

The Holy Spirit: God with Us

Read Ezekiel 37:1-10; Acts 2:1-4

Jesus came to be *God with us*. But His task wasn't done when He ascended back to His Father. One of Jesus' purposes in coming to us was to pour out God's Spirit on all who trust in Him. At the very beginning of Jesus' ministry, John the Baptist introduced Him this way:

"I baptize you with water for repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, and I am not fit to remove His sandals; He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire." (Matthew 3:11, NASB)

When the Holy Spirit came, He carried on Jesus' ministry. He was to all believers what Jesus had been to His disciples: teacher, comforter, encourager, companion, advocate, intercessor, friend, and the presence of God. The Holy Spirit was all that, but more. Jesus had been limited by a physical body. The Spirit is Jesus unbound from any limitations. He is God's presence with us, among us, and within us, every moment, always and forever.

When the Holy Spirit was poured at the day of Pentecost, His coming was accompanied by two signs. Both of these signs had long been symbols of the living presence of God.

- *"A noise like violent rushing wind"* (Acts 2:2, NASB) - In both Old Testament Hebrew and New Testament Greek, the word for "Spirit" also means "wind" and "breath". Thus God's Spirit has always been associated with wind. God's Spirit is His life in motion. For example, read Ezekiel's vision of the valley of dry bones in Ezekiel 37:1-10.
- *"Tongues as of fire...rested on each one of them"* (Acts 2:3, NASB) - Fire is another frequent symbol of God's presence. For example, recall that God's presence was a pillar of fire in the wilderness (Exodus 13:21). God revealed His holy presence on Mt. Sinai by fire (Exodus 19:18). When Elijah faced the prophets of Baal on Mt. Carmel, the God who answered by fire was the true God (1 Kings 18:24).

When God poured out His Spirit at Pentecost, He signaled unmistakably that the powerful, living presence of God Himself was now among, with, and within His people.

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