

The Strange and Unique Phenomena of Pentecost Acts 2:1-6

You may believe in UFO's and human-like life on other planets, or not, but our government has recently released footage of what is purportedly a UFO recorded by one of our military pilots from the cockpit of his really fast jet. Another pilot who was flying alongside him saw it as well and their voice recordings show their astonishment at how otherworldly their experience was. The object darted about and pulled off maneuvers at speeds no one has ever witnessed before. It must have come from outer space. Have you ever watched a butterfly or moth flying through your backyard? It was kinda like that. I sometimes wonder how the butterfly feels and why they fly like they do. One second there here, the next there there. Anyway, it seems our government is pretty much convinced that such phenomena is likely a visitor from another planet, the UFO, not the butterfly.

Speaking of strange phenomena, take your Bibles and turn to Acts chapter 2 and v.1, repeat. This is my third and final sermon from a series I began on our first Sunday back after 5 months away on the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

I want to preface my sermon with two observations. **First, “God initiates the baptism of the Holy Spirit, not man.”** Nowhere in Scripture are we told to seek or pursue the baptism. That's God's doing and His alone.

Second, “It is the Holy Spirit who gives His gifts and who decides which gifts we get.” ¹¹ *But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually just as **He wills**.* (1 Cor. 12:11 NAU)

Acts 2:1 *When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place.* Do you remember where they were? They were in the upper room of a house located near the center of Jerusalem waiting on the coming of the Holy Spirit like Jesus had commanded them to do. Now it had been ten days since Christ ascended back to His Father.

² *And suddenly there came from heaven a noise like a violent rushing wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting.*

³ *And there appeared to them tongues as of fire distributing themselves, and they rested on each one of them.*

⁴ *And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit was giving them utterance.*

⁵ *Now there were Jews living in Jerusalem, devout men from every nation under heaven.*

⁶ *And when this sound occurred, the crowd came together, and were bewildered because each one of them was hearing them speak in his own language. The "crowd," by the way, was made up of thousands of Jews who were in Jerusalem for the weeks long celebrations of the feasts God had commanded them to observe that climaxed with the Passover, which this time was the day Jesus was crucified. As it turns out, this year God had the Jews here for a slightly different reason. God had providentially on this particular Day of Pentecost gathered the Jews in Jerusalem in order that thousands of them might be saved and baptized in the name of Jesus and with the Holy Spirit.*

⁷ *They were amazed and astonished, saying, "Why, are not all these who are speaking Galileans?"*

⁸ *"And how is it that we each hear them in our own language to which we were born?"*

⁹ *"Parthians and Medes and Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia,*

¹⁰ *Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the districts of Libya around Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes,*

¹¹ *Cretans and Arabs-- we hear them in our own tongues speaking of the mighty deeds of God." (Acts 2:1-11 NAU)*

I want to call your attention this morning to three strange and unique phenomena that occurred on this particular God-ordained Day of Pentecost.

The first strange and unique phenomena was the violent rushing wind.

² *And suddenly there came from heaven a noise like a violent rushing wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting.*

Have any of you ever been in a tornado? I am told that it sounds like a train. I have seen news reports where those involved in a tornado strike have reported that it did in fact sound like a train passing overhead. People who survived tornadoes said they were terrified by the sound and the wind and the darkness. I have never heard one and don't want to. Violent storms such as tornadoes and hurricanes make a sound I imagine, much like what filled the room where the apostles were gathered that day.

And since the noise was that loud, it got the attention of thousands of Jews who were in Jerusalem for the days of the feasts climaxing with Passover and then ten days later ending with the Day of Pentecost. It was clearly **God's intention to get their attention.**

God does that. He gets our attention. Has He gotten your attention recently through something you have gone through? If He's gotten your attention, pay attention.

That phenomena of the loud violent noise may have been a little scary at first for the disciples, but listen, **it quickly went from filling the room to filling the disciples.**

⁴ *And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit.* The God-designed purpose of that heaven-sent wind was to demonstrate the power of God manifested in the Person of the Holy Spirit. ⁸ *but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; (Acts 1:8 NAU)*

Here's the second strange and unique phenomena

³ *And there appeared to them **tongues as of fire** distributing themselves, and they rested on each one of them.* You can see that these "tongues as of fire" weren't really made of actual fire. God wasn't out to burn His disciples. They rested on the disciples without consuming them. They gave a visible manifestation of the presence of the Spirit who was being poured out upon the disciples. The disciples could see these tongues as of fire. *And there **appeared to them** tongues as of fire.*

They were like the burning bush Moses saw in the mountain that day that wasn't consumed by the fire. It represented the presence and

power of God without consuming the bush. That got Moses attention. The tongues as of fire represented the presence and power of the Spirit.

Do you realize that that same power is in every disciple of Jesus sitting in this room this morning? Did you know that God desires us to know and exercise that power? I would dare say that most of those who are gathered around our Eastern Seaboard during this idea have no idea of what God has made available to them. Read this, this is from Paul's first prayer in his letter to the Ephesians,

¹⁷ that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him.

¹⁸ I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,

¹⁹ and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. These are in accordance with the working of the strength of His might

²⁰ which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places,
(Eph. 1:16-20 NAU)

The same Person and Power who raised Jesus from the dead now lives in everyone who is in Christ. That Person and that Power are not the exclusive possessions of the Charismatics or the Pentecostals as so many church-goers see it.

I pray the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him. And that specifically that we might know the Person and the Power already resident in each of us.

This is the third and final strange and unique phenomena that occurred on that Day of Pentecost.

⁴ And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit was giving them utterance.

Speaking in tongues is a bit like UFO's for most people who profess faith in Christ. Some believe in it, some don't.

There are two groups of disciples with two different and opposing views on the gifts of the Spirit and in particular the gift of tongues. One group is called "continuationists," they are convinced that all the gifts are for today. The other group is called "cessationists," they believe the gifts have all ceased. But whichever camp you fall into, the gifts were very real and very much alive in the days of the apostles and the first century church.

The big issue in our day between the Charismatics and the Pentecostals and your average cessationists has to do with what the Charismatics and Pentecostals refer to as "the evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit," which to them is speaking in tongues. Their belief goes exactly like this, "I believe in the baptism of the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues." If one doesn't speak in tongues, those two sects see no reason for that one or anyone for that matter to believe you have been baptized in the Spirit or even have the Spirit, which means you're not saved. But I have an answer to their false charges.

The real question that deals with the real evidence that has nothing to do with speaking in tongues is this, and I close with this, "**Do you have evidence that you are a disciple of Christ?**" "**Do you have evidence that you are a disciple of Christ?**" Beloved, that's the question that settles it all. So, if it isn't tongues, what is it? Here it is, spoken by the Lord Himself, ³⁵ "*By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.*" (Jn. 13:35 NAU) Not if you speak in tongues which pagan tribes in South America and Africa exercise. But do you love your brothers and sisters in Christ?

1 Corinthians 13:1 *If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.*

² *If I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing.*

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³ *And if I give all my possessions to feed the poor, and if I surrender my body to be burned, but do not have love, it profits me nothing. (1 Cor. 13:1-3 NAU)*