

Water, Wind and Fire

‘June Cerza Kolf wrote: “My family had gathered at my house for our yearly reunion. While we were in church singing the opening hymn, an earthquake hit. The building shook, and the overhead lights swung back and forth. In true California style we never missed a beat, even though we had to grab the pews in front to steady ourselves. Following the service, the pastor came over to greet my out-of-town relatives. My son-in-law grinned as he shook the pastor’s hand and said, “I’ve been to a lot of church services in my life, but I can honestly say this was the most moving one I’ve ever attended”.’

Ordinarily, a church service in which people were “moved” would be most highly sought after. Moved in their souls, convicted of sin, convinced in their hearts and minds that they must repent and dedicate themselves to God, right then and there, without delay—that would be a wonderful “moving” of Holy Spirit on any church. But in Kolf’s church, it was a literal earthquake. The whole building physically moved, not spiritually, not anything within people’s hearts. However, Holy Spirit sometimes does “speak” directly through earthquakes. Recall how their whole building shook, when the members of the church earnestly prayed along with the Apostles Peter and John after they’d been freed from

their trial before the Sanhedrin, as recorded in Acts 4. In Acts 4:29-30 they prayed: “And now, O Lord, hear their threats, and give us, Your servants, great boldness in preaching Your word. Stretch out Your hand with healing power; may miraculous signs and wonders be done through the name of Your holy servant Jesus”. The very next verse records: “After this prayer, the meeting place shook, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit. Then they preached the word of God with boldness”. So it’s clear here that Holy Spirit often comes upon believers with startling physical manifestations. Note, too, that this wasn’t the first time these believers had been “filled with the Holy Spirit”. Understand that while we are each indwelt with Holy Spirit when we are baptized, or when we first sincerely believe, meaning Holy Spirit comes to dwell, live, in us, this being filled with Holy Spirit is a whole different experience and level of power. Being indwelt with Holy Spirit is what Lord Jesus promised the disciples in John 7:38 saying: “Rivers of living water will flow from his heart”. But being filled with Holy Spirit is what He meant in Acts 1:4 when He commanded the disciples “Do not leave Jerusalem until the Father sends you the gift He promised”, and in Acts 1:7:, “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you”.

We see how Holy Spirit is associated with water. Water is life giving. But Holy Spirit is “living water”, no ordinary water. Holy Spirit is living water which continually flows from within us, as we learn to depend on it, which imparts to us eternal life, as He

gradually enlivens our spirits, transforming them into the likeness of Christ Jesus, such that we take on little by little the very resurrected, never-to-die-again living power of our Savior. But on the Day of Pentecost, 50 days after Jesus' day of resurrection, something entirely different happened. As we read today, and every year, on Pentecost, originally the day Moses received God's law from God's very own hand, this year in Acts 2, when Christ resurrected and fulfilled the Law, this was no anniversary and ceremonial observance of the giving of the Law. No way. This year, as the 120 or so believers were gathered together in the Upper Room, instead of some reenactment of the giving of the Law to Moses, this time Holy Spirit Himself came down on the believers.

It began with the "sound from heaven like the roaring of a mighty windstorm" which descended from above becoming louder and louder until the whole meeting hall was filled with this thunderous sound, and then, just as suddenly, "what looked like flames or tongues of fire appeared and settled on each of them". Verse 4 then records that "everyone present was filled with the Holy Spirit and began speaking in other languages, as the Holy Spirit gave them this ability". This was the direct fulfillment of the prophecy given to John the Baptist when he proclaimed that Christ Jesus would baptize His followers "with the Holy Spirit and with fire", as recorded in Matthew 3:11, Mark 1:8, Luke 3:16, John 1:33, and Acts 1:5. The "fire" carries a double meaning, as does so much of God's Holy Word. Here in Acts 2 we see it literally in

the flames, the tongues, of fire that descended upon each believer. But the “fire” also speaks of suffering, specifically the sufferings of Christ Jesus, and of how we, as we faithfully live lives of witness to His truth and power, will participate in Christ’s sufferings by suffering ourselves for righteousness’ sake.

This spectacular manifestation of God’s holy presence in the form of Holy Spirit coming in massive supernatural power upon people had happened once before, on another very important day recorded in Numbers 11:25, as we just read. On this original day some 3,500 years ago, which we recall every Pentecost annually thereafter, God directed Moses to designate 70 men to serve as elders and leaders of Israel’s twelve tribes. Those men were to serve God under Moses’ leadership as the administrative, governmental leaders of each tribe. When the men had gathered around the Tabernacle at Moses’ command, God took some of the Holy Spirit that was on Moses and gave it to each of the seventy. The Bible records that when Holy Spirit rested on each of them, they prophesied for several minutes or so. But only that one time.

Interestingly, two of the designated elders, for whatever reasons, had stayed behind in their camps. Perhaps they hadn’t gotten the memo. But despite not showing up, their names were on Moses’ list, and God gave them Holy Spirit regardless. They also prophesied where they were, despite not being among the others assembled around the Tabernacle where God’s presence dwelt. This served to show Joshua and the others who witnessed Eldad

and Medad prophesying that God's Spirit didn't "operate" in this way just within a certain effective range or distance. It's also interesting that these two "no shows" are here identified by name, to be so remembered for all eternity, while the other 68 elders are not named, so until we get to Heaven, we won't know who they were! In this case, maybe it was better not to have been named, for possibly Eldad and Medad were singled out because they had willfully disobeyed Moses' order. Nevertheless, because they received of God's Spirit that was upon Moses, they would hereafter be moved to righteously assist Moses in governing their particular tribes and clans. Joshua had urged Moses to do whatever it took to make those two stop prophesying, seemingly because he thought it detracted from Moses' authority. But Moses turned it right around, saying in verse 29: "I wish that all the Lord's people were prophets and that the Lord would put His Spirit upon them all!" Well, Moses' wish came true and is coming true! For it was God's good pleasure that all His people receive His Spirit at just the right time. Just as Joel later prophesied in Joel 2:28-29.

In Numbers, it specifically states that when Holy Spirit came upon the elders, they all prophesied for a while that day. In Acts, when Holy Spirit came upon all the believers, they all spoke in tongues, "speaking in our own languages about the wonderful things God has done!", verse 11 records. These "peasants" with just elementary school educations, who could hardly have said to have had a literary command on their own native Aramaic, which

most of them even spoke with a “hillbilly” Galilean accent, are now speaking fluently in languages they had never learned! And what were they saying? “The wonderful things God has done” the report states. In other words, they were prophesying! For what is prophecy? It’s telling about the wonderful things God has done, and is doing, and things He has already set in motion, and things He will do, and things His beloved people are to look out for, pray for, pray against, fight for, fight against, all for His greater glory!

Which is exactly the situation we, His people, find ourselves here in America today. Do not things look bleak? Especially after the latest tragic travesty of a “reasoned” judgement from supposedly enlightened and most highly esteemed of human judges. Unless negated by new legislation, their catastrophic ruling puts our religious freedom and property rights in jeopardy all across this country, shredding the constitution in the process. This was not supposed to happen. I wonder how betrayed President Trump feels? Nevertheless, we take comfort that none of this came as a surprise to Father God, for He knew it all from the beginning. And He is in control. And it is His Holy Spirit Who dwells in us, and wants to fill us, day after day, to also prophesy His victory in our land in the midst of evil’s seemingly unstoppable advance. For what the devil proposes will not stand. As quickly as he seemingly gains ground against us, Holy Spirit in us will take him down, and reestablish righteousness and truth in this land greater than ever before. Pray it in, folks. Daily. Pray it in!

