

The Gift of the Spirit

by H.J. Vine

The gift of the Holy Spirit is a vital part of the believer's life, sealing them, making them a member of the body of Christ, and guiding them into all truth.

Scripture: John 7:39, John 14:15, Acts 2:1, 1 Corinthians 6:19, Ephesians 1:13

Topics: "Holy Spirit", "Sanctification"

Description

H.J. Vine preaches on the significance of the Holy Spirit in early preaching, emphasizing its fulfillment of prophecy and role in uniting believers into one body. The outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost marked the beginning of this era, with Peter referencing Joel's prophecy. The Spirit's presence empowers believers for witness and sanctification, serving as a seal of faith in Christ and vitalizing the assembly as the body of Christ. The Spirit guides believers into truth, glorifying the Son and demonstrating sin, righteousness, and judgment.

Transcript

Answer to Correspondence--Why was the gift of the Holy Spirit made so prominent in the early preaching?

The question raised is an important one. Prominence was necessarily given to the gift of the Spirit at the beginning, for that had been the subject of prophecy, and godly souls rightly expected this outpouring; and when at Pentecost some mocked because of the stirring scenes and marvellous manifestations connected with the Spirit's presence, and others amazed and in perplexity asked what it all meant, Peter stood up with the eleven and exclaimed, 'it was just the sort of thing the prophet Joel had foretold, (Acts 2:1-17). It was not, however, till later, as we shall see, that the truth of the Spirit forming the saints of the present time into one body was unfolded. The full fulfilment of Joel 2:28-32 is yet future, when God will take up Israel again.

Before ascending to the right hand of God the Lord Jesus also spoke of the coming of the Spirit, and, in a special way, as giving power for witness.

At the beginning the Holy Spirit came upon about one hundred and twenty from Christ glorified, and the effects of His presence were wonderfully manifested, as we have said. Passing over the present period when the assembly is being builded by the rejected Son of Man, the Spirit will be given in the abundance of blessing indicated by the prophets; and "the powers" of that "age to come," which accompanied the Lord and His apostles (Heb. 2:4; 6:5), shall publicly obtain in that glorious time. Meanwhile, those who

have believed on Christ are indwelt by the Spirit of God, and are thus vitally united one to another and to their glorified Head in heaven, "for by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body." Moreover, it is important to remember, the body of each individual who has received the Spirit is the temple of the Holy Ghost; therefore it is to be used in sanctification, and for God's glory (1 Cor. 6:19-20).

Promise had been made that the gift of the Spirit should take place; but, as long as the Lord Jesus was on earth, that promise remained unfulfilled, for redemption had not been secured; and we are told, "the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified" (John 7:39); but it was said, the Father would send Him; also the Son would send Him; and, He would Himself come (John 14:26; 15:26; 16:13). Thus the Trinity was immediately concerned in that great event, which was fulfilled at Pentecost, when the hundred and twenty were "baptized with the Holy Spirit," when they received "the promise of the Father" of which Christ had spoken. Correctly speaking, that was the gift of the Spirit. He was given to believing Jews at that time. The gift was afterwards extended to believing Samaritans, who were a mixed people (Acts 8:12-17), and then to pure Gentiles (10:44). This extension is explained by Peter in chapter 11:15, "The Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning"; and again, "God gave them the like gift as He did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ" (11:17). It was not a fresh baptism of the Spirit, but the extension of it through Peter's ministry; whereas, the baptism at Pentecost was direct, without any man's ministry.

There are contrasts which should be noticed in these three cases. They show that there is no rule to be laid down. The one hundred and twenty had evidently been baptized with water during the Lord's life on earth, long before they received the Spirit. The Samaritans, heard the gospel through Philip and were baptized, but not till Peter and John visited them did they receive the Spirit.

On the other hand, He came upon the Gentiles, in the house of Cornelius, while Peter was preaching before they were baptized.

An exceptional instance during the early transitional period is recorded in Acts 19:1-7. Paul found about twelve men who had heard and been baptized with John the Baptist's baptism--the baptism of repentance. The Apostle spoke to them, and baptized them to the name of the Lord Jesus. The Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied. They were previously quite ignorant of the gift of the Spirit, for when Paul asked them, "Did ye receive the Holy Spirit when ye believed?" they replied, "We did not even hear if the Holy Spirit was come." There is no ground in this case for saying that there are true believers on Christ today who have not received the Spirit at all; for it is Christ who is preached now, and not the baptism of John; that is, where the gospel is really preached.

The above cases are all special, but we are told in Ephesians 1:13, what is the normal way today. The word of truth, the gospel of salvation is preached, and those who hear and believe in Christ are sealed by the Spirit. Immediately there is faith in Christ thus presented the Spirit seals the believer in Him. The reading should be, not "after that ye believed," but simply "having believed." It is important to see this. The believer who receives the Spirit now is consequently made a vital member of the assembly of which Christ is the Head. He is a member of His body, belonging not merely to a religious organization, but to a living organism--the body of Christ. "There is one body and one Spirit." The truth as to this was given of God later, through the Apostle to the Gentiles. We do well to understand and respond to this inclusive truth.

The Lord Jesus, however, foretold the normal character of His mission in John 14:15-16. He should be for us that other Comforter, the Spirit of Truth during the absence of the Son; He should bear witness to

Christ; and, whilst on the one hand He brings demonstration of sin, righteousness and judgment; on the other, He guides believers into all truth, not speaking from Himself, but glorifying the Son, and showing us those things of which the Son is the Centre.

The Holy Ghost is still here. His infinite power and energy are unabated, He indwells each individual who is redeemed by the precious blood of Christ. He glorifies the Son of God, not speaking from Himself, He still uses the preaching of our Lord Jesus Christ. Men, women and children who are reached are born of water--the word--and the Spirit. Repentance has been granted to them unto life eternal. Salvation and forgiveness are theirs through our Lord Jesus Christ; and, if rightly directed and instructed, they will grow in grace and deepen in the knowledge of Himself; progressing in the understanding of the blessings and the acceptance which is theirs in Him; realizing in a positive way their oneness with all saints--"for by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body"; rejoicing, in spite of defective preaching and wrong teaching, that they are complete in Christ, who is above all; boasting in Him, notwithstanding all ecclesiastical pride, tyranny, or failure, for He is the Head of the assembly, the body which includes every true believer. He gave Himself for the assembly. He is coming to present it to Himself all glorious; and, while we long to see Him, and the Spirit and the bride say, Come--may there be an overflowing Spirit-given testimony to a needy world, saying, "Whosoever will let him take the water of life freely!" The word of the Son of God abides still: "He that believes on ME, as the Scripture has said, out of his belly shall flow RIVERS of living water. This He spake of THE SPIRIT."

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