



Message #4

“THE COMING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT”

Acts 2:1-13

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There are 1,189 chapters in the Bible (both OT and NT combined). Acts 2 would have to be one of the most important and significant of all those chapters. This second chapter of Acts takes in the events of Pentecost...and the coming of the Holy Spirit, as Christ had promised.

Pentecost was the day on which the Holy Spirit was poured out on the believers (2:1-4). This event is perhaps one of the three most important moments in redemptive history.

- **The first event was creation**, the moment when God created the stage on which He would work out His sovereign plan. As John Calvin said, God created the world to function as a theatre of His glory in the drama of redemption (see Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, 1.6.2).

- **The second most significant moment in redemptive history was the substitutionary death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.** In the cross and resurrection of Christ, God accomplished redemption and ushered in the new covenant, fulfilling all the promises and expectations of the Old Testament.

- **The third most significant event in redemptive history is the day of Pentecost** – the birth of the church, the creation of God's new covenant people.

And in Acts 2 we see three of the most important keys of the whole book developed further....

1. The fulness of the Holy Spirit (2:1-13)
2. The evangelistic ministry of the church (2:14-41)
3. The community life of the believers (2:42-47)

Pentecost was the inauguration of the new era of the Spirit. Although His coming was a unique and unrepeatable historical event, all the people of God can now always and everywhere benefit from His ministry....it is through the Spirit that we are enabled and empowered to live the Christian life and witness.

PENTECOST

The word “Pentecost” derives from the Greek word for “50th” because the Jewish harvest festival was celebrated on the 50th day after Passover.

It came to be a commemoration of the giving of the Law of God to Moses on Mt Sinai, as well as the harvest festival when the “first fruits” were offered to God in prayer and thanksgiving.

There is a wonderful symmetry in the working of God....

The Old Covenant had been characterized by the operation of the Law.

The New Covenant would be characterized by the operation of the Spirit.

The Feast of Pentecost celebrated the “first fruits” of the harvest.

The Day of Pentecost would see the “first fruits” of the evangelistic witness of the Church.

This day of Pentecost was a dramatic and unique moment.

Imagine that you are a reporter. Describe in detail, as if you are covering an important story, what happened in this Upper Room in Jerusalem.

What do you think it would have been like to be one of the 120 believers in this room?

IT WAS DRAMATIC:

The writers of the Bible frequently use comparisons to describe great works of God. Luke does the same thing when he writes, “**And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind**” (2:2). This wasn’t a soft breeze...the sound of it got everyone’s attention (2:6).

THE WIND: Throughout the Bible, the work of God is often described with the imagery of “wind”. In fact, in the OT the Hebrew word *ruach* means both “wind” and “spirit”. (Read Ezekiel 37)

THE FIRE: Immediately after the wind, Luke records that “...**what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them**” (2:3). Again, fire is a symbol used in Scripture to describe other significant acts of God....For example, when God appeared to Moses in the form of the burning bush (Exodus 3).

John the Baptist even foreshadowed this fiery appearance of God’s Spirit when he indicated that Christ offered a great baptism because He would baptize with the Holy Spirit and fire (Matthew 3:11).

So Luke describes the sudden coming of the Holy spirit in two common metaphors found in Scripture: wind and fire.

Do the images of wind & fire excite you about the reality that you are indwelt by this same Spirit?

TONGUES: This passage is the first mention of this phenomenon in the Book of Acts. There are two categories of “tongues” spoken of in Scripture....

1. The speaking of a recognizable language by someone who does not know that language (this is the kind of tongues that is referred to here in Acts 2:4).
2. The speaking of a non-recognizable form of language, a type of ecstatic, angelic speech, often referred to today as a “prayer language”.

The tongues being spoken in the Upper Room by the believers on the Day of Pentecost were recognizable languages (not the *glossolalia* of 1 Corinthians 12-14). And it was all a part of God’s great plan.....

IT WAS UNIVERSAL:

Because the Feast of Pentecost was one of the three “pilgrim feasts” (where the Jews gathered in Jerusalem to celebrate) there were Jews from all over the world present (2:5-12). They heard the sound of the rushing wind and were drawn to the area near the Upper Room. Then they heard the “**wonders of God being declared**” in their own languages (by the Galilean believers). This was another amazing miracle!

IT WAS POLARIZING:

Not everyone who witnesses the amazing miracles of God responds positively. In Acts 2:13 it is obvious that, in spite of everything that has just happened, there are scoffers and cynics. It is important not to let the ridicule of others put you off stepping out to follow Christ and His mission.

Have you ever experienced the scoffing and ridicule of others as you have professed your faith in Jesus, and your commitment to follow and serve Him?

What difference do you think it would make if the Holy Spirit were withdrawn from the church?

DISCUSS: *Out of a fear of going to the extreme of too much focus on the ministry and the experience of the Holy Spirit, we can go to the other extreme of ignoring, or even, diminishing the role and the necessity of the Holy Spirit.*