

SCOTT WILSON & JOHN BATES

# SPREAD THE FIRE



SPIRIT BAPTISM IN  
TODAY'S CULTURE

FOREWORD BY DR. GEORGE O. WOOD

*GENERAL SUPERINTENDENT OF THE ASSEMBLIES OF GOD*



## WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING ABOUT *SPREAD THE FIRE* . . .

“If you’re going to be a Pentecostal, you might as well be a good one. That’s the message of Scott Wilson and John Bates in this honest, practical book. Writing humbly, the authors lay out the biblical foundation and pastoral guidance needed to walk people and ministries toward a life continually filled with the Holy Spirit’s power. Their book will help you envision how the Holy Spirit can transform your life through a vibrant connection with the Jesus who is the same yesterday, today and forever.”

— *Earl Creps, PhD, DMin, lead pastor; church planter; author of Off-Road Disciplines and Reverse Mentoring, 360church.net*

“I am excited about *Spread the Fire* and its potential to motivate pastors toward a new dependence on the person and work of the Holy Spirit in our churches. Scott Wilson and John Bates lead different, yet equally influential, Spirit-filled ministries. However, they share a passion to see the baptism in the Holy Spirit empower believers and strengthen the church for the purpose of winning the lost. These pastors aren’t sharing some untested theory—this message reflects what the Spirit is doing in their churches today!”

— *Kermit S. Bridges, DMin, president, Southwestern Assemblies of God University*

“I know personally that the miraculous work of God’s Spirit has always been and always will be a fire that can’t be contained. In *Spread the Fire*, Scott and John are passionate about their convictions, their struggles, and the answers they’ve found to the hard questions as Pentecostal pastors in our modern culture. I hope you’ll read this book and apply the principles they’ve outlined. It will make a difference for sure.”

— *Dr. Tim R. Barker, superintendent, South Texas District, Assemblies of God*

“Nothing is more critical to the life of the believer than understanding the truth about the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Scott Wilson and John Bates draw attention to the role of today’s pastors and leaders to emphasize the baptism in the Holy Spirit as a practical experience in the life of every individual who seeks to know the Lord Jesus Christ in an intimate way. In *Spread the Fire*, the focus is placed on the benefits of this experience and the Spirit’s ability to transform every person. I strongly encourage you to read this book, and may the experiences of the New Testament believer be yours as well.”

— *Dr. Clarence V. Boyd, Jr., dean of spiritual formation, Oral Roberts University; senior pastor, Revelations-Revealed Truth Evangelistic Center*

“I’ve been so blessed to watch God use Scott Wilson as a rising voice in our nation, and He continues to use him in the writing of *Spread the Fire*. The baptism in the Holy Spirit is a miraculous work of God. Through the work of the Spirit, amazing things happen. In this book, Scott and John share their convictions, their struggles, and the answers they’ve found to the hard questions about the Holy Spirit. This book has been a blessing to me and is a must-read for everyone!”

— *Robert Morris, founding senior pastor of Gateway Church, Dallas/Fort Worth, Texas; bestselling author of The Blessed Life, From Dream to Destiny, The God I Never Knew, and Truly Free*

“The primary purpose of Spirit-empowerment is to carry out the transformative mission of God among the lost. With the challenges facing the church today, it would be senseless to attempt to effect change in the lives of people merely by utilizing our own ingenuity, intellect, and human effort. God hasn’t abandoned us to that fruitless recourse. In *Spread the Fire*, Scott Wilson and John Bates combine the truths of Scripture and the examples of personal testimonies to encourage us to give the Holy Spirit freedom in our personal lives and in our churches. They invite us to allow the Holy Spirit to equip and embolden every believer to confront our lost world with the hope of the gospel.”

— *Alton Garrison, assistant general superintendent, The General Council of the Assemblies of God; chairman, Pentecostal Charismatic Churches of North America; co-chair, Empowered 21 USA; author of Hope in America’s Crisis, 360 Degree Disciple, and A Spirit-Empowered Church*

“We need good theology about the baptism in the Holy Spirit, but we need more than that. We need leaders who are wrestling with the practical ways to impart this teaching—and this vital experience—to men and women, young and old, in today’s churches. Scott Wilson and John Bates have given us a tool to help us. Their book is filled with rich biblical insight, as well as practical guides to direct us. With their encouragement, we can trust the Spirit of God to ignite (or reignite) His fire in our lives and our churches.”

— *Samuel R. Chand, author of Leadership Pain: The Classroom for Growth, [www.samchand.com](http://www.samchand.com)*

“*Spread the Fire* is relevant, biblical, challenging, and practical. Scott Wilson and John Bates deliver a powerful word for twenty-first century believers as they revisit first-century Pentecost and challenge us to embrace all God desires for His church today. Thank you, Scott and John, for being a fresh voice in today’s culture to remind us of these truths, and for your call for us to be the Spirit-filled, Spirit-led, and Spirit-empowered church in our communities and around the world.”

— *Michael Dickenson, superintendent, New Mexico Ministry Network*

“What a powerful and timely book! In *Spread the Fire*, Scott Wilson and John Bates weave together biblical insight, cultural understanding, and practical wisdom to help you experience a deeper relationship with the Holy Spirit. This is a must-read for anyone who desires a life filled with passion, purpose and a transparent love for God and people. Nothing will revolutionize your prayer life, your study of God’s Word, your ministry leadership, or your church more than opening your heart to the work of the Holy Spirit. After reading this book, you will discover a powerful awareness and understanding of how the Holy Spirit moves—and how you can join Him in living out the Pentecostal priority.”

— *Kent Ingle, DMin, president, Southeastern University; author of 9 Disciplines of Enduring Leadership*

“*Spread the Fire* is a compelling call to reclaim the primacy of the Spirit’s work in our churches. We can’t afford to disciple a generation of churchgoers who have never encountered the power of the Holy Spirit. The question, however, isn’t just the doctrinal ‘what’ but the pastoral ‘how.’ In this book, John Bates and Scott Wilson shine as both teachers and practitioners as they describe how to lead individuals and congregations into Spirit baptism and Spirit-led living. It’s a privilege to know them both. I admire the spiritual leadership they authentically embody.”

— *James Bradford, PhD, general secretary, The General Council of the Assemblies of God; author of Lead So Others Can Follow*

“Scott Wilson and John Bates remind us with biblical insight, cultural understanding, and practical experience that the power of the Spirit unleashed at Pentecost is still operative in our churches and our world. *Spread the Fire* is a book of excellent theology, but it’s more than that. Wilson and Bates remind us that the life of a church isn’t in programs; it’s in our experience of the fire of the Holy Spirit—a fire that warms us with comfort and propels us to every corner of our communities and the globe to take the life-changing message of Christ.”

— *Rich Wilkerson, Sr., lead pastor, TrinityChurch.TV,  
Miami, Florida; author of Inside Out*

“I love the axiom, ‘From the altars of the past, take the flame and leave the ash.’ That is exactly what Scott Wilson and John Bates are emphasizing in their book, *Spread the Fire*: making the baptism in the Holy Spirit integral to the life of the church. Although we are grateful for the way God has poured out His Holy Spirit in the past, we need fresh fire today. The smell of smoke or sight of ashes from days gone by helps no one. This book will inspire individuals and congregations to seek all that God has for them, and once the fire burns anew in them, it will spread to a lost and dying world.”

— *Don Meyers, PhD, president, University of Valley Forge*

“Back in the days of no lighters or matches, it was necessary for someone to keep the flame going in the fireplace or red coals burning in the stove for long periods of time. In the winter, letting either go out could mean death. Scott Wilson and John Bates have teamed up to become Spirit-governed ‘fire keepers,’ who have been charged with never letting the fire on the altar go out. Their book *Spread the Fire* answers practical questions that both the older and younger generations are asking. Reading it will help the older make the transition into ‘new wineskins’ to hold fresh wine; and it will answer the younger generation’s passionate cry, ‘Where are all the miracles our ancestors told us about?’ ”

— *Bishop Walter Harvey, vice president, National Black Fellowship, Assemblies of God; senior pastor, Parklawn Assembly of God, Milwaukee, Wisconsin*

“The book you hold in your hands is an affirmation that the baptism in the Holy Spirit is a privilege for *all* believers. It is a reminder that He (the *person* of the Holy Spirit) plays a critical role in the life and growth of the local church. Scott and John remind us that the transformational power of a church is not in programs; rather, it is found in the active work of the Holy Spirit. I pray that this book will inspire you to seek more ‘power’ from the Holy Spirit so that you can spread the ‘fire’ with a greater anointing.”

— *Doug Clay, general treasurer, The General Council of the Assemblies of God*

“Scott and John speak out of their own pastoral experiences of realizing that the ‘fire was flickering.’ Without rekindling the flame, a birthright was in danger. This volume is not an apologetic for a doctrine; instead, it is a passionate plea by pastoral leaders who have the foresight to realize each generation needs to understand Pentecostal faith in their cultural context. The Spirit-empowered life is humble in spirit but confident in the presence and power of the Holy Spirit. We can live in the middle of brokenness, yet be filled with hope. We can experience the turmoil of a dark world, yet live in the light of God’s peace.”

— *Byron D. Klaus, DMin, president (1999-2015),  
Assemblies of God Theological Seminary*

“An encouraging must-read for any pastor or leader seeking to consistently pursue the adventure of life in the Spirit within a community of the Spirit.”

— *Mike Quinn, lead pastor, New Break, San Diego,  
California*

“*Spread the Fire* gives us a fresh perspective on first-century Pentecostal reality by dressing it in 2015 clothing. If you want Spirit baptism demystified in a fashion that honors non-Pentecostal traditions while biblically elevating the potency, veracity, and necessity of Spirit baptism and Spirit activity within services and personal lives, then *Spread the Fire* should move to the top of your reading list.”

— *Dr. Terry L. Yancey, superintendent, Kansas District,  
Assemblies of God*

“Spread the word about *Spread the Fire!* It is rock solid in its declaration of the meaning and purpose of the historical view of the baptism in the Holy Spirit. The fire of the Holy Spirit isn’t just memory; it can be practiced in the post-modern church. Writing in relevant and contemporary language, Scott and John focus on personal application, so the book is more than a teaching tool. Their message is a call to personal renewal in the Spirit—a call to let this renewal *spread the fire.*”

— *Greg Mundis, DMin, executive director, Assemblies of God World Missions*

“At a time when Christians feel increasing pressure to be more private, even individualistic about their faith in Jesus Christ, Scott Wilson and John Bates reassert baptism in the Holy Spirit as the biblical, timeless model for powerful ministry and witness. Passion alone is the low-hanging fruit of Pentecostalism. Scott and John present thoughtful passion conjoined to practice that opens the doors to fresh grace, renewed anointing, and relevance that outlasts the latest media campaign. *Spread the Fire* is a clarion call to all who would resist the temptations of a life or ministry that is domesticated and tame.”

— *Michael J. Beals, PhD, president, Vanguard University*

“Scott Wilson and John Bates have tapped into one of the foundational doctrines of the Bible—the Holy Spirit’s divine purpose. Their investigative approach to biblical truths about the Holy Spirit (line upon line and precept upon precept) in the church of the twenty-first century is spiritually challenging and enlightening. The insights expressed in *Spread the Fire* explain that the Holy Spirit is the *fire* that makes Jesus, the Savior, known in a spiritual way on earth through His church. I encourage all pastors and church leaders who desire to go to the next level in making Jesus the *supernatural center* of their lives and ministries to read this book, so that none perish.”

— *Zollie Smith, executive director, Assemblies of God  
US Missions*

“All of us want to be part of a movement in which the power of the Holy Spirit impacts our churches and communities. Spirit-empowered Word, worship, work, and witness change everything. In *Spread the Fire*, Scott Wilson and John Bates provide biblical, practical, and applicable insights for church leaders seeking to integrate the presence of the Holy Spirit in their local setting. This book helps pastors and leaders strategically rethink where, when, and how to pursue the experience of the baptism in the Holy Spirit in the contemporary church. The insights of these pastors could be a catalyst for something big in your church!”

— *Tom Jacobs, superintendent, Iowa Ministry  
Network, Assemblies of God*

“Every generation faces unique challenges as well as new opportunities in carrying out the mission of God in the world. While people and culture constantly change, the strategy for the church in its mission remains the same: the power of the Holy Spirit. We are helpless to reach people with the gospel and transform our communities without a fresh anointing and move of God’s Spirit. That’s what makes this book so vitally important. Scott Wilson and John Bates remind us that the baptism in the Holy Spirit is available to every believer today, and they reinforce the biblical imperative for the Spirit’s work in every part of our lives and in the growth of our churches.”

— *Chris Railey, senior director, leadership/church development, The General Council of the Assemblies of God*

“Transparency and passion are evident as Scott Wilson and John Bates share their drift from our Pentecostal distinctive and their call back to renewed desire for the supernatural. They have learned that you can be truly Pentecostal and culturally authentic at the same time. They emphasize the importance of the manifestation of the supernatural gifts operating in their growing congregations, and they provide practical, organic ways to reintroduce these opportunities. This book will create a hunger for fresh anointing with evidence that miracles still happen today.”

— *Larry Liebe, superintendent, Wisconsin/Northern Michigan Ministries Network*

“Relevance doesn’t have to be synonymous with compromise. Indeed, the Holy Spirit, who speaks in a language all can understand, lures us into the most relevant form of Christianity: living out the Scripture in our cultural context. In this clear message and clarion call, Scott and John remind us that the power of the Holy Spirit is profound and practical for both the church *individual* and the church *corporate*. I recommend this book, and even more I recommend the spiritual encounter they so beautifully describe.”

— *Heath Adamson, senior director of youth ministry, The General Council of The Assemblies of God; author of The Bush Always Burns*

“Traveling the globe, I’ve experienced the powerful seen and unseen manifestations of the work of the Spirit. But a defiant, unbelieving culture—with its tough questions and harsh judgments—is pervasive. And the modern church has drifted away from teaching on Holy Spirit baptism and its physical manifestations such as speaking in tongues. In *Spread the Fire*, Scott Wilson and John Bates provide practical ways to reignite the importance of this vital experience in our own lives and in our churches. This fiery apologetic is infused with Spirit-drenched wisdom that will refresh your heart and renew your commitment to lead in the power of the Holy Spirit.”

— *Rob Hoskins, president of OneHope*

“In a period of history when the power of programs holds sway over the power of Holy Spirit, the presence of men replacing the presence of God’s Spirit, and strange fire filling our altars, Scott Wilson and John Bates address the church’s drift away from the perspective of the early church and advocate the return to our basics. They acknowledge the dilemma we face in introducing and interpreting the Holy Spirit to a techno-savvy generation that has shied away from Him. They don’t advocate returning to modes of the past, but instead, they encourage us to develop methods of communicating this vital life of the church in culturally relevant, socially non-threatening, and currently viable ways.”

— *Chadwick Moban, lead pastor, New Life Assemblies of God Church (NLAG), Chennai, India*

“In *Spread the Fire*, Scott Wilson and John Bates help us in two ways: They encourage us to find and use the fire from the true altar of heaven, and they warn us to avoid using earthly fire rather than the Holy Spirit to build the church. I know both of these men and their stories. Both of them have watched their churches increase. They’ve made sure they are operating with heavenly fire and are giving the Holy Spirit room to be God. It’s never too late to become a Spirit-empowered, Spirit-led church!”

— *Rick DuBose, superintendent, North Texas District, Assemblies of God*

“In so many areas of life, ‘old school’ is becoming ‘new school’ again. As my wife, Valery, and I travel the globe working with movements and with leaders, one of the resounding themes is that ‘the Holy Spirit is making a comeback!’ *Spread the Fire* gives contemporary application to the Ancient of Days in the person of the Holy Spirit. Thank you, Scott and John, for this significant contribution to the modern church.”

— *Michael Murphy, founding director, Leaderscape*

“This topic is incredibly important to the life of every believer; yet comparatively little has been written recently about how the baptism in the Holy Spirit can impact our lives and the effectiveness of our churches. I’m thrilled that Scott Wilson and John Bates have given us such practical and powerful insight on this vital relationship with God. I highly recommend this book to anyone and everyone interested in all God has for them.”

— *Jeff Leake, lead pastor, Allison Park Church, author of God in Motion and Praying With Confidence*

“Most all pastors want an outpouring of God’s Holy Spirit. Some passionately petition heaven for that outpouring. Fewer, however, are bold enough to allow God to sovereignly move when and how He desires. In *Spread the Fire*, Scott and John provide a scriptural framework as well as a practical picture of what it looks like for a ministry to truly be Spirit-led.”

— *Scotty Gibbons, strategist, National Youth Ministries of The Assemblies of God*

“The Assemblies of God is profoundly a Pentecostal fellowship. Its birth pangs came over 100 years ago in the spiritual fires of the early twentieth-century outpouring, and that outpouring continues unabated to this day. However, a new generation is now confronted with the challenge of proclaiming, defending, and practicing this key element of our faith. Scott and John challenge us to understand that not only the message but the ‘container’ that delivers the message needs to be in focus if a new generation is to embrace and engage our distinctive role as a fellowship. Pentecost must be more than our heritage; it must be our practice and experience today.”

— *James R. Braddy, superintendent, Northern California Nevada District, Assemblies of God*



**SCOTT WILSON & JOHN BATES**

**SPREAD  
THE  
FIRE**

**SPIRIT BAPTISM IN  
TODAY'S CULTURE**



Copyright © 2016 by Scott Wilson and John Bates  
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

Published by Gospel Publishing House  
1445 N. Boonville Ave.,  
Springfield, Missouri 65802  
www.gospelpublishing.com

No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means—electronic, mechanical, photocopy, recording, or otherwise—without prior written permission of the publisher, except for brief quotations used in connection with reviews in magazines or newspapers.

Cover design by PlainJoe Studios ([www.plainjoestudios.com](http://www.plainjoestudios.com))

Interior formatting by Anne McLaughlin

Unless otherwise specified, Scripture quotations are taken from The Holy Bible, New International Version® NIV®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.™ Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved worldwide. [www.zondervan.com](http://www.zondervan.com). The “NIV” and “New International Version” are trademarks registered in the United States Patent and Trademark Office by Biblica, Inc.™

Scripture taken from *The Message*. Copyright © 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996, 2000, 2001, 2002. Used by permission of NavPress Publishing Group.

Scripture taken from the New King James Version® (NKJV). Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

ISBN: 978-1-60731-412-7

Printed in the United States of America  
19 18 17 16 • 1 2 3 4

## DEDICATION

*From Scott ...*

I dedicate this book to my dad, Dr. Tom Wilson, who prayed with me to receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit when I was eight-years-old. Thank you for praying with me, praying for me, and modeling what a Spirit-empowered prayer life looks like. I will never forget our early morning, family prayer meetings. Thank you for making me get out of bed!

*From John ...*

I dedicate this book to my father, O. C. Bates, who lost his battle with cancer in May of 2015. My father was thoroughly Pentecostal in his convictions, life, pastoring, and preaching. It is from this Pentecostal heritage I have gleaned much of my experience and knowledge regarding the workings of the Holy Spirit. The person of the Holy Spirit was made real to me through Dad's teachings and obedience to the voice of the Holy Spirit in church settings. It was not until years later I was able to discern what I had learned. I was taught the Holy Spirit is not a person to fear, He is my friend.