

Acts 2:1-21 Earth, Wind, and Fire

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1. One of my favorite fire stories is 15 years ago
 - a. Jenn and I newly married
 - b. Visited my brother in Bolivar Mo, went to huge cave they found
 - c. And we did wax and water bombs – giant fireballs
 - i. SHOW PIC (s)
2. There's something special about fire – what is it?
 - a. Humans love fire– LIGHT A CANDLE
 - b. For all of human history, this thing called FIRE has captured us in its spell – something primal (designed?)
 - c. It keeps us warm, gives us light, cooks our food,
 - i. And draws us together
 - ii. One of my favorite pastimes is gathering around the fire pit
 1. Sitting around this flame with friends
 2. With neighbors who quickly become friends
 3. With a hoodie on my back, and a drink in my hand
 4. My kids with smores on sticks
 - a. And both chocolate bars AND REECES pb cups
 5. Staring into the flame as we tell stories, laugh, and connect
 6. Looking up at the stars
 7. Some of the best moments of my entire life have happened around fire pits
 - a. I'm hopefully convinced that we'll sit around fire pits on the new earth
 - b. With friends, and soon to be friends
 - c. And Jesus
 - d. In the proper contexts with the right precautions, wisdom, care, it's incredible
 - i. But it's not safe. Fire is wild.
 - ii. Don't respect it, don't handle it with proper care,
 1. And it consumes. It destroys.
 2. Especially when coupled with strong winds.
 - a. It can burn down entire forests
3. 2000 years ago, Jesus has risen from the dead and gone back to heaven, and his followers are waiting in Jerusalem for whatever's next... they just know they're supposed to WAIT:
4. **Acts 2:2** ²And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. ³And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them.
5. Pause. – what does this mean?
 - a. To understand this crucially important passage in your Bible, you'll need to know what the original readers would have known about what fire and wind had meant throughout the Bible.
 - b. Let's look at that briefly: **[PRAY]**

Timeline:

1. In the very beginning, God's Spirit, the one who orders creation and brings life to all living things on Earth is called God's
 - a. Ruach – Hebrew
 - b. In Greek – Pneuma
 - c. WIND – specifically a POWERFUL wind.
 - i. God's very presence is named for a powerful wind
 - ii. TURN ON BOX FAN
2. Burning Bush
 - a. Moses comes into the very presence of God. This time, not through a wind, but a fire
 - b. God's presence on earth
3. Pillar of cloud and a pillar of fire / wind leading them through desert
 - a. God's very presence on earth
 - b. What's a pillar of cloud look like?

- i. A tornadic wind
 - c. A pillar of fire – leading them to their homeland
 - 4. Mt Sinai – fire & wind on the mountain
 - a. God comes close.... His presence on earth. FIRE & wind
 - b. Ppl invited close, to connect directly with him....
 - i. Like people haven't been able to do since the Garden of Eden
 - 1. BUT they say NO, send a rep instead, we'll stay back
 - ii. We're too scared to get too close to that God
 - iii. Oh I wonder what might have happened in human history if they'd accepted his invitation!
 - iv. What might have been different in our history and our world if God's people had accepted God's invitation to come close to him, to enter his very presence, and go back out into their world filled with fire and faith, on mission to invite others to draw near to their God....
 - c. Moses sent
- 5. Tabernacle –
 - a. Pillar of cloud and fire descends onto tent
 - i. Cloud by day, fire by night
 - b. God's presence on earth
 - c. The intersection between heaven and earth
 - i. Mobile in the desert as they wandered
 - d. Only Moses direct access
 - e. Only Priests allowed inside
- 6. Incorrect Handling Brings Death
 - a. Imperfect priests killed!
 - i. Those who didn't worship him purely, as directed
 - ii. Aaron's sons, Nadab and Abihu, killed with the fire of God's presence
 - b. Ark of covenant
 - i. Priests touched inappropriately
 - ii. GOOD INTENTIONS! – but against God's explicit commands
 - iii. Lightning comes out and kills them
- 7. Temple
 - a. First temple, Solomon
 - b. Prays to dedicate it, and everyone sees FIRE FROM HEAVEN come down to earth, consume the sacrifice offerings, and fill the temple
- 8. God's spirit would come from time to time on special people, for special tasks.
 - a. Then he would leave
 - b. When they messed up
 - c. Or his task was done
 - d. IMPERMINENT
 - i. Judges
 - 1. Removed for sin
 - ii. Saul
 - 1. Sins really bad
 - 2. BEGS God not to take his spirit away!
 - a. Because he did and would!
 - iii. David
 - 1. Sins really bad
 - 2. BEGS God not to take his spirit away!
 - a. Because he did and would!
- 9. God promises that one day I will come and live WITH THEM Forever
 - a. Joel: And in the last days I'll pour my Spirit out on ANYONE WHO CALLS ON MY NAME
 - i. Men and women, slave and free – Jew and Gentile
- 10. And things get worse, not better
 - a. A century later, God's presence LEAVES the temple in Ezekiel 10
 - i. Bc of the people's sin, idolatry in his temple
 - ii. God has left the building
 - iii. Left the city
 - iv. Left the country
 - v. Seems like he'd left the whole earth

11. And still men and women waited
 - a. Were born
 - b. Lived their whole lives and died
 - c. Waiting to hear from God
 - d. Longing to be close to him
 - e. And the years, and decades, and centuries rolled by
12. CAN YOU RELATE TO THAT FEELING?
 - a. Feeling like God is distant, silent?
 - b. You know he's there, but perhaps he's a million miles away
 - c. Or maybe he doesn't have time to talk to you
 - d. Or he's disappointed with you, waiting for you to get your life cleaned up before he'll consider talking to you?
 - e. If you know what that's like, you're not alone
 - i. God's chosen people, the Israelites, felt like that.
 - ii. For centuries after blurry century they longed for God to come close
 - iii. To deliver them
 - iv. To live WITH them
 - v. To be close... for them to KNOW that he loved them
 1. Accepted them
 2. Forgave them
 - vi. Yet the years went by, generation after generation,
 1. In silence
 - f. You're not alone
 - i. You're in good company
 - ii. If you waiting, longing for God's presence
 - iii. Hoping against hope that he'll come and rescue you
13. Against THAT backdrop, against more than 400 years of silence,
 - a. On a hilltop, in backwater Judea, the silent night was ripped open by the firelight of heaven
 - i. As angels announced that He's here!
 - b. Jesus, the Messiah, God Himself, is born in Bethlehem
 - i. God Himself come to Earth
 1. he is the RADIANCE of God's glory and the exact representation of his being
 - c. The Son of Man is also the fire of heaven
 - i. Wrapped in flesh like ours, so that he wouldn't burn us up
 - ii.
 - d. HE was the new tabernacle
 - i. Gods very presence, mobile with us
 - ii. John 1 says of Him: "The Word of God became flesh and Tabernacled with us"
 - e. God himself come here
 - i. Come close to us
 - ii. When people didn't want to come close to him
14. And then Jesus, the fire become flesh,
 - a. Was put out
 - b. Crucified on the cross
 - c. His very presence gone from his body
 - i. The TABERNACLE empty again
 - ii. God has left the building
 - d. But The great curtain in the temple, separating sinful people from God's presence – at the very moment of Jesus' death, was ripped in two.... From top to bottom
15. Jesus didn't fail, he triumphed – he succeeded in his great mission –
 - a. God vindicated Jesus and proved him to be the way the truth and the life by raising him from the dead by the power of the Holy Spirit.
 - b. What could be better than this??
 - c. God Himself right there with you.
 - d. Jesus. Alive again from the dead, the promised one come to save us!

16. And it is into THIS background that we step into Acts 1:3-4 as Jesus promises to send the Holy Spirit
17. Acts 1 ³He presented himself alive to them after his suffering by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God. ⁴And while staying^[a] with them he ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, “you heard from me; ⁵for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with^[b] the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”
18. ^{John} 16:7 - I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you.
19. ... Acts 2: ¹When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place.
20. Pentecost:
 - a. Jews had an annual calendar of major festivals
 - b. Passover to Pentecost – Pente 50 – cost after
 - i. Like thxgiving to Xmas
 - c. Passover celebrated when God delivered the Israelites from the Angel of Death plague on Egypt
 - i. By telling them to sacrifice a perfect lamb and put the blood on their doorposts
 - ii. And that death would then PASS over them – as indeed happened
 - d. Pentecost was a harvest celebration
 - i. Also known as the festival of firstfruits
 - ii. Agrarian society
 1. When the first of the harvest would pop up, they’d know the rest of the crop would be coming – and they’d be alive that year!
 - e. Jesus died at Passover
 - i. The perfect Lamb of God, was crucified
 - ii. Right at Passover
 - iii. At the exact moment when the priests in the temple began ritually sacrificing the Passover lambs
 - iv. Jesus’s blood wiped all over wooden posts, lifted high above the ppl’s heads
 - v. Sacrificed for their sins and for ours
 - vi. So that we might be forgiven, and death itself might pass over us
 - f. Then 50 days later, right at the harvest celebration, the celebration of the firstfruits:
 - g. All of human history changes.
 - i. In a moment as significant as Jesus’ atoning death at Passover
 - ii. Another long LONG awaited promise was fulfilled
21. ²And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, [read, freight train.... This is the sound of a great tornado!] and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. ³And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. ⁴And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit
 - a. The children of God, the ppl of Israel had waited for this day – forever!
 - i. God had not only come close to them, but he’d put HIS spirit in their hearts.
 - b. This was the FIRSTFRUITS, a celebration and promise of the GREAT HARVEST to come!
 - i. The God of heaven and earth had finally wooed his people to come close
 - ii. But he wasn’t done. This wasn’t just for the disciples, nor just for the Israelites...
22. “...and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.”
23. ⁵Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven. ⁶And at this sound the multitude came together, and they were bewildered, because each one was hearing them speak in his own language.
 - a. NOT the tongues of some heavenly unknown language.... These were the HUMAN languages of the known world
24. And here Peter – the screw up – the defector – he who denied Jesus in fear ---who struggled to GET IT time and time again as he walked with and learned from Jesus,
 - a. NOW filled with God’s Holy Spirit – he steps up and speaks the Truth of God – about his plan for the beginning
25. ¹⁶ this is what was uttered through the prophet Joel:
26. ¹⁷““And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,

and your young men shall see visions,
 and your old men shall dream dreams;
¹⁸even on my male servants and female servants
 in those days I will pour out my Spirit, and they shall prophesy.
 ...²¹ And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.'

27. God's heart from the very beginning has been for ALL FLESH -- every man and woman and child to be brought back home into his very presence. The place they were made to live.
 - a. For them to be washed clean from their sin and shame, and filled to the brim with his very Spirit - forever
 - b. And for most of human history, that's been out of reach
 - c. But now, in these LAST DAYS
 - i. Sinful people like You and I can be brought close to our Creator God who is a consuming Fire and a tornado
 - ii. Can not only be brought near to his presence, but be FILLED WITH IT
 - iii. Now God is continuing the great work he started in Jesus... reconciling the whole world to himself
 - iv. Every follower of Jesus an ambassador (2 Cor 5:20) and a priest (1 pet 2:8) -- not standing between God and his people
 1. But now taking the very fire of his presence to our neighbors
 - v. Now the intersection between heaven and earth isn't limited to a bush
 1. Or a mountain
 2. Or a tent
 3. Or a temple
 4. OR EVEN a MAN, JESUS
 - vi. Now, the fire of his presence, the intersection between heaven and earth is you
 1. And me
 2. And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord
 - d. God Himself is sending you out to YOUR NEIGHBORS
 - i. Who long for God and yet are afraid of him
 - ii. Unable to come close.
 - iii. We have been given both the ministry AND THE POWER of reconciliation.
28. The GREAT mission that's playing out TODAY.... That's almost finished, but not quite yet.
 - a. The Holy Spirit is at work IN POWER through us drawing ppl to God and remaking everything broken new
 - b. TG Church does not exist primarily as an end to itself.
 - i. We're not just here to meet with God ourselves, to have meetings, to balance a budget, to build friendships
 - ii. Great as those are, NONE are sufficient for the purpose of God's people, the church, here in these LAST DAYS
 - c. We exist to move forward the mission TOGETHER. To love God AND LOVE OUR NEIGHBORS.
 - i. More than we've yet seen!
 - ii. Otherwise I'm not interested ... and my guess is neither are you.
 - d. The offer made to the ancient Israelites at the foot of Mt Sinai is now made to the whole world.... Through us
 - i. Come close.
 - ii. Let the fire of God's very presence blow come inside you, without fear
 1. I won't burn you
 - a. Because Jesus has washed you clean with his blood
 2. I won't ever leave you
 - a. Because in Christ you're a forgiven and adopted prince or princess of God the King.... Forever
 3. And I'll give you the greatest purpose you could imagine
 - a. Joining in Jesus' continuing work to lead lost and broken men and women back home
 - iii. So come close, my beloved. And bring your friends!

29. Applications:

- a. REPENT
 - i. Change your mind
 - 1. Repent of your sin, your settled lifestyle of self-rule
 - 2. Ask Jesus for forgiveness, and receive his promise of His Spirit
 - ii. If you've never recognized your dire situation, disconnected from your creator with no way to make things right on your own,
 - iii. I invite you right now in your heart and mind to cry out to God and tell him you're ready to quit trying to go your own way, to turn around and embrace Jesus and the forgiveness he offers. That you want to give yourself fully to him as the new Lord of your life.
 - 1. The HS is for EVERYONE who would believe and be saved
 - 2. That's the Gospel – The God loved us first, even when we were sinners, and died for us
 - iv. BECAUSE GOD FIRST LOVED US, WE EXIST TO
 - b. LOVE GOD
 - i. Worship God in gratitude and awe for his very presence in you
 - ii. His Holy Spirit not only assures us of God's presence and love for us,
 - iii. But also helps us to respond to his love with our own love!
 - 1. He helps us to Love God Back.....
 - 2. LOVE GOD with his Spirit
 - c. LOVE OUR NEIGHBORS
 - i. Remember Jesus' continuing mission to draw all people back to himself
 - ii. The HS is STILL the same today. Still offered to us today. Still vital for the church and ministry today.
 - 1. Remember that you are now priests, mediators between God and our fellow man
 - 2. And priests who are sent out, with God's very presence, as ambassadors of God's love and the good news of a way back to him based on HIS work, not yours
 - iii. When people come close to you, they're come close to God's actual presence!
 - 1. What an incredible thought!
 - iv. So, consciously take the presence of God into your neighborhoods
 - 1. Your families
 - 2. Your workplaces
 - 3. Your schools
 - 4. Your teams
 - v. The HS changes scared bumbling fools into bold and powerful ministers of the Gospel
 - 1. Young and old, men and women, black and white, rich and poor
 - a. ALL empowered by the spirit to speak the words of God
 - b. And empowered to minister to a lost and dying world.
 - 2. WE NEED to rely on the HS to do ministry in and through TG today
30. PRAY: JESUS, continue your ministry through us, in the power of your Spirit
- a. For our sakes
 - b. And for the sake of our neighbors.
 - c. In the precious name of Jesus, Amen.
31. Questions for reflection
- a. When have I experienced the presence of God in my life through the HS?
 - i. If so, what has that looked like? Felt like?
 - ii. Any specific scenes?
 - b. In what way do I sense the Spirit leading me to more fully love God
 - c. In what way do I sense the Spirit leading me to better love my neighbor.
32. Sharing answers

God consuming fire....

- i. Deut 4:24 and Deut 9:3
- ii. Isaiah 30:27-30
- iii. Heb 12:29

End by praying over Terrence: (after 2 songs?)

Have Terrence come up – Terrence has been a big blessing to me since God led him to come join with our church about a year ago?

We're a family, and one of the ways we practice that out is by praying. Indeed one of the 3 main focuses of our church this year is praying together: corporate prayer. Today we'd like to pray over Terrence before he deploys. God has told us through his Word that we are to pray over one another, and that our prayers are powerful and effective. So we're going to spend a few minutes praying blessings and protection and vision over our brother. Everyone can participate silently. But I'm going to ask others who've known Terrence better to come up and pray aloud over him. We'll pass the mic around and after a few minutes we'll end with another song. On the screen are some ideas of things to pray for Terrence during this time. Please come now.

Article:

<https://thebibleproject.com/blog/presence-of-god/>

- a. *God consuming fire....*
 - iv. *Deut 4:24 and Deut 9:3*
 - v. *Isaiah 30:27-30*
 - vi. *Heb 12:29*

Questions raised:

1. Who is the HS?
2. How does he operate in our lives?
3. What about spiritual gifts and tongues?
4. Do some Xians have the HS and others don't? / Baptized with the HS?
5. Dangers with Pentecostal theology?

⁹Parthians and Medes and Elamites and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, ¹⁰Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, ¹¹both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians—we hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God.” ¹²And all were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, “What does this mean?”

- a. a great question to ask when you hear the Word of God spoken to you in your heart language!
 - i. WHAT'S THIS MEAN
 - b. ¹³But others mocking said, “They are filled with new wine.”
 - i. This is the opposite response – not curious about what this means, what's true or important
 - ii. But rather how can I bat this away... maintain my status quo ... and tear them down in the process
 - iii. Doesn't mean anything – they're just DRUNK
 - iv. I've heard some drunk talk in my time
 1. Raise your hand with me if you've heard drunk folks talking
 2. Have you ever seen A cornfed western Kansas boy, throw up in the trashcan and then break into flawless Korean?
 - a. Or French? Or Mandarin?
 - c. Peter took a different tact:
6. ¹⁴But Peter, standing with the eleven, lifted up his voice and addressed them: “Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and give ear to my words. ¹⁵For these people are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day.^[1]
 - a. it's only 9 am!
 - i. not overly convincing perhaps in our college town!