



WOW: Word Of the Week

Wildfire

September 28, 2022

“God’s Word spread like wildfire through that region.” A recent WOW focused on the confusion of Babel and the tendency of many religious people to babble rather than to speak God’s Word clearly and accurately. With social media, instant news, and easy publication, today ideas spread like wildfire – whether they are accurate or not! In fact, the challenge is that truth often seems to be drowned out by opposing views that are spread with fervency and force.

Two passages from The Passion Translation catch my attention. At the beginning of Jesus’ ministry, Mark 1:28 says, “So the reports about Jesus spread like wildfire through every community in Galilee.” In Acts 13:49, the first missionary journey of Paul caused God’s Word to spread like wildfire....

In the first century—in fact, for almost three centuries after Christ—the gospel blazed forth into the world like wildfire. In the book, *The Growth of Christianity in the Roman Empire*, it is estimated that the number of Christians grew from around 1000 in the year AD 40 to over 7000 in the year AD 100, to over six million in AD 300; and to perhaps 350 million by AD 350. (But it should be noted the very rapid growth during the 50 years from 300 to 350 was largely the result of the favorable treatment of Christianity by Constantine.)

So, let us think only about the years from the resurrection to AD 300. From a few dozen to six million, during years when Christians were suffering intense persecution, even death. Remarkable! Even incredible!

Contrast today’s world. Ease of communication, instant news. Why is the gospel not exploding into the world? Why is the gospel not spreading like wildfire? Wildfires need three things – fuel, heat, and wind. Today the spread of the gospel needs fuel, fervency, and force.

The fuel is readily available—the gospel is available in numerous languages. The fuel is not lacking!

Wildfires need heat. The spread of the gospel requires fervency – fervent Christians sharing Good News, burning hearts, the word of God as a fire in our bones. **Perhaps the gospel does not spread like wildfire today due to lack of fervent hearts burning within God’s people.**

Wildfires need wind to spread rapidly. For Christians, the wind of God is the Spirit of God. **Perhaps the gospel does not spread like wildfire today due to the lack of God’s Holy Spirit.** Acts 9:31 in the CEV: “The church in Judea, Galilee, and Samaria...became stronger, as the Holy Spirit encouraged it and helped it grow.”

Application! We are not talking, and when we are talking, we are talking mostly to ourselves. Fuel alone is impotent without heat and wind. The gospel is powerless without burning hearts and Spirit-driven voices that share it. In a day when many are talking about the Spirit, it is clear that too few are being blown forward to ignite a gospel wildfire—fuel, the heat of fervent burning hearts, the powerful wind of God’s Spirit.

The gospel is in our hands. Let us pray for burning, fervent hearts. Let us pray for Spirit-driven boldness, empowering us to carry the gospel to receptive hearts all around us and all around the world.