

Holy Spirit: Wind and Fire | Pentecost

Introduction:

Throughout the Old Testament, God gave assurances of His presence through visible and audible signs such as fire, wind, and inspired speech. At Pentecost, He further restored His covenant relationship with His people when the power of the Holy Spirit came to rest upon individual believers.

After Jesus went to the cross and rose from the grave, he appeared to the disciples for another 40 days (Acts 1:3). The risen Jesus told his disciples that he needed to leave them, but he would send the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, to be with them (John 14:26). He told them to go to Jerusalem and wait for that gift (Acts 1:4-5). On the day of Pentecost, 50 days after the Resurrection, the Holy Spirit came with a rush of wind, “tongues of fire...came to rest on each of them... [and they] were filled with the Holy Spirit...” (Acts 2:2-4).

The coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost is a progression of God’s redemptive story for His people throughout the Bible. First-century Jews would have understood fire as a sign of God’s presence with them such as the “pillar of fire” guiding the Israelites by night (Ex.13:21), the “consuming fire” on Mount Sinai (Ex.24:17), and the fire in the cloud over the tabernacle in the wilderness (Ex. 40:38). Under the old covenant, the fire that represented the presence of God was either for all of Israel or specific individuals at specific moments. But at Pentecost, under the new covenant established by Jesus, and as the gift promised by the Father, the fire representing God’s presence separated and rested on the Apostles individually, and they were filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:3-4). Peter explained that the gift and promise of the Holy Spirit wasn’t only for the Apostles, but also for everyone who would repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ throughout the nations and generations (Acts 2:38-39).

The coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost marks a powerful new beginning to God’s more individual and intimate covenant relationship and presence with His people.

Read Your Bible

- Acts 2
- John 14:25-27

Apply God’s Word to Your Life:

1. Have you ever been in a situation where you didn’t understand the language being spoken? How did you communicate?
2. Give some examples of how fire or wind can change things.
3. Why do you think Luke, the writer of Acts, named the different nations in Acts 2:9-11?
4. What does it mean to be filled with the Holy Spirit?
5. Why do the events of Pentecost matter?
6. Read Acts 2:42-47 again. This is a snapshot of the early church. Describe some ways today’s church resembles the early church. Describe some ways it doesn’t

Reflecting on the text:

1. What have you learned about God?
2. What have you learned about the world?

3. What have you learned about yourself?

Pray

Heavenly Father, thank you for the gift of the Holy Spirit. The lengths You would go to in order to be in personal relationship with us are both humbling and amazing. May the light of Your fire continue to guide us, burn bright within our hearts, and encourage others to know Your love. In Jesus' Name. Amen.