

POWER TO THRIVE

#4 SERIES: 50 DAYS TO CHANGE THE WORLD

Introduction:

- Who is the Holy Spirit to you?
 - Is the Holy Spirit real?
 - Some call experiences with the Holy Spirit psychosomatic.
 - Some Christians believe that the gifts of the Holy Spirit ceased when Jesus' disciples died.
 - History proves otherwise.



ILLUSTRATIONS:

A. Early Church Fathers:

a. Irenaeus (130-202AD)

He writes, "Those who are in truth Jesus' disciples, receiving grace from Him, do in His name perform miracles, so as to promote the welfare of other men, according to the gift which each one has received from Him. For some do certainly and truly drive out devils, so that those who have thus been cleansed from evil spirits frequently both believe in Christ, and join themselves to the Church.

"Others have foreknowledge of things to come: they see visions, and utter prophetic expressions. Others still heal the sick, by laying their hands upon them, and they are made whole. Yea, moreover, as I have said, the dead even have been raised up, and remained among us for many years. The Spirit, then, does miracles, casts out demons, reveals the future, delivers the sick and even raises the dead!

"In like manner, we do hear many brethren in the church who possess prophetic gifts, and through the Spirit speak all kinds of languages, and bring to light for the general benefit the hidden things of men, and declare the mysteries of God..."

b. Tertullian (150-220AD)

- He was the church's first authentically "Pentecostal" Theologian.
- In the context of baptism, '...he urged new disciples to earnestly seek after spiritual gifts. "Ask from the Father, ask from the Lord, that His own specialties of grace and distribution of gifts may be supplied to you".'



c. Novation (220-258AD)

- "This is He who places prophets in the church, instructs teachers, directs tongues, gives powers and healings, does wonderful works, often discrimination of spirits, affords powers of government, suggests counsels, and orders and arranges whatever other gifts there are of charismata; and thus makes the Lord's Church everywhere, an din all, perfected and completed."

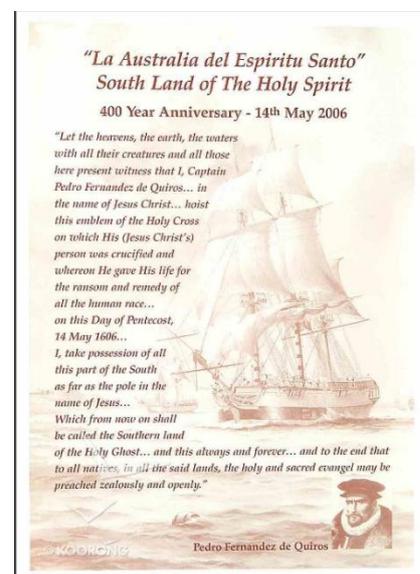


d. Cyril of Jerusalem (313-386 AD)

- "If you believe, you shall not only receive remission of sins, but also do things which pass man's power. And my you be worthy of the gift of prophecy also. All your life long will your Guardian the Comforter abide with you; He will care for you, as for His own soldier, for your goings out, and your comings in, and your plotting foes. And He will give you gifts of grace of every kind, if you grieve Him not be sin,,, be ready to receive grace, and when you have received it, cast it not away."



B. Pentecost Sunday 14 May 1606:



“Let the heavens, the earth, the waters with all their creatures and all those here present witness that I, Captain Pedro Fernandez de Quiros... in the Name of Jesus Christ... hoist this emblem of the Holy cross on which His [Jesus Christ’s] person was crucified and whereon He gave His life for the ransom and remedy of the human race... on this Day of Pentecost, 14 May 1606... I take possession of all this part of the South as far as the pole in the Name of Jesus... which from now on shall be called The Southern Land of the Holy Spirit, and this always and forever... and to the end that to all natives, in all the said lands, the holy and sacred evangel may be preached zealously and openly.’

C. Worldwide Pentecostalism:



- Who is the Holy Spirit to YOU?

Part A of story for Jan 14th in *“On This Day in Christian History”* by Robert J Morgan Thomas Nelson Publisher © 1997)

Walter Lewis Wilson, a Christian medical doctor, agonised over his fruitless efforts at witnessing. One day in 1913, a French missionary visiting the Wilson home asked the doctor, *“Who is the Holy Spirit to you?”*

Wilson replied, *“One of the Persons of the Godhead... Teacher, Guide, Third Person of the Trinity.”* The friend challenged Wilson: *“You have not answered my question.”* To this Wilson replied sadly: *“He is nothing to me. I have no contact with Him and could get along quite well without Him.”*

1. The Promise

Acts 1:4-5 *On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: “Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. For John baptized with water, but in a few days, you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.”*

- Gift (cannot be earned)
- Baptised (immersed in)
- Why did the disciples need more?
 - Had they not received before?

John 20:21-22 *Again Jesus said, “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.”*

- Different scholars’ interpretation of this passage:
 - Disciples were born again at this point
 - Points to what is to come
- They needed MORE...

2. The Reason

Acts 1:7-8 *He said to them: “It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”*

- Jesus has already given us the authority
 - Now He wants to release the power of the Holy Spirit
- Witness is called a “martyr”
 - Witnessing is tough – that is why we need both power and authority.

3. The Preparation

Acts 1:14 *They all joined together constantly in prayer, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers.*

- Notice who was there...
 - Disciples, women, Jesus' brothers
- Constant; regular
 - Like minded
 - Power of agreement
 - Press in and wait

4. The Outcome

Acts 2:1-13 *When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.*

Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard their own language being spoken. Utterly amazed, they asked: "Aren't all these who are speaking Galileans? Then how is it that each of us hears them in our native language? Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs—we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!"

Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, "What does this mean?" Some, however, made fun of them and said, "They have had too much wine."

- When evaluating supernatural events we ask:
 - What is the purpose?
 - What is the fruit?
 - Is it godly?

(a) Sound of Wind

- John 3:8 -Jesus connects wind with being born of the Spirit
- Ezekiel 37:9 – Ezekiel was prophesying over dry bones and spoke to the wind: “Breath of life into the slain”.

ILLUSTRATION:

“Wind” is a good word to describe the power of the Holy Spirit. Change happens when winds blow – and when the Holy Spirit moves, He brings change like wind. Energy is produced by wind – and when the Holy Spirit moves in this manner, He supplies supernatural energy. He empowers us to do what we could not naturally do on our own.

(b) Fire

Matthew 3:11 *“I baptize you with water for repentance. But after me comes one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.*

- Fire symbolises:
 - God’s presence
 - God’s passion
 - God’s purity

(c) Release of worship / Praise.

- Who was listening?
 - God fearing Jews
- What was the worship?
 - God honouring
- What was the fruit?
 - People heard in their own language.
- What was the result? (salvation)