

Pentecost 2024:-

The familiar text for the Day of Pentecost in the Acts of the Apostles chapter 2 has all the echoes of the Book of the Prophet Joel referred to by Peter in his address to the gathered crowd. Certainly there was a great deal of supernatural activity which attracted the questioning crowd – Acts chapter 2, verses 5 – 13. Unfortunately (or fortunately?) it doesn't happen like this for most of us. Maybe a gentler introduction would help!

Read the Gospel of John chapter 3, verses 1 – 2:- Remember that the Lord Jesus Christ is talking about the role of the Holy Spirit in bringing new spiritual life to fallen human beings.

The comparison of the Holy Spirit to the wind is a play on words as well as being descriptive. At the beginning of creation in Genesis chapter 1, verse 2, we read of “*the Spirit of God was moving over the face of the waters.*” The word “*Spirit*” (Hebrew ‘*ruah*’) used here can be translated “*Breath*” or “*Wind*”. The same word is used in Genesis chapter 2, verse 7 – the Spirit of life was blown into man's nostrils “*and man became a living being.*” Remember that it is the same Father and the same Son at work in both the Old and New Testaments. It is the same Holy Spirit, the ‘*breath*’, the ‘*wind*’ of God who is at work throughout the ages. The criticism of Nicodemus was because, as a teacher of Israel he should have understood the comments of the Lord Jesus regarding the work of the holy Spirit. The ‘*spiritual life*’ lost by mankind through sin (Genesis chapter 2, verses 15 - 17) can only be restored by the eternal life giving Spirit of God - “*. . . unless one is born anew he cannot see the kingdom of God*”.

It may sound strange to call for an attitude of repentance at Pentecost but if we are genuinely seeking revival this is where we must begin! It is worth re-reading and meditating on Psalm 51 in this context. Notice that the rebuilding of the ‘*walls of Jerusalem*’ and the restoration of spiritual worship only comes after the sacrifice of “*a broken and contrite heart*” (Psalm 51, verse 17).

The hymn written by William Booth and now set to a modern tune is well known. It says it all!

1) *Thou Christ of burning, cleansing, flame,
Send the fire!
Thy Blood-bought gift today we claim,
Send the fire!
Look down and see this waiting host,
Give us the promised Holy Ghost,
We want another Pentecost,
Send the fire!*

3) *'Tis fire we want for fire we plead,
Send the fire!
The fire will meet our every need,
Send the fire!
For strength to ever do the right,
For grace to conquer in the fight
For power to walk the world in white,
Send the fire!*

2) *God of Elijah, hear our cry;
Send the fire!
To make us fit to live or die,
Send the fire!
To burn up every trace of sin,
To bring the light and glory in,
The revolution now begin,
Send the fire!*

4) *To make our weak hearts strong and brave,
Send the fire!
To live a dying world to save,
Send the fire!
O see us on Thy altar lay
Our lives our all, this very day,
To crown the offering now we pray,
Send the fire!*

Original words by William Booth, Salvation Army 1894