



GOOD NEWS

for the unsaved WORLD!

(#42)
The terrifying work of the Holy Spirit.

Ok, maybe I can accept what you said about miracles, and that "major outpourings" of miracles by the Holy Spirit are not that common. (SEE LAST WEEK)

But I would still like to experience one! I think that would be exciting!

Are you sure? People tend to look at the things they call "exciting" –

healings, miracles, speaking in tongues, thousands of people being saved at one time...

They forget that many of the things that happened were also terrifying!

Terrifying? Why?

You see, when the Holy Spirit does these great works of power, his focus isn't on getting people excited...

His focus is on God's glory, majesty, holiness, and honor.

He will not close his eyes and tolerate unrepentant sin and rebellion. He must deal with it!

You're kidding! No preacher ever told me that!

Maybe not, but the apostle Paul did!!

PAUL & THE CORINTHIAN SITUATION

- **MIRACULOUS THINGS WERE HAPPENING** in the Corinthian church – miracles, healings and speaking in tongues (with the necessary interpretation of the tongues).
- **PEOPLE WERE ALSO GETTING SICK AND DYING.** Why?
- **PAUL POINTED TO THE TIME OF MOSES** (for the answer), and warned the Corinthians to learn from what happened back then.

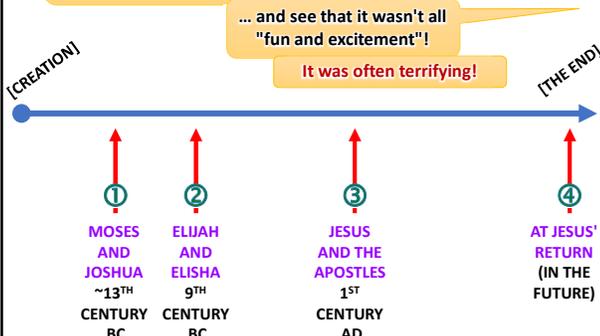
These events happened as a **warning** to us, ...

These things happened to make them an **example** for others. These things were written down as a **warning** for us who are living in the closing days of history.

1 Cor. 10:6a, 11 (GW)

We will look at some of the "not-so-exciting" things that happened during these great outpourings of the Holy Spirit...

... and see that it wasn't all "fun and excitement"! It was often terrifying!



[CREATION] ————— [THE END]

1. MOSES AND JOSHUA ~13TH CENTURY BC
2. ELIJAH AND ELISHA 9TH CENTURY BC
3. JESUS AND THE APOSTLES 1ST CENTURY AD
4. AT JESUS' RETURN (IN THE FUTURE)

1. IN THE DAYS OF MOSES AND JOSHUA

"EXCITING" THINGS OCCURRED... [A FEW EXAMPLES...]

- ✓ Crossing the Red Sea on dry ground.
- ✓ Water coming from the rock.
- ✓ Manna from heaven.
- ✓ The walls of Jericho fall down.

BUT WHEN THE HOLY SPIRIT WAS DOING THESE "EXCITING" THINGS...

he did NOT tolerate sin and rebellion... and he did something about it!

(Hopefully, we can learn, like the Corinthians were told to.)

 ✓ **When the people turned celebration and worship of God into a joke...**

- Their idolatry wasn't worship of a different god, but worshipping the true God... the wrong way.
- Their celebration degenerated into an uncontrolled self-indulging revelry. No focus on praising and honoring God!*
- Even their enemies were astonished by their conduct!

WHAT THEY DESERVED:

- Moses interceded for the nation, so this didn't happen.

"Now leave me alone so my anger can blaze against them and destroy them all."
Exodus 32:10a (NLT)

* (Many modern-day "fellowship" meals aren't much better than this!)

WHAT THEY GOT:

- The few who didn't participate in this sin were told to kill any of their family and friends who had participated.*

"This is what the Lord God of Israel says: Each of you put on your sword. Go back and forth from one end of the camp to the other, and kill your relatives, friends, and neighbors."
The Levites did what Moses told them, and that day about 3,000 people died.
Exodus 32:27b-28 (GW)

- God also punished many of the people.

And the Lord struck the people with a plague...
Exodus 32:35a (NIV)

*(Their love for God was proven greater than their love for people... as in Luke 14:26.)

 ✓ **When the nation turned to adultery...**

The Lord said to Moses, "Take all the leaders of the people, and execute them in broad daylight in the Lord's presence. This will turn the Lord's anger away from Israel."
Numbers 25:4 (GW)

 ✓ **When the people started complaining that they didn't like the way God was doing things...**

Then the Lord sent venomous snakes among them; they bit the people and many Israelites died.
Numbers 21:6 (NIV)

 ✓ **When certain leaders thought they could do Moses' job better than Moses...**

... the ground under them split, and the earth opened up to swallow them... They went down alive to their graves... The ground covered them, and so they disappeared from the assembly.
Fire came from the Lord and consumed the 250 men who were offering incense.
Numbers 16:31b-32a, 33, 35 (GW)

 ✓ **When people grumbled about this judgment...**

The next day the whole Israelite community grumbled against Moses and Aaron. ...
But 14,700 people died from the plague, ... *
Numbers 16:41a, 49a (NIV)

*(God was ready to destroy them all. Moses and Aaron interceded – Num. 16:44-48.)

 ✓ **When the people began to constantly look for something to complain about...**

"WE DON'T LIKE THE DIFFICULTIES OF THE JOURNEY!"

When the Lord heard them, he became angry, and fire from the Lord began to burn among them. It destroyed some people on the outskirts of the camp.
Numbers 11:1b (GW)

THEY FORGOT THAT CONDITIONS WERE ACTUALLY BETTER THAN IN EGYPT.

"WE DON'T LIKE THE FOOD YOU'VE GIVEN US!"

[So the Lord] drove quail in from the sea. ...
But while the meat was still between their teeth and before it could be consumed, the anger of the Lord burned against the people, and he struck them with a severe plague.
Numbers 11:31b, 33 (NIV)

WHAT SHOULD WE BE LEARNING FROM ALL THIS?

- ➔ Sin is a lot more serious than what most people today – even in churches – are willing to admit.
- ➔ Our views about "sin" (and its seriousness) tend to be influenced by the world, not by Scripture.
- ➔ We may call them "mistakes," but even "little" sins deserve death.
- ➔ If the Holy Spirit were to come and do great, wondrous miracles, his purifying work would leave many of us dead.

THE NEW TESTAMENT WRITERS TELL US THAT WE SHOULD BE LEARNING FROM THESE PAST EVENTS.

- They **NEVER** say that those Old Testament judgments were wrong or too harsh. (The world teaches us that lie!)
- **INSTEAD**, they took those events in history and applied them to situations in their own day.

They used those **OLD** Testament events to warn **NEW** Testament Christians (and "church-goers") about sin and its consequences!

- As the apostle Paul said...

These events happened as a **warning** to us, ...
1 Cor. 10:6a (NLT)

THIS FACT IS WORTH NOTING!

These events happened as a **warning** to us, ...
1 Cor. 10:6a (NLT)

TODAY: Many people take offense at some of God's Old Testament judgments.

- They consider them *cruel, embarrassing, "unfair," even sinful!*

JESUS AND THE APOSTLES: They **NEVER** described them that way. They **ALWAYS** affirmed that the judgments were righteous and deserved.

IF YOU DISAGREE WITH JESUS AND THE APOSTLES:

It is because you accepted the **WORLD'S VALUES** and its distorted concepts of sin, righteousness and judgment.



- ✓ **The O.T. used as a WARNING... that God will punish sin in the church.**

Do not be **idolaters**, as some of them were; as it is written: "The people sat down to eat and drink and got up to indulge in pagan revelry."

We should not commit **sexual immorality**, as some of them did--and in one day twenty-three thousand of them died.

We should not **test the Lord**, as some of them did--and were killed by snakes.

And do not **grumble**, as some of them did--and were killed by the destroying angel.

1 Cor. 10:7-10 (NIV)

- **BASED ON THESE FACTS**, Paul warned the Corinthians that they were being punished for their actions. (More about this later.)



- ✓ **The O.T. used as a WARNING... that God will deal with false teachers. (They will be destroyed.)**

... I want to remind you that the Lord delivered his people out of Egypt, but later destroyed those who did not believe.

Jude 1:5b (NIV)



- ✓ **The O.T. used as a WARNING... that if we know the truth, our situation will be worse if we abandon it.**

Anyone who rejected the law of Moses died without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses.

For we know him who said, "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," and again, "The Lord will judge his people." It is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

Hebrews 10:28, 30-31 (NIV)

[LET'S GO TO THE NEXT "MIRACLE CLUSTER" ...]

2. IN THE DAYS OF ELIJAH AND ELISHA

"EXCITING" THINGS OCCURRED... [A FEW EXAMPLES...]



- ✓ Elijah controls the rain.
- ✓ Fire comes down from heaven and burns up the sacrifice (and the altar).
- ✓ [Later] A dead person is put in Elisha's tomb... and the dead person suddenly comes back to life.

BUT WHEN THE HOLY SPIRIT WAS DOING THESE "EXCITING" THINGS...

he did NOT tolerate sin and rebellion... and he did something about it!



- ✓ **When military leaders had a defiant attitude toward God's prophet...**

[THIS HAPPENED TWICE.]

Then God's fire came from heaven and burned up the officer and his 50 men.

2 Kings 1:12b (GW)

- A prophet's authority was **greater** than that of a king. Here, followers of a **false** god were demanding the prophet of the **true** God to obey them!
- In this situation, a third group came with the right attitude... and was spared.

This third captain went up and fell on his knees before Elijah. "Man of God," he begged, "please have respect for my life and the lives of these fifty men, your servants!"

2 Kings 1:13b (NIV)

 ✓ **When teenage boys [not mere "children"] had contempt for God's prophet...**

Then two bears came out of the woods and mauled forty-two of them.

2 Kings 2:24b (NLT)

 ✓ **When the prophet's servant decided to lie to an Aramean army commander, in order to obtain some "free money" from him...**

Naaman's leprosy will cling to you and to your descendants forever." Then Gehazi went from Elisha's presence and he was leprous, as white as snow.

2 Kings 5:27 (NIV)

3. IN THE DAYS OF JESUS AND THE APOSTLES

"EXCITING" THINGS OCCURRED... [A FEW EXAMPLES...]

 ✓ Many people being healed.
 ✓ Speaking in tongues.
 ✓ Demons cast out of people.
 ✓ A few people raised from the dead.

BUT WHEN THE HOLY SPIRIT WAS DOING THESE "EXCITING" THINGS...

 **he did NOT tolerate sin and rebellion... and he did something about it!**

[**In this miracle cluster, there is a difference...**]

For JESUS: Judgment against sin and rebellion would be postponed.

BUT HE WARNED THEM that their judgment would come.

Then Jesus began to denounce the cities in which most of his miracles had been performed, because they did not repent.

... But I tell you, it will be more bearable for Tyre and Sidon on the day of judgment than for you.

... But I tell you that it will be more bearable for Sodom on the day of judgment than for you."

Matthew 11:20, 22, 24 (NIV)

For the APOSTLES: The Holy Spirit responded in ways similar to the way he did in the Old Testament era. **[SEE THE FOLLOWING PAGES]**

 ✓ **When a husband and wife lied to the apostles...**

You didn't lie to people but to God!" ... When Ananias heard Peter say this, he dropped dead.

Then Peter said to her, "How could you and your husband agree to test the Lord's Spirit?" Immediately, she dropped dead in front of Peter.

Acts 5:4b-5a, 9a, 10a (GW)

 ✓ **When a king refused to honor God...**

Immediately, because Herod did not give praise to God, an angel of the Lord struck him down, and he was eaten by worms and died.

Acts 12:23 (NIV)

 ✓ **When a sorcerer tried to keep the governor from learning the good news about salvation...**

"The Lord is against you now. For a while you will be blind, unable to see the light of day."

Suddenly, Elymas couldn't see a thing. He tried to find people to lead him.

Acts 13:11 (GW)

 ✓ **When the Corinthians didn't have the right attitude, while celebrating what Jesus did on the cross (represented by the bread and the cup)...**

For this reason many among you are weak and sick, and a number sleep [= death].

1 Cor. 11:30 (NASB)

 ✓ **This is probably the context for verses such as these...**

Is any one of you sick? He should call the elders of the church to pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise him up. If he has sinned, he will be forgiven.

Therefore **confess your sins** to each other and pray for each other **so that you may be healed.**

James 5:14-16a (NIV)

If you see a Christian brother or sister sinning in a way that does not lead to death, you should pray, and God will give that person life. But **there is a sin that leads to death**, and I am not saying you should pray for those who commit it. Every wrong is sin, but **not all sin leads to death.**

1 John 5:16-17 (NLT)

4. DURING THE "END TIMES" EVENTS

"EXCITING" THINGS WILL OCCUR... [A FEW EXAMPLES...]

☺

- ✓ The good news will be preached worldwide (Matt.24:14).
- ✓ Jesus will return.
- ✓ [The greater emphasis is on the terrifying things that Jesus warned about during his first coming.]

BUT WHEN THE HOLY SPIRIT IS DOING THESE "EXCITING" THINGS...

☠ **he will NOT tolerate sin and rebellion... and he will do something about it!**

☹ ✓ **When people oppose God's "two witnesses"...**

If anyone wants to harm them, fire comes from their mouths and consumes their enemies; if anyone wants to harm them, he must be killed in this way.

They have authority to close up the sky so that it does not rain during the days of their prophecy. They also have power over the waters to turn them into blood and to strike the earth with every plague whenever they want.

Revelation 11:5-6 (CSB)

THE END TIMES FOCUS: JESUS WILL COMPLETE WHAT HE BEGAN

- **At Jesus' FIRST COMING:** Judgments against sin were postponed.
- **At Jesus' SECOND COMING:** The major theme is judgment – catastrophe and death. (God's people, even if they die during this time, will be rewarded.)

5. EVEN AT TIMES WHEN MIRACLES WERE NOT AS COMMON

"TERRIFYING" THINGS SOMETIMES OCCURRED, BECAUSE...

☠ **The Holy Spirit does NOT tolerate sin and rebellion... and he can do something about it!**

[ONE EXAMPLE...]

☹ ✓ **When a false prophet opposed Jeremiah's message...**

And Jeremiah the prophet said to the prophet Hananiah, "Listen, Hananiah, the LORD has not sent you,... Therefore thus says the LORD: 'Behold, I will remove you from the face of the earth. ...'"

In that same year... the prophet Hananiah died.

Jeremiah 28:15a, 16a, 17 (ESV)

SO THE QUESTION IS THIS...

Suppose God did decide to do extraordinary miracles in our day...

Terrifying judgments would also occur.*

Are you ready for that?
Are your friends ready for that?

* (We haven't even looked at the second common theme... the opposition and persecution that God's faithful people often experience during such times! (Are you ready for that?))

Maybe we should be content with the way God is working among us today.

If we are faithful and obedient to God, he can accomplish many great things through us...

And maybe people we love won't be struck dead, but will have another opportunity to repent!

The Lord... is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.

2 Peter 3:9 (NIV)

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