

Week of May 13-19

HOLY SPIRIT EARTHQUAKE

Scripture Reading: Read Acts chapter 4

Have you ever experienced an earthquake? For those of us who live in upstate New York, they're rare but they do occur. The most recent one took place last summer just a few days before the remnants of Hurricane Irene devastated Schoharie County with extensive flooding. I was in a meeting at our office on the 2nd floor and felt the building begin to shake. Having felt the same sensation years before in another earthquake in the Adirondacks, I immediately knew what was happening. Knowing, however, doesn't remove that uncomfortable feeling of your surroundings being shaken.

In Acts chapter 4, we read of an earthquake occurring in Jerusalem: "...*the place where they were meeting was shaken.*" This earthquake wasn't caused by the shifting of tectonic plates, though. Rather, it was a Holy Spirit earthquake and it was in response to the prayers of God's people: "*After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.*"

What kind of prayer produced those kinds of results? It certainly wasn't self-seeking or self-serving prayer. It wasn't "keep me comfortable" prayer. It wasn't weak or impotent prayer. No, it was bold, hungry, persistent, Christ-honoring prayer for God to unleash his anointing to empower the church to reach their world for Christ. It was prayer that came in response to the threats of the religious leaders who wanted to shut the disciples up and silence their witness. Take a look at their prayer again and you'll see why the Lord was pleased to display his power in a Holy Spirit earthquake.

"Sovereign Lord," they said, "you made the heaven and the earth and the sea, and everything in them. You spoke by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of your servant, our father David: "Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers gather together against the Lord and against his Anointed One. 'Indeed Herod and Pontius Pilate met together with the Gentiles and the people of Israel in this city to conspire against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed. They did what your power and will had decided beforehand should happen. Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness. Stretch out your hand to heal and perform miraculous signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus."

The Lord's answer to this prayer rocked an empire and produced spiritual aftershocks that lasted for centuries. Twenty centuries later, another Holy Spirit earthquake is needed to rock our communities for Christ. The Lord is just looking for people desperate enough to seek him in prayer for it! May it be so, Lord, may it be so!

Action Step & Prayer Focus: Use the prayer in Acts 4 as a guideline for your prayer today in your devotional life. Join together with other believers sometime this week to make it a corporate prayer as well.

Take-a-way: *Holy Spirit earthquakes produce empowered believers who rock their communities for Christ!*