

INTO ONE SPIRIT

There is much disunity in the world. There are many conflicts. Last February, the Carnegie Corporation of New York published [Seven Global Conflicts to Watch](#). They are:

1. An escalation of coercive pressure by China toward Taiwan, including heightened military activity involving the U.S. and other countries in the region.
2. An escalation of the conflict in Ukraine, resulting from the employment of unconventional weapons, spillover into neighboring countries, and/or direct involvement of NATO members.
3. A highly disruptive cyberattack targeting U.S. critical infrastructure.
4. Growing civil unrest in Russia and a power struggle in Moscow due to popular dissatisfaction with the war in Ukraine and worsening economic conditions.
5. An acute security crisis in Northeast Asia triggered by North Korea's development and testing of nuclear weapons and long-range ballistic missiles.
6. A military confrontation between Israel and Iran over Iran's nuclear program and its continued support for militant groups in neighboring countries.
7. A migration surge to the U.S. due to increased violence, political unrest, and declining economic conditions in Central America and Mexico, aggravated by acute weather events.

For the Christian, these are reasons for concern, but not for despair, as some might take them. The Christian can take heart, because he knows that conflict will not last. He knows that God in Christ is uniting all men in Himself, under His Lordship.

After the Exodus, Israel traveled to Mount Sinai, and there made their encampment. The Lord gave Moses instructions for building a tabernacle wherein the Lord would meet His people. So, the Israelites constructed a temple according to the instructions of the Lord. When the temple construction was complete, the Lord did visit His people. The Scriptures say, "Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle." (Exodus 40:34) From within the tabernacle, the Lord gave Moses further instructions concerning the worship of Him. The Lord instituted a number of feasts, to be observed after they arrived in Canaan, including the Feast of Tabernacles, one of three principal feasts, along with the the Feast of Passover, and the Feast of Pentecost. Immediately after the annual harvest, the people would leave their homes, and for eight days dwell in tabernacles, or booths, made from the branches of trees. They would do this in remembrance of tents in which they had to dwell during the wilderness journey. The Lord said, "Ye shall dwell in booths seven days; all that are Israelites born shall dwell in booths: That your generations may know that I made the children of Israel to dwell in booths, when I brought them out of the land of Egypt: (Leviticus 23:42, 43) For eight days they would do no ordinary work, but rather offer burnt offerings to the Lord.

In the days of the second temple, the Israelites added to the ceremony of the Feast of Tabernacles. Every morning, the priest would draw water from the pool of Siloam, and pour it out on the altar of the burnt offering. This act reminded the people of the occasion when the Lord from a rock brought forth water for the people to drink when they thirsted in the wilderness. The Lord delivered His people Israel from their bondage in Egypt, then led them to Mount Sinai. Along the way, the people were thirsty, and in need of water, and the Lord in His mercy provided water for them. The Lord told Moses that He would stand upon a rock in Horeb, and that Moses should strike that rock. When Moses struck the rock as the Lord had commanded Him, water flowed from it, and so the people had water to drink. (Exodus 17:1-7) This event, of course, was a foreshadowing, and the rock

a type of the Christ to come. The Lord later through the prophets used this imagery for His future giving of His Spirit. Through Isaiah the prophet, he said, “For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring.” (Isaiah 44:3) And again, “And the LORD shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones: and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not.” (Isaiah 58:11) Through Zechariah the prophet, he said, “In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness.” (Zechariah 13:1) Through the prophet Joel, the Lord said:

And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit. And I will shew wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the LORD come. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be delivered. (Joel 2:28–32)

The Holy Spirit had always been in the world, and had given men of God power to fulfill their ministries, men like Joshua, Samson, and David (Numbers 27:18; Judges 13:25) He helped prophets to prophesy, priests to serve, and prophets to prophesy. (1 Samuel 16:13; 2 Samuel 23:2) Yet, God through the prophets promised that He would in future give the Holy Spirit to all of His people in equal measure. The water that the priest poured out during the Feast of Tabernacles signified the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

It was at one of celebrations of the Feast of Tabernacles that Jesus made an important claim concerning Himself. Saint John recorded the following:

In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.) (John 7:37–39)

As the people watched the priest daily pour water upon the altar, Jesus stood in the temple, as He had on the rock in Horeb, and proclaimed the spiritual meaning behind the material symbol. If any man longs for salvation, for forgiveness and new life, for cleansing from sin and power for righteous living, then He must turn to Jesus, the only fount, the only source. If any man would put his faith in Jesus, then Jesus would not disappoint him. Jesus would give that man the Holy Spirit. The man that has Jesus has the Holy Spirit, and the man that has the Holy Spirit has spiritual life. He has salvation, and so he has joy, as Isaiah the prophet said, “Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation.” (Isaiah 12:3) He has spiritual life for himself, and he imparts that life to others by proclaiming that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. As the prophet Joel said:

And it shall come to pass in that day, that the mountains shall drop down new wine, and the hills shall flow with milk, and all the rivers of Judah shall flow with waters, and a fountain shall come forth of the house of the LORD, and shall water the valley of Shittim. (Joel 3:18)

Zechariah the prophet prophesied the same:

And it shall be in that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them toward the former sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea: in summer and in winter shall it be. And the LORD shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one LORD, and his name one. (Zechariah 14:8, 9)

All would drink of this water, and so all would be one. They would be one people, with one Lord, and one faith. (Ephesians 4:5)

Jesus was the master of his disciples, and theft depended upon Him for guidance. When some of Jesus's followers abandoned Him, and he asked the twelve if they, too, would leave Him, Saint Peter answered, "Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life." (John 6:68) Jesus taught His disciples that He would leave this world, and so leave them, but He would not leave them alone; He would send to them the Holy Spirit. He said to them:

And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth... But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you. (John 14:16, 17, 26)

Jesus taught His disciples that He would be murdered, but God would raise Him from the dead. Moreover, Jesus taught His disciples that, after His resurrection, He would ascend to His Father in heaven to receive His dominion. Yet, He would send the Holy Spirit to take His place, and the Spirit would be their guide.

Jesus was crucified, and God did raise Him from the dead because He was God's beloved son, and did not deserve to die. Jesus died for men's sins, and He was raised from the dead so that they might have new life. After His resurrection, He told His disciples to wait in Jerusalem for the promise from the Father, of which promise He had already spoken. He said to them, "For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence." (Acts 1:5)

That day did come. Saint Luke recorded this:

And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. (Acts 2:1-4)

On that day, the disciples, about one-hundred twenty in number, were gathered in a room in Jerusalem, patiently awaiting the coming of the Holy Spirit, just as Jesus had commanded them. Without warning, there came from heaven to their ears a sound like that of a rushing mighty wind, and the sound filled the place where they were. There appeared to rest upon each of them a flame of fire. As John the Baptist had preached, "I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire." (Luke 3:16) According to Jewish tradition, God gave the law to Israel on Mount Sinai fifty days after the Exodus. When He did, He descended upon the mountain in fire, a demonstration of His holiness, in order to cause His people to fear Him, and so obey Him. (Exodus 19:18) Moses said to the people, "Fear not: for God is come to prove you, and that his fear may be before your faces,

that ye sin not.” (Exodus 20:20) And again, Moses said, “The LORD thy God is a consuming fire, even a jealous God.” (Deuteronomy 4:24) Even so, the people did not obey God, but continually rebelled against Him. On the Day of Pentecost, the Spirit came upon the people like a flame of fire, not to consume them for failing to obey the law, but to empower them to obey it. As Saint Paul wrote to the Corinthians, “The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.” (1 Corinthians 3:6) At Mount Sinai, the people had to keep their distance from the Lord, or they would be consumed. (Exodus 19:12, 13) At Pentecost, God came into every one to dwell in them. Just as the Lord descended upon the tabernacle to dwell therein, so He descended upon the disciples to dwell in them.

The Holy Spirit came upon the disciples, and enabled them to speak in languages they had never learned. According to Saint Luke, there were at that time dwelling in Jerusalem “Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven.” (Acts 2:5) When these devout men heard the disciples, some thought they were babbling drunks, but others, hearing the disciples speaking in all the various languages, wished to know what it meant, and Saint Peter was pleased to tell them. He told them that they were witnessing the fulfillment of the prophecy of Joel. God had through the prophet Joel promised to pour out His Spirit upon all of His people, and on the Day of Pentecost what is precisely what He did. He gave the Holy Spirit to all those who believed in Jesus, so that they all might prophesy, and see visions, and dream dreams. Moreover, the Lord, by giving the gift of language to His people, undid what He did at Babel, when He confounded the language of the people for their rebellion. The era of Jewish exclusivity was over, and the era of global inclusivity had begun. When the people heard Saint Peter’s preaching, they believed in Jesus, and they believed, about three-thousand of them.

The day on which the Lord Jesus sent the Holy Spirit was the Day of Pentecost. Pentecost was so called, because it was held fifty days after the Feast of Passover. The Feast of Passover, which the Lord first instituted at Mount Sinai, is also known as the Feast of Weeks, and the Feast of Harvest. On this holy God’s people offered to Him the firstfruits of their harvest, thereby acknowledging their dependence upon Him for life. (Exodus 23:16; 34:22; Leviticus 23:9–21; Deuteronomy 16:9–12) On the Day of Pentecost, there were presented to God the first fruits of a great harvest of souls. As Jesus had told His disciples, “The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest.” (Luke 10:2) God desires unity. He desires for mankind to be united to Christ, and to each other, as Christ is united to His Father. Jesus in His high priestly prayer, prayed, not only for His apostles, but for all those that would believe in Him. He prayed:

Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, *art* in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. (John 17:20, 21)

The Christians of the church at Corinth were carnal, and one of the signs of their carnality was their factions. He appealed to them to be unified. He wrote, “Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.” (1 Corinthians 1:10) This was not wishful thinking on the apostle’s part, nor was it an exhortation that lacked foundation. Real unity is possible in Christ. Saint Paul wrote, “Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.” (1 Corinthians 12:3) The Spirit works in the hearts and minds of men, enabling them all together to confess that Jesus is Lord. There is one God who eternally exists in three Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The Godhead has both unity and diversity. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are of one mind, and they work together in the various members of the church for one end:

the edification of all the members. Not all the members have all the same gifts. The Spirit Him gives to each member certain gifts as it pleases Him to do. Concerning the unity of the church, Saint Paul wrote:

For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. (1 Corinthians 12:12, 13)

The human body, although it has several members, is a unified whole, and all the members work together for the good of the whole body. It is the same with Christ. There is one Christ, with one body, and by one Spirit all are baptized into that body, becoming members thereof. This is true no matter one's race, or social standing. As Saint Paul wrote to the Ephesians, "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all." (Ephesians 4:4–6) Men may be divided over many things, and their common humanity is not enough to unify them. True unity is only found in the unity of the Spirit in the body of Christ. Only in Christ is there hope, and reason, for unity.

Let us know that Christ has sent into the world the Holy Spirit. Let us understand that at Pentecost Christ sent the Holy Spirit into the world. Let us believe that by baptism men are united to Christ, and to each other.

Unto the Father, and unto the Son, and unto the Holy Spirit, be ascribed in the Church all honor and glory, might, majesty, dominion, and blessing, now, henceforth, and ever. Amen.