gospel, (Rom 1:16) the power of His resurrection, (Phil 3:10) the power of an indestructible life. (Heb 7:16) You’ve been sent with the peace and power of the Holy Spirit.

This is God’s shalom, the peace that passes understanding that soothes the soul, and tames the tongue, and brings life and light in a dark and dying wilderness outside the Garden Land.

Your shalom can’t be stolen. It’s *within* you. The slow checkout line, the wrong order, the poor driver, the muddy feet, they can disappoint you, but they can’t *touch* your shalom.

You know the truth and it has set you free.