

The Spirit of God
Week 15
The Pentecostal Wind and Fire
A Study of Acts Chapter Two

LBC 11/2/04

¹And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. ²And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. ³And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. ⁴And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. ⁵And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven. ⁶Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language...³⁸Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. ³⁹For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call. ⁴⁰And with many other words did he [*Peter*] testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation. ⁴¹Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. ⁴²And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. ⁴³And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles."

Acts 2:1-6, 38-43

Review:

Last week we discussed sinning against the Holy Spirit. How might you sin against the Holy Spirit?

1. You may **GRIEVE** the Holy Spirit.
2. You may **QUENCH** the Holy Spirit.
3. You may refuse the **FILLING** of the Holy Spirit.

Tonight we will study the Pentecostal wind and fire.

Introduction:

The feast of **Pentecost** was a Jewish festival that celebrated the **giving of the Law** on Mount Sinai. When the Law was given, there was a marvellous display of divine power: thunder, lightning, smoke, the trumpet of God, fire, an earthquake, and the very voice of God Himself. It is no surprise, then, that there would be a **display of divine power** when the Holy Spirit came down upon the Jewish Christians at Pentecost, 1,500 years later. Also, the feast of Pentecost was the feast of **firstfruits**, and so it is fitting that the firstfruits of the marvellous **Gospel harvest** should be gathered in at Pentecost.

We may learn a lot about the person and workings of the Holy Spirit by studying His first baptism of the Christians in the early days of the church. **The same Holy Spirit Who came upon the early saints is the Holy Spirit who works among us today!** Sadly, this key passage in Acts chapter 2 has been neglected by those who do not agree with the interpretations and subsequent practices of our Pentecostal friends. **How tragic** – it is a very **interesting, challenging** and **useful** passage to study.

*** Tonight let me talk to you about the Pentecostal wind and fire:**

1. The Symbols of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

A. The first symbol was WIND.

“And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.” (**Acts 2:2**)

- i) The words “wind”, “breath” and “spirit” are the same in the Hebrew and Greek. The Holy Spirit could be referred to as the breath or wind of God.
- ii) In Ezekiel’s vision of the valley of dry bones (**Ezek 37**), the Holy Spirit was represented by a wind that blew upon the lifeless bodies and gave them life.
- iii) “From Heaven” – This was no ordinary wind, but the breath of God from Heaven. Compare this with **Luke 24:49**, “And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power **from on high**.”
- iv) How refreshing is a cool breeze on a hot, dry day! How invigorating is fresh air blowing through a stuffy, hot room! Is not the work of Holy Spirit **refreshing** and **invigorating**?
- v) “Rushing mighty wind” – implying **great power**. C.f. Hurricanes and tornadoes.

B. The second symbol was FIRE.

“And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them.” (**Acts 2:3**)

- i) Fire is a frequent symbol of deity.
 - a. Abraham saw a burning lamp.
 - b. Moses saw a burning bush.
 - c. The fire of God descended upon the altar when Solomon dedicated the Temple.
 - d. The Jews were led through the wilderness by a pillar of fire at night.
 - e. “Our God is a consuming fire.” (**Hebrews 12:29**)
- ii) The Holy Spirit would illumine them as a fire gives light.
- iii) The Holy Spirit would set them on fire with zeal and love for God.
- iv) John the Baptist was “a burning and a shining light.”
- v) Fire consumes the sacrifice of our lives.
- vi) “The fire shall ever be burning upon the altar; it shall never go out.” (**Leviticus 6:13**)

C. The third symbol was TONGUES.

“And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them.” (**Acts 2:3**)

- i) The church was to go forth and conquer, not with the **sword**, but with the powerful **words** of the Gospel.
- ii) “And he hath made my mouth like a sharp sword; in the shadow of his hand hath he hid me, and made me a polished shaft; in his quiver hath he hid me;” (**Isaiah 49:2**)
- iii) Christians with the fire of God in their hearts and the Words of God upon their lips have conquered this world with the Gospel.

D. The meaning of these symbols.

- i) The combination of wind and fire is indeed a potent one! Who can stand before wind and fire?
- ii) **ILLUSTRATION** – The bush fires in Canberra. Wind and fire!
- iii) If the fiery wind of the Holy Spirit were to descend upon our church and others, who could stand before us?

2. The Effects of the Mighty Rushing Wind.

A. The first effect was FILLING.

“And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost...” (Acts 2:4)

- i) **Ephesians 3:19** “And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.”
- ii) **Ephesians 5:18** “And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;”
- iii) We are poor, empty and useless vessels until we are filled with the Holy Spirit.
- iv) First the filling, then the speaking. Speaking without filling is unfruitful.
- v) A vessel filled with cool water will refresh the weary soul; an empty vessel refreshes no one!
- vi) Many Christians are filled with **self**, with **pride**, with **covetousness**, with **worldliness**, and with **bitterness**, but very few Christians are **filled with the Holy Spirit!**

B. The second effect was UTTERANCE.

“...and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.” (Acts 2:4)

“And how hear we every man in our own tongue... we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God.” (Acts 2:8, 11)

- i) As soon as they were **filled**, they **spoke** for God!
- ii) “And they called them, and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. **For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.** So when they had further threatened them, they let them go, finding nothing how they might punish them, because of the people: for all men glorified God for that which was done. (Acts 4:18-21)
- iii) They spoke so as to be **understood**. “For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?” (1 Corinthians 14:8)
- iv) **ILLUSTRATION** – Catholic priests conducting services in Latin.
- v) The Holy Spirit gave them the supernatural gift of **languages**, or **tongues**, whereby they were able to speak in the unknown languages of the hearers. This was a miraculous sign to the unbelieving Jews: “Wherefore **tongues are for a sign**, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not: but prophesying serveth not for them that believe not, but for them which believe.” (1 Corinthians 14:22)
- vi) They spoke what the Spirit wanted them to speak – “as the Spirit gave them utterance.”
- vii) “And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; **Speaking** to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; **Giving thanks** always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ;” (Ephesians 5:18-20)
- viii) You can tell if a person is Spirit-filled by what comes out of His **mouth!**

3. The Primary Subject of those preaching at Pentecost.

“And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven. Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language. And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galilaeans? And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?...we do hear them speak in our tongues **the wonderful works of God.**” (Acts 2:4-8, 11)

“But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judaea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words:” (**Acts 2:14**)

A. Rejoicing.

“...we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God.” (**Acts 2:11**)

B. Repentance.

“Then Peter said unto them, **Repent**, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.” (**Acts 2:38**)

C. Redemption.

“Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have **crucified and slain**:” (**Acts 2:23**)

D. Resurrection

“This Jesus hath God **raised up**, whereof we all are witnesses.” (**Acts 2:32**)

E. Regeneration.

“Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive **the gift of the Holy Ghost**.” (**Acts 2:38**)

F. Remission.

“Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the **remission of sins**, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.” (**Acts 2:38**)

Remission = freedom; pardon; deliverance; forgiveness; liberty.

“...without shedding of blood is no remission.” (**Hebrews 9:22**)

4. The Glorious Results of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

What were the **results** of the Holy Spirit coming upon the servants of God? What were the **fruits** of this wonderful revival? If **we** would see revival, would we not expect to see many similar things as the early church saw at Pentecost?

“Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. And they continued stedfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles. And all that believed were together, and had all things common; And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need. And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.” (**Acts 2:41-47**)

A. A deep conviction and feeling among the hearers.

“Now when they heard this, they were **pricked in their heart**, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?” (**Acts 2:37**)

Is this not lacking in much preaching and witnessing today – **true Holy Ghost conviction**? Sorrow for sin? A feeling of desperation for fear of eternal judgment? People today seem to want comfortable,

enjoyable, ear-tickling preaching – but Holy Ghost preaching produces **deep conviction and feeling**. The aim of preaching and witnessing is the **heart** of man.

“And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:” (**John 16:8**)

B. An earnest enquiry.

“Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, **what shall we do?**” (**Acts 2:37**)

Follow the preaching of the apostles throughout the Book of Acts, and you will find deep conviction of heart, followed by an earnest enquiry into salvation:

“And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” (**Acts 16:30**)

Emotion is only useful if it is followed by **practical action**, whether of a sinner getting saved, or of a Christian getting right with God and increasing in holiness and usefulness.

C. A great reception of the Word.

As we consider such a wonderful harvest of souls, let us remember the steps that brought it about:

1. A unified, praying church.
2. The filling of the Holy Spirit.
3. The bold, plain preaching of the word of God.
4. Holy Spirit conviction.
5. Earnest enquiry.

What was the end result?

“Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about **three thousand souls.**” (**Acts 2:41**)

Why don't we see great results today? Shall we blame the hardness of hearts? No – let us blame the disobedience and unbelief of the church!

D. They were baptised immediately.

“Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about **three thousand souls.**” (**Acts 2:41**)

They were not ashamed of Jesus!

The Great Commission is threefold:

1. Evangelise.
2. Baptise.
3. Stabilise.

E. Great steadfastness of the saints.

“And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.” (**Acts 2:42**)

Here is one quality we lack among Christians, both young and old: **STEADFASTNESS!**

“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.” (**1 Corinthians 15:58**)

In what were these new Christians **steadfast**?

- i) **Doctrine** – they were steady, stable and strong in their understanding of the Bible. They knew what they believed, and why they believed it. They did not **change** from what they knew to be truth. “That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;” (**Ephesians 4:14**)
- ii) **Fellowship** – they were faithful to fellowship with other Christians, especially at public church services. The word fellowship means, “partnership, participation, or social intercourse; to communicate; communion (a body of people with common faith).” **They wanted to be around the people of God** – you didn’t have to twist their arm to get them to church!

The term “breaking of bread” refers either to keeping the Lord’s Supper, or to the practice of gathering regularly with other believers to eat and fellowship, which was common in those days.

F. Prayer.

“And they continued stedfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.” (**Acts 2:42**)

There was no trouble getting a prayer meeting together then! The revival that began with prayer continued with prayer.

“Peter therefore was kept in prison: but **prayer** was made **without ceasing of the church** unto God for him...And when he had considered the thing, he came to the house of Mary the mother of John, whose surname was Mark; where **many were gathered together praying.**” (**Acts 12:5, 12**)

When was the last time you invited someone over to your house **just to pray together**?

G. Fear.

“And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles.” (**Acts 2:43**)

What kind of fear? A holy fear of God!

H. Apostolic miracles.

“And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles.” (**Acts 2:43**)

The evidence of apostolic miracles continued throughout the Book of Acts – this was God’s way of showing His divine approval of their **ministry** and their **message**, as He had done with Jesus.

“Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know:” (**Acts 2:22**)

“How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?” (**Hebrews 2:3, 4**)

I. Striking Generosity.

“And all that believed were together, and had all things common; And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need.” (**Acts 2:44, 45**)

Some have used this passage, and Acts chapter 4, to prove a kind of Christian communal living.

“Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, And laid them down at the apostles’ feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need.” (**Acts 4:34, 35**)

Did all the Christians sell everything and move in together? Are we expected to do the same today? **No**. This passage simply shows that spiritual Christians will give **sacrificially** and **generously** to meet the needs of **others**. Remember several things:

- i) The phrase “And all that believed were together” does **not** mean that they all lived in a **separate community**; that is evidenced by early histories of the churches. It simply means that they were together in unity, and that they were often together for fellowship, prayer and praise.
- ii) The selling of lands and possessions was entirely **voluntary**, intended to provide for those Christians in need. “While it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold was it not in thine own power?” (**Acts 5:4**).
- iii) Many of the Jewish Christians came from abroad. They were from Parthia, Media, Arabia, Rome, Africa, etc. It is probable, also, that they now remained longer in Jerusalem than they had at first planned; and it is likely that they would be denied now the usual hospitalities of the Jews, because they had embraced Jesus of Nazareth. In these circumstances, it was natural that they should share their property while they remained together.
- iv) Many Jews were fired from their employment, expelled from their synagogue, and excommunicated by their families when they got saved. Obviously they would have great financial needs, especially considering the lack of government welfare, so it was necessary to pool resources that needs might be met.
- v) Wealthy Christians are not commanded in the epistles to sell all their goods and move in with other believers in a commune. Instead, they are commanded to do good works, to trust in God rather than money, and to give generously. **See 1 Timothy 6:17-19**.

J. Unity.

“And they, continuing daily with **one accord** in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart,” (**Acts 2:46**)

Unity among believers is a common observation throughout Acts and a common theme of the epistles.

K. Continual gladness.

“And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with **gladness** and singleness of heart,” (**Acts 2:46**)

Does not salvation, steadfastness, prayer, fear of God, and generosity make a glad Christian? Most churches today could use a good dose of Holy Ghost **gladness**!

L. Praising God.

“**Praising God**, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.” (**Acts 2:47**)

The gladness showed itself in the public praising of God. They were not embarrassed, afraid or ashamed to say “amen” or “praise the Lord!”

M. A daily increase of the church.

“Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church **daily** such as should be **saved**.” (**Acts 2:47**)

Those who got saved joined the church, and this was a **regular**, even **daily**, occurrence. Conversions were not rare and unexpected – they were part of **normal** church life. **May it be so today!**

Conclusion:

“Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever.” (**Hebrews 13:8**)

- Does not your heart long to see such an outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon His people today?
- Do you not desire to see this church growing and prosperous?
- Do you not wish that we might see many souls saved, baptised and added to the church?
- Do you not long for the joy, gladness and harmony of the early church?

“If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?” (**Luke 11:13**)