Pentecost :: Historians tell us that Pentecost was a holiday appropriated by the ancient Israelites from the Canaanites who lived in the land before them. This holiday represented several different things, before being transformed by the event related in Acts 2. It was first the established Canaanite celebration of the harvest which came to be called in Hebrew the Festival of Weeks, or to be Shavout, meaning “weeks” (festival of weeks) It occurred 7 weeks after the first spouts (Deuteronomy 16:9). The Greek term, Pentecost (from whence comes our word) meant 50, roughly 7 weeks of 7 days See Tobit 2:1 and 2 Maccabees 12:21. This holiday predominantly represented the gratitude given to the Creator for the fruits of the harvest: a sort of Thanksgiving. It came to also be associated with the fulfillment of the covenant with Noah, to never again destroy the earth with rain, thus providing for the fecundity of the land (Genesis 9 and Jubilee 6). It thus became a holiday that was both agricultural and religious. It was a minor holiday, occurring between Passover and The Feast of Tabernacles, and much later, was adopted as the principal holiday celebrated by the religious community of Qumran (think of those who wrote the Dead Sea Scrolls, abandoning the Jerusalem Temple as a corrupt and oligarchic institution). They focused on the gift of the Torah to Moses on Mont Sinai in Exodus 19. This came to be the dominant identity of the holiday from then on, further developed by in Rabbinical Judaism. This day then was a feast that gathered Jews dispersed across the Roman Empire to celebrate the way in which Yahweh nurtured the earth and people through the Torah and the harvest. The theological evolution of this holiday conjugates the themes of God acting in nature and God acting in history. (Daniel Marguerat. *Les Actes des Apôtres*)

in one place :: through inference this place is understood to be the upper room see Acts 1:13. Is this the same upper room as where they gathered with Jesus in Luke 22:10-12? This encounter in which the power of God unsettling breaks into the established patterns and routines of life, can only be told and explained as a narrative story by Luke. The Spirit drives them from gathering together inside in a private, established and familiar place, to taking their community embodiment of the teachings of Jesus to the street outside with the crowd.

Suddenly a sound ... They saw:: the narrative stressed three inter-related elements. It’s unexpected, a surprise. It’s an audiovisual event which is both heard and seen.

Like :: Luke writes emphasizing the comparison. This key word sets up the following language as metaphorical and symbolic, more so than literal.

of first importance:: this can refer to a temporal order, the first things done, taught, or in terms of importance such as the most important, first in line. Whether it was the first thing taught, or the chief point for Paul, he insists that he taught it as he received it.

tongues:: like in English, the word in Greek can mean both the tongue as an organ, as well as the tongue as a language that is spoken and heard.

Spirit :: the word simultaneously means spirit, ghost, wind, and breath.

tongues of fire:: the fire is given to all, but also individually. It recalls the promise of John the Baptist in Luke 3:16 “But he will baptize you with spirit and fire.”

other:: Biblicists see this addition in the middle of speaking other tongues, seems to imply that it’s about other foreign languages, as opposed to glosslai (or speaking in tongues/angelic language).

Wind ... fire :: these words bring many first testament stories to mind, recalling in particular the revelation of God on Mt. Sinai in Exodus 19:16-19),

**Acts 2:1-4**

New Revised Standard Version | (NRSV)

1When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. 2 Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. 3 They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. 4 All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.

**1 Corinthians 12:1-13**

the gifts:: the Greek language is vague. It’s possible that in this phrase Paul is talking about people as well as talents/gifts/capacities.

led astray to mute idols :: many Biblicists see this phrase as the figure of animals being driven to sacrifice. This demonic association is a reduction of the humanity of those who are distracted or divided.

the manifestation of the Spirit :: this may mean that the Spirit is being revealed or that the Spirit is doing the revealing.

of first importance:: this can refer to a temporal order, the first things done, taught, or in terms of importance such as the most important, first in line. Whether it was the first thing taught, or the chief point for Paul, he insists that he taught it as he received it.

tongues:: like in English, the word in Greek can mean both the tongue as an organ, as well as the tongue as a language that is spoken and heard.

Spirit :: the word simultaneously means spirit, ghost, wind, and breath.

The interpretation of tongues:: this can mean either the translation of a foreign language, or the at of an unintelligebile language/utterance/gibberish uttered during an ecstatic worship experience.

one Spirit to drink:: this seems like a funny expression as is mostly identified with wind and fire. How can you drink those? It could be related to what Jesus says in John 7:37-39 | “ 37 On the last day of the festival, the great day, while Jesus was standing there, he cried out, “Let anyone who is thirsty come to me, 38and let the one who believes in me drink. As the scripture has said, ‘Out of the believer’s heart shall flow rivers of living water.’” 39 Now he said this about the Spirit, which believers in him were to receive; for as yet there was no Spirit, because Jesus was not yet glorified.”

**QUESTIONS FOR PONDERING:**

**HOW HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED THE POWER AND PRESENCE OF GOD IN YOUR LIFE?; IN OUR LIFE TOGETHER?**

**WHAT LANGUAGE DO YOU USE TO TALK ABOUT THAT DYNAMIC AND EXPERIENCE?**

**HOW DO THAT EXPERIENCE(S) INTERACT WITH THE STORY THAT WE HEAR IN ACTS 2 AND THE WAY PAUL DESCRIBES THAT DYNAMIC IN 1 CORINTHIANS 12?**

New Revised Standard Version | (NRSV)

1Now about the gifts of the Spirit, brothers and sisters, I do not want you to be uninformed. 2 You know that when you were pagans, somehow or other you were influenced and led astray to mute idols. 3 Therefore I want you to know that no one who is speaking by the Spirit of God says, “Jesus be cursed,” and no one can say, “Jesus is Lord,” except by the Holy Spirit.

4 There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. 5 There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. 6 There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work.

7 Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. 8 To one there is given through the Spirit a message of wisdom, to another a message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, 9 to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, 10 to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between Spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues. 11 All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he distributes them to each one, just as he determines.

12 Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. 13 For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.