

Foreshadowed by Fire: Prophetic Roots of Pentecost

A study resource on the Old Testament and Jewish foundations of the Acts 2 outpouring

1. Old Testament Prophecies & Scriptures

Joel 2:28–29 (NKJV)

“And it shall come to pass afterward
That I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh;
Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,
Your old men shall dream dreams,
Your young men shall see visions.
And also on My menservants and on My maidservants
I will pour out My Spirit in those days.”

Numbers 11:29 (NKJV)

Then Moses said to him, “Are you zealous for my sake? Oh, that all the LORD’s people were prophets and that the LORD would put His Spirit upon them!”

1 Samuel 10:6, 10 (NKJV)

“Then the Spirit of the Lord will come upon you, and you will prophesy with them and be turned into another man.”

...“Then the Spirit of God came upon him, and he prophesied among them.”

Isaiah 28:11–12 (NKJV)

“For with stammering lips and another tongue
He will speak to this people,
To whom He said, ‘This is the rest with which
You may cause the weary to rest,’
And, ‘This is the refreshing’;
Yet they would not hear.”

Ezekiel 36:26–27 (NKJV)

“I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.
I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them.”

2. Jewish Writings: Midrash & Talmud

Midrash Shemot Rabbah 5:9

“When the Holy One, blessed be He, gave the Torah, He gave it with a great voice. How so? The Holy One, blessed be He, would speak and the voice would go out and be divided into seventy voices for the seventy nations, so that all the nations could hear.

And all the people were seeing the voices. It does not say ‘the voice,’ but ‘the voices... All the people were seeing the voices’ Voice is not written here, but “voices.” Rabbi Yoḥanan said: The voice would emerge and divide into seventy voices for seventy languages, so that all the nations could understand. Each and every nation would hear a voice in the language of that nation, and their souls departed. But Israel heard and they were not harmed.”

Babylonian Talmud, Shabbat 88b

“And, similarly, the school of Rabbi Yishmael taught with regard to the verse: “Behold, is My word not like fire, declares the Lord, and like a hammer that shatters a rock?” (Jeremiah 23:29). Just as this hammer breaks a stone into several fragments, so too, each and every utterance that emerged from the mouth of the Holy One, Blessed be He, divided into seventy languages.”

3. New Testament Fulfillment (Select Verses)

Acts 2:1–4 (NKJV)

“When the Day of Pentecost had fully come... there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind... Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire... and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues...”

John 7:38–39 (NKJV)

“He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.” But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive...”

Luke 24:49 (NKJV)

“Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high.”

Acts 1:8 (NKJV)

“But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me...”

4. Sinai: Thunder, Fire, and the Mystery of “Voices”

Exodus 20:18 (NKJV)

“Now all the people witnessed the thunderings, the lightning flashes, the sound of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking; and when the people saw it, they trembled and stood afar off.”

The Hebrew text reads literally: “And all the people saw the voices...”

Most English translations render **kolot** as “thunderings” or “noises,” but the word קולות (**kolot**) is the plural of קול (**kol**), which means “voice” or “sound.”

This unusual expression suggests something profound—what they heard, they also *saw*. Jewish tradition interprets this as a supernatural multi-sensory revelation, possibly indicating *synesthesia*. This encounter at Sinai forms a shadow of what would later happen in Acts 2, when the Spirit again descended with fire and sound.

Both events were dramatic, public, and multi-lingual, and both centered on divine communication—God revealing Himself to His people in overwhelming, unmistakable ways.