

Why We Must Embrace the Weird Movement of the Holy Spirit

“Lord, send revival...” (but don’t let it be weird)

Many people in different denominations are praying these spiritual words. These sound nice, yes, but what we are often really praying is, “Lord, send revival... on my terms.”

Every time God moved in Scripture or recent history, His movement—by and large—was accompanied by weird phenomena. What do I mean by “weird?” It confronted complacency. It pushed people out of stale, dead and dry religion. It called for pastors and leaders to be more elastic with their “orders of service” to accommodate God’s agenda. When God comes down and we experience a taste of the power of the age to come in the here and now, things are going to get a little weird. This is to be celebrated, not tolerated at best or rejected at worst.

Consider the birth, ministry and death of Jesus Christ. All of it was weird!

Jesus’ birth was weird. I love Christmas, but I am concerned that we have overly glamorized what transpired at the birth of Jesus. The holy King of creation was delivered by a frightened teenager in a smelly stable while the sinister Herod enjoyed the splendor of opulent quarters. Jesus’ birth was not welcomed by the kings or nobles of the earth, but rather, peasant shepherds (the magi/wise men came later).

Jesus’ life and ministry were weird. God incarnate actually limited Himself while He walked on planet Earth. Although He was God (and never ceased being God), He did not pull the “God-card” and display power out of His divinity. He lived as the Son of Man, anointed by the Holy Spirit, thus providing all born-again humanity a model to follow once they received the same empowering of the Spirit. It’s weird, really, that

Jesus didn't just hover around the planet and immediately take over everything. After all, He was God Almighty—King of kings!

He didn't come as the liberator everyone thought He would be. Talk about weird. Many were expecting the Messiah to physically overthrow the Roman oppression over the people of Israel and usher in an eschatological Golden Age as the heir to David's throne. Scripture does point to such an age of glory, yes, but that day is still yet to come. The Messiah had to first come as lowly Savior before He would come as conquering King. If He came as King without first dealing with the sin issue, humanity could not stand under His holy reign. Weird, but that's how it had to happen.

Jesus' death was weird. To redeem humanity, the spotless Son of God had to become sin (2 Cor. 5:21). It's hard to comprehend what the onlookers must have thought as they watched Messiah Jesus carry the cross up the hill of Golgotha. Even Jesus' disciples and those closest to Him were surely perplexed by the weirdness. God was being slaughtered. The Creator was being torn, beaten, mocked and spit upon by those He created. Furthermore, the most perfect Being in all of creation was being treated like the most hardened of criminals and being sentenced to die the most horrific of deaths—Roman crucifixion. Downright weird.

Pentecost was weird. Who are we to think that in our sophisticated modern culture, we have somehow “graduated” past the need for what the early church depended upon for dear life—Pentecostal power? When the Holy Spirit came in Acts 2, a lot of weird stuff happened. Never mind the whole speaking in tongues thing. There was a host of unusual manifestations in operation: a sound from heaven, a mighty rushing wind and then 120 people speaking in languages they could not have possibly known (Acts 2:1-4). It's interesting to also note that lots of people were present during these phenomena. Scripture records that during this outpouring, “Now dwelling in Jerusalem were Jews, devout men, from every nation under

heaven" (Acts 2:5).

Such a setting is every preacher or pastor's dream. *Lots of people! A big crowd! An audience full of potential!* I think it's important that we examine how the story did *not* play out. The Book of Acts does *not* record it this way:

And at the sound of the relevant and eloquent preaching, the Broadway-style production, and the professional praise and worship the multitude came together.

Multitudes, both then and now, are not drawn by the world repackaged in a Christian presentation. I prophesy that the Lord is awakening the church to the deep longing of those who are disconnected from God. Such a longing can be expressed in the following question—a question that, I am convinced, the people who cross the threshold from the world into a church building are burning to know the answer to.

Is God Real?

Wouldn't it be like the devil to try to distract the postmodern church from answering this question. There is only one thing that sufficiently answers this question, and it's not the size of a church sanctuary or the relevance of the preaching, or the hip-ness of a preacher or the professionalism of the music teams. These things are fine, to a degree. We need to be relevant, not irrelevant. We should pursue excellence and not settle for mediocrity. We do this, however, to honor God—not build an "experience" to attempt to please people. And yet, we often aim at this target because we are terrified of being "weird."

The one answer to this question is the very thing we are terrified of—the movement and outpouring of the Holy Spirit. God made every provision available so that we could have an answer to a world that is desperate to know if God exists. He gave us His Spirit, and how do we often respond? We're afraid that He might do the very thing that will answer the cry of a

hungry, thirsty world—we're afraid He might move.

I prophesy that it's time for charismatics and Pentecostals to boldly return to their roots of the supernatural.

I prophesy that it's time for different denominations to re-dig the wells that were paid for (often through blood and martyrdom and sacrifice) by their founders, as many historic, orthodox denominations were birthed through a move of the Spirit.

What drew the multitudes then, and will draw the multitudes today? I have to warn you, it's weird. But are we going to veer away from the opportunity to reach and impact the masses because we're afraid of what a few people will think of us?

Acts 2:6 clearly states that *"at this sound the multitude came together..."* What sound? The sound of the manifestation of Holy Spirit outpouring. The unusual signs and wonders that accompanied God's entrance into the Earth realm was a sound from Heaven that drew the multitudes.

Now keep in mind, the "multitudes" does not imply everyone is going to "get it." Consider how the people responded to these weird manifestations.

"the crowd came together and were confounded, because each man heard them speaking in his own language" (Acts 2:6).

"They were all amazed and marveled, saying to each other, 'Are not all these who are speaking Galileans?'" (Acts 2:7).

"They were all amazed and perplexed, saying to each other, 'What does this mean?'" (Acts 2:12).

"Others mocking said, "These men are full of new wine" (Acts 2:13).

Granted, I was never too good in math, but the positive responses to the sound of outpouring far outnumber the

negative response. By and large, the people were amazed and astonished. There were others who were perplexed and confused. Finally, we read about the mockers who accused the 120 of being drunk.

Sadly, many of us sanitize our expectation of what God will do because we are afraid of offending the “others mocking.” Yes, what the Holy Spirit was doing was weird. It was weird because it was new. It was weird because it was unusual. It was weird because it was supernatural.

Likewise, it’s weird when people fall down when they are prayed for (John 18:5-6, Rev. 1:17).

It’s weird when people cry or laugh, seemingly uncontrollably (Ps. 16:11; Luke 10:21).

It’s weird when people shake or tremble in response to the Spirit’s touch (Jer. 23:9; Hab. 3:16).

When God touches a person, it will always look weird, and there will always be those who mock it. But I can assure you, reader, that the Lord is more interested in how we minister to the multitudes than react to the mockers. The last thing we need to be doing is building a Christian culture that seeks to appease the few mockers while neglecting the desperate multitudes. The reason we seek to appease the mockers is because they can be vocal, loud, and reputation-killing. So be it. If the appearance of our reputation is more important than His, we need to repent for idolatry.

He’s far more concerned with His reputation than ours. Historically, God has intentionally sought to preserve the accurate representation of His namesake. Signs, wonders and weird manifestations have never threatened God’s reputation—if anything, they show an on-looking world that the God of the Bible is alive, well, and moving in the Earth. *This reality demands a response.* {eoa}

Larry Sparks is publisher for Destiny Image (), a Spirit-filled publishing house pioneered by Don Nori Sr. in 1983 with a mandate to publish the prophets. Larry is fueled by a vision to help the church community create space for the Holy Spirit to move in freedom, power and revival fire, providing every believer with an opportunity to have a life-changing encounter in the Presence of God. In addition to publishing, Larry is a regular contributor to Charisma Magazine, he conducts seminars on revival, hosts regional Renewing South Florida gatherings, and has been featured on Sid Roth's It's Supernatural, TBN, CBN, the ElijahList, and Cornerstone TV. He earned a Master of Divinity from Regent University and enjoys life in Texas with his beautiful wife and beloved daughter. Visit .