

The Promises of the Gift of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament

by Arno Clemens Gaebelein

Arno Clemens Gaebelein preaches about Moses' desire for the Spirit of God to help bear the burden of the people, highlighting the importance of the Holy Spirit in fulfilling Israel's calling to be a holy nation and a kingdom of priests. The Old Testament prophecies in Isaiah, Ezekiel, Joel, and Zechariah foretell the future outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon Israel, leading to their national cleansing, new birth, and sanctification. These prophecies emphasize that the Spirit will be given to Israel in the day of their restoration and manifestation of the Lord, awaiting their repentance and recognition of the once rejected Messiah.

Description

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Transcript

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Israel" - heading: "A. The outpouring of the Spirit in Isaiah 32:13-18" - heading: "B. The promise of the Spirit in Isaiah 44:2-5" - heading: "C. The national conversion and restoration of Israel in Ezekiel 36" - heading: "IV. The Gift of the Spirit in Ezekiel 36" - heading: "A. The cleansing of Israel" - heading: "B. The new birth of the nation" - heading: "C. The gift of the Spirit" - heading: "V. Conclusion" - heading: "A. The promise of the gift of the Holy Spirit is confined to Israel" - heading: "B. The Spirit will be given to Israel in the day of their restoration" faq: - q: "What is the significance of the 70 men of the elders receiving the Spirit?" a: "The 70 men of the elders receiving the Spirit signifies the burden of the people being too heavy for Moses, and the need for the Spirit to be given to others to help bear the burden." - q: "What is the condition for Israel to be a holy nation and kingdom of priests?" a: "The condition for Israel to be a holy nation and kingdom of priests is redemption and the Holy Spirit." - q: "What is the promise of the Spirit in Isaiah 32:13-18?" a: "The promise of the Spirit in Isaiah 32:13-18 is the outpouring of the Spirit, which will bring peace, righteousness, and a fruitful land." - q: "What is the significance of the gift of the Spirit in Ezekiel 36?" a: "The gift of the Spirit in Ezekiel 36 signifies the cleansing of Israel, the new birth of the nation, and the gift of the Spirit." - q: "Who will receive the gift of the Spirit in the Old Testament?" a: "The gift of the Spirit in the Old Testament is confined to Israel, and will be given to them in the day of their restoration." quotes: - "Would God that all the Lord's people were prophets and that the Lord would put His Spirit upon them." - "The Spirit is poured out from on high." - "I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thy offspring." applicationPoints: - "The Holy Spirit is necessary for Israel to be a holy nation and kingdom of priests." - "The gift of the Spirit is a promise for Israel's restoration and conversion." - "The Holy Spirit will be given to Israel in the day of their restoration, bringing peace, righteousness, and a fruitful land." keywords: - "Holy Spirit" - "Old Testament" - "Israel" - "Redemption" - "Law Covenant" - "Promise" - "Gift" - "Spirit" - "Restoration" - "Conversion" ---

WHEN Moses complained to the Lord on account of Israel murmuring at Taberah, and confessed that the burden of the people was too heavy for him, the Lord told him to gather seventy men of the elders, and that He would give them the Spirit, who rested upon himself, so that they might bear the burden with him. When it was done the elders prophesied. Two of the seventy had not gone outside of the camp to the tabernacle, Eldad and Medad, but they also prophesied in the camp. Then Joshua rushed up to Moses and informed him of this fact, adding a demand, "My lord Moses, forbid them." Moses answered him, "Enviest thou for my sake? Would God that all the Lord's people were prophets and that the Lord would put His Spirit upon them" (Num. 11:1-29).

Moses knew that the only remedy for the unbelieving and complaining people was the Spirit of God. But in his wish he expressed something more. It becomes in later prophecy a definite promise for the nation God has chosen as His earthly people, that they were to receive the Holy Spirit and that the whole nation should be Spirit-filled. In Exodus 19:5-6 the calling of Israel is stated. They are to be, says the Lord, "A peculiar treasure unto Me (see Matt. 13:44) above all people, for all the earth is Mine. And ye shall be to Me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation." In Deut. vii:6 we read, "For thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God; the Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto Himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth." Two things are necessary for the realization of this calling, redemption and the Holy Spirit. It will be noticed that the calling stated in the nineteenth chapter of Exodus is conditional. It is in connection with the inauguration of the law-covenant. We read, "If ye will obey My voice, and keep My covenant, then ye shall be to Me a peculiar treasure." As they were uncircumcised in their hearts, they could not keep His covenants nor walk in His ways as a nation. If their calling is to be realized they must have a circumcised heart (Deut. 10:6), in other words, be born again, which is the result of redemption and the Spirit of God. The law covenant says nothing about redemption and a circumcised

heart, because by the works of the law no one can be justified, nor receive the blessings of redemption. Neither does the law covenant promise to him who keeps the law the gift of the Holy Spirit (see Gal. 3:2).

The prophetic Word reveals the great future of the people Israel, when they shall be a holy nation, a kingdom of priests, a nation born again, a nation filled with the Spirit, a nation which will show forth the Lord's glory. This future will be realized through grace, when the remnant of Israel in the latter days turns to the once rejected Messiah, the pierced One upon whom they look (Zech. 12:10). In connection with their future conversion as a nation, the fulfillment of the many promises of earthly glory, such as their restoration to their land and the kingdom, the gift of the Holy Spirit is prominently mentioned.

We shall examine briefly certain passages upon the understanding of which a great deal depends if we want to grasp the teachings of the New Testament as to the Holy Spirit.

Isaiah 32:13-18

The first Scripture we select is Isaiah 32:13-18.

"Upon the land of my people shall come up thorns and briers, yea, upon all the houses of joy in the joyous city; because the palaces shall be forsaken, the multitude of the city shall be left, the forts and towers shall be dens for ever, a joy of wild asses, a pasture of flocks; until the Spirit be poured upon us from on high, and the wilderness be a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be counted for a forest. Then judgment shall dwell in the wilderness, and righteousness remain in a fruitful field. And the work of righteousness shall be peace, and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance forever. And my people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in dwellings, and in quiet resting places."

We notice that this passage begins with a prophecy announcing that the curse of the Lord would rest upon Israel's land. Thorns and briers, symbolical of the curse, would change Israel's land into a wilderness, while the joyous city would be forsaken. This, however, is not to be the permanent condition of the land. The time is to come when the wilderness will become again a fruitful field, when peace, the work of righteousness will prevail, when the people scattered and driven about among the nations, shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, in sure dwellings, and quiet resting places. The great change will come, when "the Spirit is poured out from on high." Inasmuch as the national and earthly blessings for Israel and Israel's land have not yet come, and these blessings can only be realized by the Spirit poured upon them, there is yet to come the outpouring of the Spirit of God upon that people.

Isaiah 44:2-5

We cite another passage from Isaiah, chapter 44: 2-5.

"Thus saith the Lord that made thee, and formed thee from the womb, who will help thee; Fear not, O Jacob, my servant; and thou Jeshurun, whom I have chosen. For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground. I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thy offspring. And they shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the watercourses. One shall say, I am the Lord's; and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob; and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord, and surname himself by the name of Israel." This passage looks forward to the day when Israel is converted and knows the Lord. The outpouring of the Spirit of God is here likewise a leading feature.

Ezekiel 36

Ezekiel 36 is a great chapter dealing with Israel's future restoration blessings, and with their new birth as a nation before the kingdom is restored unto them. When our Lord said to Nicodemus in the third chapter of John's Gospel, "Art thou the teacher in Israel and knowest not these things?", He had the thirty-sixth chapter of Ezekiel in His mind. There is a beautiful chronological order in the closing chapters of Ezekiel. In the thirty-sixth chapter the national conversion of Israel is predicted.

In the next chapter we behold their national restoration, as seen in the vision of the valley of dry bones. The union of the house of Judah with the house of Israel follows. In chapters 38 and 39 the prophetic history is recorded of the last invasion of Israel's land by Gog and Magog and their complete defeat. From the fortieth chapter to the end we hear of the great temple to be erected during the millennium, of the division of the land and the glory of the earthly Jerusalem.

In the thirty-sixth chapter the people Israel are first of all reminded of their past history of sin and shame, as well as the judgment which the Lord meted out to them as a nation. "Wherefore I poured my fury upon them for the blood that they had shed upon the land, and for their idols wherewith they had polluted it; and I scattered them among the nations, and they were dispersed through the countries; according to their way and according to their doings I Judged them. And when they entered unto the nations, whither they went, they profaned my holy name, when they said to them, These are the people of the Lord, and are gone forth out of this land" (verses 18-20).

The dispersion which is mentioned here is not the Babylonian captivity, but it is the great dispersion among all the nations. Then the Lord reveals their future. He does not say that they have repented and have become righteous by keeping the law, but He is gracious and -merciful unto them that His great name may be sanctified, that the world might know the depths of His mercy. The first promise as to their future is contained in verse 24, "For I will take you from among the nations, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land."

This is their restoration and it will be seen that it is accomplished by the Lord Himself and not by their own political efforts, as we witness today in Zionism. The Lord who made a covenant with Abraham and promised to him and to his seed the land, which he never possessed, will bring them again to their land. Next we read of their cleansing. "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean; from all your filthiness, and from your idols, will I cleanse you."

It is folly to quote this verse, as it has been done, to show that sprinkling is the only scriptural mode of baptism. It has nothing whatever to do with baptism nor with the church. The foolish spiritualizing of the national promises which belong to Israel has worked, and is still working, untold harm. The Lord in His grace will cleanse them from their sins and defilement. As Paul states by the Spirit of God, "This is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins" (Rom. 11:27).

The prophetic Word contains many promises as to their national cleansing. Their cleansing is followed by the new birth of the nation, "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you, and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh." This is the circumcision of their heart (Deut. 30:6). Next to the promise of their rebirth, when their iniquity will be removed in one day (Zech. 3:9) and the nation will be born in a day (Isa. 66:7-8), we find the gift of the Spirit.

"And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them. And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers, and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God." The Holy Spirit is bestowed upon them as a nation and the result will be their

sanctification and walk of righteousness. Over and over again in this chapter we read the divine "I will," the word of sovereign grace. The remnant of Israel living in that day will be saved, blessed, cleansed, born again and filled with the Spirit by grace.

Ezekiel 39

When we turn to the last verse of the thirty-ninth chapter we find the statement again that the Lord has gathered them out of all nations and brought them back to their land. Then the final assurance, "Neither will I hide my face any more from them, for I have poured out my Spirit upon the house of Israel, saith the Lord God." No intelligent believer will claim that this has taken place, nor will any one who divides the Word of Truth rightly say, as we read in commentaries, that it will never be fulfilled in Israel, but has found its fulfillment in the church.

Joel 2

The second chapter in the prophecy of Joel contains the most outstanding prediction and promise as to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in connection with the chosen people of God, the nation Israel. We refer the reader to our larger exposition of the Book of Joel, in which the writer examines every detail of this interesting prophecy and shows its relation to the coming Yom Jehovah, the Day of the Lord. The prophecy of the outpouring of the Spirit is found in chapter 2:28-32, "And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions. And also upon the servants and the handmaids in those days will I pour out my Spirit. And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, fire, and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the Lord come. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered, for in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the Lord hath said, and in the remnant whom the Lord shall call."

The context shows when this great prophecy will be fulfilled. That it is a Jewish national promise is so plainly written in this chapter that one must be willfully blind in not seeing it. The first part of the chapter gives a prophetic description of the coming great tribulation, the time of Jacob's trouble, preceding the Day of the Lord, which brings the visible manifestation of the Lord for the deliverance of the remnant of Israel. Jerusalem is in great distress once more. Then a remnant turns to the Lord and calls upon Him. He answers and pities His people. The enemy from the north, who had invaded the land, is repulsed. The Lord does great things. The former rain and the latter rain comes upon the land, and what the locusts had devoured, devastating the land, will be restored. It is Bible interpretation gone to seed when a certain woman-leader in Los Angeles claims that all this means the church and that she herself has a prominent part in the fulfillment of this prophecy. Such egotism is obnoxious to every true child of God. The prophecy as to the great outpouring of the Spirit is closely related to the Day of the Lord. It can therefore not be fulfilled as long as this day has not come. Here, again, these latter day delusionists, a good many of whom are women, claim fulfillment. They try to justify their speaking "in tongues," usurping authority over man, taking the place as teacher, by the passage before us, because it says, "your daughters shall prophesy." They claim to have visions; we do not doubt that they are visions, but certainly not the -visions of God, but lying visions. All these delusions might have been avoided and also with it the havoc and heartaches among a certain class of Christians, if the context had been studied. They would have discovered that all this has nothing whatever to do with the church of Jesus Christ and with the present age. We mention the quotation of this passage by Peter on the day of Pentecost in the chapter on "The Holy Spirit in the Book

of Acts."

Joel 3

The third chapter in Joel shows what else will take place in that day, when Israel is saved and the Holy Spirit is poured out upon them. We give one more passage.

Zechariah 12:10

In Zechariah 12:10 we read: "And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplications, and they shall look upon Me, whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for Him, as one that mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for Him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn." This also is future and its fulfillment awaits the day when they shall see Him coming in the clouds of heaven and shall know Him by the prints of the nails in His hands and His feet.

We give a summary. The promise of the gift of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament is confined to the people Israel. The Spirit of God will be given to them in the day of their restoration, when the Lord is manifested. The promise is therefore unfulfilled. Nowhere do we read in the Old Testament that the Spirit of God is to be given to the Gentiles, that Gentiles are to be united with believing Hebrews in one body and that the middle wall of partition was to be broken down. Nor do we read the promise in the prophets that believing sinners should receive the Spirit of Sonship, by whom they are enabled to cry "Abba, Father," that their bodies become the temples of the Holy Spirit. Not a word is said, furthermore, about the Holy Spirit sealing the believer until the day of redemption, and that He is the earnest of the purchased possession, abiding in the believer. Nor is there a word as to the gifts of the Spirit and the unity of the Spirit. Old Testament believers were visited by the Spirit and guided as well as helped by Him, but the teachings of the New Testament concerning the Spirit, and the blessings and relationships, all the results of the finished work of Christ on the cross, were unknown to them.

We are now prepared to examine the different references in the New Testament Scriptures dealing with the Holy Spirit. What we have written as to the relation of Israel to the Holy Spirit we shall have occasion to mention again.

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