

THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

The subject of the Holy Spirit has been one of controversy and confusion. Some religious groups teach that the Holy Spirit is still imparting miraculous gifts to those who have enough faith. Other religious groups believe the Holy Spirit will overwhelm you, causing you to have a variety of joyful emotions. Even among our brethren there are disagreements about whether the Holy Spirit personally dwells within the Christian, and about the extent of His influence over the Christian. Many arguments made concerning the Holy Spirit are less than convincing. I believe the failure in clearly understanding the work and person of the Holy Spirit is because of our lack of study on the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament. We often begin our studies of the Holy Spirit in Acts 2, as if the audience on the day of Pentecost had no prior knowledge of the Holy Spirit. But the Old Testament is full of information concerning the Holy Spirit, and ignorance of these texts is causing a misunderstanding of His work.

The Seventy Elders (Numbers 11:16-17, 24-26)

In Numbers 11, Moses explained to the Lord that the burden of leading the people of Israel was too great. To alleviate the burden, the Lord had the seventy elders of Israel come before Him. "Then I will come down and speak with you there. I will take some of the Spirit who is on you and put the Spirit on them. They will help you bear the burden of the people, so that you do not have to bear it by yourself" (Numbers 11:17). "Then the LORD descended in the cloud and spoke to him. He took some of the Spirit that was on Moses and placed the Spirit on the 70 elders. As the Spirit rested on them, they prophesied, but they never did it again" (Numbers 11:25).

This is an important event to consider in our study. When the Lord placed the Holy Spirit on the seventy elders, the elders prophesied, but only for one day. Why would they prophesy for only one day? What would be the point of this miracle? The reason for the miracle was to reveal to the congregation of Israel that the seventy elders carried the authority of God. The miracle proved to the people that the seventy elders were being designated as God's leaders and representatives. The miracle of prophecy only served the purpose of proving that God's authority rested upon these men.

Throughout the Old Testament we also see the Spirit of the Lord resting upon the judges, King Saul, and King David. The purpose of the Spirit of the Lord resting upon these men was to show Israel that these men were God's designated leaders and indicate the military victory the Lord would give.

Old Testament Prophecies

Understanding the prophecies concerning the Holy Spirit is very important if we are going to understand what the Jews expected when the pouring out of the Holy Spirit took place.

Isaiah 32:14-18. "For the palace will be forsaken, the busy city abandoned. The hill and the watchtower will become barren places forever, the joy of wild asses, and a pasture for flocks, until the Spirit from heaven is poured out on us. Then the desert will become an orchard, and the orchard will seem like a forest. Then justice will inhabit the wilderness, and righteousness will dwell in the orchard. The result of righteousness will be peace; the effect of righteousness will be quiet confidence forever. Then my people will dwell in a peaceful place, and in safe and restful dwellings."

Notice how the people would have understood the pouring out of the Holy Spirit. Verses 13-14 describe the barrenness of the nation of Israel. The palace is forsaken, the city is abandoned, and the pasture is barren until the Spirit is poured out. However, when the Spirit is poured out, the desert would become

an orchard. There would also be righteousness, peace, and safety. Nothing in this prophecy suggests or even hints at a personal indwelling of the Holy Spirit. There is nothing in the prophecy about miraculous gifts or spiritual gifts. The pouring out of the Holy Spirit, in this context, simply meant the restoration of the nation of Israel and the restoration of the blessings of God to the people.

Isaiah 44:3-5. "For I will pour water on the thirsty land, and streams on the dry ground; I will pour out My Spirit on your descendants and My blessing on your offspring. They will sprout among the grass like poplars by the streambeds. This one will say: I am the LORD'S; another will call himself by the name of Jacob; still another will write on his hand: The LORD'S, and name himself by the name of Israel."

The pouring out of the Holy Spirit in Isaiah 44 has the same meaning as in Isaiah 32. The picture Isaiah paints is of God's blessings returning to the people of Israel. The nation is described as a thirsty land and dry ground that will become fertile when the Spirit is poured out. Isaiah is describing the restoration of the nation as God pours out His blessings on the people.

Ezekiel 37:13-14. "And you shall know that I am the LORD, when I open your graves, and raise you from your graves, O my people. And I will put my Spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you in your own land. Then you shall know that I am the LORD; I have spoken, and I will do it, declares the LORD."

This prophecy is the vision of the valley of dry bones. The vision shows Israel as a broken, shattered nation. God says that He would put His Spirit within them. Ezekiel foresaw the restoration of the nation of Israel (giving new life to the nation) and blessings of God returning to the people.

Ezekiel 39:28-29. "'Then they shall know that I am the LORD their God, who sent them into captivity among the nations, but also brought them back to their land, and left none of them captive any longer. And I will not hide My face from them anymore; for I shall have poured out My Spirit on the house of Israel,' says the Lord GOD."

This prophecy makes the same point as Ezekiel 37. The pouring out of the Spirit is the same as God no longer hiding His face from the people. Israel is depicted as having a favorable relationship with God again. God will not have His back turned, but the people will have God's favor and God's blessings restored.

Joel 2:28-3:1. "After this I will pour out My Spirit on all humanity; then your sons and your daughters will prophesy, your old men will have dreams, and your young men will see visions. I will even pour out My Spirit on the male and female slaves in those days. I will display wonders in the heavens and on the earth: blood, fire, and columns of smoke. The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the great and awe-inspiring Day of the LORD comes. Then everyone who calls on the name of Yahweh will be saved, for there will be an escape for those on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, as the LORD promised, among the survivors the LORD calls. Yes, in those days and at that time, when I restore the fortunes of Judah and Jerusalem...."

This is the first prophecy that speaks of the coming of the Holy Spirit in terms of a miraculous outpouring. Therefore, Joel is prophesying about how Israel would know when the Spirit had been poured out. The sign that the nation/kingdom had been restored and God's blessings were being offered to the people was through the miracles that would be performed. The point is clearer in Joel 3:1,

where Joel says when these signs happen the fortunes of Judah and Jerusalem will be restored. These signs were to be a warning to the people that the “great and awe-inspiring Day of the Lord” was about to come. Judgment was going to follow the restoration of the kingdom of God and the return of God’s blessings. We will look more closely at the fulfillment of this prophecy when we study Acts 2 and the pouring out of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

Conclusion

The prophets promised the arrival of the Holy Spirit. But many have made that promise to mean something different from what the prophets spoke. The prophets declared the restoration of the kingdom which had been destroyed because of the people’s sins. The prophets preached that the blessings of God would return, though they had fallen out of God’s favor because of their wickedness. The hope of Israel was that the covenant relationship with God would one day be restored at the coming of the Messiah (Jeremiah 31:31-34). These are the ideas that the prophets captured in the phrase, “the pouring out of the Holy Spirit.” Thus, the promise of the Holy Spirit is the restoration of the kingdom, the restoration of the covenant, and the restoration of God’s blessings.

THE BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Matthew 3:7-12. When he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to the place of his baptism, he said to them, "Brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? 8 Therefore produce fruit consistent with repentance. 9 And don't presume to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' For I tell you that God is able to raise up children for Abraham from these stones! 10 Even now the ax is ready to strike the root of the trees! Therefore every tree that doesn't produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire. 11 "I baptize you with water for repentance, but the One who is coming after me is more powerful than I. I am not worthy to take off His sandals. He Himself will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. 12 His winnowing shovel is in His hand, and He will clear His threshing floor and gather His wheat into the barn. But the chaff He will burn up with fire that never goes out" (HCSB).

It is often suggested that the baptism of the Holy Spirit took place on the apostles only. However, it is important to notice the audience of John's words. First, we need to consider that there were not yet any apostles for John to be speaking about. Second, carefully look at the audience. In Matthew 3:5 we read that the people from Jerusalem, all Judea, and all of the vicinity of the Jordan were coming to John. John is speaking to the Jewish people who are flocking to him. Further, in verse 7, we see that John begins this lesson when he sees the Pharisees and Sadducees coming among the people. John is speaking to the whole nation of Israel. The nation was going to experience a baptism of the Holy Spirit and a baptism of fire.

Baptism of Fire

How did the Jews who heard John's words understand the baptism of fire? Was the baptism of fire a good thing or a bad thing? Let us look to the scriptures first:

Isaiah 66:15-16. "For behold, the LORD will come in fire and His chariots like the whirlwind, to render His anger with fury, and His rebuke with flames of fire. For the LORD will execute judgment by fire and by His sword on all flesh, and those slain by the LORD will be many."

Ezekiel 22:20-22. "As one gathers silver and bronze and iron and lead and tin into a furnace, to blow the fire on it in order to melt it, so I will gather you in my anger and in my wrath, and I will put you in and melt you. I will gather you and blow on you with the fire of my wrath, and you shall be melted in the midst of it. As silver is melted in a furnace, so you shall be melted in the midst of it, and you shall know that I am the LORD; I have poured out my wrath upon you."

It is shocking to see scholars argue the baptism of fire was a good thing. I read one scholar describe it as a picture of God's grace. But the prophetic scriptures always speak of fire as being bad. Even being refined by fire, while ultimately having a good outcome, describes a painful process in the meantime (see James 1 and his description of trials).

Even the Qumran community of the first century understood fire as the wrath of God. In interpreting Psalm 2, the Qumran community declared, "The meaning is that the nations shall set themselves and conspire vainly against the chosen of Israel in the Last Days. That will be the time of persecution that is to come upon the House of Judah, to the end of sealing up the wicked in consuming fire and destroying all the children of Belial. Then shall be left behind a remnant of chosen ones, the predestined. They shall perform the whole of the Law, as God commanded through Moses. This is the time of which it is written

in the book of Daniel the prophet, "The wicked will act ever more wickedly and shall not understand. But the righteous will be purified, cleansed and refined" (Daniel 12:10). So, the people who know God shall be steadfast" (4Q174f1, 2i:19-3ii4).

Notice that the baptism of fire is a description of judgment and the wrath of God. John the Baptist is telling the Pharisees and Sadducees that they are the ones who are going to receive God's judgment of fire. Notice Matthew 3:10, "Even now the ax is ready to strike the root of the trees. Therefore every tree that doesn't produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire" (HCSB). Also notice Matthew 3:12 which continues the picture of wrath and judgment. "His winnowing fork is in His hand, and He will clear His threshing floor and gather his wheat into the barn, but the chaff He will burn with unquenchable fire" (ESV). We cannot argue that the baptism of fire is speaking about the tongues of fire that appeared upon the apostles' heads. John is speaking to the Jewish leaders and telling them that they will experience the baptism of fire because they have not repented. The ax was laid at the tree, Israel, and the tree would be chopped with the coming of the Messiah. The wrath of God was coming in judgment against Israel.

The Baptism of the Holy Spirit

Since the baptism of fire is a description of judgment and wrath (see Malachi 4), what then is the baptism of the Holy Spirit? Before we answer this question, we need to again notice that these are two events John is speaking about. Can we say that the baptism of the Holy Spirit is a bad thing, like the baptism of fire? Not at all. As we noticed in the last lesson, the pouring out of the Spirit was a picture of the restoration of the people, restoration of the nation, and a return of God's blessings to the people. In fact, we see this in John's message in Matthew 3:12:

"His winnowing fork is in His hand, and He will clear His threshing floor and gather his wheat into the barn, but the chaff He will burn with unquenchable fire" (ESV).

Notice that the Messiah will gather His wheat into the barn. This is a positive event tied together with a judgment event. The Messiah is going to gather the people who are his, but destroy those who are not. John the Baptist is not preaching something new. The prophets spoke of two events that would take place when the Messiah came. One event would be good, but the other would be judgment.

Malachi 4:1-3. "For behold, the day is coming, burning like a furnace; and all the arrogant and every evildoer will be chaff; and the day that is coming will set them ablaze," says the LORD of hosts, "so that it will leave them neither root nor branch. But for you who fear My name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings; and you will go forth, and skip about like calves from the stall. You will tread down the wicked, for they will be ashes under the soles of your feet on the day which I am preparing," says the LORD of hosts." Notice how Malachi prophesied about a day of fire where the evil were set ablaze. But notice that the good tidings are also prophesied, as those who fear His name will tread down the wicked.

Joel 2:28-3:1. "After this I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; then your sons and your daughters will prophesy, your old men will have dreams, and your young men will see visions. I will even pour out My Spirit on the male and female slaves in those days. I will display wonders in the heavens and on the earth: blood, fire, and columns of smoke. The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the great and awe-inspiring Day of the LORD comes. Then everyone who calls on the name of Yahweh will be saved, for there will be an escape for those on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, as the

LORD promised, among the survivors the LORD calls. Yes, in those days and at that time, when I restore the fortunes of Judah and Jerusalem....”

Again we see the good tied together with the bad. The Spirit will be poured out and the fortunes of Judah and Jerusalem will be restored. However, at the same time, the sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood. These are images of judgment. Joel prophesies that it will be “lights out” for the nation of Israel.

Therefore, there is nothing unusual about John the Baptist preaching that the good will come with bad when the Messiah arrives. The righteous would receive the blessings of God while the wicked would receive judgment and destruction.

Rather than think in terms of miracles, notice the baptism of the Holy Spirit is the restoration of the blessings of God. Everything we noticed in the last lesson about the prophets promising the pouring out of the Holy Spirit is in view. Recall that we saw there were at least three aspects that the prophets promised in the pouring out of the Holy Spirit: (1) restoration of the kingdom of God, (2) restoration of God’s covenant with the people, and (3) restoration of God’s blessings upon the people.

John the Baptist preached, “The kingdom is at hand!” (Matthew 3:2). John is telling the Jewish leaders that the Messiah is coming. With the Messiah will be two events: (1) the baptism of the Holy Spirit, that is, the arrival of the kingdom of God, restoration of God’s covenant with Israel, and blessings to the people. (2) Judgment. The Messiah was also bringing judgment, as John the Baptist describes. John’s message was very simple. Repent, because the restoration of the kingdom was near. The prophets warned that when the Messiah restored the kingdom, judgment would also follow.

THE BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN ACTS

John the Baptist preached "the kingdom is at hand!" (Matt. 3:2). John told the Jewish leaders that the Messiah was coming. With the Messiah would be two events: (1) the baptism of the Holy Spirit, God's phrase that represented the arrival of the kingdom of God, restoration of God's covenant with Israel, and blessings to the people; (2) the baptism of fire, God's phrase that represented judgment. As we will notice later in Acts 2, Peter preached the same message of judgment to Israel if they would not repent and be baptized for the forgiveness of their sins. Remember these points as we now look at Acts 1.

Acts 1:1-8

In the first three verses of Acts 1 we see that Jesus taught the apostles for 40 days about the kingdom of God. In verse 4, Jesus commanded the apostles to wait for "the promise of the Father." What is the promise of the Father? The next sentence explains: "'This,' He said, 'is what you heard from Me; for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.'" Jesus said the promise of the Father is the same as the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Jesus quoted the very teaching of John the Baptist that we studied in Matthew 3. Jesus simply added that this event would take place "not many days from now." Therefore the promise of the restoration of the kingdom of God, the restoration of God's covenant with Israel, and the restoration of God's blessings would take place "not many days from now." This is why the apostles ask, "At this time are You restoring the kingdom to Israel?" The apostles are not asking the wrong question, as we may have charged. Jesus had taught the apostles for 40 days about the kingdom of God. The apostles asked the appropriate question: are You restoring the kingdom, the covenant, and the blessings of God now as promised by the prophets?

To prove that the apostles asked the right question, note that Jesus accepted their inquiry. Jesus never had a problem upbraiding the apostles for their lack of spiritual insight. But Jesus does not rebuke the apostles for questioning of restoration of the kingdom of Israel. Rather, Jesus said that it was not for the apostles to know the exact day and time when the restoration would take place. However, this kingdom restoration would begin when the apostles "received the Holy Spirit with power."

Acts 2:33-40

In the first four verses of Acts 2 we read about the Holy Spirit being poured out. In verses 17-21 Peter quoted the words of the prophet Joel to show that the Holy Spirit has been poured out, the proof of which was the apostles' ability to speak in different languages. In verses 32-33 Peter said something very important to our study:

"This Jesus God raised up again, to which we are all witnesses. Therefore having been exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He has poured forth this which you both see and hear."

Notice carefully what Peter said. Jesus had been exalted to the right hand of God and "received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit." We need to ask: what did Jesus receive? The promise of the Holy Spirit has often been defined as miracles. However, it would not make any sense to say that Jesus ascended to the Father, sat down at the right hand of God, and received miraculous gifts. Jesus ascended to the Father and received the kingdom (Acts 2:34-35; 2 Sam. 7:12-16; Dan. 7:13-14; Phil. 2:9-10; 1 Cor. 15:24-28; Eph. 1:21-23; Heb. 4:14-16, 10:12-13; 1 Pet. 3:21-22; Rev. 19:16). As we have noted repeatedly, the promise of the Holy Spirit referred to the restoration of the kingdom, the restoration of the covenant, and the restoration of God's blessings. Peter said that Christ ascended to

the Father, received the kingdom, and has poured out these blessings upon Israel. Peter then argues that the miracle of Acts 2 was the proof that the kingdom had begun, the covenant had been renewed, and the blessings had returned: "He has poured forth this which you both see and hear."

Upon the knowledge that they had crucified the Messiah and that the kingdom had been offered to them, the people asked, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" They knew that the Savior had been crucified. Jesus and John the Baptist had preached that baptism of fire was coming against the disobedient. Peter quoted Joel to make the same point, noting that "the day of the Lord" was coming (Acts 2:20). The people needed to be saved and wanted to know how to enter the kingdom of God and receive God's blessings.

Peter tells the crowd, "Repent and be baptized, each of you, in the name of Jesus the Messiah for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and for your children, and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call."

It is difficult to think that Peter is now speaking about a completely different work of the Holy Spirit. Only three sentences earlier Peter explained that Jesus had received the promise of the Holy Spirit. Peter now tells the crowd that they can receive "the gift of the Holy Spirit." In fact, Peter calls this "the promise" which was offered to them, their children, and those afar off (the Gentiles). It has often been taught that the gift of the Holy Spirit is salvation. However, this explanation does not fit the context. Jesus received the promise of the Holy Spirit and poured it out on the people. Peter says that this promise is offered to them, their children, and those afar off. These are not different promises. Jesus did not ascend to heaven and receive salvation. Jesus received the kingdom. Peter told the people that when they repented and were baptized, they would receive the forgiveness of sins and the promise of the Holy Spirit, that is, entrance into Christ's kingdom, entrance into a covenant relationship with God, and acceptance of the blessings of God. This is the promise of the Holy Spirit available to "as many as the Lord our God will call."

Some may argue that the gift of the Holy Spirit is different from the promise of the Holy Spirit and the baptism of the Holy Spirit. However, we ought to note that Acts makes these phrases synonymous. Acts 1:4 called this event "the promise of the Father." Acts 1:5 called this event "the baptism of the Holy Spirit." Acts 2:33 called the same event the promise of the Holy Spirit and the pouring out of the Holy Spirit ("He has poured out what you see and hear"). Acts 2:38-39 called this event the gift of the Holy Spirit and the promise of the Holy Spirit. We will now look at Acts 10 and the conversion of Cornelius to see how these terms continued to be used interchangeably. These terms are used interchangeably to help us grasp the nature and work of the Holy Spirit.

Acts 10:44-48, 11:15-18

In Acts 10 we see the Holy Spirit come down upon Cornelius. Peter stated that it was the same outpouring that took place at Pentecost: "As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit came down on them, just as on us at the beginning" (Acts 11:15). But notice that this event is called the gift of the Holy Spirit: "All the circumcised believers who came with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also" (Acts 10:45). Further, in Acts 11:16, Peter ties this outpouring to the same words taught by John the Baptist in Matthew 3 and the words of Jesus in Acts 1:4-5. Finally, Peter again refers to this outpouring of the Holy Spirit as "the same gift" that was given in Acts 2 (Acts 11:17).

Peter taught that the entrance into the kingdom of God, a covenant relationship with God, and the blessings of God had been extended to the Gentiles. The Gentiles could also have forgiveness of sins and be part of God's kingdom, just like the Jews. In Acts 2, the miracle of speaking in tongues proved the kingdom had arrived and was being offered to the people of Israel. In the same way, in Acts 10, the miracle of speaking in different languages proved the kingdom was being extended to the Gentiles. In each case, the outpouring of the Spirit was first signaled by the miraculous, after which the people were offered the blessings of the kingdom's promise. The promise of the Holy Spirit, the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and the gift of the Holy Spirit were not promises to perform miracles. The miracles simply proved that the kingdom had been restored, a new covenant had been given (Jeremiah 31:31-34), and the blessings of God would be extended to His people, both Jews and Gentiles.

JESUS' PROMISE TO SEND THE HOLY SPIRIT

How do we explain the miraculous gifts that we see throughout the New Testament? If the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the gift of the Holy Spirit are not references to receiving miraculous gifts, why do we see disciples performing miracles? First, let us remember the purpose of the miracles in what we have analyzed thus far. The miracle at Pentecost in Acts 2 was to show the Jewish people that Christ was on the throne in heaven and the kingdom of God had been restored. In the same way, the miracle upon Cornelius' household in Acts 10 was to show that Gentiles could also enter the kingdom of God. The miracles were proof of the arrival of the kingdom and the resurrected Christ. But there is another work of the Holy Spirit promised by Jesus while He was on the earth:

John 14:25-26. "These things I have spoken to you while abiding with you. But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you."

John 15:26-27. "When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, that is the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify about Me, and you will testify also, because you have been with Me from the beginning."

John 16:12-13. "I have many more things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come."

Not only was the work of the Holy Spirit to usher in the kingdom of God, but Jesus promised that the Spirit would guide the apostles into all truth. Paul verified this work of the Holy Spirit on the apostles:

Ephesians 3:3-5. "The mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I have briefly written above. By reading this you are able to understand my insight about the mystery of the Messiah. This was not made known to people in other generations as it is now revealed to His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit."

The apostles needed a way to prove that they were teaching the words of God since His word had not yet been written and widely distributed. The apostles were teaching the new covenant and the restoration of the kingdom; the miracles verified their words. But not everyone would have this ability. In Acts 8:4-13 we read about the conversion of the Samaritans. Then we are told something interesting in Acts 8:14-17:

"When the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them. When they arrived, they prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit, because the Holy Spirit had not yet come upon any of them; they had simply been baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus. Then Peter and John placed their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit."

Peter said in Acts 2 that anyone who repents and is baptized will have forgiveness of sins and receive the gift of the Holy Spirit as promised by the prophets. The Samaritans were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus, but they had not received the Holy Spirit. Was Peter wrong about how the Holy Spirit was received? Not at all.

Acts 2 revealed that all classes of people would receive miraculous spiritual gifts. We can read 1 Corinthians 12-14 to know what those gifts were and how the Christians in Corinth were using them. By sending Peter and John to Samaria from Jerusalem to give these gifts, we quickly learn that only the apostles had the power to impart the gifts to others. Philip was unable to give the gifts to the Samaritans. Hence the language, "They had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus." Luke is not denigrating baptism or what the Samaritans had done in obedience to have their sins forgiven. Rather, Luke is emphasizing the need for the apostles to bestow miraculous gifts upon the Samaritans because no other disciples could perform the task.

It should be of interest to us that the miraculous gifts of the Spirit centered on the revealing of God's will to the world:

1 Corinthians 12:7-11. "A manifestation of the Spirit is given to each person to produce what is beneficial: to one is given a message of wisdom through the Spirit, to another, a message of knowledge by the same Spirit, to another, faith by the same Spirit, to another, gifts of healing by the one Spirit, to another, the performing of miracles, to another, prophecy, to another, distinguishing between spirits, to another, different kinds of languages, to another, interpretation of languages. But one and the same Spirit is active in all these, distributing to each one as He wills."

The purpose of the miracles was to prove that the words of the speaker were truly from God. Notice the gifts of the Spirit also included "the message of wisdom," "the message of knowledge," "prophecy," "distinguishing between spirits," that is, true or false teachings (see 1 John 4:1), "speaking in different languages," and "interpretation of languages." These gifts center on the revelation of God's will, which is the fulfillment of Jesus' promise that the Holy Spirit would guide into all truth. As we have noted, the Christians in the first century did not have the revealed will of God. The New Testament scriptures did not yet exist. The twelve apostles could not be at all the churches at the same time. Christians in the churches needed to know the will of the Lord so they could be obedient to His laws. Therefore, the work of the apostles in conferring miraculous gifts through the laying on of their hands was necessary in the first century.

Logic would dictate that these gifts would no longer be necessary once the complete will of God had been revealed. Thus, Paul's words in 1 Corinthians 13:8-10, "Love never ends. But as for prophecies, they will come to an end; as for languages, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will come to an end. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when the perfect comes, the partial will come to an end." The miraculous gifts were only necessary for revealing God's will and validating the words of the prophets as authentic. Once the apostles died, the gifts could no longer be given. Within one generation, in the early second century, these gifts would have faded away completely. But the gifts were no longer necessary because God's will had been completely revealed by the end of the first century. Jude tells us that the faith had been delivered to "the saints once for all" (Jude 3).

THE INDWELLING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

There is much made about the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. We need to wash away our preconceived notions and simply allow the scriptures to speak on this matter. Then we can make an honest evaluation about the work of the Holy Spirit dwelling in the Christian. In our last lesson we noticed the scriptures' teaching about the work of the Holy Spirit in revelation of God's will. Jesus made a promise to the apostles that He would send the Holy Spirit, who would guide the apostles into all truth. Peter says that they did not write down their own words, but the very words of God, as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit. Further, Paul said that when people read what the apostles wrote, they would understand the apostles' insights into the mystery of Christ. The scriptures further argue that they are able to make the person of God complete and equipped for every good work. But what is the indwelling of the Holy Spirit? The indwelling is commonly explained to be the inner promptings of the Holy Spirit. We are told that we need to listen to God speaking to us through the Holy Spirit who will help us and tell us what we should do. Is this correct?

The Holy Spirit Dwells In The Christian

The first thing we need to do is show that the scriptures do speak of the Holy Spirit dwelling in the Christian.

Romans 8:9. "You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him."

1 Corinthians 6:19. "Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own?" What we need to do is explain what this means for the Holy Spirit to dwell in us. We might be surprised to find out that the scriptures reveal there are many things that dwell in us.

What Else Dwells In The Christian?

God the Father dwells in us. "What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; as God said, 'I will make my dwelling among them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people'" (2 Corinthians 6:16; ESV). Notice that God says that He dwells within His disciples. I have not yet heard someone argue that God the Father personally dwells within the soul of every believer.

Christ dwells in us. "If Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, yet the spirit is alive because of righteousness" (Romans 8:10). Not only does God dwell in us, but Christ dwells within us. Paul says this again to the Galatians. "I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me" (Galatians 2:20; ESV). Again, I have never heard any argument presented that Christ literally and personally dwells within the soul of every believer, telling the believer what to do. No, these arguments are reserved for the Holy Spirit. Yet, the same language is used to describe the work of the Father and the work of Christ.

Sin can dwell in us. "But now, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me" (Romans 7:17; NKJV). "Now if I do what I will not to do, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me" (Romans 7:20; NKJV).

Paul says that sin can dwell within us. Does Paul mean that sin literally and physically dwells within the Christian, causing us to be unable to do what is right? I have never heard such an argument. So we need to ask an important question: what does it mean for sin to dwell within us? When we answer this, we will know the answer to the Holy Spirit dwelling within us because these two concepts are in the same context in Romans. Sin dwells in us when we allow ourselves to be controlled by the flesh. Sin rules our lives. We are not following God's commands, but we are following our own ways, our own desires, and our own lusts. This is exactly how Paul explains these concepts a little bit later in Romans.

Romans 8:5-11. "For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. 6 To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. 7 For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. 8 Those who are in the flesh cannot please God. 9 You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. 10 But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. 11 If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you."

Notice verse 5 says what it means for sin to dwell within a person: they "set their minds on the things of the flesh." In verse 6 Paul says such a person is "carnally minded." The person has his thoughts on the world. He is fleshly, worldly, and is mindful of the physical. Thus, sin dwells within the person. What does it mean for the Father to dwell within the Christian? What does it mean for Christ to dwell within the believer? What does it mean for the Holy Spirit to dwell in the Christian? Paul explains that those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on spiritual things (vs. 5). Rather than be worldly and carnally minded, the person who has the Spirit of God is spiritually minded (vs. 6).

Please notice that verse 9 says that we are in the Spirit. Does this mean we literally dwell in the Holy Spirit? No, we are talking about a relationship and fellowship that exists between the Holy Spirit and ourselves.

Often, people use Romans 8 to show a personal and literal indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the Christian. But the context is so often neglected. Romans 7 and Romans 8 are not separate letters. Paul is drawing a contrast between the person whose mind is set on the flesh and the person whose mind is set on the spiritual. The person whose mind is on the flesh does things that are hostile toward God. Therefore, sin dwells in that person. However, the person whose mind is set on spiritual things does things that are pleasing to God. Therefore, the Spirit dwells in that person. Paul is making a simple contrast, and is not teaching that the Holy Spirit lives in us and makes decisions for us.

If we can understand how Christ dwells in the Christian, then we can understand how the Holy Spirit dwells in the Christian.

John 15:5-7. "I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing. 6 "If anyone does not abide in Me, he is thrown away as a branch and dries up; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire and they are burned. 7 "If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you."

Notice that if we abide in Christ that Christ's words abide in us. This is how we dwell in Christ and Christ dwells in us. The scriptures are speaking about a relationship that exists between ourselves and God when we let God rule our lives rather than letting sin rule our lives. Notice these parallel statements by Paul, which explains these terms:

Ephesians 5:18-19. "And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord."

Colossians 3:16. "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord."

Notice that in one instance Paul speaks of our need to "be filled with the Spirit" and in another instance calls it letting "the word of Christ dwell in you richly." How is one filled with the Spirit? By letting the word of Christ dwell in each of us richly. How does the Holy Spirit dwell in us? By having the word of Christ dwell in us and rule our lives.

There is nothing mystical about what Paul is saying concerning the Holy Spirit, Christ, or the Father dwelling in us. We do not argue that Christ's presence literally resides in us, causing us to know God's will and make decisions. We do not argue that the Father's presence literally resides in us, causing us to know God's will and make decisions. Why should we change the metaphor and say such things about the Holy Spirit? I believe the only reason we do so is because of the name of the Holy Spirit. The word "spirit" or "ghost" causes us to speak of the Holy Spirit in mystical terms. But the Holy Spirit is just as much of a person as the Father and the Son.

The Holy Spirit is deity, not an active force. The Holy Spirit can be lied to and can be grieved. The Holy Spirit is not a mystical vapor. "Then Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and keep back part of the proceeds from the field? Wasn't it yours while you possessed it? And after it was sold, wasn't it at your disposal? Why is it that you planned this thing in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God!" (Acts 5:3-4; HCSB). I believe that when we erase from our minds some sort of mystical nature from the Holy Spirit and consider Him in the same terms that we think of the Father and the Son, we realize that the Holy Spirit cannot physically and literally dwell within us. Terms are used to refer to the Holy Spirit just like the Father and the Son who dwell in us.

Conclusion

The Spirit dwells in us when we allow the word of God to rule our lives. The Spirit of God dwells in us when we submit our lives to the rule of Jesus Christ. Paul is not saying something mystical. If the Holy Spirit operates in our decisions beyond the scriptures, then we do not need the scriptures to know God's will. If the Spirit tells us what to do, then the scriptures are not able to make us complete and fully equipped for every good work, as Paul argued in 2 Timothy 3:16-17. The scriptures never teach the believer to listen to inward promptings of the Holy Spirit. The scriptures do not teach the Christian to search within oneself for the answers. While this all sounds very spiritual, the scriptures do not teach these things.

MIRACULOUS SPIRITUAL GIFTS

In the last few lessons we have looked at the working of the Holy Spirit. We noticed that the promise of the Holy Spirit, the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and the gift of the Holy Spirit were synonymous terms that described the arrival of the kingdom of God, the offer of a covenant relationship with God, and the offer of God's blessings. Joel prophesied that the miracles would show that these things had arrived and were being offered. The miracles were not promised. The miracles simply proved or confirmed that God had fulfilled His promises. There was also a second work of the Holy Spirit. Jesus promised the apostles that the Holy Spirit would guide the apostles into all truth. The apostles received and spoke the very words of God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit (1 Peter 1:20-21). They wrote down those words so that when we read them, we can understand God's will (Ephesians 3:3-5). Earlier, we examined the scriptures that declare that the Holy Spirit dwells in us. But we also noticed that Christ dwells in us, and God the Father dwells in us. Further, sin can dwell in us when we put our minds on the things of the flesh. By examining the scriptures carefully we see that Paul is not describing a literal, physical indwelling of the Spirit. Rather, Paul is speaking about what is ruling our lives. Does sin rule our lives or does the Spirit rule our lives? Do we set our minds on wickedness or on spiritual things? Do we submit to our own desires or to the law of Christ? This is the contrast Paul is drawing in Romans 7-8.

There is another aspect of the Holy Spirit that we have not addressed yet. The apostles were not the only people doing miracles. We read the first letter to the Corinthians that a number of them had miraculous spiritual gifts. How were the Christians of the first century performing miraculous spiritual gifts? Did these miraculous gifts come upon them at the time of their salvation? Should we expect to be able to perform miraculous gifts today? If not, why are there not miracles being performed today?

The apostles needed a way to prove that what they were teaching were the very words of God. The words of Jesus had not been written down and widely distributed yet. The apostles were teaching about a new covenant and restoration of the kingdom, which were the fulfillment of the words of the prophets. The miracles verified their words. I think it is important to see that not everyone would have this ability, according to the words of Paul. Paul told the Ephesians that when they read the scriptures, they could understand Paul's insight into the mystery of Christ that he had received through the Holy Spirit. Remembering this other work of the Holy Spirit is important when reading through the book of Acts.

In Acts 8:4-13 we read about the Samaritans listening to the preaching of Philip about the kingdom of God. Then we are told something interesting in Acts 8:14-17:

"When the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them. 15 When they arrived, they prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit, 16 because the Holy Spirit had not yet come upon any of them; they had simply been baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus. 17 Then Peter and John placed their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit."

By sending Peter and John to Samaria from Jerusalem to give these miraculous spiritual gifts, we quickly learn that only the apostles had the power to give these gifts to another person. There is no reason for Peter and John to travel to Samaria unless Philip was unable to give the Samaritans the miraculous gifts of the Spirit. Hence the language, "they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus." Luke is not denigrating baptism or what the Samaritans had done in obedience to have their sins forgiven. Rather, Luke is emphasizing the need for the apostles to come to bestow the miraculous works upon the

Samaritans, because no other disciples can perform the task. Remember that the apostles had previously laid their hands upon Philip (Acts 6:5-6) and Philip was performing miracles (Acts 8:6-7). However, Philip could not bestow miraculous spiritual gifts on the Samaritans. The apostles were needed.

This point is explicitly stated in the next verse: "Now when Simon saw that the Spirit was given through the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money, saying, 'Give me this power also, so that anyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit'" (Acts 8:18-19; ESV). Notice that Simon explicitly observes that the apostles had to lay their hands on people. Simon was a Christian at this point (Acts 8:13), but he could not lay hands on others to give them the ability to perform miraculous spiritual gifts. Only the apostles had this ability and Simon tries to purchase this ability from the apostles.

Since only the apostles could transfer miraculous spiritual gifts to others through the laying on of hands, then we can see when miraculous gifts stopped. When the apostles died, the gifts could no longer be transferred. When those who had received the miraculous spiritual gifts through the laying on of hands died, spiritual gifts would stop. Anyone who claims to be able to perform miracles speaks against the scriptures since only the apostles could give such abilities to a Christian.

Peter said in Acts 2 that anyone who repented and was baptized would have the forgiveness of sins and receive the gift of the Holy Spirit promised by the prophets. The Samaritans are baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus, but they had not received the Holy Spirit. Was Peter wrong about how the Holy Spirit was received? Not at all. We need to see that Luke is recording the other work of the Holy Spirit. Peter taught that when a person repented and was baptized, he or she received the forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit. The Samaritans were baptized but did not receive miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit until the apostles laid their hands on them. Therefore, the gift of the Holy Spirit is not miraculous. Since the promise of the Holy Spirit and the baptism of the Holy Spirit are synonymous with the gift of the Holy Spirit, then the baptism and promise of the Holy Spirit was not the promise to perform miracles.

Why were miraculous spiritual gifts necessary? What was the purpose of having Christians performing these gifts in the first century? We need to remember the situation that we explained at the beginning of the lesson. The revealed will of God had not been written down by the apostles yet. How would the first century Christians know what God's will was? How would first century Christians prove to the Jews and to the Greeks that Christ had been raised from the dead, the kingdom had come, and a new covenant had been established? It should be of interest to us that the miraculous gifts of the Spirit centered on the revealing of God's will to the world:

1 Corinthians 12:7-11. "A manifestation of the Spirit is given to each person to produce what is beneficial: 8 to one is given a message of wisdom through the Spirit, to another, a message of knowledge by the same Spirit, 9 to another, faith by the same Spirit, to another, gifts of healing by the one Spirit, 10 to another, the performing of miracles, to another, prophecy, to another, distinguishing between spirits, to another, different kinds of languages, to another, interpretation of languages. 11 But one and the same Spirit is active in all these, distributing to each one as He wills."

The purpose of the miracles was to prove that the words of the speaker were truly from God. Notice the gifts of the Spirit also included "the message of wisdom," "the message of knowledge," "prophecy," "distinguishing between spirits," that is, true or false teachings (see 1 John 4:1), "speaking in different languages," and "interpretation of languages." These gifts center on the revelation of God's will, which is the fulfillment of Jesus' promise that the Holy Spirit would guide into all truth. As we have rightly

recognized, the Christians in the first century did not have the revealed will of God yet. The New Testament did not exist yet. There were only twelve apostles, who could not be at all the churches at the same time, though the apostles traveled extensively. Christians in the churches needed to know what the will of the Lord is so they could be obedient to His laws. Therefore, the outpouring of these miraculous gifts was necessary. These miraculous gifts were imparted through the laying on of the apostles' hands.

Logic would dictate that these gifts would no longer be necessary once the complete will of God had been revealed. Thus, Paul's words in 1 Corinthians 13:8-10, "Love never ends. But as for prophecies, they will come to an end; as for languages, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will come to an end. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when the perfect comes, the partial will come to an end." The miraculous gifts were only necessary to know what God's will was and to validate their teachings as the authentic word of the Lord. We understand this to be true with the fact that only the apostles could pass the miraculous gifts through the laying on of their hands. Once the apostles died, the gifts could no longer be given. Within one generation, in the early second century, these gifts would have faded away completely, because those who had received the miraculous gifts through the laying on of the apostles' hands could not transfer the gift to another. Once these died, the miraculous gifts ceased. But the gifts were no longer necessary because God's will had been completely revealed by the end of the first century. Jude tells us that the faith had been delivered to "the saints once for all" (Jude 3).

Hebrews 2:3-4. "This salvation, which was first announced by the Lord, was confirmed to us by those who heard him. God also testified to it by signs, wonders and various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will."

Mark 16:20. "Then the disciples went out and preached everywhere, and the Lord worked with them and confirmed his word by the signs that accompanied it."

Both the writer of Hebrews and the Gospel of Mark show that the miraculous gifts were to confirm that their words were the words of God.

Conclusion

Jesus made the promise that the Holy Spirit would come and guide the apostles into all truth (John 14-16). We see the apostles are given that ability from the Holy Spirit. "For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit" (2 Peter 1:21; ESV). The apostles were able to transfer the ability to perform miraculous gifts by laying their hands upon various disciples (Acts 8:18). These miraculous gifts were about the revealing of God's will to the people because God's will had not been written for all to know yet (Ephesians 3:3-5). These miraculous gifts ceased for two reasons: (1) The gifts were no longer necessary. Once the word of God had been recorded, miracles were not needed to know or validate God's word. The scriptures are now the tool to know God's will and validate our teachings. (2) The gifts could not be transferred. Since disciples could not transfer these miraculous gifts to other disciples, when the recipients of the gifts died, the miraculous gifts ended with them. One proof is the silence in the writings of the church fathers in the early centuries who do not speak about people performing miracles or knowing God's will through miraculous gifts. These gifts died when those early disciples died.

THE HOLY SPIRIT



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