

A "violent, carrying blast"

When God gives spirit—watch out

And suddenly there came out of heaven a blare, even as of a violent, carrying blast, and it fills the whole house where they were sitting. And seen by them were dividing tongues as if of fire, and one is seated on each one of them."

It is so unusual to see the word "violent" used to describe the power and action of God that blesses people. I realize that this is an account of how the spirit of God came upon the disciples at Pentecost, but the violence of God's operation is the same for us today. Pentecost was a time for signs and wonders to Israel. Now is a time for settledness in the face of unparalleled evil. And yet the spirit of God which makes all these things happen comes just as violently to us today as it did for those twelve men. We just don't see the flames or hear the blast.



On the day you believed, you literally got blasted by spirit. If it had been an actual wind, it would have blown you through a wall. It came so violently that it filled your house (your body). And what did you do to bring it on? Like the disciples, you were merely "sitting."

People under siege by the violent blessings of God can only sit and watch God work. They can only stare in awe at the action and say, "Wow."

Speaking of incoming blasts of blessing, our Savior Jesus Christ is about to return for us and take us to heaven. Are you sitting down?

Perfect. ■

Martin Zender's Clanging Gong News

"If I know all mysteries and all knowledge, but have no love, I am a clanging gong" --1 Cor. 13:1-2



Two out of three isn't bad.

God's spirit makes its home in you

It sometimes seems that God has left us. Jesus *was* here, but then He went away, disappearing from the gaze of three men who stood upon the Mount of Olives watching Him go. He said He would return, but still hasn't done so. So here we sit, on our own. Or so it seems.

But no.

God has breathed deeply into certain people, causing them to feel God's presence. It is as if God Himself was living inside of them, telling them: "Walk and don't worry. You can let all the tension leave your body now. I have everything under control."

When the disciples sat in the upper room on Pentecost, they already possessed a measure of God's spirit. But everyone else on earth had that as well, because nothing can live apart from the spirit of God. What was given to those twelve men in that humble place that day was an extra breath; it was a deeper and broader exhalation of spirit from God's Mouth. This breath put them all, instantly, into a much better mood than most other people.

We have this same filling of spirit. It's the next best thing to being in heaven with God; it's as good as it gets here on earth. This filling manifests itself in different ways, depending on the era. Back in the disciples' day, the spirit made them speak in other languages so that folks from different countries could hear God simultaneously in their native tongues. The spirit of God today makes us stand calmly and wait for Christ while the rest of the world develops facial tics.

"Psychedelic, man."

If you could walk into Discount Drug Mart and buy a drug with no side-effects that could make you appreciate even the evil in your life, so that you could say, "Even this evil will benefit me in some way," then you would buy that drug. If you could pop a small, smooth pill from Rite-Aid that could cause you to appreciate everything you



have, even the smallest of things like the apples in the fruit bowl on your dining room table, then you would pop that pill. What if there was a drug that could make you whistle a hit song from the 70's in the midst of political, financial, and environmental upheaval, while other people bite their fingernails, smoke multiple packs of cigarettes, and threaten to kill themselves? You would say, "Give me that drug!"

Well, you already have this "drug." It is called the holy spirit of God, and it lives inside you.

"Are you not aware that you are a temple of God, and the spirit of God is making its home in you?" (1 Cor. 3:16).

You can neither see, nor feel, nor taste, nor smell this spirit, but it nevertheless lives inside you. It will eventually manifest itself via your peaceful disposition. In the meantime, you simply have to read the above verse, and believe that it is there. It may take multiple readings. This verse is a great thing to repeat to yourself when you're feeling down. Instead of watching the news, you can instead turn off the T.V. or radio and say to yourself:

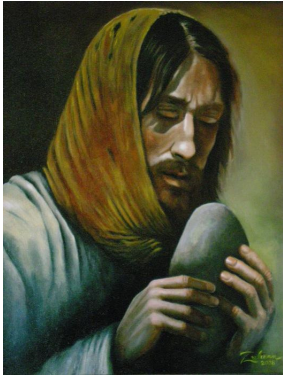
"Am I not aware that I am a temple of God, and the spirit of God is making its home in me? No, I'm actually not. I wonder why. I'm aware of everything else, like how my hair looks, how my pants fit, and how miserable I feel sometimes, but I am rarely aware that I am a temple of God, and the spirit of God is making its home in me.

"Maybe I should concentrate more on *that* instead of all the other stuff. Maybe concentrating on the spirit of God inside me would make me feel good instead of miserable. Maybe I should visit God inside of me more often."

Wow. *Visit God inside me more often.* Speaking for myself, what kind of crazy, powerful, deceitful world is this that makes me think that *it* is more worthy of focus than God's spirit in me? I must be one brainwashed son of a gun. ■

Refuting Satan with calm words, not violent actions

WHEN SATAN TEMPTED OUR LORD, OUR LORD SIMPLY RELAXED AND RESPONDED CALMLY TO HIM, REFUSING TO ZAP HIM OR YELL



The spirit of God had led our Lord into the wilderness, where He fasted for forty days. By the end of the forty days, He was very hungry and tired. That's when Satan came to give Him the old Satanic what-for.

Satan tried to convince Jesus that it would be much more enjoyable to exercise His power and impress people NOW and get cheap accolades NOW, rather than die a humiliating death on a Roman cross and have to wait thousands of years for genuine praise and adoration. The first temptation was:

"If you are God's Son, say that these stones may be become cakes of bread."

We know that Jesus Christ could easily have turned stones to bread, but He was not about to do it at the behest of God's enemy. But rather than blasting Satan with fire, Jesus says:

"It is written, 'Not on bread alone shall man be living, but on every declaration going out through the mouth of God.'"

See how Jesus relaxes and puts the burden on God. He is possibly so tired that He can't even raise His arm, so He just says, basically, "I eat what God says. Next?"

"If you are God's Son, cast yourself down, for it is written that 'His messengers shall be directed concerning Thee, and on their hands shall they be lifting Thee...'"

...and on Satan goes, quoting the King James Version.

Jesus, Who was probably so tired that He didn't have the energy even to roll His eyes at this ridiculous suggestion, again does the easiest thing possible and appeals to God:

"It is written, You shall not be putting on trial the Lord your God."

Our Lord's apparent nonchalance no doubt drove Satan to distraction, but Satan had one more trick up his sleeve. He takes our Lord to a high mountain and shows Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. And he says to Him:

"All these to you will I be giving, if ever, falling down, you should be worshipping me."

Instead of blasting the Adversary with ten paragraphs of divine blasting filled with eight-syllable words and accompanying pyrotechnics, Jesus—Who can barely even move His lips—says:

"Go away, Satan. The Lord your God shall you be worshipping, and to Him only shall you be offering divine service."

My point is that fighting Satan is easy. You can be totally exhausted and still do it. You don't have to turn red, or yell, or even lift your arms. You don't have to clench your fists. Just mention that you know God. One sentence will do. Just mention the name of God. It can be three words. Or two. Or one: *God*. Or, if you can't even manage a word, then just point to heaven.

When you have a God, it's so easy to fight the devil. ■

GOD.

Q&A

Q: Hi, Martin. Please explain to me 2 Corinthians 3:6. That verse says that "the letter kills, but the spirit gives life." People have used this verse to belittle scripture study, because they say that scripture is "the letter" that kills. Are these people right? — Roxie V.



A: Hi, Roxie. These people are as wrong as can be, and I'll

prove it by quoting the context. I'm going to quote the verse you mentioned, plus the previous and the following verses. 2 Corinthians 3:5-7:

"Our competency is of God, Who makes us competent dispensers of a new covenant, not of the letter, but of the spirit, for the letter is killing, yet the spirit is vivifying. Now if the dispensation of death, by letters chiseled in stone..."

That's all I need to quote. "The letter" of verse 6 that kills, is not the scriptures that we have today, but the "letters chiseled in stone" of verse 7, that is, the law of Moses. It is the law of Moses that kills, NOT the scriptures that explain to us the work of Christ. As Paul wrote to Timothy:

"The sacred scriptures are able to make you wise for salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus (2 Tim. 3:15).



Deceiving spirits imitate the real thing

The tricky thing about deceiving spirits is that they imitate the real thing. When Satan tempted our Lord, He wanted Him to perform spectacular feats. Why? Because people love spectacular feats. Spectacular feats would have excited the throngs, who would have then taken Jesus and made Him king by force. These folks didn't want a spiritual kingdom; they wanted a fun kingdom with lots of cool stuff.

It's the same today. When he tempted our Lord, Satan basically told us what he thought were the ultimate greatneses: turning rocks into food, flying, and running government. When Jesus quoted God and yawned, Satan fled. But now he's back, trying the same stuff on people who will gladly accept a fun kingdom with lots of cool stuff. Am I talking about the world and not Christians? No. I am talking about the world *and* Christians.

Beware of deceiving spirits. These aren't dressed like

red devils. They are dressed—quite possibly—in red, white, and blue.

I love my country, but I love God more. ■

Rants & Stuff

The Apostle Paul says we should not murmur (Philippians 2:14).
Therefore, I shall rant.

“Here’s how you resist the devil, kiddies!”

I went to a church service twenty five years ago where the pastor got the idea to demonstrate for all of us Sunday morning attendees how to properly resist the devil. For the demonstration, he pulled a kid out from the congregation, saying, “C’mere, kid!” Then he called several men up and said, “C’mere, you fellas!” I was not one of “the fellas,” thank goodness. My body language must have told the pastor not to call on me; I was in the back loading a handgun and eying the “Exit” sign.



Next, the pastor had all but one of the men form a circle, and he put the kid in the middle of it. Then he told one of the

men to stand outside the circle.

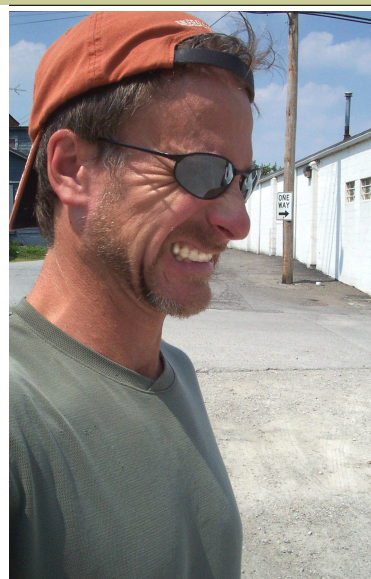
“This kid is you people!” he shouted. “And this outside man is the devil! And these men in the ring are also you people! “Now pay attention, you people!”

With an intro like that, I felt like I *had* to pay attention.

“Now here’s how it is,” the pastor continued. “Satan can wreck your lives. He can wreck your salvation, and possibly even your car. He has already wrecked several of your marriages. Right, Bill?”

A man ran from the church. I assume it was Bill.

“Satan is constantly foiling God’s plans for your lives!” continued the man of God. “But



you don’t have to let him do this. That’s right! Watch how you can kick Satan’s butt and send him back to hell!”

The pastor then instructed the “devil man” to charge the kid, and told the men in the ring, “Resist the devil! Resist the devil! Resist the devil!” By this time, I had my pistol fully loaded and would have shot any of the “your people” attempting to prevent my escape. The demonstration, from what I saw of it, was a sweaty mess, with grunts, groans, rug burns, and one gouged eye. The devil ended up capturing the kid and taking him to hell, i.e., Sunday school. There was only one bad thing about the demonstration, that I could tell.

Satan invented it. ■

Who lures us toward evil desires—Satan, God, or ourselves?

IT ALL DEPENDS ON VIEWPOINT

James insists (James 1:14) that some are lured away by their own desire. Many grab this verse to “prove” that God would never lead anyone into sin, and therefore into trial. They will use it to “prove” that God is not responsible for trial, and that it’s the person’s “own stupid fault” for having the sinful desires in the first place. Here’s the passage:

“Now each one is undergoing trial when he is drawn away and lured by his own desire. Thereafter, the desire, conceiving, is bringing forth sin. Now sin, fully consummated, is teeming forth death.”

As usual, James is not looking at ultimate causes, but immediate ones; I say, “as usual,” because the book of James is on quite a low

plane, spiritually. After all, he is writing to “adulterers and adulteresses” (Js. 4:4). James is not interested in pointing out to these disobedient Israelites that “the creation was subjected to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of Him Who subjects it.” That’s Paul’s department, and the apostle points out this very thing in Romans 8:20.

Here are the dominoes, in reverse order: 1) Sin comes from mortality, 2) mortality came from Adam, 3) the original temptation came from Satan, and 4) God created Satan. So Who is ultimately responsible? God is.

There is nothing wrong with taking the practical viewpoint (“Save yourself trial by doing the right thing”), as long as we realize that, even when we do sin, God is above and behind it all, working out a plan. ■

