

## Fire and the Holy Spirit

Acts 2:1-21

Today we end our three week series on the Holy Spirit, entitled "Earth, Wind, and Fire."

John the Baptist: "but he will baptize you with the **Spirit** and with **fire**" (Matthew 3:11)

- Sounds *impossible*... and dangerous!

The Spirit and tongues of fire in Acts 2:1-4

- What follows is Pentecost and the reversal of the Tower of Babel!
- This event doesn't happen again.

"Fire" in this sermon series:

- Unlike last week's sermon ("wind"), this one will highlight the one-time and occasional works of the Spirit. They're often unique and extraordinary events.

Extraordinary occasions of the Spirit in the Old Testament:

- *Spirit-filled artisans*: Bezalel and Oholiab. Bezalel constructed the Ark of the Covenant. (Ex 37:1, 31:4-5, 35:30-35)
- *Spirit-filled warrior*: Samson. His strength appears almost super-human at times (Judges 14:6,19; 15:14).
- *Spirit-filled visionary*: Ezekiel. See his remarkable vision in Ezekiel 2-3.
- *Spirit-filled prophesying*: Saul!? "Then the Spirit of the Lord will rush upon you, and you will prophesy with them and be turned into another man" (1 Samuel 10:6).
- *Spirit-filled future*: All kinds of people will receive the Spirit (Joel 2:28-32).

Peter announces the Joel prophecy is fulfilled at Pentecost (Acts 2:5-21)

Excursus: What about tongues elsewhere in the New Testament? (1 Corinthians 12 and 14)

To the Lord's Supper: Fire and the distress of Jesus

- John the Baptist announced that Jesus came to bring fire of judgment (Luke 3:17)
  - Jesus spoke of the fires of hell (Mark 9:47-49). But Jesus rebuked James and John for wanting to call down fire from heaven upon those who rejected Jesus (Luke 9:54-55).
- Baptism by fire would first come upon Jesus! "I came to cast fire on the earth, and would that it were already kindled! I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how great is my distress until it is accomplished!" (Luke 12:49-50; see next few verses as well)

### Questions for Further Reflection and Application

1. Would you rather be baptized by water or fire?
2. How is fire different in Luke 3:17 vs Acts 2:1-4?
  - a. What are the ways in which fire is "good" and "bad"? That is, helpful vs. harmful, or a blessing vs. a judgment.
3. Think of the extraordinary, occasional works of the Holy Spirit in the Bible. What comes to mind?
4. Last week we talked about the universal works of the Holy Spirit for all Christians (John 3:1-8, Gal 5:22ff). How can you apply that message ("wind") to your life?
  - a. Tough question: how can we "apply" today's message? Many events in the Bible are one-time events. How can we apply them to our lives? Or is this a wrongheaded question?

## Fire and the Holy Spirit

Acts 2:1-21

Today we end our three week series on the Holy Spirit, entitled "Earth, Wind, and Fire."

John the Baptist: "but he will baptize you with the **Spirit** and with **fire**" (Matthew 3:11)

- Sounds *impossible*... and dangerous!

The Spirit and tongues of fire in Acts 2:1-4

- What follows is Pentecost and the reversal of the Tower of Babel!
- This event doesn't happen again.

"Fire" in this sermon series:

- Unlike last week's sermon ("wind"), this one will highlight the one-time and occasional works of the Spirit. They're often unique and extraordinary events.

Extraordinary occasions of the Spirit in the Old Testament:

- *Spirit-filled artisans*: Bezalel and Oholiab. Bezalel constructed the Ark of the Covenant. (Ex 37:1, 31:4-5, 35:30-35)
- *Spirit-filled warrior*: Samson. His strength appears almost super-human at times (Judges 14:6,19; 15:14).
- *Spirit-filled visionary*: Ezekiel. See his remarkable vision in Ezekiel 2-3.
- *Spirit-filled prophesying*: Saul!? "Then the Spirit of the Lord will rush upon you, and you will prophesy with them and be turned into another man" (1 Samuel 10:6).
- *Spirit-filled future*: All kinds of people will receive the Spirit (Joel 2:28-32).

Peter announces the Joel prophecy is fulfilled at Pentecost (Acts 2:5-21)

Excursus: What about tongues elsewhere in the New Testament? (1 Corinthians 12 and 14)

To the Lord's Supper: Fire and the distress of Jesus

- John the Baptist announced that Jesus came to bring fire of judgment (Luke 3:17)
  - Jesus spoke of the fires of hell (Mark 9:47-49). But Jesus rebuked James and John for wanting to call down fire from heaven upon those who rejected Jesus (Luke 9:54-55).
- Baptism by fire would first come upon Jesus! "I came to cast fire on the earth, and would that it were already kindled! I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how great is my distress until it is accomplished!" (Luke 12:49-50; see next few verses as well)

### Questions for Further Reflection and Application

5. Would you rather be baptized by water or fire?
6. How is fire different in Luke 3:17 vs Acts 2:1-4?
  - a. What are the ways in which fire is "good" and "bad"? That is, helpful vs. harmful, or a blessing vs. a judgment.
7. Think of the extraordinary, occasional works of the Holy Spirit in the Bible. What comes to mind?
8. Last week we talked about the universal works of the Holy Spirit for all Christians (John 3:1-8, Gal 5:22ff). How can you apply that message ("wind") to your life?
  - a. Tough question: how can we "apply" today's message? Many events in the Bible are one-time events. How can we apply them to our lives? Or is this a wrongheaded question?