

LESSON FOUR

AZUSA STREET, LOS ANGELES

A. **W. J. SEYMOUR:**

In December 1905, Brother Parham rented a large residence at 503 Rusk Street in Houston, Texas, in order to open a Bible School. Classes began after the New Year of 1906.

Among the students was a colored Holiness preacher, W.J. Seymour. He had not yet received the Holy Ghost but he was convinced that the experience was Scriptural.

A sister from a colored Nazarene church in Los Angeles visited Houston and met Brother Seymour. On her return to Los Angeles she told the church about Brother Seymour and an invitation was sent to him to hold a meeting in their church. He accepted the invitation and took a train to Los Angeles.

On the first Sunday morning he took for his text Acts 2:4. He told the Nazarene church about the Baptism of the Holy Ghost, with the initial evidence of speaking in tongues. When he returned for the afternoon service he found the church door locked. They had decided that the new doctrine was heresy.

A man by the name of Lee invited him to his home where Brother Seymour gave himself to prayer.

B. **BONNIE BRAE STREET:**

A Baptist couple, Richard and Ruth Asberry, lived at 214 Bonnie Brae Street. They invited Brother Seymour to conduct prayer meetings in their home. Each night a group of hungry souls met for prayer in this home.

On April 9, 1906, the power of God fell upon these praying believers. Seven were gloriously filled with the Holy Ghost one of them being Brother Lee.

For three days and three nights the service continued with people coming from everywhere. Hundreds of all races tried to crowd into the house. The whole city was stirred. People fell under the power of God. Sinners were converted and sick bodies were healed.

On April 12, 1906, W.J. Seymour, who had brought the message to Los Angeles, was baptized in the Holy Ghost.

C. **AZUSA STREET:**

A building was needed to accommodate the crowds. An old discarded building, which had been used for a Methodist Church, was found at 312 Azusa Street. It had been vacant for years. It was a two-story frame building and the upstairs had been used as a tenement house. On the lower floor was a large unplastered room. In the neighborhood were a tombstone shop, some stables and a lumberyard.

The revival that began here lasted for three years, day and night without a break. Services continued every day from ten o'clock in the morning until midnight.

The meetings were not advertised. No church organization was sponsoring the meetings. No instruments of music were used; there was no choir. No offerings were received.

Brother Seymour generally sat behind two empty shoeboxes. During the services, he kept his head in the top box in prayer. No subject or sermons were announced in advance. Everything was done in a spontaneous manner wholly led by the Spirit.

There was no place for pride here. Everyone was equal, black and white, rich and poor, educated and illiterate.

People came from everywhere by the hundreds and thousands. They came from all parts of the globe. People of all religious faiths and denominations were represented. They were of every class, race and culture. There, in the Azusa Mission, God baptized them with the Holy Ghost and fire. They returned home preaching the Pentecostal Truth. In a very short period of time the glorious truth of the Pentecostal experience had circled the globe and was reaching hearts everywhere.

D. WHY WAS THE AZUSA STREET REVIVAL SO IMPORTANT?

Many factors entered into this revival and gave it such prominence in those early days of this twentieth century Pentecostal revival. We might name a few of these factors.

1. THE LOCATION OF LOS ANGELES:

Los Angeles was located at the crossroads of a nation where missionaries were constantly coming and going. Evangelists and other Gospel workers were constantly visiting or passing through Los Angeles.

2. THE PUBLICITY IT RECEIVED:

Newspapers gave it wide coverage. The revival received nation wide publicity and was thus brought to the attention of thousands.

3. THE FOUNDATION OF SCRIPTURAL TRUTH:

The revival was built upon Scriptural truth. Emphasis was placed upon the Pentecostal experience and the Bible evidence of speaking in tongues was declared.

4. PERSECUTION THAT FOLLOWED:

This revival brought great opposition and persecution. Generally those who received the Pentecostal experience was expelled from their churches. This drove the Pentecostal people together and gradually caused the Pentecostal movement to be launched.

E. THE RESULT OF THE STREET REVIVAL:

The Holiness Churches split over the Pentecostal experience and doctrine. Some churches, such as Church of the Nazarene and Missionary Alliance, took a stand against the Pentecostal

Revival. Some other Holiness churches, such as the Pentecostal Holiness Church and Church of God accepted the new teaching.

Some of the godliest men of other denominations were attracted to the revival.

The Pentecostal Revival received from the Holiness Churches certain characteristics that continued: the open altar, the tarrying services, the camp meetings, etc.

In the beginning the Revival went by various names. The most common in the beginning was the "Apostolic Faith." However, soon other names were given, the most common of which was simply "Pentecostal."

LESSON FOUR

SELF HELP TEST

A. State FOUR factors which made the Azusa Street revival so important.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

B. Describe the building used at 312 Azusa Street.

C. Describe the services which took place there.

D. What happened at 214 Bonnie Brae Street?

E. When did W. J. Seymour receive the Holy Ghost?

If you wish to obtain your AIS Bible and Theology Certificate or work toward your B.A. Degree from Indiana Bible College, complete this Self-Help Test as completely as possible and return it to: AIS, P.O. Box 47917 Indianapolis, IN 46247 or email it to: ais@apostolic.edu or fax it to: (317) 781-7700.