

Wind Fire and Dynamite in the Church

by Victor Maxwell

The Feast of Pentecost marks the beginning of the Church, as the Holy Spirit is poured out on the disciples, empowering them to spread the message of Jesus Christ.

Scripture: Leviticus 10:1, John 3:8, Acts 2:1, Acts 2:4, 1 Corinthians 12:12, Ephesians 1:11, Ephesians 5:18, 1 Peter 1:7, 1 John 1:5

Topics: "Holy Spirit", "Spiritual Renewal"

Description

Victor Maxwell preaches on the significance of the Feast of Pentecost, highlighting the symbols of wind and fire representing the Holy Spirit's presence and power. The chapter of Acts 2 outlines the advent of the Holy Spirit, emphasizing the fullness and signs of the Spirit's presence displayed through speaking in tongues. The sermon also delves into the importance of being filled with the Spirit, drawing inspiration from the story of missionary John Hyde's transformation after a simple question challenged his reliance on his own strength.

Transcript

Wind Fire and Dynamite in the Church Acts 2:1-13 Yesterday we received a calendar for the New Year of 1999. The Calendar is a Christian Calendar so called which punctuates the great historical events of the Gospel story. Christmas Day, the incarnation of our Lord Jesus, Good Friday - His crucifixion at Calvary, Easter Sunday - the resurrection of our Lord from the grave, Ascension Day marking the return of our Lord into heaven, Whitsun which marks the coming of the Holy spirit into the world.

These all are looking back on historical facts. In the ancient Jewish Calendar there were certain feast days that are set out for us in Leviticus 23. There were seven of them and not only did all have particular significance at the time but also prophetic significance in the Jesus Christ. The Feasts (Lev. 23) Christ's Fulfilment 23:4,5 Passover (March/April) Death of Christ (1 Cor.5:7) 23:9-14 Unleavened Bread (March/April) Sinlessness of Christ (1 Cor.5:8) 23:6 Firstfruits (March/April) Resurrection of Christ (1 Cor. 15:23) 23:15-22 Pentecost (May/June) Outpouring of Spirit of Christ (Acts 1:5; 2:4) 23:23-25 Trumpets (Sept/Oct.)

Israel's re-gathering by Christ (Matt.24:31) 23:26-32 Atonement (Sept/Oct.) Substitutionary Sacrifice by Christ (Rom. 11:26) 23:33-36 Tabernacles (Sept./Oct.) Rest and reunion with Christ (Zech. 14:16-19) For male Jews it was obligatory for them to attend three of these feasts, Passover, Pentecost and the Feast of Tabernacles. Today there are some added feasts on the Jewish Calendar - the feast of Purim when they

remember Mordecai and Hanoka which marks the miraculous supply of oil in the temple during the days of Jacob Maccabbees.

For our study here today we are focusing in on the Feast of Pentecost. As pointed out in our earlier study Acts is the essential "bridge book between the Gospels and the Epistles". So also, Acts 2. Is the essential key to the book of Acts. No other chapter of the book is of more importance, so misunderstood and widely abused as this one. Let us be sure to apply the principles of observation,(read the Scriptures), meditation and application so that we might avoid the perils of digression and division in our study.

Chapter 2 is outlined as follows: The Advent of the Holy Spirit (a) The significance of the Day of Pentecost 2:1 Pentecost means "Fiftieth". This refers to the 50th day after Passover was essentially the harvest time. It was also called the Feast of Weeks because it occurred a week of weeks after Passover. (7weeks) An offering of firstfruits was made at Pentecost. It was an offering of two wave loaves of unleavened bread. As the priest waved the loaves they created wind. The fire of making bread and the wind stirred by waving loaves were faint pictures of what was to come on the church's Pentecostal day.

The day of Pentecost was also the day when Jews celebrated the giving of the Law. This was a prophetic reflection of the day when God gave His law in our hearts by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit came on this day as the firstfruits, the earnest, of the believers inheritance.(Eph 1:11) Those first gathered into the Church were also the firstfruits of the great harvest of believers. (b) The symbols described - wind and fire 2:2,3; As the disciples were bowed in prayer as they had been for ten days they experienced a supernatural phenomena.

The sound of the wind. Suddenly there was the echoing roar of a mighty wind - tornado like sound. Wind is frequently used as a symbol of the Holy Spirit. Wind and breathe are symbols of inspiration of the Holy Scriptures which are God breathed. (2Tim. 3:16) Our Lord spoke of the spirit as wind in the work of regeneration. (John 3:8;) In Ezekiel's vision in the valley of dry bones it was the breathe of God that brought life and restoration - Ezek 37:9,14. The sound Spirit's coming like the wind filled the room.

The disciples must have realised that God was present because of it source of the wind, the suddenness of the wind and the sound of it. They did not see the wind but they did see something. The sight of the Tongues of fire were also symbols of the Holy Spirit. they not only heard God was in their midst but they saw visible evidence of His presence. This was evidence that "our God is a consuming fire". God's presence in the Old Testament was often depicted in the form of fire.

He appeared in the burning bush to Moses.(Exodus 3:2;) He appeared to Israel in a pillar of fire to guide them.(Exodus 13:21;) He appeared to Elijah as the God who answers by fire"(1Kings 18:24,38) and it was a chariot of fire that appeared as he was taken up to heaven. (2Kings 2:11) He appeared to Elisha as chariots of fire on the mountains.(2 Kings 6:17) He appeared to Isaiah as live coal from off the altar.(Is. 6:6,7;) He appeared to Ezekiel as a bright fire in the likeness of God's glory.

Ezek. 1:27,28; This fire was a symbol of their baptism into the body of Christ. When our Lord was baptised in the Jordan the Father sent the symbol of the Holy Spirit upon Him in the form of a dove. The Holy Spirit came as fire to warm their hearts as in Luke 24:32; consume the dross as in 1 Peter 1:7; illuminate the way with light as in 1 John 1:5. (c) The Spirit's fullness defined. 2:4 - "They were all filled with the Holy Spirit" In contrast to the baptism of the Spirit which is the one-time and final act by which the believer is placed into the Body of Jesus Christ (1Cor. 12:12), the filling of the Holy Spirit was a repeatable experience by which the believer in his body was brought under the control of the Holy Spirit.

There is a distinction between the "Baptism of the Holy Spirit" which is positional whereas the "filling of the Holy Spirit" is experimental. The duration and display of the fullness of the Holy Spirit are other factors to be studied and applied. We are to know continual filling and consequential spirit controlled behaviour. (Ephesians 5:18f.) (d) Signs of the Spirit's presence displayed. 2:4,6 "other tongues - their own tongue" This is one of the most controversial issues in Christian circles today.

Until now God had always spoken to His people in the Hebrew tongue. On this occasion everyone heard in his own tongue the wonderful works of God. These were languages known by the representatives of the various countries and groups present. these tongues were not only for communication of the good news but were signs of judgement on unbelieving Israel. This sign gift is spoken of three times in Acts; in Jerusalem(2:4;) at Caesarea(10:46;) at Ephesus.(19:6) This was a sign gift to the authenticity of the message.

Today there are many people who are more taken up with the method God used than the message they preached. Paul said he would rather speak five words in a known tongue than five thousand in an unknown language. How about these five words. Jesus, grace, love, hope and heaven. Like as in the ancient times so also today we must be careful not to admit strange fire in the Holy place.(Leviticus 10:1.) When John Hyde, better known as praying Hyde, boarded the ship to go from England to India for on his first missionary tour, he was handed a telegram.

He opened it hurriedly on the deck of the ship. The only words in the telegram were, "John Hyde, are you filled with the Spirit of God" The note aroused Hyde's anger. He crumpled the paper, put it into his pocket, and went to bed. Unable to sleep, he tossed and turned all night. He arose from bed in the early morning hours, took the piece of paper out of his pocket, and read it again. He thought, The audacity of somebody to ask me that question, 'Am I filled with the Holy Spirit" Here I am a missionary, sincere, dedicated, leaving my home and going to another country.

How dare someone ask me filled with the Spirit Suddenly, Hyde's spirit was touched by the challenge of the note, and he fell to his knees before the Father. "O God", he cried out, "the audacity of me to think that I could pray or preach or witness or live or serve or do anything in my own strength and power. Fill me with Your strength. Fill me with Your power". John Hyde became one of the great missionary statesmen of all time. Why Because of the power of the Spirit which enabled him to face the challenges of his life in the power of God.

The Admission of the Strangers 2:5-13 (a) The multitude of strangers. 2:5,6, 9-11 "Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven". As said above Jewish males were required to attend the feast of Pentecost as part of observing the religious Jewish calendar. Soon the news spread of the extraordinary experience of the disciples and a multitude gathered to see what was happening. (b) The mystery at which they mocked 2:12 There must have been several things that were mysterious to the multitude.

The miracle of hearing Galileans speak their own language The manner in which the disciples displayed their joy. The message of the coming of the Holy Spirit and the name of the Lord Jesus. At first the crowd was amazed. Jaws must have dropped and mouths gaped open to hear their own tongue spoken by strangers. Then they were confused as they listened. Sadly like today many mocked and made fun of the disciples even though they were witnessing the beginnings of the Church of Jesus Christ. (c) The mistake at which they marvelled 2:13 Breathe on me, breath of God. Fill me with life anew, That I may love what Thou dost love, And do what Thou wouldst do.

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