

Building a Community that Stands - a study in the Book of Acts - Adam Heather

- A suggestion: Read Psalm 65 and thank God for harvest

Pentecost: Fire and Wind are signs of God's presence

John 16v7 Jesus: *very truly I tell you, it is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you.* Is this a good promise?

Acts 2v1-4 Pentecost is a culmination moment in history. The new church turned the world upside down. We need to understand the Bible on it's own terms:

FIRE:

- Ex 13v21 Pillar of fire and smoke led the Israelites. Ex 33 this pillar rested on the tent which signified the presence of God. The Tabernacle was most holy. One priest entered once a year on Yom Kippur.
- I Kings 8v10 The cloud filled the Temple, built by Solomon. God had a dwelling place among the people.
- Acts 2v3 Tongues of fire rested on each person - God was moving out of a building to dwell in people.

John 1v14 *The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.* "Dwelling" (Greek: "Skenoo" = tabernacle). Note, Spirit descended on Jesus at his baptism (Matt 3v16). Jesus' ministry included forgiving sins - previously only done within temple. Jesus was redefining Temple business. He was walking/talking Temple. And we are too! *Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives among you?* (1Cor 3v16) "You yourselves" indicates plural. One pillar of fire is now many flames.

What do we think of us being God's Temple?

WIND:

- Gen 1v2b *the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.* "Spirit of God" (Hebrew: Ruach = breath)
- Gen 2v7 God breathed into man and set him apart to create as God created
- Ezek 37. c600BC Ezekiel was one of the prophets who foreshadowed normal Christian living - he was filled with the Spirit but for a certain task at a certain time. He was commanded to speak life over dead bones and v10 says breath came and they lived.

After Resurrection Jesus said to disciples: *'Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.'* And with that he breathed on them and said, *'Receive the Holy Spirit.* Jn 20v21-22. Acts 2v2 Ruach arrives. This is the same Spirit that breathed in creation, breathed over the bones in Ezekiel, breathed through Jesus to heal the blind, lame and lepers. And the same Spirit is available for us.

How can we experience the Breath of God?

FROM THE UPPER ROOM A NEW CREATION COMES INTO BEING: THE CHURCH

The ministry of the church is the same as Jesus' ministry: *The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour.* Luke 4v18-19 cf Ias 61v1-3. This is why we want a Lighthouse in Guildford - to proclaim good news to the poor!

How else can we fulfil this manifesto?

John says there is no sea in the new heaven and earth (Rev 21v1). Why? Because "sea" is image of darkness, chaos, disorder. Spirit brings God's order, beauty, life, light and power into being.

John 14v12 Jesus: *Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father.* Note the "whoever" - all inclusive!

"It is the conviction of the Bible that absolutely everything in Scripture is liveable" E Petersen.

"The Spirit is there to make the impractical practicable." Anon

"God's people lack something, ... they have recurring defeat, ...they're hungry for more, ...they need filling with the Holy Spirit" Billy Graham

What stands out from these quotes?

- The Spirit is not a force to wield but a person to know and be known by.
- It is not information or incantation but intimacy that we need to experience.
- The Spirit is Holy - our sinfulness can quench the Spirit but He is our Advocate, He knows our sin, our "curving in on ourselves"
- We can fan the Spirit into flame through Scripture and it's promises, and worship
- We can experience a personal Pentecost every day.... Better is available!

Pray for one another to be refilled with the Spirit

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