

## about this book . . .

As one who sees great value in the gifts of the Spirit, including tongues, yet as one who does not hold a Pentecostal view of the question, Bingham stands in a unique bridging position—one which has enabled him to speak to those on both sides. His thesis in this book is an attempt to build a bridge—and an excellent attempt at that—but whether those on either bank will trust themselves to walk on it remains to be seen. The security of the bank is often more favoured than the uncertainty of a crossing!

The other major contribution of this book lies in its suggestion that prime evidence of the coming of the Spirit is love. Now this is not a new concept, of course. But the way in which Bingham argues his case is, to me at least, different and persuasive. In other words, we may justly expect increased effectiveness as the result of baptism in the Spirit (i.e. power) but we should also expect improved relationships (i.e. love). Hence, the early church's immediate response to Pentecost was to continue in fellowship and to share their goods. Similarly, Romans 5:5 points out how love is poured into our hearts by the Spirit.

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*Geoffrey Bingham is an Anglican minister. His experience as soldier, prisoner of war, farmer, missionary, writer, teacher and family man, as well as theologian, has given him grounds for writing material which is Australian in tone, and relevant to the society in which we live.*

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# SPIRIT-BAPTISM: SPIRIT-LIVING

by **Geoffrey Bingham**

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

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**SPIRIT-BAPTISM:**

**SPIRIT-LIVING**

**By Geoffrey Bingham**

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FOREWORD

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***This is the Day  
of the Spirit***

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When Pentecost came a radical change took place in man’s history. Whilst that day has scarcely been noticed by the secular powers, it was a day of deep and rich significance. Peter described it in terms of Joel’s prophecies as being the last days, a new era which will be climaxed by ‘the great and notable day of the Lord’. These last days, then, must lead up to the great Last Day, i.e. the Day of the Lord.

Whether we realize it or not, we are living in the last days, and they represent momentous times, especially if we can understand their prophetic presentation in the Book of the Revelation. The intention of this book is not to enter into the current polemic between schools of thought concerning what has been termed ‘the Baptism in the Holy Spirit’. In fact it may seem strange that a book

such as this does not raise the question directly. It is, of course, raised implicitly.

As the writer of this book, I confess my inability to make a reconciliation of the views on the subject held by extreme right and left wings. Nor do I think a reconciliation can be made by anyone. This has always led me to believe that the answer cannot lie in an attempted reconciliation, or in continued debate, but in a fresh approach to the subject, namely the one in which I believe all its elements are rooted, that of the Kingdom of God. I am frankly astonished that these two wings seldom, if ever, seek to take the entire perspective of the Scriptures and so put the argument into its true focus. The subject is too often treated atomistically. It is hoped that in some way this book may prove helpful in enlarging the perspective of the subject.

As suggested, the question of contemporary Pentecostalism and the Charismatic Movement (often called the Renewal Movement) has not been raised. One reason is that Christians seem bent on placing a writer or theologian into one school or the other. My weakness (may it even be strength) is that I see the excellencies of the two main schools of thought in regard to the nature, meaning and mode of the Spirit-baptism they discuss. One of the most vigorous movements in the world today is the Pentecostal-Charismatic growth. Biblically-oriented, faithful to ideas of biblical inspiration, and insistent upon the proclamation of the Gospel in homelands and missionary situations, it has burgeoned out in an amazing fashion. It has a robust life, a good press, and is determined in its goals. It cannot be written off on charges of mere enthusiasm. This, of course, does not mean that its rationalizations of faith and

practice are necessarily correct.

Those churches known as 'mainline' and 'orthodox' also have their problems. Theological ideas and fashions have changed rapidly over the past century. Some of the churches are in confusion. Others follow fairly fixed traditional patterns, both in faith and practice. Others are zealous for the faith and see the Pentecostal-Charismatic Movement as a dangerous one, and they are highly critical of the doctrine held relating to Spirit-baptism. In some cases they see the practice of glossolalia as even demonic. Those who do not hold with such inflexible opposition they suspect to be in sympathy with the churches they oppose, even calling them 'crypto-charismatics'. It is not helpful when the atmosphere is so volatile.

Thoughtful theologians who also do not lack grace have been able to see the reasons why the debate commenced and why it continues. Some of the reasons are not always theological in nature. Books have been written of an eirenic nature, and because of this literature and counsel, some of opposite camps have themselves come to take a more understanding view of the differences. We are all in danger of an incipient sectarianism, as Paul so ably shows us in I Corinthians, chapter 3. In writing this book I have tried to avoid unnecessary debate and to emphasize those things which most Christians hold. At the same time I have hoped that the angle from which the materials under consideration have been approached may provide new insights, and even corrections, to the thinking of some who are deeply interested and involved in Spirit-baptism and Spirit-living.

It is hoped that the materials used may be of personal and devotional profit to us all. Primarily the subject we



discuss relates to us as persons and as the Body of Christ. Such elements were never intended to divide, but rather to unite us in the bonds of love and the true fellowship of the Spirit.

By way of explanation, let me say that the first section of the book was a monograph (Living Faith Study No. 36) originally published under the title, *The True Baptism in the Holy Spirit*. Requests had been made to produce it in book form. It was then thought sensible to go on to the subject of living in the Spirit—the natural outcome of being baptized by Christ our Lord in (or, with) the Spirit.

In hope that no one will approach the book in a polemical spirit, and that it will prove, as I have said, of personal and devotional value.

*Geoffrey Bingham*

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## SECTION ONE

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# ***SPIRIT- BAPTISM***

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# 1

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## ***Introduction to the Subject***

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There can be no doubt that the subject is a fascinating one—especially in today’s climate when the person and work of the Holy Spirit is so much to the fore. The work and ministry of the Spirit is of prime importance in this age of Messiah, the conquering King, for the Spirit is his *alter ego* in the world.

We believe that the importance given to the baptism of the Spirit is reasonable, indeed right and proper, but it may well be that *the theology* of the Spirit lacks thoughtfulness and, often, biblical veracity. That is why we need books which act as correctives, and we trust this present book fulfils that role.

The approach to the subject is linked with a history of development of the idea of justification, sanctification, and empowerment for preaching the Gospel. In other

words, we must trace our approach to the subject of Spirit-baptism for some centuries—at least back to the Reformation. This we will now proceed, briefly, to do.

### **A Short History of the Subject**

Unless we trace the roots of the current debate from its origins in church history, we may find ourselves speedily embroiled in its ‘either-or’ complex. It is a fact of church history that the debate at the time of the Reformation, roughly speaking, was between ‘works-righteousness’ and ‘faith-righteousness’, i.e. justification. The great doctrine of justification was expounded, and when espoused, was the way of Christian liberty. However, a form of antinomianism also arose as a result of emphasis on this doctrine of justification. As a reaction to this the practice and theology of Pietism arose. This demanded the living proofs of true regeneration by holiness and piety of life. Thus emphasis came to be placed upon the new birth and experimental holiness. The Wesleyan revival of the eighteenth century had its roots in this pietistic tradition, and so the emphasis on holiness increased and what Wesley called ‘the perfection of love’. Out of this emphasis the holiness churches of the latter part of the nineteenth century were born. They spoke of a second definitive experience which they called ‘entire sanctification’.

At the close of the nineteenth century and the opening of the twentieth, the Pentecostal movement arose. Quite demonstrable experiences took place, these often being accompanied by glossolalia. This definitive experience was called ‘the baptism in the Holy Spirit’, and it related to power to witness. Holiness churches had come to

terms with the new phenomenon. Some kept to holiness as their primary emphasis and insisted that the baptism in (or, of) the Spirit was for holiness. Some opted for three experiences (regeneration, holiness and power), whilst some truncated them to two. Those in the tradition of Reformation theology denied any but one experience or happening, namely that of regeneration. Many in the Reformed tradition also looked to outpourings of the Spirit upon the church, this being rather in the line of revival than a personal ‘charismatic’ experience for any single member of the church.

It may well be possible that these views can be reconciled, especially with a little patience and working at the text of Scripture. Nevertheless it may also be possible that by tackling the subject in this ‘either-or’ way the basic point and purpose of this Spirit-baptizing may have been obscured, namely that the baptizing is there to make God’s people one, and drawing them together in love, to send them out as the people of God that they might witness to Christ and proclaim his Kingdom.

Whilst the ‘either-or’ debate is carried on with some vehemence, there may be cause to think that both sides of the debate show a trifle of uneasiness, not because the theological arguments of both sides are strong, but because there are flaws in the way those two sides go about establishing their theological rationales. To cast off one or both of these views is not an easy matter, but we will have to do just this if we would see ‘truly’ what this Spirit-baptizing is all about.

# 2

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## ***The Term 'Baptism in the Holy Spirit'***

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It may seem trivial to point out that no such term exists explicitly in the Scripture. The term is nounal, whereas references to this matter are generally verbal. That is, 'He *will baptize* you with the Holy Spirit and with fire'; 'Not many days hence you *will be baptized* in the Holy Spirit'. Descriptions of the event are descriptions of an action. Hence it would be more correct to ask, 'Have you *been baptized* in the Holy Spirit?', rather than, 'Have you *received* (or, *had*) the baptism in the Holy Spirit?' It is not a *thing* but an event or a happening. This fact makes it more attractive than thinking of it as a 'thing' one 'possesses'. One certainly 'receives' the Holy Spirit or 'has' him, but one does not 'receive' a baptism, for one is baptized. One

does not 'have' the baptism; one 'has' the Spirit.

Where, then, in Scripture do we have reference to this matter? In the synoptic Gospels John the Baptist promises that Jesus will 'baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire' (Matt. 3:11–12; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16). In John's Gospel (1:33) it is 'He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this is he who *baptizes* with the Holy Spirit'. In Acts 1:4–5 the statement is, 'And while staying with them he charged them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, "you heard from me, for John baptized with water, but before many days you *shall be baptized* with [or, in] the Holy Spirit.'" ' In Acts 11:16 Peter describes the event of the Spirit falling (verse 15) on the Gentiles at Caesarea, and says, 'And I remembered the word of the Lord, how he said, "John *baptized* with water, but you shall *be baptized* with the Holy Spirit.'" '

These, then, constitute the only explicit *references* to the matter. Doubtless there are a number of explicit happenings of this baptizing in the Spirit. There is also a statement in I Corinthians 12:13 which says, 'For by [or, in] one Spirit we *were all baptized* into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all *were made to drink* of one Spirit'. Apart from such statements, references to the subject are indirect.

### **The Context of the Term**

There are some immediate elements in context which will throw light on the meaning of the term. John's statement, 'I baptize you with water, but . . .' must mean that the action of being baptized in (or, by) the Spirit is more

significant and of a greater order than baptism (only) with water. Since water baptism (John's) was linked with: (i) repentance, and (ii) the forgiveness of sins, then 'Spirit-baptism' must be highly significant if it is greater than this. It may, of course, also include these elements, i.e. the elements of John's water baptism.

The reference in Acts 1:4–5 speaks of them waiting for 'the promise of the Father', and adds 'which you heard from me'. This probably refers to Luke 24:49, 'I send the promise of my Father . . . wait until you are clothed with power from on high'. The Holy Spirit, in Galatians 3:14 and Ephesians 1:13–14, is either 'the promised Holy Spirit' or 'the promise of the Spirit', but in Acts 1:4–5 he is 'the promise of the Father'. They are to 'wait' for the Spirit. Something will come to them, or happen to them. In Acts 1:8 this baptism is related to 'when the Holy Spirit has *come upon you*'. In Acts 11:16–17 the Spirit is said to come gift-wise—'gave the . . . gift to them'. In 10:44 it is written, 'the Holy Spirit *fell* on all who heard the word'. We adduce the fact that this act of baptizing relates to receiving a gift, having the Spirit come upon (the recipients), having a promise fulfilled, and receiving power. Each of these is significant.

### The Meaning of the Term to the Hearers

What would John's use of 'baptize' mean to his hearers? We know enough of the contemporary history to know that certain Jewish communities used baptisms and lustrations. The idea of being immersed in something would be simple enough to understand. However, in what way does the use of 'baptized in the Spirit' relate to the Old

Testament, i.e. the Hebrew Scriptures?

The leading Jews objected to John's prophetic stance, and his call to all Israel to come to repentance, and then signify that in baptism. It was tantamount to telling the chosen people that they were as Gentiles. That is, they needed repentance. The prophets, of course, had made similar calls. However, John made his in relation to Messiah. He then said Messiah would do three things: (i) baptize in the Spirit; (ii) bring universal forgiveness of sins (cf. Luke 3:3; John 1:29); (iii) bring in the Kingdom (Matt. 3:2). This then established the baptism (baptizing) as Messianic. What prophecies in the Old Testament speak of an act of baptizing in the Spirit? The answer is, 'None, explicitly, i.e. none literally'.

The hearers must have had an idea of what it meant, and must have understood it to be in conformity with the Old Testament Scriptures. What, then, was this matter of the Spirit? John gives one clue. God had said to him, 'He on whom you see the Spirit descend *and remain*, this is he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.' Obviously the coming of the Spirit on this one is permanent. Also this one dispenses the Spirit. In the Old Testament the servant of Isaiah 42:1–2 has the Spirit upon him. He preaches judgement to the nations. In Isaiah 11:1f. the Davidic leader will have the Spirit upon him and by the Spirit will rule the earth. In Isaiah 61:1–2 the Suffering Servant will be anointed with the Spirit and be the liberator of his people. This event is shown in verse 11 to affect all the nations.

Another clue is given in Acts 1:1–8 which we shall later study. Suffice to say here that the disciples connected two things: (i) the action of Spirit-baptizing; and



(ii) the (action of the) Kingdom of God. *In the Old Testament every promise of the outpouring of the Spirit is accompanied, contextually, by the promise of the restoration of the Kingdom (to Israel).*<sup>1</sup> It seems reasonable to assume that the ‘baptizing’ of the Spirit is the outpouring of the Spirit, and there are many such promises. In Acts the Spirit is outpoured.

It is reasonable to conclude that the hearers expected some special outpouring of the Spirit upon Israel, having Messianic (Kingdom) connotation. In fact this was what happened at Pentecost and was suitably described by Peter per the medium of Joel 2:28ff.

It is also worth noting here that Jesus, in the period of his ministry, spoke little of Israel or persons actually receiving: (i) the forgiveness of sins; (ii) the gift of the Holy Spirit (cf. Luke 11:13); and (iii) the Kingdom (cf. Luke 12:32). That is, these three elements forecast by John were virtually absent from his ministry as actions, although he teaches concerning the Kingdom and occasionally brings persons to forgiveness. It is on the last night, at the supper and following, that Jesus refers definitely to men receiving these three elements (cf. Matt. 26:28; John chs 14–16; Luke 22:28–30). It is helpful to note that somehow John the Baptist had related these three elements to, and linked them with, Messiah.

Finally, we should see the problem which arises as to whether we should speak of ‘baptizing *with* the Spirit’ or ‘baptizing *in* the Spirit’. The general use of the Greek preposition *en* would seem to indicate a locative ‘in’.

Mark uses the dative form of ‘Holy Spirit’ which does not require the actual preposition. The word *en* is capable of also being translated ‘with’, and the dative form of ‘Holy Spirit’ in Mark 1:8 is also capable of this translation. A simple way of dealing with the matter is to see that one is baptized *with* water as one is baptized *in* water. What is sure is that one is not baptized *by* the Spirit. Christ is the Baptizer. There is no instrumental dative linked with the Holy Spirit in the Gospel and Acts references. The reference in I Corinthians 12:13 is sometimes translated as though the *en* (Gr.) meant ‘by’ and so is an instrumental dative (i.e., by means or agency of). Nevertheless the grammar indicates ‘in’ rather than ‘by’, but then the action of baptism is *by* the Spirit, that is the effectual working of the Spirit into whom men are baptized is what is primarily indicated in this Scripture. We mean that the element (the Holy Spirit) into which men are baptized is itself (himself) dynamic and effective.

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<sup>1</sup> See Isa. 32:9–20; Isa. 35 (esp. vv. 5–10; cf. John 7:37–39); Isa. 44:1–3; Ezek. 36:24–28; 37:1–14; Joel 2:28ff.; cf. Acts 2:14ff.

# 3

## ***Jesus' Teaching Concerning the Baptizing in the Spirit***

---

Acts 1:1–11 is really the central teaching concerning the matter we are studying. For this reason it has to be looked at closely. The passage, summarized, has these elements:

- (a) All that Jesus has done is the beginning of what he is about and will yet do.
- (b) He gives commandment ('The Great Commission'?) through the Holy Spirit, i.e. he still relates (as yet unascended) to the Spirit.
- (c) He promises the disciples that they will be baptized in the Spirit, shortly.
- (d) He has been speaking of one thing—the Kingdom. The disciples relate the teaching of the Kingdom,

- and the being baptized in the Spirit. To them it means that the Kingdom is about to be restored to Israel.
- (e) Jesus does not deny this; neither does he explicitly affirm it. They are not to know the times and seasons. Also they see the Kingdom as restored only to Israel. Jesus mentions Judea, Samaria, and the Gentile lands. He links them, too, with the Kingdom. They (i.e. the disciples) will need power to witness to all of these peoples.
  - (f) The ascension of Jesus is temporary. Linked with their witness 'to the end of the earth' is the ultimate return of their Lord.

If we remember that the promise of the pouring out of the Spirit, and Israel being restored (as God's Kingdom), are related, then we can see the disciples thought correctly. What they had missed was that the Kingdom was to be universal, that is to say the proclamation of the Kingdom, i.e. the 'witness to Jesus', was to be universal. The 'now' of their question was to be the 'then' when they compassed the earth.

We adduce one important fact: the being baptized in the Spirit was with a view to the Kingdom—(i) its universal proclamation; and so (ii) its universal consummation. It was with a view to Jew, Samaritan and Gentile. *Power* was needed for this world-wide witnessing ministry.

Does this idea tally with the true thrust of the New Testament?

Before we answer this question let us remember that John the Baptist had linked forgiveness of sins, baptizing in the Spirit, and the Kingdom, with Jesus. He was paramount in these. The three went together.

We see Jesus' encouragement concerning the Spirit (Luke 11:13). The disciples will receive if they ask. He encourages them concerning the Kingdom. It is the Father's good pleasure to give the Kingdom to them. As for forgiveness of sins, the Last Supper statement of Matthew 26:28 ensures forgiveness for them. It would be difficult to separate these three elements.

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# 4

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## ***The Holy Spirit & The Kingdom—I***

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### **Spirit-Anointing for Kingdom-Action**

We may enter by the saying of Matthew 12:28, '... if it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you'. Jesus is saying that through the power of the Spirit he is the Kingdom in action when he exorcizes. This accords with Acts 10:38, '... God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power... he went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him'. Acts 10:38, in conformity with Luke 4:18-19, does not confine Christ's Kingdom-action to exorcizing, but includes healing and other liberating actions.

This surely means that at his baptism Jesus was anointed with the Holy Spirit and power. If the terms *anointed* and *baptized* are synonymous, Jesus, being baptized in the Spirit, was anointed as Messiah. 'The Messiah, the Son of the living God' are virtually terms equal in value. We may say that Jesus' Sonship was Messianic in operation. Of course 'Messiah' means 'the anointed One', i.e. anointed as King, and for the task God has appointed him (cf. Ps. 2:2, 6-8; Isa. 42:1; 11:1-13). So then by being anointed he became the Messiah (or King) of the Kingdom. This accords perfectly with Psalm 2:6-7 and Isaiah 42:1-2. The Father uses these two Scriptures at his baptism in conflated form, and repeats them at his Transfiguration (cf. Matt. 3:17; 17:5).

That the anointing was for the ministry of the Kingdom is clear from comparing Matthew 12:28 with Acts 10:38. What they have in common is exorcism, and in Matthew 12:28 this is the Kingdom coming upon the exorcized, whilst in Acts 10:38 it is 'healing all those who were oppressed by the devil'. Of course, as we have noted, other elements of Jesus' ministry were equally the Kingdom coming upon people. In Luke 10:8-11 the disciples have the ministry of preaching the Kingdom delegated to them, and Jesus commands, '... heal the sick ... and say to them, "The Kingdom of God has come near to you."' Also, even when they (i.e. the apostles) are rejected, they are to reject the rejecters and say, '... the Kingdom of God has come near.'

We must conclude, then, that all that Jesus did he did by the Spirit, and all that Jesus did was related to the Kingdom.

### **The Kingdom Ministry of Jesus**

Jesus committed himself at his baptism to 'fulfil all righteousness'. This was not merely to be righteous morally in his life, but to carry out 'the righteousness of God'. The righteousness of God in Romans includes His justifying of sinful men—by faith—through the Cross. It includes His work of sanctification in men, and it covers His plan for both Jew and Gentile, that is, His universal plan for His creation in redemption and glorification. In the simplest terms, Jesus wanted to do the will of the Father. He desired to carry out the plan of the Father, a plan already outlined in the prophetic Scriptures.

He was anointed for this task, and where he went, so to speak, the Kingdom went. Darkness receded before light. His powers were not, innately, of himself. They were of the Spirit. He taught, healed, exorcized and liberated in the power of the Spirit. Thus his ministry was a Spirit-ministry. Nevertheless his dynamic defeat of evil had to be consummated. Jesus could not endlessly go about the world in the type of ministry he exercised in Palestine. Thus he had a consummating work to do—the work of the Cross. This would defeat evil, deliver man, and so 'seal' the Kingdom.<sup>1</sup> The work of the Cross also was undergirded by the Spirit (Heb. 9:14), as was the Resurrection (Rom. 1:4; 8:9-11). Also, 'that same power which raised Jesus from the dead ... set him at his

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<sup>1</sup> We mean that a definitive victory of the Kingdom needed to be accomplished so that such a victory could be proclaimed by the apostles. Christ's bodily presence as such would not then be needed to proclaim the Kingdom by the Spirit. What the apostles and the church proclaimed (by the Holy Spirit) was, in fact, the accomplished victory of the atonement.

own right hand . . .’ (Eph. 1:19–20). The Ascension was also by the Spirit.

In Jesus the triumph of the Kingdom was consummated. Satan, his hosts, the world, the flesh, sin, the law, and conscience as tyrants, were defeated in this Kingdom victory, this salvific triumph.

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# 5

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## ***The Holy Spirit & The Kingdom—II***

### **THE KINGDOM MINISTRY OF THE APOSTLES**

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It is very clear from Luke 24:46–49 and Acts 1:3–8 that the disciples are not to undertake proclamation and witness until they are endued with power, i.e. until the Spirit comes upon them. This act is called the baptizing with (or, in) the Spirit. We need then to recognize that as Jesus needed the anointing for his Messianic or Kingdom-action, so the disciples need the same gift of the Spirit for power and proclamation. They, too, have to proclaim the Kingdom, but there is a difference. Jesus is not now going to defeat Satan and the powers of darkness as he promised in Luke 11:21–22 and John 12:31 (cf. 16:11). He has done this. He is not going to work for forgiveness



(John 1:29). He has done this (Matt. 26:28; Luke 24:45–46). The triumph of the Kingdom, and its salvific powers, are what the disciples will proclaim.

### **The Message of Acts is that of the Kingdom**

The primary proclamation of the Acts—and this supported by the Epistles—is, ‘Jesus is Lord’. The offer of forgiveness only follows this. This Lordship is proclaimed in various terms. It is always linked with his resurrection. Because he has been raised (i.e. defeated death), then he is Lord. He is ‘the Holy and Righteous One’, ‘the Prince [Author] of life’. He is now ‘Leader and Saviour’. It is summed up in Acts 2:36, ‘Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified’. Hence, in Acts 10:36, ‘he is Lord of all’. In Romans 10:9 belief in his Lordship brings salvation. His Lordship is proven by his resurrection. Of course the Cross is no mere accident. It was ordained by God (Acts 2:23). Also Jesus is the one who pours out the Spirit. That also powerfully confirms his Lordship.

The Kingdom, then, is explained or proclaimed in practical terms of his Lordship over death and sin. Hence the proclamation is that of the Kingdom. We have seen in Acts 1:3–8 that the outpouring of the Spirit was linked, in the apostles’ minds, with the Kingdom, and that Jesus extended their view of Israel having the Kingdom restored, to the Samaritans and the Gentiles. Also the Kingdom was not to be immediately consummated. It is also pertinent to note that Israel’s restoration is promised in Joel 2 and that this is linked with the outpouring of the Spirit.

Peter uses this Scripture to explain the happenings of Pentecost. In salvation, however, he includes ‘and them that are far off [the Gentiles]’.

In Acts 8:5 we are told that Philip went down to Samaria and ‘proclaimed to them the Christ’. This under any reading is Messiah of the Kingdom. Philip then baptized those who believed. In 8:12 we read, ‘But when they believed Philip as he preached *the good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ*, they were baptized . . .’. Thus ‘the Christ’ and ‘the Kingdom and the Name’ are the one message.

An even clearer treatment is given by Paul in Acts 20:18–27. Here ‘repentance to God and faith in our Lord Jesus’ are equivalent to ‘the gospel of the grace of God’, ‘preaching the kingdom [of God]’ and ‘declaring to you the whole counsel of God’. It is the Gospel; it is the Gospel of the Kingdom; it is the whole counsel of God.

In Acts 19:8 we read of Paul that he ‘. . . entered the synagogue [at Ephesus] and for three months spoke boldly, arguing and pleading about the kingdom of God’. Finally, in Acts 28 there are two important references. In verse 23 we read that the Jews came to Paul in large numbers, ‘And he expounded the matter to them from morning until evening, *testifying to the kingdom of God and trying to convince them about Jesus*, both from the law of Moses and the prophets’. Again in verses 28–30 he indicates that as the Jews reject ‘Jesus and the kingdom’ the message will be proclaimed to the Gentiles. Verses 30–31 say, ‘And he lived there two whole years at his own expense, and welcomed all who came to him, *preaching the kingdom of God*, and *teaching about the Lord Jesus* quite openly and unhindered’.

Two things are clear: (i) the whole message of the Gospel is really the proclamation of the Kingdom;(ii) 'Jesus is Lord' is the fact and truth of the Kingdom (cf. Col. 1:13). It is also helpful to note Acts 14:21–22. Having preached the Gospel, Paul tells the new disciples that 'through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God.' The entering of the Kingdom in a final way will be in the eschaton.

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# 6

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## ***The Holy Spirit & The Kingdom—III***

### **THE MODE OF PREACHING THE KINGDOM**

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We have seen that Jesus' mode of preaching the Kingdom was to preach, heal, exorcize, and that this was the Kingdom 'coming upon' his hearers. Also he did this under the anointing of the Spirit. In the Acts the apostles are certainly anointed, i.e. 'clothed with power'. As Jesus taught with authority, so do they, and as the Kingdom came with power through signs and wonders, so with them.

It would be a mistake, however, to think that the apostles and others (cf. Stephen, Acts 6:8; Philip, Acts 8:6–7) simply used powers they possessed to impress others. Mark 16:17 speaks of signs accompanying

‘those who believe’, not ‘who teach’, and Mark 16:20 says that ‘the Lord worked with them [the messengers] and *confirmed the message by the signs that attended it*’.

The action of Philip in Acts 8:6–7 is reminiscent of Jesus’ action in Palestine as the Kingdom came upon people. There, as in Acts 8, the powers of evil were defeated. Men were liberated by the power of the Kingdom. Yet it is the Lord who still handles this matter. In Acts 14:3 it is said of Paul and Barnabas, ‘So they remained for a long time, speaking boldly for the Lord, who bore witness to the word of his grace, *granting signs and wonders to be done by their hands.*’ Again in 19:11, ‘And *the Lord did extraordinary miracles by the hand of Paul*’ (cf. Gal. 3:5). We assume then that the Lord (Messiah of the Kingdom) is the one who initiates this ‘Kingdom-action’.

We conclude then that the disciples were baptized in the Spirit with a view to this *proclamation of the Kingdom*, and the proclamation had in mind and intention the *consummation of the Kingdom*, i.e. amongst the Jews, Samaritans and the Gentiles. The Kingdom, although manifested in time, has eternal connotation. The New Testament speaks of ‘inheriting the Kingdom’, and this in the context of the eschaton.

We cannot here debate whether or not we ought to expect the proclamation of the Kingdom to proceed in exactly the same way as it did in apostolic times. One school of theology insists that this is not necessary, claiming that the use of signs and wonders was an aid to launching the church, and that since it is launched there is now no need for extraordinary methods. The other school argues that ‘launching’ is in fact a continuing thing.

We cannot here resolve this debate. What we may observe, however, is that church history shows us how certain truths of the Scriptures are lost, or partially obscured, from time to time. There have been periods of reformation in both faith and practice throughout the 2,000 years of church history. For example, the truth of justification was greatly recovered during the period of the Protestant Reformation, a fact that many Roman Catholic scholars concede today. The Puritans may be said to have furthered the Reformation with their teaching of experimental holiness.

The purpose of our study is not to verify the current debate on charismatic renewal, any more than it is to deny its validity. What we must take into consideration is: (i) the unique presence of Jesus as the King in his ministry as we see it recorded in the Gospels; (ii) the strong presentation of truth by the apostolic church at the very fountainhead of the proclamation of the Kingdom; and (iii) the message of church history that the church has seasons of lethargy and revival, of tepidity and dynamic proclamation. We may not then insist at every level that the pattern of apostolic life and preaching constituted the methodology we must use today. Neither must we deny that Christ may evidence himself in apostolic forms of power and proclamation at any time in history, or we would be denying the facts of that same history, as already recorded in time.

# 7

## ***The Holy Spirit & The Kingdom—IV***

### **THE HOLY SPIRIT & THE KINGDOM IN THE EPISTLES & THE REVELATION**

#### **The Kingdom in the Epistles**

The subject under this heading is too wide to be properly treated here. Briefly we may summarize:

- (a) Entrance into the Kingdom is already effected (Col. 1:13). We have already received the Kingdom (Heb. 12:28).
- (b) One *now* has an inheritance (Eph. 5:5) but will eventually inherit (I Cor. 6:9; 15:50; Gal. 5:21; cf. Acts 14:22). In any case we have been chosen to be heirs (James 2:5).

- (c) The Kingdom is not weakness and mere talk, but power (I Cor. 4:20). At the same time it is 'righteous-ness, peace and joy'.
- (d) The Kingdom is 'in the Holy Spirit' (Rom. 14:17).
- (e) The Kingdom entails suffering (II Thess. 1:4–5). Believers suffer *for* the Kingdom. This makes them worthy *of* the Kingdom.

The Kingdom is both *now* (Col. 1:13; Rom. 14:17; I Cor. 4:20) and *then*, i.e. in the future. At the same time the struggle in relation to the Kingdom and its ultimate victory (in contradistinction to its victory achieved at the Cross and Resurrection) is still proceeding. I Corinthians 15:24–28 says ultimately Christ will subdue rebellious powers and give the (completed) Kingdom to the Father. This accords with Philippians 2:9–11 and Revelation 11:15.

It can very easily be shown that every aspect which relates to the Kingdom derives from the Spirit. Regeneration, which places one in the Kingdom, is by the Spirit (I Cor. 6:11; Titus 3:5). Justification comes through the ministry of the Spirit (Rom. 8:2; I Cor. 6:11). Righteousness, peace, joy, as also power, come by the Spirit (Rom. 14:17; I Cor. 4:20). All elements within the Kingdom, such as prayer, love, fellowship, unity, ministry, are by the Spirit. The gifts which provide something of 'the action of the Kingdom' also come through the Spirit.

We may conclude by saying that whichever way we examine the matter, the Kingdom and the Holy Spirit are inseparable, that is, any discussion on being baptized in the Spirit is not contextually correct unless it relates to the Kingdom. (See Appendix 2, 'The Spirit & the Kingdom'.)

### The Spirit and the Kingdom in the Book of the Revelation

Without doubt the Spirit plays a major part in the Book of the Revelation. ‘The testimony of Jesus’ is a theme we have already discussed, primarily from Acts 1:8, and we have seen that it is the action of Jesus himself, not only as past (in the Gospels and Acts), but as his current work, subsumed under the passage of I Corinthians 15:24–28. Revelation 19:10 points out that ‘the testimony of Jesus is the spirit [Spirit?] of prophecy’. This fact of the testimony is mentioned directly eight times in the Book (1:2, 9; 11:7; 12:11, 17; 19:10; 20:4; 22:16). We conclude that this testimony is by the Spirit, and from Acts 1:8 we see it was the reason why power was needed. That is, no testimony can be effected apart from the power of the Spirit.<sup>1</sup>

In 1:10 John speaks about *being in the Spirit* on the Lord’s Day. Doubtless he was always ‘in the Spirit’ in the sense in which Paul speaks of that state in Romans 8:9–11, but as we know from the Acts, special infillings and affusions were given for special cases. We see also in Revelation 17:3 and 21:10 that John was aided by the Spirit to share in and grasp the entirety of the prophecy which was put into his hand (cf. 1:1, 3).

When it comes to the matter of the Kingdom of God we are made aware that the entire Book of Revelation is upon this theme. See, for example, 12:10:

And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, ‘Now the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren has been

<sup>1</sup> For a fuller treatment of the theme, ‘The Testimony of Jesus’, see Chapter 10.

thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God . . .’

Also read 11:15:

Then the seventh angel blew his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, ‘The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever.’

Chapter 10:1–7 shows that the plan of God will inevitably be fulfilled. Verses 5 to 7 reveal this as conclusive:

And the angel whom I saw standing on sea and land lifted up his right hand to heaven and swore by him who lives for ever and ever, who created heaven and what is in it, the earth and what is in it, and the sea and what is in it, that there should be no more delay, but that in the days of the trumpet call to be sounded by the seventh angel, the mystery of God, as he announced to his servants the prophets, should be fulfilled.

Even so it is not the mention of specifics as they relate to the Spirit which constitutes the subject of the Kingdom in the Revelation. The whole Book is on the subject of the sovereignty of God, and the fact that God is in control of all things. Nothing happens unless it is allowed by Him. The evil forces can do nothing apart from Him permitting their actions. Finally these evil forces are vanquished. What we have to see is that the people of God are being informed of the principles and patterns by which God works, and in particular the authority and action of the Lamb who shares the throne with the Father.

*The people of God need the guidance, instruction and empowerment of the Spirit.* We have seen in the Acts and the Epistles that the Spirit empowers for witness and he leads the church. In Revelation 1:2 and 9 we see the need for holding the testimony of Jesus. In chapters 2 and 3



this testimony is jealously guarded by the Spirit who speaks to the seven churches. Revelation 1:11 indicates that the whole prophecy of the Book is to be delivered to all the seven churches, so that they may see the general nature of their witness in the world. In chapters 2 and 3 *each church* is corrected where it is wrong, encouraged to conquer, and urged to witness by the Holy Spirit. On the one hand it is Christ writing to the churches concerning that witness. On the other hand the note is, 'He who has an ear to hear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches'.

We conclude then:

- (a) The Spirit is the source and power of the true witness, i.e. 'the testimony of Jesus'.
- (b) The Spirit is leading the people of God in the battle of the two kingdoms, i.e. that of Satan's kingdom and the Kingdom of God.
- (c) In line with the Acts and Epistles, those who have the seal of God<sup>1</sup> (Eph. 1:13–14; II Cor. 1:21–22; cf. Rev. 7:2–8; 9:4; 14:1; 22:4; as against 13:17–18; 15:2) are those who suffer for the sake of the Kingdom (cf. 1:9; 12:17), and this accords with what we read in the Acts and the Epistles (Acts 14:22; II Thess. 1:5).

The conclusion of the matter is seen in Revelation 22:16–17:

'I Jesus have sent my angel to you with this testimony for the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, the bright

morning star.' The Spirit and the Bride say, 'Come.' And let him who hears say, 'Come.' And let him who is thirsty come, let him who desires take the water of life without price.

Here we see that Jesus is giving the fact and ministry of his own testimony to the churches. Doubtless this accords with the giving of the prophecy to the seven churches (1:10–11), and with the Spirit and the church both offering the evangel, even at the very last. The invitation to come is the ministry of the church empowered by the Spirit to offer salvation (repentance and remission of sins) to the world, and offer it freely. In this sense the Spirit and the Kingdom are indivisible, and with them work the empowered people of God, i.e. those who hold (or have) 'the testimony of Jesus'.

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix 2, 'The Spirit & the Seal of God'.

# 8

## ***Immediate Meaning & Effect: Baptizing in the Spirit***

### **Introduction**

It is well known that in the Old Testament, although the Spirit was always generally with Israel (Hag. 2:5), yet his work was manifested primarily with and through special persons. Some leaders, artisans, prophets and others would know a special anointing or 'coming upon' them of the Spirit. In some cases (e.g. that of Samson, Judges 16:20) the Spirit departed from them. The promises, then, of passages such as Ezekiel 36:24–28; 37:1–14; Isaiah 32:15 and context; 35:6 and context; 44:3ff.; Joel 2:28ff., are direct enough and had people in anticipation, by John's day, of an outpouring of the Spirit which would

be upon 'all flesh', and not just on chosen persons. Whilst many readers of Joel may have thought the outpouring would be limited to Jews, yet this was not the essence of the prophecy.

John's hearers saw nothing incongruous with his linking the three elements of Kingdom, forgiveness and the giving of the Spirit. These were congruous with Old Testament prophecies. Jesus, too, increased expectation by doing the same as John, saying, 'The time appointed *is* fulfilled. The Kingdom of heaven is at hand. Repent and believe the Gospel.' He also said, 'The law and the prophets were until John; since then the good news of the Kingdom of God is preached . . .' John himself was a man filled with the Holy Spirit from his mother's womb. He had come 'in the Spirit and power of Elijah'.

We need, then, to look more closely at Jesus' explanation of the baptizing in the Spirit. This means we must understand that John saw the coming of the Kingdom and the baptizing in the Spirit as being, virtually, the one, and that equally linked with them was the forgiveness of sins.

### **The Commission and the Spirit**

The key thought in Acts 1:8 is 'power to witness to me', i.e. to witness to Christ. We have to determine the meaning of *witness*, and see why power is required, and the nature and expression of that power. It is obvious that we will find much of the explanation in the passages which concern this 'commission'.

In Matthew 28:18–20 the disciples have to make disciples of all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and have to

teach them all the things that Christ has commanded. In Mark 16:15ff. it is to preach the Gospel to every creature and to baptize those who believe, thus saving them. In this context there will be signs and wonders following those who believe their word, i.e. a continuity of their own ministries. In Luke 24:44ff. there is the statement that ‘repentance and remission of sins will be preached in his [Christ’s] name among all nations, and you are witnesses of these things’. This must mean that their work is to call for repentance and to offer forgiveness. The preaching is to be ‘in my name’, and note, ‘you *are* witnesses of these things’, i.e. that he has suffered and entered into his glory, which is then the basis for preaching repentance and remission of sins. In Matthew, Mark, and Luke, the proclamation is to be world-wide. In Matthew they go in the authority of Christ. In Mark the Lord goes with them. In Luke they must wait for the Holy Spirit.

In John’s Gospel (see 20:19–23) the matter is somewhat different. It is still the preaching of forgiveness, and the sending is into the world, but the Spirit is given at that point, i.e. prior to Pentecost. ‘Receive [take] the Holy Spirit.’ He is given to enable them to preach and declare forgiveness.<sup>1</sup>

In Acts 1:3–8 Jesus teaches the things *concerning the Kingdom*. He then promises the disciples that they will

be baptized in the Spirit after some days. He says that when they have the Holy Spirit come upon them, and so have power, then they will witness to him in Jerusalem and all Judea, Samaria, and to the end of the earth. If we link the Acts passage with the Gospels, then we can discover what ‘witness’ really means.

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<sup>1</sup> We do not here enter full discussion on what has been called ‘the Johannine Pentecost’. Only ten disciples were present. Thus the event may have been a token action of the gift *yet to be sent from heaven* by the Father and the Son, as Jesus had taught on the night of his betrayal. There are certainly no special effects which are immediately discernible. For full discussion of the matter see Section 2, Appendix 1, ‘The Johannine Pentecost’.

# 9

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## *The Meaning of 'Witness'*

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In Luke 24:48 and John 15:27 Jesus says they are and will be witnesses to him. The Jews have failed to understand him for the most part. In John 15:26 (cf. 16:7–15) the Holy Spirit will witness to Jesus. So will the disciples, presumably through the aid of the Holy Spirit. He will witness through them.

Whilst Acts 1:8 speaks of 'my witnesses', i.e. 'witnesses to me', they must do the actual work and action of witnessing. What, then, is witnessing? Luke 24:48 says they *are* witnesses, i.e. they have seen the things which Jesus 'began both to do and to teach'. A witness is simply one who tells what he has seen. If we collate the passages in Matthew, Mark, Luke, John and Acts, then something like this emerges:

Witnessing to Christ means having seen the events of Christ and telling them. It means proclaiming his life, death and resurrection, and then the fruits of that in his Lordship. This means calling for repentance, and offering forgiveness in the name of Christ, since it can only be found in that name. It means, then, baptizing them (nations, persons) into the Name, and teaching them the things Christ has commanded to be taught.

None of this witnessing can be done properly apart from the Holy Spirit. Presumably since even Christ could not break through opposition and misunderstanding (John 15:18–26), it needed his departure and the coming of the Spirit (John 16:7ff.) to fully witness and convict the hearers. Surely contained in this witness is the revelation of Jesus as Lord, Saviour, Ruler and Prince of Life. Surely their witness is not merely telling, and even telling powerfully, but *evidencing* Christ. They are not only witnessing to what Christ *was* and *did*, but to who he *is* and what he *does* in the 'now-time'.

To understand this witnessing we should comprehend the thrust of the action of the apostles and the church, even when it is not explicitly called 'witnessing'. We do, of course, have explicit references. In Acts 1:22 the apostles reveal, in essence, that they are witnesses to his resurrection. This thought is repeated in 2:32, and again in 3:15, and 5:32. In 5:32 they witness not only to his resurrection, but also that God has exalted Christ to His right hand, and made him Ruler and Saviour so that he gives repentance and remission of sins to Israel (cf. 11:18). In 10:39ff. Peter says the apostles are witnesses to the life and acts of Jesus. He says Christ appeared after his resurrection only to chosen witnesses. Paul also says

something similar in 13:31. Paul reveals that Jesus has also commissioned him to be a witness to himself. In 22:15 he is to witness to what he has seen and heard (cf. Acts 4:20), and this is repeated in 26:16.

We conclude from these references that to witness to Christ is to tell what he was and did, and what that now signifies for the hearers. This is the purpose of being baptized in the Spirit. There is, however, something more, even, than this. In Acts 4:33 we read, 'And with great power the apostles gave their testimony [witness] to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus'. This witnessing was in the context of a whole way of living by the people of God. 'Now the company of those who believed were of one heart and one soul, and no one said that any of the things which he possessed was his own, but they had everything in common.' Whilst this must greatly have encouraged the apostles and warmed them up to witness, surely part of the witness was this very condition of the church, that is to say, the life they lived together in love and unity. This certainly accords with the thought in John 17:20ff. that the oneness (unity and love) of the church would make the world know that the Father had sent the Son. What is significant in this passage in Acts 4 is that *all* had been freshly filled with the Spirit, so that doubtless *all* witnessed in one way or another.

In I Thessalonians 1 and 2 Paul speaks of the manner of life he and his helpers had had when they were at Thessalonica. They not only proclaimed the word, but lived in accordance with it. This, too, was witness. Their proclamation was 'not in word only but in power and in the Holy Spirit with full conviction' (I Thess. 1:5). Notice also that the response was one evoked by the Holy Spirit

through the witness of the apostolic team (I Thess. 1:6): 'And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, for you received the word in much affliction, with joy inspired by the Holy Spirit'.

There are many elements of witness in the Book of Acts especially, such as the life and power of Stephen, and then his steadfastness in death. No less, of course, the witness of others such as Barnabas and Philip. We may conclude then, that 'witness' is what the Spirit of God is about in the life of the church in this Book of Acts.



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# 10

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## *Witness in the Revelation*

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In Revelation 19:10 the angel tells John that he is to worship God, and not him. 'I am a fellow servant with you and your brethren *who hold the testimony of Jesus*.' Then is added, 'For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit (Spirit?) of prophecy.'<sup>1</sup>

What then is 'the witness of Jesus'? This is a term used in Revelation 1:2 and 9. John, in verses 1 and 2, says the angels bore witness to the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. In 1:9 he says he is in exile on account of 'the word of God and the testimony of Jesus,' whilst in 6:9 the martyrs have been slain 'for the word of God and *the witness they had borne*'. In 12:17 the saints

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<sup>1</sup> The Greek words 'witness' and 'testimony' are the same (*marturia* or *martus* or *marturion*). The verb 'to witness' is *martureo*.

are those 'keeping the commandments of God and having [holding] the testimony of Jesus'.

The 'testimony of Jesus' can either be seen as an objective genitive, i.e. the testimony Jesus gives, or a subjective genitive, i.e. the testimony given to Jesus. If Jesus testifies to God and His word, then doubtless this fits the idea that 'the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy', i.e. 'Jesus testifies to the truth of prophecy by fulfilling it, authenticating it, etc.' Again it could mean, 'the testimony given to Jesus', in which case it would fit with Acts 1:8. However, it must surely mean something of both. In 12:11 the saints overcome the accusing dragon 'by the word of their testimony'. That must mean they testify to Christ. Yet doing this they also testify to their own faithfulness. In 6:9 the martyrs *have* (or, *hold*) a testimony. John is in exile because he holds the testimony of Jesus, yet it could mean because of what Jesus testifies to, i.e. the action of God, the Gospel of grace.

What then is the 'testimony of Jesus' which is 'the spirit of prophecy'? It must mean first that very life and action of Jesus which itself bears witness to the truth of God's word, mainly by the fulfilment of the plan (and so the prophecies) of God. Yet it must also mean *the very action of Jesus*. When, then, the apostles and their brethren 'witness to Jesus' it must mean more than that they simply testify he rose. It must mean that the life of Jesus is currently being manifested, and this by means of the true people of God. In other words, the Holy Spirit has come and brought with him the fullness and life of Jesus so that *the outworking of that life in history is the true witness of testimony given*. They do not simply hold to a body of truth, but the truth itself is being worked out

in the world through the people of God who are one with their Head. If this is so, then to bear testimony to Jesus is to be—as the people of God—Jesus himself in (present) action! This being true then we can understand what it is essentially to be ‘baptized in the Spirit’. How else could true testimony be given by proclamation, dynamic actions, and the whole way of life of believers? Certainly not apart from the enabling, anointing and continuing presence of the Spirit.

*We conclude then, that being baptized in the Spirit is to hold the testimony of Jesus, give witness to Jesus, and to be the witness of Jesus. We need, then, to spell out fully what is this witness.*

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# 11

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## *The Witness Of, or To, Jesus*

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### **Introduction**

Why in the Revelation is ‘the testimony of Jesus’ (either objective or subjective genitives) so hated by Satan and the worldly man? Because the testimony of Jesus is the ongoing action, not only of Jesus but of God, it is no mere dry statement of fact concerning a literal resurrection. It is the resurrected Jesus who is (currently) Lord of history, i.e. he is Lord because he is risen. He works out that Lordship in authority and action. Likewise this is what his people participate in. Hence, as we have seen from the ‘commission’ passages, and the action of Acts, the proclamation of the Gospel of the Kingdom throughout the world means the destruction of evil—vis-à-vis

I Corinthians 15:24–29 and Revelation 11:15.

To be in such witness is to be hated by evil, and the object of its continual attacks or attempted seduction.

### **The Elements of the Witness**

#### *(a) Power to Proclaim.*

The power of the witness, and the power to witness, are contingent upon the Holy Spirit. In Acts 2 the company gives witness to Jesus (v. 32) when they speak of ‘the wonderful works of God’. Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, has power to convict at least three thousand people. I Peter 1:12, I Corinthians 2:5, and I Thessalonians 1:5 show that by the power of the Spirit the Word is preached and is effective. Peter proclaims to the Sanhedrin—not a little thing. Paul proclaims to city after city, even when persecuted. He proclaims to Felix, Festus and Agrippa (cf. Matt. 10:20). Stephen uses this power to confound his adversaries, even the Sanhedrin, so much so that they kill him. He claims, ‘You always resist the Holy Spirit’, for this is what they do in the face of the proclamation of the Lordship of Christ.

The proclaimers in Acts testify to the Cross and Resurrection of Jesus, his Ascension, the fact that he was anointed by God and ministered in the power of the Spirit. They speak of the Cross being ordained, Jesus being raised by God, and his installation as Ruler, Prince of Life and Saviour at the right hand of God, is shown to be in accordance with the prophecies. They testify that Jesus sends the Spirit. They offer baptism in the name of Jesus, and the forgiveness of sins through him. They testify that he has been received into the heavens until all

that the prophets have foretold will come to pass, i.e. ‘the restitution of all things’.

To testify to these things certainly requires being baptized in the Spirit and receiving his power.

#### *(b) The Power of Action.*

Nobody doubted the power of Jesus not only to proclaim the Kingdom, but to show it in action, in fact to be it by action. Hence the truth of Matthew 12:28 and Acts 10:38. Hence also the rolling back of evil forces, and the relentless onward movement of the Kingdom. Likewise the apostles and their fellows do great signs and wonders. ‘Greater works than these shall you do’ is a fact.<sup>1</sup> They face the Sanhedrin, they face kings and governors, and Matthew 10:20 comes into play. The Spirit of their Father speaks from within, impromptu. When told to leave the prison early in the morning and go to the temple courtyard (where they had previously been arrested) and ‘tell all the words of this life’, they do so without hesitation and with power. They speak immediately out of what they know, i.e. ‘We cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.’ There is no question of them preparing messages! The apostolic truth is alive to them.

The lists of sufferings and persecution which Paul gives in his letters are proof of action-with-power. Again these actions, whilst being those of the apostles and others, are really the actions empowered by the Spirit, and in the ultimate they are the actions of Jesus. This is the true witness to (of) Jesus.

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix 1, ‘Greater Works Than These Shall You Do’.

(c) *The Dynamic Proclamation.*

Paul sees the Gospel in itself as the power of God. Nevertheless that Gospel often comes through to the people in the evidences of power, i.e. miracles, signs, wonders, healings and exorcisms, as well as raisings from the dead. Hebrews 6:5—amongst other passages

—is proof of this fact. Doubtless I Corinthians 4:20, I Thessalonians 1:5, and I Peter 1:12 do not simply mean that the message was emotionally powerful or articulated dynamically so much as its *content* and the *witness to it* are effectual, polarizing on the one hand to belief and acceptance, and on the other hand to disbelief and rejection (cf. Acts 2:41; 5:33; with John 20:22–23).

Along with this is the greatest element of the witness, the truth and offer of the Gospel. To show Jesus as Lord is to accomplish a great feat (cf. I Cor. 12:1–3; cf. Acts 2:38). To effect repentance and faith through ‘the word of Christ’ (Rom. 10:17) is to bring people to repentance, and the receiving of the total forgiveness of sins. Without the Spirit this would be impossible. In Acts 2:38 people have come to conviction and need to know ‘what to do’. They repent and have the remarkable forgiveness of sins, being baptized *in the name of Christ*. They receive the gift of forgiveness and the gift of the Holy Spirit. Could, then, more be said of God’s action through the Gospel, proclaimed by His people in the power of the Spirit? A clear example of this is in Acts 10:34–48 (cf. 11:17–18) when the Word, uttered in the Spirit, brings the gifts of repentance, forgiveness, and the Spirit.

The effects of regeneration and sanctification through this Gospel are discussed in the Epistles at great length (e.g. I Cor. 6:9–11; I Pet. 2:9–10; Titus 3:3–7). In all this

we are reminded that the Kingdom of God is not talk but power (I Cor. 4:20). When there is true talk (by the Spirit) then there is true power (cf. I Thess. 1:5).

# 12

## *The Witness & the Goal of the Baptizing—I*

### **Introduction: The Effective Spirit**

In the Gospels and Acts Jesus is the one who baptizes with the Spirit. First of all, then, there is the action of Jesus to effect what he desires in us. Secondly, there is the action of the Spirit himself. Even water is not passive when one is baptized in or with it. It cleanses, cools, and so on. The Holy Spirit, however, is the Spirit of power and he effects many things. To be immersed into him cannot be an ineffectual happening. Jesus said that the Spirit would testify to him (i.e. give witness), and also that he would glorify Christ and reveal him to his followers. At the same time the things of the Father are the things of the Son, therefore his coming would effect a revelation of these things.

### **The Church, the People of God**

Jesus had said, 'I will build my church.' It had not already been built, at least not in the sense that he indicated. He says little in regard to the church in the Gospels, but he uses a number of figures concerning his people such as the flock, the vine, but they are few. His prayer of John 17 makes very clear how he thinks about the church. He prays for the oneness of his people. At one stage he had said, 'you are all brethren' (Matt. 23:8). Later he had called them 'my brethren' (John 20:17; Matt. 28:10). In John 8:34–36 he had spoken of the house (or, household) of God his Father. He had also spoken of his Father's house in heaven.

When the proclamation was commanded in Acts 1:8, Jesus spoke of three sets of people. They were Jew, Samaritan, and Gentile. If these are looked at locatively rather than as peoples, then the point of Acts 1:8 is missed, namely that these three peoples be brought into the Kingdom by the witness to Jesus.

This is precisely what the whole Book of Acts is about. In one sense it is about nothing else! Nevertheless we could easily miss this message if we were not alerted to it.

### **Baptizing and the People of God**

#### *The Jews: 'Jerusalem and All Judea'*

On the day of Pentecost, virtually speaking, only Jews were present. They were Jews from many different geographical settings. They were, to some degree, the products of their various cultures. At heart they were all Jews

and members of the congregation, the Jewish *qahal*. They heard the message of the 120 who had been baptized dramatically with the Holy Spirit and tongues of fire. With this affusion of the Spirit the apostles had been led 'into all the truth', for the doctrine is already formulated (Acts 2:42), so that it can be called 'the apostles' doctrine'.

At Pentecost 3,000 people are baptized. Peter tells them the promise is to them, the Jews, and to their children, and to those who are afar off, i.e. the Gentiles. He also tells them to separate themselves from 'this perverse generation', i.e. the Christ-rejecting people amongst the Jews. It means, although he does not spell it out, that *there is now a new people of God*. These are those who have believed (cf. Acts 11:17), who have repented, and have received the forgiveness of sins. These are those who receive the gift of the Spirit (Acts 2:38). This new congregation then, is Jewish.

#### *The Samaritans: 'Samaria'*

We do not know the exact period of time which elapsed between the day of Pentecost and the preaching of the Gospel in Samaria by the Jewish Philip, the evangelist. He preached the Christ; he preached the Kingdom. Those who believed were baptized in accordance with the commission, but they knew of no affusion of the Spirit until the apostles came. We may leave the problem here of '*belief but no baptizing*', and return to it later. However, with the outpouring of the Spirit upon them, the Samaritans had to be recognized as belonging to the new true people of God.

#### *The Gentiles: 'The End of the Earth'*

The third section of Acts 1:8 begins to come to fulfilment with Peter's going down to Caesarea to speak to the Gentiles of the household of Cornelius. Acts 10 makes it very clear that:

- (a) The Lord (the Father?) gives Peter a vision of what was previously unclean now being clean, i.e. the Gentiles (cf. Acts 15:8–9).
- (b) An angel of the Lord sends men from Cornelius to Peter to bring him, and the Spirit alerts Peter to this fact.
- (c) Peter is led to preach to the Gentiles. As a result they believed the message, and the Spirit 'fell' on all who were present.

This means that the Spirit has come to the believing Jews and the new true people of God is formed. The old Hebrew *qahal* passes over into the *new ekklesia*. Still it is only Jewish. Then the Samaritans believe and are baptized. However, not until the apostles go and pray does the Spirit come upon them. In fact they 'receive' him. The people of God is now of Jewish and Samaritan origins. With the Spirit falling upon the Gentiles they must now be included. *Had he not fallen on them there would be no question of their being included.*

In other words, the Book of Acts is telling us that the witnessing to Christ in these three ethnic areas is the purpose of the enduement of the Spirit upon the apostles. More correctly, the enduement is to so witness that they will believe and be incorporated into the people of God.

# 13

## *The Witness & the Goal of the Baptizing—II*

### **The Matter of Including Peoples in the Kingdom of God and the Church**

The first factor is that there is no coming of the Spirit upon these groups *until they believe*. The coming of the Spirit is contingent upon that. Also, the event of receiving the forgiveness of sins is contingent upon believing, i.e. heeding the Gospel proclamation (I Cor. 1:21). Yet salvation as such is not an end in itself. It is also with a view to the community. The members of the community are members of the Kingdom of God, but whereas their eschatological inclusion in the Kingdom is on a proleptic basis, they are immediately included in the people of God. Here and now they constitute the church. Ultimately

they will be known as the people of God and as inheritors of the Kingdom of heaven.

The Book of Acts shows *the problems* that arose with the inclusion of the Gentiles. Galatians, too, must be read in this light. Many of Paul's letters stress the fact that God makes no distinction, for to be baptized into Christ is to put on Christ, where there is neither Jew nor Gentile, slave or freeman, male or female. Likewise we are baptized in (or, by) one Spirit into one body, and made to drink of one Spirit. Hence being baptized in the Spirit also relates to (i) inclusion in the church; and (ii) the unity, love and fellowship which should be found in the church. One of the distinctive marks of the early church was the unity, and the caring for others. When, however, it came to Christian Jew and Christian Gentile, there were real problems to be solved, i.e. the problems of relationships which would be complicated by cultural morés and practices. This is seen to be the case in Acts 15. Surely then, the prayer of John 17 had to be answered in practice under the guidance, inspiration and ministry of the Holy Spirit.

### **The Spirit and the People of God**

There is nothing the people of God do which is not initiated and aided by the Spirit. This includes proclamation, signs, wonders, works and miracles, the fact and use of gifts, the ministries, the experiences of worship, prayer and praise, as also love, unity, fellowship, and producing the fruit of the Spirit. The church is also led by the Spirit to fulfil the plan of Christ. Not to be baptized in the Spirit is to fail to enter into these areas authentically.



It is *how* people come into the community which determines their actions and experiences. The community is really the household of God. God is Father of His people and His family. They are a dwelling place for Him, an habitation built in and by the Spirit (Eph. 2:18ff.). However, the reconciliation that God provides through Christ is effected by the forgiveness of sins and justification. Yet even this redemption is only with a view to sonship of the Father. Hence Galatians 4:4–6 shows that God sent His Son to redeem men (from the law) *that* they might receive the *sonship*. This means that they come to the Father through the Son (John 14:6; Eph. 2:14–18; etc.). This coming makes them at once sons of God and brethren of each other.

Now it is the Spirit who cries ‘Father!’ within them, and they also learn to cry ‘Father!’ (Gal. 4:6; Rom. 8:14–17). Hence whilst redemption is of great meaning and consequence, yet sonship is the peak of experience. It also is the true key to being part of the people of God. Jews, Samaritans and Gentiles are sons and daughters of the living God.

The question is, ‘How can one witness to Christ if one is not a son of the Father, and a brother to the people of God?’ Hence in Romans 8:9–11 the test of being a believer is not whether one has believed on Christ, but *whether one has the Spirit of Christ*. ‘If any man has not the Spirit of Christ, *he is none of his*.’ The church must have looked to see the Spirit within a person, and not merely to hear him say he had believed.<sup>1</sup> It is axiomatic

<sup>1</sup> Of course *true* belief would have brought both forgiveness (salvation) and the gift of the Spirit.

that all Christians had received the Spirit (Gal. 3:1–3).

For the rest, the love, the gifts, the fruit, the ministries, the prayer and worship, as also the proclamation, were the marks and experiences of the true church. Whilst we briefly state them this way, they were highly significant and functional.

### Christ in His People by the Spirit

In the various ‘commission’ passages Christ promises he will be with his people. He promises this personally to Paul. They look not so much to his *return* as to his *appearing* (*parousia*). Ephesians 3:14–19 shows that by the Spirit, Christ is present to the heart, especially to faith. This means that Christ’s people can dwell in him, and he in them (cf. John 14:15–23; Rom. 8:9–11; Col. 1:27; II Cor. 13:5). We expect then, that the character of Christ will be in his people as he is in them. Yet this matter of Christ dwelling in the heart is not merely devotional. It is practical. The fruit of the Spirit is really ‘Christ in action’.

When, then, persons are in this knowledge and understanding, they live towards one another in this Christly way. They are truly members of his body in the world. In fact Christ has given his fullness to his body (Eph. 1:22–23). Hence the corporate witness of the church *to Christ*. Indeed it is John who majors so much on mutual love in his First Epistle and who demands full love for the brethren, who says twice, ‘We know that he abides in us, by the Spirit which he has given us’ (3:24; 4:13).

We are tempted to fill this out, and speak of the holiness of the community (I Pet. 2:9–10; cf. Exod. 19:5–6),

but it is enough that the household of God holds to the Father because of the Spirit (Eph. 2:18–22; Gal. 4:6; etc.). Then, too, the members hold to one another because of the Father (I Thess. 4:9; I John 4:20).

### **Conclusion: The Ultimate People of God**

Genesis 49:10 speaks of the peoples becoming subject to Christ. Romans 1:5, 15:18, and 16:24–26 speaks of the Gospel bringing the obedience of the faith of the nations through proclamation. Hence ‘the children of God scattered abroad’ are being ‘brought together in one [family]’ (John 11:51–52). The sheep which are not of the Jewish fold are also being brought, so that there will be ‘one Shepherd and one flock’ (John 10:16). Note in Romans 15:18 and Acts 15:8–9 that the people come together (in accordance with Acts 1:8) by the Holy Spirit. The continuing unity of this people is dependent upon the Holy Spirit (Eph. 4:3).

The final pictures as seen in Revelation 7, 21:1–5, 22–27, 22:1–5, are the people of God brought under him, Christ, and also under the Father. These are from ‘Jerusalem and all Judea, Samaria, and the uttermost part[s] of the earth’. This, in conformity with the victory of Psalm 2 and Messiah the Son, where the ‘uttermost part[s]’ is a synonym for the Gentiles, i.e. ‘the nations’.

This is what being baptized in the Spirit is all about.

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# 14

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## ***The Fact & Mode of Being Baptized in the Spirit—I***

### **INTRODUCTION: ‘WITH HOLY SPIRIT & FIRE’**

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John the Baptist said, ‘He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.’ What did he mean by that? In Matthew 3:10–12 John makes three mentions of fire. In verse 10 it is impossible to deny that fire is judgement. Likewise, in verse 12, the fire is burning judgement. In verse 11 the baptism of the Holy Spirit and fire far surpasses John’s baptism of water. His baptism gets them to *express* their repentance. It *concerns forgiveness but cannot give forgiveness*.<sup>1</sup> It is with a *view to forgiveness* (Mark 1:4).

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<sup>1</sup> Except proleptically.

The baptism in the Spirit and fire, then, will do what the Spirit of burning does in Isaiah 4:4, where he is ‘a Spirit of burning and a Spirit of judgement’. In this context God washes away the filth, and cleanses the bloodstains by this Spirit. In I Corinthians 6:11 the Spirit washes. In Titus 3:5 there is ‘the washing of regeneration and the renewal of the Holy Spirit’. In Isaiah 30:27–28 God speaks the word of judgement and *breathes* out destruction. His breath is His Spirit. This principle of judgement is also seen in Isaiah 11:4, 15, and 29:9–10.

In Matthew 3:10–12 there seems to be only one possible conclusion. For the one who has repented and been baptized with water, there is a looking forward to an event when *the people of God* (‘baptize *you*’) will have a visitation of the Spirit, who will come as fire. The result of this will be *a baptism of cleansing and renewal* for the true ‘grain,’ and equally a judgemental burning for the impenitent, i.e. the chaff. Even Israel will not stand as a nation if it does not repent, for the axe ‘is even now at the root’.<sup>1</sup>

At Pentecost the Spirit did come with flames as of fire. There was a cleaning and a renewal for those looking to Messiah and his gift of the Spirit (Acts 1:4–8; Luke 24:48–49; Acts 2:1ff.). There was also a judgement to those who would not. They were now ‘a perverse generation’. Their sins were retained (John 20:23; cf. Acts 5:33; 13:40ff.; 28:24–28).

Doubtless, for the people of faith, the symbolism of

fire also meant the power and energy that comes with cleansing of the impurity and the renewal of the heart. Primarily, however, the Holy Spirit was to bring total cleansing—the cleansing of the Cross (Heb. 9:14; I Cor. 6:11; Titus 3:5; cf. Acts 3:19; 22:16; etc.).

Finally, although we have concentrated on what is meant by ‘fire’, yet the primary act is ‘baptize you with the Holy Spirit’. The fire is surely that of the Holy Spirit himself, and not another element apart from him. What then of the element into which they are baptized—the Spirit? In Joel 2:28ff., Isaiah 32:15, and Ezekiel 39:29, the term used is ‘poured’ or ‘pour out upon’. In other words, there would be an affusion—‘floods on the dry ground’—which would envelop Israel.

Why then does Jesus not speak often of this wonderful coming event? The closest he gets to it in the Synoptic Gospels is ‘Shall not my heavenly Father *give* the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?’ In John’s Gospel he does refer to ‘rivers of living water’ flowing out from the inner man (7:38). It is, however, his full discourse in John chapters 14–16 which fills out the expectation of the disciples. He speaks of sending the Spirit to them, rather than speaking of a mode of baptizing. In John 20:18–23 he actually *breathes* the Spirit upon them, as in Genesis 2:7 when God breathed into man and he became a living being.

<sup>1</sup> Such a principle is not limited to the Jewish nation. I Peter 4:17 indicates that cleansing judgement, when and where needed, will always come to the people of God.

# 15

## *The Fact & Mode of Being Baptized in the Spirit—II*

### THE MODES OF THE BAPTIZING

One of our problems in dealing with this subject is our failure to realize that if there is a baptism *in* the Holy Spirit, i.e. just as we are baptized *with* (in) water, so we are baptized *with* the Holy Spirit, i.e. we are plunged into him (I Cor. 12:13). Water is effective to a degree in that it cleanses, but otherwise it is considered passive. Not so the Holy Spirit: he is the power of God. He is not static or passive, but dynamic and effective. Hence in the Old Testament, when he is poured out on people, there is a clear and recognizable result. One clear case is of the judges, especially Samson. Another happening is the case of the seventy elders in Numbers 11, where the Lord

‘... took some of the spirit that was upon him [Moses] and *put it upon* the seventy elders; and when the spirit *rested upon them*, they prophesied’ (v. 25). Later (v. 29) Moses says, ‘Would that all the Lord’s people were prophets, that the Lord would *put his spirit upon them!*’ This approximates in some degree to Pentecost, i.e. the Spirit came, the people prophesied. Our point is that the Spirit is dynamic and not static. We are not baptized into a passive agent.

### Pentecost

Acts 1:5 says the apostles will be *baptized in the Spirit*. Acts 1:8 says, ‘You will receive power, the Holy Spirit *having come upon you*’. In Acts 2:2 the sound *fills* the room where the 120 are waiting. The tongues of fire *rest upon* each one of them. This is the term in Numbers 11:25, i.e. ‘the spirit rested upon them’. In Acts 2:4 they are all *filled with the Spirit*. He is not only *around* them and *on* them, but *in* them. The effects of ‘around’, ‘on’ and ‘in’ are speaking in tongues of *known languages*,<sup>1</sup> and prophesying or telling ‘the wonderful works of God’. In 2:33 Peter explains, ‘Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, *he has poured out* this which you see and hear.’ This agrees with 2:17 and 18

<sup>1</sup> We are sure the languages used at Pentecost were known ones. We cannot be dogmatic about the language/s used in Acts 10:46, 19:6, and 8:17, if tongues were then used. It seems reasonable, even so, to see the tongues as similar to those expressed at Pentecost. This would appear to make the gift of tongues in I Corinthians 13 to be of another order. It may be that I Corinthians 13:1 makes two classes of tongues: (i) of men (known languages); and (ii) of angels (celestial tongues).

where the term ‘I will *pour out* my Spirit *upon* all flesh’ is used. This is, of course, a quote from Joel 2:28–32.

### **Samaria (Acts 8)**

In Acts 8:14–17 the terms used are ‘*receive* the Spirit’, ‘*received* the Spirit’, ‘*fallen* . . . on them’.

### **Caesarea (Acts 10 and 11)**

In Acts 10:44 the Holy Spirit *fell* on all who were present. Peter was amazed because ‘*the gift* of the Holy Spirit had *been poured out* even *on* the Gentiles’. Also Peter declared, ‘these people . . . *have received* the Holy Spirit.’ In 11:16 Peter says that this is being baptized with the Holy Spirit. He says, ‘God *gave* to them *the same gift*.’

### **Ephesus (Acts 19)**

In Acts 19:6 Paul lays his hands on the Ephesian believers, who in fact were disciples of John the Baptist, and had had only his baptism. They had not yet, in fact, believed in Christ. Receiving baptism into the name of Christ, Paul then lays his hands on them and ‘the Holy Spirit *came on them*; and they spoke with tongues and prophesied’.

### **Paul’s Baptism**

After Saul of Tarsus met Christ on the road to Damascus and remained three days in blindness, Ananias came to him. He said two things. Firstly, ‘Why are you waiting?’

Rise, and be baptized, washing away your sins.’ Secondly, ‘The Lord . . . has sent me that you may regain your sight and *be filled with the Holy Spirit*’.

### **Some Conclusions as to Mode**

The terms for being baptized in (or, with) the Holy Spirit are ‘come upon’, ‘were filled’, ‘rest upon’, ‘poured out’, ‘fallen upon’, ‘received’, ‘came upon’. One set of terms describes *the action* of the Baptizer; the other set *the reception of a gift*, i.e. the Holy Spirit. Another set shows the result of the baptizing action, namely the recipient being filled (with the Spirit).

### **Some Further Statements from the Epistles**

. . . the Holy Spirit which has been given to us (Rom. 5:5);  
you have received the spirit of sonship (Rom. 8:15);  
we have received . . . the Spirit which is from God (I Cor. 2:12);  
he has . . . given us his Spirit (II Cor. 1:22);  
if you receive a different spirit from the one you received (II Cor. 11:4);  
Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law? (Gal. 3:2);  
that we might receive the promise of the Spirit (Gal. 3:14);  
he who goes on supplying the Spirit (Gal. 3:5);  
God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts (Gal. 4:6);  
You were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit (Eph. 1:13; cf. 4:30);  
God, who gives his Holy Spirit to you (I Thess. 4:8);  
the Spirit which he has given us (I John 3:24);  
he has given us of his own Spirit (I John 4:13).

The conclusion is evident when the verses are put together. The Holy Spirit is God’s gift. He has given

him to us. He has sent him. Believing man receives him. We have seen above that when one is baptized in the Spirit he receives the Spirit; he is filled with the Spirit. Galatians 4:4–6 suggests that salvation then brings the *gift* of the Spirit of sonship: indeed God *sends* him into the heart.

At the same time he *seals* the believer for the day of redemption—‘having believed . . . you were sealed’ (Eph. 1:13).

# 16

## ***The Fact & Mode of Being Baptized in the Spirit—III***

### **ELEMENTS PERTAINING TO SPIRIT-BAPTIZING**

#### **Faith a Prerequisite**

A problem confronts us. Is what was needed for the 120 waiting for the Spirit needed by all? They appear to be true believers. They believe in Christ. They believe in the coming of the Spirit. John 13:10–11 seems to suggest regeneration had taken place in all but Judas. However that may be, they had believed before receiving the gift. Acts 11:17 says, ‘. . . God gave the same gift to them [Gentiles] as he gave to us *when we believed*’. When then, did they believe? The aorist participle here (‘having believed’)

is the same in Ephesians 1:13, '*having believed* you were sealed', and also in Acts 19:2, '*Having believed* did you receive . . .?' These are called 'coincident aorist participles', i.e. the events took place simultaneously.

The 120 had believed long before Pentecost, but then does Peter in Acts 11:17 indicate that the very coming of the Spirit enlivened faith and took away the last doubts? Certainly the truth was crystallized for them with the coming of the Holy Spirit. We can scarcely say that what happened to them was normative for the ones who followed. In Acts 2:38 Peter says, 'Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and *you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.*' Faith, as such, is not explicitly mentioned but is clearly implied. In Acts 11:17 the faith of the Gentiles is certainly implied, and in any case it is stated in Acts 10:43–45, for he had said, 'To him all the prophets bear witness that every one *who believes* in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.' They, of course, believed and received (i) repentance (11:18); (ii) forgiveness (10:43); and (iii) the Holy Spirit (10:45).

At Pentecost the 120 believe. Those 3,000 baptized believe and receive the Spirit. The Gentiles at Caesarea believe and receive. *Believing and receiving is normative* for being baptized in the Spirit, that is to say, receiving the Spirit.<sup>1</sup> The believing is in Christ. In Acts 19:1–6 the disciples of John have not yet believed on Jesus. Paul

points out that John had told his disciples to do this. So here they do, are baptized and receive the gift of the Spirit. In Acts 8 the Samaritans believe, but do not simultaneously receive the Spirit (Acts 8:12, 15–17). For some reason this situation needed apostolic presence. That not receiving the Spirit on believing was not normative is clear. Had it been normative the apostles would not have been needed. At any time they might yet have received the Spirit. It is clear from the text that it needed apostolic presence. It is worth noting that there was apostolic presence at Jerusalem (Acts 2), at Caesarea (Acts 10–11), and even at Ephesus (Acts 19). It seems that especially apostolic presence was needed for the three principal outpourings: (i) Jerusalem—the Jews; (ii) Samaria—the Samaritans; and (iii) Caesarea—the Gentiles. We do not henceforward hear of any initial principal outpourings. The case of John's disciples—who would have been Jews—is simply a 'catch-up' on the Jewish Pentecost.

In Ephesians 1:13 the Ephesians *had believed and been sealed*. If the seal is the Spirit himself coming, then that could refer to Acts 19:1–6. If the Spirit himself seals, then he did that immediately, and it amounts to the same thing. He had come (cf. 4:30). In Galatians 3:1–6 Paul makes the point that they received the Spirit *by faith*, i.e. *by believing*. Also *the kind of faith was justifying faith*—'Thus Abraham "believed God, and it was accounted unto him as righteousness"'. This is underlined in 3:13–14 where the subject is Christ becoming a curse for us, 'that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might *come upon* the Gentiles, that we might *receive* the promise of the Spirit *through faith*'. In Galatians 4:4–6 Paul speaks first of

<sup>1</sup> Note that no special phenomena are recorded when the 3,000 believe and receive the Spirit. There may have been such, but the absence of a description of such warns us about being dogmatic regarding the matter. Phenomena are not criteria of proof. The phenomena that attended the 3,000 were the unity, love, loyalty to teaching, praying and caring.



*redemption* (from the law, i.e. forgiveness) and then of the Spirit being sent into the heart. Redemption is always received *by faith*; hence the coincident action. When they believe the Spirit is sent into their hearts. In Romans 5:5–10 it is evident that the love of God is flooded into our hearts at the time of believing, for Paul sets out the causes of love in the heart, i.e. Christ dying for us. He says God has poured His love into our heart by the Holy Spirit *given* (aorist participle) to us. Again this relates to *faith*. The other Scriptures quoted on page 61 ('Some Further Statements from the Epistles') obviously relate to faith. Note in the Acts that love accompanies the gift of the Spirit. In line with I Peter 1:22, I John 3:14, 4:11–12, love is evidenced when the Spirit comes.

We can *draw*, then, this conclusion, that *faith is a prerequisite to being baptized in the Spirit*. Ananias seems to wonder why Paul has not already acted in faith for baptism. 'Why do you wait? Rise and be baptized, and wash away your sins.' In the same breath he tells him he will be filled with the Spirit, a parallel synonym for being baptized in the Spirit (cf. Acts 22:16; 9:17).

### The Matter of Repentance

The normative pattern for being baptized in the Spirit, i.e. *receiving* the Spirit, is Acts 2:38—'Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.' This is what the 3,000 did. In Acts 3:19 Peter says, 'Repent therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out, that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord.' 'Times of refreshing'

can be understood as 'times of respite', i.e. from judgement, i.e. 'times of grace', and even 'times of the Spirit'. (The latter may seem a little forced.) For those believing, and—we doubt not—receiving the Spirit, repentance was necessary (Acts 2:38; cf. 3:19; 5:31–32). At Caesarea they repent, although Peter does not explicitly demand it. Acts 11:18 shows they repented: 'He has also granted [the gift of] repentance unto life to the Gentiles.'

It is fairly clear that there is no true faith without repentance. Acts 20:21 shows that Paul preached 'repentance to God and of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ', and this is consonant with Acts 26:20, 'that they [the Gentiles] should repent and turn to God . . . '.

### Conclusion

We conclude, then, that faith and repentance are the two indispensable prerequisites to receiving the Spirit. According to Romans 8:9–11 the proof of having believed is that one has received the Spirit. It is clear that one has the Spirit, and if one has not the Spirit then it is clear one has not believed. It is not stated that because one has believed one has the Spirit, but because one has the Spirit it is clear that one has believed, i.e. that one belongs to Christ. Doubtless true believing will bring the gift of the Spirit, but in practice it is having the Spirit which proves one has believed.

# 17

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## ***The New Era of the Spirit—I***

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### **The Messianic Mission is Universal**

Without doubt the coming of the Spirit at Pentecost signified a new era. In one sense it is the era of the Spirit, and in another sense the era of the Messiah. John promised Messiah would baptize in the Spirit. Messiah promised them, following the resurrection, that this would happen (Acts 1:5; cf. Luke 24:47–49). Already the prophets had promised this outpouring of the Spirit, and now was the moment. In John chapters 14 to 16 it is the Father who sends the Spirit. Christ prays for the Father to do this. He then says he will send the Spirit from the Father. In Acts 2:33 it is Messiah who, being exalted at the right hand of God, sends forth the Spirit.

As we have seen, Acts 1:8 described the ethnic and geographic progression from Jerusalem to the ends of

the earth. This all fits exactly with Psalm 2 where the Lord's 'anointed' is made king in Zion, being the Son of the Lord, and he is to have 'the nations for his inheritance and the uttermost part of the earth for his possession'. This is exactly what Jesus indicates in Acts 1:8. We conclude, therefore, that the ministry of the Spirit is universal, that it is to win the nations, and that this winning is by the witness to Messiah. Witness through his people can only be done in the power of the Spirit. For this purpose Jesus baptizes them in the Spirit. For this purpose the Spirit comes and works in and through Messiah's people.

### **Messiah and His 'Messiah-ites'**

Jesus was anointed 'with the Holy Spirit and with power'.<sup>1</sup> No less must his people be anointed. If he needed the Spirit, so do they. In any case he told them not to leave Jerusalem until they had received the promise of the Father. The reason for this is twofold: (i) they would not have power to communicate without the Spirit; (ii) they would have no revelation and true understanding of the truth apart from the Spirit (John 16:12–15). It follows then, that there is no conviction of sin, righteousness and judgement without the Spirit (John 16:7–11).

Galatians 3:26–29 makes it clear that to be baptized into Christ is to put on Christ. This is the incarnated,

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<sup>1</sup> Note that in his baptism he was identified with sinners (Matt. 3:15) and in fact was made sin for us (II Cor. 5:21). At the Cross he was 'numbered with the transgressors' (Isa. 53; Luke 22:37). In his baptism he identified with us. In our baptism which is 'into Christ' and by which we 'put on Christ' (Rom. 6:3; Gal. 3:27) we are identified with Christ the Messiah. Hence we are 'Messiah-ites'.

-serving, crucified, risen and ascended Christ. All of him is put on. Thus his people are incorporate in him, they are 'Messiah-ites'. They have no programme but his, no goal but his, and no life but his. Hence their actions are his as he told them in John 14:12-14.

Another way of saying this is that Messiah is the Son. His people are sons. What the Son does, the sons do under him. They do this through the Holy Spirit. In the Holy Spirit they are under the Lordship of Christ, and they know the will of the Father. Without being baptized into Christ, and without being baptized in the Spirit, they are not anointed and cannot be 'Messiah-ites' ('Christ-ians'), i.e. 'anointed ones in the Anointed One'. Another way of seeing incorporation is to understand that *all* the people of Israel were the son of God. Exodus 4:22, 'Israel is my first-born son', likewise Hosea 11:1, '... out of Egypt I called my son'. Hosea 11:1 is applied to Christ in Matthew 2:15. So then, in accordance with Galatians 3:27-29, we are all one (son) in Christ, i.e. one people.

### Messiah Gives to His People

He gave the commission to proclaim the Gospel of the Kingdom. He then gave the Spirit to effect this. With the giving of the Spirit—and so power—he gave: (i) his fullness (Eph. 1:19-23; cf. 3:16-19); and (ii) gifts. It may well be that *fullness* and *gifts* are virtually the same thing. In the fullness of the power of the Spirit the gifts are used for (i) building up the church, *internally* (Eph. 4:11-16); and (ii) assisting it for proclamation of the Gospel of Christ, i.e. its *external* operation. In Ephesians 4:6-11 it is clear that the gifts are Christ's gifts, i.e. innate to him,

and given from him. In I Corinthians 12 it is clear that these gifts are *distributed* by the Spirit.

### The People of God are the Prophetic Witnesses to Messiah

Acts 1:8 speaks of them receiving power and (so) witnessing to Christ. Revelation 19:10 says, 'the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy'. Whether the preposition 'of' here is an objective or subjective genitive does not greatly matter. Prophecy is concerned primarily with Jesus and testifies to him (i.e. witnesses to him) as to what he will do, has done, and yet will do. Joel 2:28ff. is the key to what happened at Pentecost in the new era that opened with the coming of the Spirit. Peter said, 'This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel.'

What 'this' is the 'that' spoken by Joel? It can only be what was spoken by Joel, namely the outpouring of the Spirit (Acts 2:17; Joel 2:28-29); the coming of the Spirit will bring prophecy—this prophecy will be assisted by dreams and visions (Joel 2:28; Acts 2:17; cf. Num. 12:6); and all this will lead up to the day of the Lord (Joel 2:30-32; Acts 2:19-21). We conclude then, that the sound of wind, the fact of flames, and the articulation of foreign tongues were the accompaniments of the outpouring of the Spirit. What was significant about Pentecost was its Acts 1:8 significance—*prophecy which was witness*. This began, of course, with the telling of the wonderful works of God, and then with Peter's sermon. It was to continue *after this principle* to the uttermost part of the earth in space, and the Day of the Lord in time.

# 18

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## *The New Era of the Spirit—II*

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### **The People of the New Era**

Apart from the account of Paul's conversion and his being filled with the Spirit, the four outpourings spoken of in Acts are *effusions upon the community*. No man can be a 'Messiah-ite' without the anointing. Romans 8:9–11, when it speaks of Christ and the Spirit in the one breath, is not emphasizing personal subjective experience of a believer as such, but the only sign of being truly Messiah's person—'if any man has not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his'.<sup>1</sup> The new people must have power, gifts,

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<sup>1</sup> It is an *objective* fact of being in the Spirit, and of Christ being in us which is so wonderful. There may well be an *infant stage* of this (I Cor. 3:1–2a; cf. Gal. 3:3; 'begun in the Spirit'), but being in the Spirit is an objective fact for immature and mature believers alike. Faith therefore has a true basis for action.

wisdom, and obey the will of God. How does God get them to that place?

Peter made it clear on the day of Pentecost. The applicants to God's grace must repent, be baptized for the forgiveness of sins *in the name of Messiah*, and then receive the gift of the Spirit. They are now ready to be part of the community and continue in 'the fellowship, the apostolic doctrine, the breaking of bread and the prayers'.

We must see very clearly here that these things of which we have just spoken are *normative for incorporation into Messiah and his community*. That is, at the point of repenting, being baptized, receiving forgiveness, one also receives the gift of the Holy Spirit. We have seen previously that the terms 'poured upon', 'came upon', 'fell on', 'received the gift', 'filled with the Spirit', were *all* and *each* synonymous for being baptized by Christ in (or, with) the Spirit.

We thus reach this conclusion, at least for the accounts of Acts 2:38ff., Acts 10–11, and Acts 19:1–6, that the regenerating, converting, justifying, forgiving work of the Spirit takes place when repentance and baptism into Christ for forgiveness are experienced.<sup>1</sup> At this point of the initiation-complex the gift of the Spirit is received, i.e. the person is born again and baptized for power. The only Scripture that would seem to controvert this principle is Acts 8 where the Spirit did not fall on them at the point of belief and baptism. The explanation for this must not make this happening *normative*. *Because it was*

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<sup>1</sup> In Acts 2:38f. baptism follows faith and repentance and the Spirit is received. In Acts 10:44 faith and repentance bring the gift of the Spirit and baptism follows. In Acts 19:1–6 there is faith in Christ, baptism, and the gift of the Spirit follows.

*not normative the apostles came down to see why and, if possible, put it to rights.* If we ask why it was not normative it is because Jerusalem, Caesarea and Samaria are three initial principal outpourings never to be repeated, since they commence the Spirit donation to: (i) Jews; (ii) Samaritans; and (iii) Gentiles. Only those who had apostolic authority could use ‘the keys of the kingdom’<sup>1</sup> (Matt. 16:19, where the ‘You’ is plural, i.e. the apostles). Once the Spirit had been given to each ethnic group he was there for all generations until the Day of the Lord. We have, then, to say that Philip did not have apostolic authority to include the Samaritans in the Kingdom, although he had the evangelist’s right to proclaim the Gospel to them. The authentic sign of their inclusion in the Kingdom of God was the gift (and reception) of the Holy Spirit. Because Acts 1:8 is fulfilled in *principle* if not in ultimate degree (i.e. Jews, Samaritans, Gentiles), there is no further need for ethnic ‘Pentecosts’. Outpourings may well (and do) occur, but they are not principal and ethnic ‘Pentecosts’.

### **The New Witnessing People**

Without regeneration no person could: (i) enter the Kingdom (John 3:3ff.; Col. 1:13); and (ii) be cleansed, new, and a child of God. Hence the work of the Spirit was to

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<sup>1</sup> ‘The keys of the kingdom must refer to opening the Kingdom to those permitted to enter. To the Jew the admission of Samaritan and Gentile was not easy to conceive. For John the Baptist’s listeners preparation for entrance was the baptism of repentance. Jesus agreed that this water baptism (‘born of the water’) was needed, but spoke of being ‘born of the Spirit’ as necessary to Kingdom admission. The apostles ‘admitted’ Jews, Samaritans, and Gentiles at the outpourings of the Spirit.

make men and women new (cf. I Cor. 6:9–11; Titus 3:5–7). Without this witness it would be impossible. The possession of the new life was in itself the witness.

Without enduement of power to proclaim, the Messianic plan could not be fulfilled (Acts 1:8; I Cor. 2:4; I Thess. 1:5; I Peter 1:12). Gifts would need also to be distributed to the anointed ones, by the Spirit. Then Christ’s ‘fullness’ and his ‘gifts’ could be in operation in his body, the church. It was with these people and for this work he would be with them ‘until the consummation of the age [of proclamation, and kingdom accomplishment]’.

### **Conclusion: The Messianic Era**

The era of the Spirit is the era of Messiah, is the era of God’s household, the true people of God. It is the era when God is bringing about, in accordance with Genesis 49:10, ‘the obedience of faith of the nations’ (Rom. 1:5; 15:18f.; and 16:25–26). Only regenerate, power-endued, Spirit-baptized people can be true working members of this community.

# 19

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## ***Conclusions on Spirit-Baptism—I***

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### **Introduction: That Which is Normative**

What is normative<sup>1</sup> for being baptized in the Spirit? What is indicated as being normative? What, then, are the results of this normative action? These are questions often asked and debated, but perhaps the question that underlies them is, 'Is the baptism in the Spirit that act of God which regenerates initially, or is it another act either following regeneration, or sometimes simultaneously happening with it?' It might also be asked, 'Is the baptism in the

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<sup>1</sup> We recognize that the term 'normative' may appear to be restrictive upon the Spirit who 'blows where he wills' (John 3:8). In Acts he appears to work differently in different cases. Nevertheless each *seeming* difference does have an explanation. Generally speaking, in Old and New Testaments, the Spirit moves according to certain recognizable principles.

Spirit simply an enduement with power, and not the act of regeneration, or is it both, and should they normatively happen simultaneously?'

We need to keep certain things in mind. We have to say that *what happened to the 120 on the day of Pentecost was not, in one sense, normative*. These people had companied with Christ and believed in him. Pentecost was the opening of a new era and was accompanied with *signs* to *signify* this. Such signs should not be regarded as *necessarily* normative.<sup>1</sup> The true disciples had been, so far as we know, baptized into John's baptism, and some of them at least into Jesus' baptism (cf. John 3:22–23; 4:1–2), and it is even possible that some had received both baptisms, although that is not likely. We do not hear of the 120 receiving *Christian* baptism, which is the new rite announced at Pentecost (Acts 2:38).

What was normative for those who believed the word of the apostles (cf. John 17:20f.) was: (i) repentance and faith (the latter implied); (ii) baptism in the name of Christ which brought forgiveness of sins; and (iii) the gift of the Holy Spirit. This, we take it, is normative for all in this era. At Samaria there was repentance and faith followed by baptism, and later the apostolically conferred gift of the Spirit. At Caesarea there was repentance and faith followed by the immediate gift of the Spirit and then baptism conferred. In the case of the Gentiles, *the gift of the Spirit was needed to prove the acceptance of the Gentiles*

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<sup>1</sup> Such signs were 'normative' for Pentecost as a unique occasion. Some of the signs would thus be expected, reasonably, for the Samaritan and Gentile 'Pentecosts'. Acts 19:1–7 represents *Jewish* disciples of John who are caught up into Christ's baptism and so receive the Spirit. Today we do not have parallel cases.

into the Kingdom and the people of God. In the case of the Samaritans, the apostles accepted the faith and repentance, but this too needed to be sealed for the sake of the Samaritans, with the gift of the Spirit. Jesus had not ministered to Gentiles, but he had ministered to the Samaritans, so much so that they understood him to be *the Saviour of the world* (John 4:39–42), a fact which had not escaped the apostles.

In Acts 19:1–6 confusion has followed an incorrect translation of verse 2. This translation poses the question, ‘Did you receive the Holy Spirit after you believed?’ It has been taken to mean, ‘one believes and later one receives’. The *RSV* translation, ‘Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?’ goes closest to translating the two coincident aorists. It emerges that *they had not believed in Christ*. They had not had Christian baptism. They had not known of the coming of the Spirit. They believe in Christ, and are baptized with Christian baptism. They are then given the gift of the Holy Spirit in the same way as the Samaritans, by the laying on of (apostolic) hands. It must be noted that such a group cannot, conceivably, be found today, since it was a pocket of Johannine disciples. It cannot therefore be normative.

Paul’s baptism and receiving of the gift of the Spirit is the only explicit account of a single person receiving the gift. Paul has doubtless come to faith and repentance through his encounter with Christ. He is told by Ananias who has laid hands on him, ‘Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on his name’ (Acts 22:16). He is also told that Christ has sent Ananias to lay hands on him that he might receive his sight and be filled with the Spirit. In this event repentance, faith, baptism, and

the reception of the Spirit are all present. It would seem, by the same token, that conversion of the Ethiopian eunuch in Acts 8 was attended with Spirit-baptism for the eunuch ‘went on his way rejoicing’ (cf. I Thess. 1:5–6). Likewise, in the case of the Philippian gaoler and his family, there is great joy (Acts 16:31–34). In this case there was repentance and faith preceding baptism, and joy following it.

In the Epistles, as we have seen (e.g. Gal. 3:1–6, 13–14; Eph. 1:13–14; Rom. 5:5; II Cor. 1:22), the order of receiving the gift of the Spirit is believing and then receiving. We assume, of course, that repentance and conversion accompany believing. The rite of water-baptism is rarely mentioned, and, as it happens, never in these situations. The closest to such a mention is in Titus 3:1–7. Even then ‘the washing of regeneration’ may or may not refer to the rite of baptism.

What, then, may be considered as normative? Surely that repentance and faith should be followed by baptism, and the expectancy of the gift of the Spirit should be present. The question is, ‘Without being baptized in the Spirit is one truly a member of God’s Kingdom, sealed to be in it in eternity, and is one a living member of the Messianic community which is in the service of the Kingdom and working at its behest?’

The elements of this question we will now try to answer.



# 20

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## ***Conclusions on Spirit-Baptism—II***

### **REGENERATION & ENDUEMENT**

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#### **Regeneration and Spirit-Baptism**

The 120 gathered to await the coming of the Spirit may be said to be believers. John 13:5–11 may indicate that the disciples (Judas excepted) were regenerate, if not the remainder of the 120, although this too seems reasonable to assert. At the same time it is not clear from Acts 11:17 whether the believing happened at Pentecost or prior to it. The history of the word ‘believe’ in John’s Gospel seems to point to various grades of belief and even belief which was not to be trusted (e.g. John 1:50–51; 2:11; 2:23–25; etc.). However this may be, *the disciples had yet to have that revelation which would fully disclose the Father and the Son to them*. This is shown in John 14:1–26, 15:25–26,

16:12–15. At Pentecost the disciples were to have illumination (revelation) as well as enduement of power. It is clear from the event that this is what happened.<sup>1</sup>

What of the 3,000 who believed and were baptized? The answer is that they must have received both regeneration (forgiveness, justification, salvation, adoption) and enduement. Doubtless men like Stephen and Philip, and others who were known to be filled with the Spirit, received the gift of the Spirit at Pentecost. We are not told of any special phenomena attending their reception of the Spirit, although this does not mean none may have happened. If we took the case of the 3,000 as normative then believers should both receive forgiveness and the gift of the Spirit. We have seen that to receive the gift of the Spirit is to be baptized in the Spirit.

At Caesarea the message was not, ‘You will be baptized in the Spirit’. It was the message of Messiah who was anointed with the Spirit, crucified and raised. As Peter was saying, ‘To him all the prophets bear witness that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name’, they believed (and repented) for the forgiveness of sins, and at that point received the gift of the Holy Spirit, i.e. the Spirit fell on them.

What happened to the Samaritans? They believed on Jesus (Acts 8:12). Did they, then, receive forgiveness of sins? Were they regenerate? John 16:7–11 makes it clear that the Spirit must have been present for conviction of sin, righteousness, and judgement. This is sometimes called the prevenient work of the Spirit. Were they regenerated?

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<sup>1</sup> We have to reiterate that what happened to the disciples was not normative for all time.

The most we know is that the Spirit had not been received as a gift, by which incorporation into the Kingdom and the people of God is normally effected, for Acts 11:17 makes it clear that the coming of the Spirit did this in the case of the Gentiles at Caesarea. We do know that having received the Spirit, the affair was regarded as fulfilling normative conditions, that is, the Samaritans were now regenerate, and equipped with the Spirit. Simon Magus undoubtedly *saw* something. 'Simon *saw* that the Spirit was given through the laying on of the apostles' hands . . .'

### **Regeneration—With or Without Enduement?**

Would we have seen—in Acts—a situation which, when complete, did not include both the regenerative work of the Spirit, and the anointing which gives enduement of power? We have seen that enduement of power was to witness to Christ. How then could one witness without enduement, and how could one be endued if one were not regenerate? We have to come to one of two conclusions: either one can be regenerated and not necessarily endued with power, or one is regenerated and also endued with power. The problem with looking to the Book of Acts for this normative position is the little that is said or indicated in respect to our questions. Because it represents an initial principal operation it cannot be claimed that this will be normative for all times. We mean that Jews, Samaritans, and Gentiles were being brought, initially, into the Kingdom and included in the people of God. This having been done, what would generally follow would be seen to be normative.

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# 21

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## ***Conclusions on Spirit-Baptism—III***

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### **Regeneration and Witness**

It goes without saying that no man who has not been regenerated could possibly witness to Christ, not anyway, normatively. Can he then be regenerated and yet lack power? To give these answers we must not look at cases which seem to relate to our questions. We should look at what the Scripture says and work from that.

It is certain that the fruit of the Spirit is in fact the character of Christ himself, and that to manifest this fruit is to witness to Christ. Without this the witness must be deficient. Paul was able to say to the Thessalonians, 'You know what *manner of men* we were among you, *for your sakes*.' Could one then have the fruit of the Spirit but lack enduement of power? Would a life filled with love, joy

and peace (etc.), nevertheless lack power for, say, proclamation? Or would one having apparent power for proclamation *truly* proclaim if, say, the fruit of the Spirit were lacking? Are not both essential for normal witness to Christ? If one is led by the Spirit and walks by the Spirit does he do this without enduement of power, or having been endued with power should not one walk in the Spirit and be led by him? (cf. Rom. 8:14; Gal. 5:17–18).

If true witness to the Son is to be involved in, and part of, his Sonship (Gal. 3:26–29; cf. Rom. 8:14–17), then to have ‘the Spirit of his Son’, i.e. the ‘Spirit of Sonship’, must surely mean one has been baptized in the Spirit. One cries, ‘Abba! Father!’, along with the Spirit who also cries, ‘Abba! Father!’ Is there any true witness to Christ if we do not have the Spirit, and can we have the Spirit without having been baptized in the Spirit? I Corinthians 12:12–13 seems to suggest we not only become members of Christ’s body through the Spirit, but that we drink the Spirit also (cf. John 7:37–39).

### **Spirit-Baptism and Gifts**

In I Corinthians chapters 12–14 it appears that it is normative for a Christian to have, at least, a gift. ‘It is the same God who inspires them all in every one’ (12:6). ‘All these are inspired by one and the same Spirit who apportions to each one individually *as he wills*’ (cf. 12:11; cf. Heb. 2:4).

Would it be normative, in the early church, not to have a gift? What gifts, then, would be most appropriate? What would the gifts be for? Paul answers some of these questions. The Spirit gives to every man accordingly, as the

Spirit himself sees fit. Prophecy, generally speaking, would be valuable because it builds up the church—which is what love is all about (Eph. 4:11–16). The gifts are for the good of all, i.e. ‘the common good’ (12:7).

How, then, do these *gifts* relate to the witness? Some gifts such as apostle and evangelist, and even those of healing and miracles, would relate to the world. They would be signs and accompaniments and expressions of the preached Word. Other gifts build up the church, for witnessing is primarily corporate (cf. Phil. 1:27–28; etc.). There is at least one gift which edifies oneself, that is speaking in tongues. I Corinthians 14:4 says, ‘He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself’. What is wrong with one edifying oneself? Also, ‘For one who speaks in a tongue speaks not to men but to God’. What can possibly be wrong or deficient about that? ‘. . . he utters mysteries in the Spirit’. What is wrong with that? The only thing that can possibly be deficient is that these mysteries, unless interpreted by an interpreter, edify the speaker only. Yet if he is edified, the body has at least that much start!

Would it be normative to be baptized in the Spirit and so equipped for power and not have a gift or gifts? Or, since ‘to love is to give’ (‘God so loved that he gave . . .’) can one express love without gifts? Is love *better* expressed with gifts acquired? We may debate whether the *charismata* are ‘natural’ or ‘supernatural’ gifts, but our question is really this: ‘May one manifest the fruits of the Spirit, all of which are subsumed under “love”, and not have gifts to give rein to, and fulfil, these fruit of the Spirit?’ The answer would seem to be, ‘No! Surely the loving one has gifts, and has power, and so witnesses to Christ.’

What *gifts*, then, are said to have accompanied being baptized in the Spirit? The fact is, none. On the day of Pentecost the 120 spoke in tongues, i.e. in languages that were known and recognized. The Gentiles at Caesarea did exactly what the Jews had done at (their) Pentecost: ‘They spoke in tongues and extolled God’. Were these two elements, speaking in tongues, and extolling, or did the audience hear the words of the tongues? It does not greatly matter. What they did may have been what the former disciples of John did at Ephesus: ‘spoke with tongues and prophesied’ (Acts 19:6). Possibly, even probably, this also happened at Samaria (Acts 8:17–18). Yet whatever happened in these events Paul places *the gift of tongues* amongst all the other gifts in I Corinthians 12:28–30 and says clearly that not every one has every gift. Tongues is a gift.

Finally, if it be suggested that following the experience of being baptized in the Spirit all spoke in tongues, then it would also have to be insisted that following this baptism all prophesied, for this they did at Pentecost (Acts 2:14ff.; cf. Joel 2:28–29), at Caesarea where ‘extolling God’ is the same as ‘telling the wonderful works of God’ (Acts 10:46; 2:11), and of course in Acts 19:6 the former disciples of John spoke with tongues and prophesied.<sup>1</sup> It is

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<sup>1</sup> In Mark 16:17 the signs of believing are: (i) power to exorcize; (ii) speaking with new tongues; (iii) immunity to snakes and poison; (iv) ability to heal sick persons. We must choose to interpret along one of three lines: (i) the believer has all of these powers and is able to exercise them; (ii) the church in general exercises them, i.e. not every one has all these gifts or powers; (c) the passage of Mark 16:9–20 is not authentic or, anyway, is inadmissible for the purposes of discussing gifts and power following believing. Note that these gifts are not consciously aligned with Spirit-baptism.

best, then, to see that these special events were followed with manifestations of the Spirit, but that *those manifestations were the witness to Christ* spoken of in Acts 1:8.

# 22

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## ***Conclusions on Spirit-Baptism—IV***

### **THE MIRACLE OF REGENERATION & THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT**

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#### **Regeneration and Its Fruit**

The accounts of regeneration or the Scriptures relating to it, such as II Corinthians 5:17; John 3:3–14; I Peter 1:23; Titus 3:1–5; I Corinthians 6:9–11—amongst others—teach us that regeneration is an incredible and powerful miracle. To nominate it as a mere beginning or even a good beginning, and then to nominate some following experience as more dynamic, is to miss the whole point. The transformation of a human being, once unregenerate, dead in trespasses and sins, and in the ‘uncircumcision of the flesh’ (cf. Deut. 30:6), dead to God, and energized by

evil, and wholly under the power of sin, is indeed a miracle beyond any human understanding. To be an ‘old creation’ and become a ‘new creation’, to be unclean and become clean, to be rebellious and become obedient—these are matters too great to be comprehended. Yet that is what happens in ‘the washing of regeneration and the renewal of the Holy Spirit’. Could such a dynamic work be accomplished, and yet it not release the person into the dynamic of true witness to Christ? Is not indeed that happening the very witness itself? These questions must be answered. They may not be ignored in the interests of any special pleading.

In the Old Testament such elements are clearly taught. When Nicodemus questioned the new birth (regeneration, being born of the Spirit) Jesus said, ‘Are you a master [teacher] in Israel, and you do not know these things?’ He meant that Nicodemus should understand these things from Scripture, i.e. the Hebrew Scriptures. Perhaps Jesus pointed to David’s cry in Psalm 51:10, ‘Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.’ He could have led him to two or three very important Scriptures. It is to these we now refer.

#### **The Spirit and Regeneration**

In Jeremiah 31:31–34 God spoke of the New Covenant and forgiveness. Forgiveness would be the result of God’s grace, and the heart would now love God and *keep His commandments*, and *know God*. Parallel to this is Ezekiel 36:17–38. In this passage God promises to cleanse Israel, and then restore her as a kingdom (i.e. ‘the restoration of the kingdom to Israel’—Acts 1:7).

How does He do this? By giving a new heart—i.e. regeneration. How does the heart become regenerated? In the same manner as in the New Testament: (i) by forgiveness and cleansing; and (ii) by putting the Holy Spirit in the heart. Surely this is the true parallel to Jeremiah 31:31–34.

More than this, the same promise of ‘the restoration of the kingdom to Israel’ is found in Ezekiel 37. The basis of this restoration is *the outpouring of the Spirit*, and that outpouring brings the regeneration of the members of the nation, and forges them into a fighting force! That is *the outpouring* effects what in Ezekiel 36 is the *inputting* of the Spirit, i.e. putting the Spirit into the hearts. In Jeremiah 31:31–34, Ezekiel 36:24–28, and Ezekiel 37:1–14, the result is the same, namely a new heart and true obedience. To cap all this, in Ezekiel 39:25–29 God once more promises to ‘restore the fortunes of Jacob, and have mercy upon the whole house of Israel; and . . . I will not hide my face any more from them, *when I pour out my Spirit upon the house of Israel*, says the Lord God.’

We can see now that it was to such promises the disciples looked when Jesus spoke of the Kingdom and promised Spirit-baptism, i.e. Spirit-outpouring. Such relate primarily to the Kingdom (for them of Israel) which was to be universal, and not limited to Israel, although including Israel. In these prophecies both regeneration and enablement to witness (‘a mighty army’), especially through obedience, are nominated. Indeed it is the new pure Israel which is, in its very holiness, the true witness (cf. I Pet. 2:9–10; Exod. 19:5).

Finally, on this score, Jesus actually pointed to Numbers 21:4–9, showing the incident of the snake pinned to the pole. This means that new birth comes from looking

at the Cross. It is life out of death. Yet, because Jesus mentions the action of the Holy Spirit in new birth, it must mean that it is *the Spirit and the Cross* which effect this wonderful action. Consistent with this are the messages given at Pentecost, Samaria and Caesarea, and also the coupling of the redemptive work of Christ and the Spirit in such significant passages as Romans 8:1–3; Galatians 3:1–3, 13–14; I Corinthians 6:11; II Corinthians 3:6–17; and Titus 3:1–7.

### **The Fruit of the Spirit, the Fruit of Regeneration**

The work of regeneration is mentioned in Romans 5:5–10 where man’s weakness, irreligion, sinfulness, and enmity are mentioned to contrast the love and grace of God through which He redeems. In the midst of this Paul says, ‘The love of God has been poured [flooded] into our hearts by the Holy Spirit *who has been given to us*.’ One wonders whether anything can transcend a flooding of our hearts with love. This surely must be the highest experience of any human being. One also wonders whether the flooding of love can be anything less than the flooding of the Spirit (John 7:37–39), i.e. anything less than being baptized in the Spirit.

Hence, when we return to the matter of power to witness, it can mean no less than production of the fruit<sup>1</sup> (or, harvest) of the Spirit. If we think of producing these fruits as painful mortification of the flesh, or gradual acquisition of character, then we have missed the point

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *The Spirit’s Harvest*, G. C. Bingham, NCPI, Blackwood, 1987.

that such fruit is *the fruit of the Spirit*. To put it another way, the Gospel-seed which the Spirit sows brings the fruit of the Gospel, i.e. love, joy, peace, and so on. For example, the love that responds to God's love (I John 4:19), the peace of justification (Rom. 5:1), and the joy of salvation (cf. Ps. 51:12; I Pet. 1:8; Rom. 15:13) are fruits of redemption. Without these there is no true witnessing. In John 17:20ff. Jesus said the oneness of love would show the world the Father had sent the Son, for the fruits of his coming are the love and unity of his people. Indeed the ultimate for the people of God is to have 'the love with which Thou has loved me' in their hearts (cf. Eph. 3:14–19; I John 4:13).

Again, love given in regeneration produces the effects of which the prophecies speak in Jeremiah 31:31–34, Ezekiel 36:24–26, 37:1–14, and so on. Love produces love for God and man (I John 4:19), and is the motivating force for true obedience—'If you love me you will keep my commandments' (cf. II Cor. 5:14; I John 5:2). It is love which makes one obligated to preach the Gospel (Rom. 1:14–15), and it is love which makes us serve others (cf. Eph. 1:15), yet it is 'love in the Spirit' (Col. 1:8). *The greatest witness is love, and by love, for God is love, and we do not witness authentically where that love is absent.*

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# 23

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## *Conclusion to Our Study on Spirit-Baptism*

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### **Gathering the Threads**

The summary of our argument follows this chapter and obviates the necessity to go over old material. The position of this book is clear, namely that the reception of the Spirit and being baptized in the Spirit are the same thing. This is uncontrovertible from the Acts and Epistles.

The problem which faces us is a practical one. If the argument of the materials here present is correct, then we have problems both in the New Testament, and in our contemporary churches. The problem primarily is that Christians in the early church and today seem to lack the power promised with the coming of the Spirit. Neither in



their Christian living, nor their attempts to proclaim the Gospel, do they seem strong witnesses to Christ and the Kingdom.

In the New Testament we have the matter stated clearly. In I Corinthians 3 Paul can complain of believers who have failed to grow. He is joined in Hebrews 5:14 by the writer of that letter. People are stunted where they ought to have grown. Likewise the writers of letters are saying that there are problems of division, disunity, moral deficiencies, and even hatreds amongst the brethren. The letters to the seven churches in Revelation chapters 2 and 3 have more complaints regarding the churches than they have commendation. Surely these facts tell us that, as today, many were deficient. Some exegetes have gone so far as to say that there were two classes amongst believers, namely carnal Christians and spiritual Christians.

Today we see things to be even worse than in churches of the New Testament days, especially those churches depicted in the Book of the Acts. This may well be. Through 2,000 years the church has known many recessions, many losses of basic doctrine, and much practice that does not line up with Christian truth. What then has all this to do with a study of being baptized in the Spirit?

It has much to do with such a study. Promoters of Spirit-baptism would argue that the coming of the Spirit to a Spiritless Christian would renew him, give him power, and doubtless also give him a fresh understanding of the gifts of grace, including the primary gift of love. No one could argue against the change the coming of the Spirit could effect. The question, nevertheless, must be asked, 'Did the Spirit not come to him in conversion?' Against all arguments the unassailable fact is, 'If any man

has not the Spirit of Christ then he does not belong to him'. That is, Christian conversion cannot possibly be unless the gift of the Spirit is received.

### **A Complex Problem Calls for Solution**

How would the New Testament writers of the Epistles have approached the subject at this point? Would they have said, 'Be baptized in the Spirit!' The answer must be, 'No!' They could not envisage a person who would need such a baptism. They could have said, and did say, 'Go on being filled with the Spirit!' 'Be aglow with the Spirit.' 'Don't grieve the Spirit!' 'Don't quench the Spirit.' They could also say, 'Stir up the gift that is within you.' They could point to the fact that God goes on supplying the Spirit (Gal. 3:5), and that the Spirit himself supplies what is needed (Phil. 1:19), as also they could have pointed to the Spirit as the aide to all exercises and graces such as prayer (Eph. 6:18), worship (Phil. 3:3), fellowship (Phil. 2:1), love (Rom. 5:5), the gifts (I Cor. 12:8-11). They may have pointed to the renewal of the mind (Rom. 12:1-2) and would not have been slow to urge personal growth (II Pet. 1:3-8), and the putting to death of what was evil and the putting off of what was wrong, whilst at the same time putting on what was good (Col. 3:1-3). These things would have constituted their advice, but never was Spirit-baptism supposed not to have happened, nor required as a remedy for low level spirituality. Indeed in none of the seven letters is this proposed as a remedy.

What has just been said in the paragraph above would sound shocking to those who know that the experience of

the Spirit coming to them has altered much for their lives. Down through the Christian centuries Christians, and indeed many theologians, have talked about a second experience, or a renewal, or a baptism in the Spirit as the only remedy for spiritual dullness and inertia, and how right they have been in practice, even if unreliable in doctrine. The truth is that countless numbers have testified to a basic and radical renewal in their lives. What they have said cannot be controverted. They would know better than others who are spectators. If a person testifies to something having happened in his life then we must not oppose his testimony. That does not mean that we confirm it, and it certainly does not mean that *when he rationalizes his experience theologically that we have to agree with his explanation, much less his theology.*

There can be many causes for a person's spiritual dullness and lethargy. For the most part we assume that the newly vitalized person was necessarily a Christian prior to his experience to which he now testifies. What is difficult to grasp is the fact that when a man has been convicted of sin, has had revelation of Christ as Saviour, has believed, repented, had his sins forgiven, his guilt eliminated, his pollution cleansed, and has been justified, sanctified as a member of God's people, and brought into sonship with the Father, that one should be other than abounding in joy and grateful love.

All would have to agree with this. We are then faced with two alternatives. Either the person was not in fact a Christian, or he was one who had, so to speak, slipped quietly into the Kingdom, not being greatly informed, not aware of the dynamics that attend conversion, and unaware of the great dimensions of grace and the love of God.

Paul says wisely, 'The Lord knows who are his.' It is doubtful whether we do. Jesus once said that 'He that is not against me is for me.' What he meant by that we cannot be fully sure, but it may mean that God's grace embraces the hearts of those set towards Him. Yet if the person is forgiven and converted, then the gift of the Spirit is his whether *or not he knows it.*

At this point let us diverge for a moment. Is it not a fair criticism to say that in these days when the Scriptures are so discredited in many churches, and when preachers give an uncertain sound on the trumpet or no sound at all, that it is no wonder well-meaning folk lack deep understanding? The apostles believed simply that when a dynamic proclamation of the Gospel was made through the Spirit that equally radical conversions would take place, or folk would be polarized against the truth. In Acts 2:38 the promise of the Spirit was part of the message. Probably in Acts 3:19 the same promise is present. Galatians 3:1-5 tells us that the Spirit was received through the hearing of faith (cf. Gal. 3:13-14). Yet how many evangelists speak of the gift of the Spirit? Frankly the subject is avoided or left to holiness or charismatic conventions! Is it any wonder that the Spirit is not known?

Paul gives us a sight of what happened when he preached. In I Thessalonians 1:4-10 he shows the powerful effects of his preaching. The Thessalonians were gripped. They 'received the word *in much affliction, with joy inspired by the Holy Spirit*'. The situation was perilous, yet the hearers were gripped and so converted that they 'became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia', and their 'faith has gone everywhere, so that

we need not say anything'. They were dynamic Spirit-filled men.

The term 'Spirit-filled' gives us the clue to the situation. It is clear from the New Testament that one can have the Spirit, but not be Spirit-filled. If this state were automatic then there would be no need for Paul to say, 'Go on being filled with the Spirit.' This imperative tells us two things: (i) they had been previously filled or they could not go on being so; and (ii) continual filling is always a necessity. In fact the real problem with dull lethargic persons is either that they have never been converted, or having been so, have not gone on being filled. It may be that some have received the Spirit but never known the dynamic infilling. It sounds inconceivable, but is possible. It seems that Simon Magus of Acts 8 had been a recipient of the outpouring of the Spirit (although we cannot say so dogmatically). If that were the case, then he quickly reverted to a sad situation.

Any lethargic person who believes himself to be a Christian and becomes dissatisfied with his apathy is surely a candidate either for dynamic conversion, or such a filling by the Spirit that all changes for him. We must recognize that this is connected with the will. When he is encouraged to believe 'there is more than you have ever had', how gladly he may anticipate a new thing, and then, through faith and willingness, receive it.

### **Unfilled Christians**

Christians who are not filled with the Spirit, either through ignorance or carelessness and sinfulness, are going contrary to their birthright and obligations as

believers. When in Acts 6 the church is selecting seven men to serve at tables, the criteria for them is 'men of good repute, full of the Spirit, and full of wisdom'. This seems to indicate that not all were 'full of the Spirit'. The slothful Christians of I Corinthians 3:1-4 (cf. Heb. 5:14f.) do not seem to be persons filled with the Spirit. In I Corinthians 13:1-3 Paul speaks of exercising gifts without love. One would be justified in thinking they were not filled with the Spirit. However, in no case can we say that they had never received the Spirit.

### **Being Filled with the Spirit**

In the next section of our book we will consider the experience of living in the Spirit. This will inevitably lead us to what it means to be continually filled with the Spirit. It may well be, then, that the dichotomy between those who claim the gift of the Spirit is an initial experience, and those who seek fullness posterior to conversion, is not a distinct one. In practice it may not be. In theology it is very real. This is because it is indicated in one case that every believer has the Spirit and needs only to be filled where he is unfilled. In the other case a definitive experience is said to have taken place which the other Christian, said to be unbaptized in the Spirit, has not had. We then have two persons, one who has been baptized in the Spirit and one who has not. Without any doubt there are not two classes of Christians. In the New Testament you do not find two classes. Every believer is expected to be filled with the Spirit, and if he is not, then he is enjoined to do so, and knows he can be.

None of this is to discount the experiences of people

who believe themselves to have been ‘baptized in the Spirit’. If the outcome of their experience is that they are Spirit-filled, then that is wonderful. If they have only an induced experience, then that is not good. Whatever the case may be with anyone of us, it is not good to work from our experience to the Scriptures, but rather we should understand our experience in the light of the Scriptures.

What we should all recognize is that all Christians ought to be—and can if they will be—Spirit-filled persons. Why this is so, and how it is so, as also the outcome of it being so, we will look at in our next section. What ought to concern us is that when we major on one doctrine or experience—sometimes to the exclusion of others—we do not have either a well-rounded theology or a well-rounded experience. We have nothing to fear from the truth, and if it corrects our theology which we previously thought to be correct, then we have nothing to fear from that, either.

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## SUMMARY

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### ***Being Baptized in the Holy Spirit: A Summary of the Material we have Covered***

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1. We observed that the term ‘baptism in the Spirit’ is not technically correct. Christ is the one who baptizes, or, with the Father, the one who sends the gift of the Spirit. ‘Spirit-baptism’ would be a better term, although not merely to distinguish it from ‘water-baptism’.
2. The promise of being baptized in the Spirit, given by John, relates also to the Kingdom of God and forgiveness. These three are related. Jesus said little

- of the three but enlarged on forgiveness, the Kingdom and the gift of the Spirit on the night of his betrayal. He speaks of the Kingdom and forgiveness in the synoptic Gospels, and of the Spirit in John's Gospel.
3. Following his resurrection, his subject—over a period of forty days—is that of the Kingdom. He then promises they will be baptized in the Spirit, and they (the apostles) connect the two. In the Old Testament all promises of Spirit-outpouring are linked with the restoration of the Kingdom to Israel.
  4. In the synoptics Jesus is 'the man of the Spirit' and from birth, through baptism, temptation, ministry, death, resurrection and ascension, he is aided by the Spirit. This is linked with the Kingdom (Matt. 12:28).
  5. The message of the Acts is that of the Kingdom. In the Gospels it was 'the gospel of the kingdom', but because of the Atonement, a completed (sealed) victory of the Kingdom is announced. Acts 20:20–25 shows that the Gospel of grace is the preaching of the Kingdom.
  6. Acts 1:3–8 makes it clear that the baptism in the Spirit is linked with the Kingdom. Jesus had to have such baptism to commence preaching the Kingdom, and then (so to speak) effect it in the Cross and Resurrection. Likewise the purpose of the coming of the Spirit is to have power to witness to Christ, i.e. preach the Kingdom effectively.

7. The apostles preached the Kingdom in much the same manner as had Jesus, signs and wonders attending their ministry, these actions effecting the liberating power of the Kingdom.
8. In the Epistles the Kingdom is rationalized. Believers are in it already (Col. 1:13), and know its life (Rom. 14:17), and it has power (I Cor. 4:20), but the Kingdom awaits the eschaton as the inheritance of the believers. To proclaim it calls for suffering.
9. In accordance with Acts 1:8 (and context) the Kingdom will not be confined to Israel. It will be proclaimed to Jew, Samaritan and Gentile (the nations). Power will come from the Spirit and this will effect the witness of Christ. The witnessing to Christ is not only the declaration of what they have seen and heard, it is the living action of Christ through his people. Doubtless what has happened (the Cross and Resurrection) is significant. Christ, however, is also currently working. The plan of I Corinthians 15:24–28 is working. Christ is to put down all enemies and give the Kingdom to the Father. Spirit-anointed servants share with him in effecting this goal, i.e. they are witnessing to Christ.
10. The witness through the Spirit is the proclamation of the Word of God, the Word of Christ. Without the Spirit no such proclamation is possible. Through him the innate reality of the Word is dynamical. It effects salvation where heard with faith, but this effective proclamation is contingent upon the Spirit, i.e. Spirit-baptized proclaimers.

11. Whilst the proclamation is the Kingdom (this primarily the announcement 'Jesus is Lord!'), it intends to bring into the Kingdom the peoples of Israel, Samaria and the nations. They are to come into the Kingdom. They are to constitute the people of God. Pentecost is the coming of the Spirit for this era, and the era stretches to the eschaton. Thus at Pentecost the Spirit comes to Israel, and so the new convenantal forgiveness which places one in the Kingdom. *One is not in the Kingdom unless one has received the Spirit* (Rom. 8:9–11).

The Kingdom comes to the Samaritans with the preaching of Philip, but inclusion into the Kingdom happens only when the gift of the Spirit comes to this people. Under the wide umbrella of Pentecost, the outpouring of the Spirit upon the Samaritans can be called 'the Samaritan Pentecost'. Likewise the outpouring of the Spirit upon the Gentiles at Caesarea can be called 'the Gentile Pentecost'. We must see these three outpourings as the opening of the Kingdom to the Jews, the Samaritans and the Gentiles (nations). After these three outpourings there is no need for further *principial outpourings*. The Kingdom is opened to the world, not being confined to Israel. Men, of course, must repent, believe, and receive the gifts of salvation such as forgiveness, justification, adoption, and the gift of the Spirit.

12. We have an excursus dealing with the Spirit, Messiah and the people of God. By the Spirit, Messiah dwells in his people as their head. The people of God is an important subject because in the eschaton this

people will be complete, and its completion is largely dependent upon the Spirit.

13. The modes of Spirit-baptism are really the one mode, but the events of such baptizing have varying terms, all of which are virtually the one; thus 'baptized in the Spirit', 'the Holy Spirit having come upon you', 'receive the Spirit', 'the Spirit fallen . . . on them', 'the Spirit came upon them', 'the gift of the Spirit having been poured out', 'God gave to them the same gift', 'be filled with the Spirit'. These are statements in the Book of Acts. The Epistles mainly speak of the gift of the Spirit which has been received, but can also speak of the Spirit being sent into the heart, or of persons having been sealed with the Spirit.
14. Prerequisites to receiving the Spirit are set out in Acts 2:38 which seems normative for those coming to the Gospel. The three principal outpourings of Acts 2, 8, and 10, are not wholly normative now that the Kingdom has been opened to all. Thus faith and repentance are the two main requisites for receiving the Spirit. The Spirit has been operative prior to faith and repentance. He also brings the gift of forgiveness, and himself comes as the gift of the Father when repentance and faith have taken place.
15. This current era is that of the Spirit. He anoints in every case for true proclamation of the Word, and so, for the ingathering of the elect of God. He is essential for primary conviction of sin, righteousness and judgement. Through him the conversion gifts come to man.

Also he gives power to the people of God to bring the message of the Gospel to the world. By this we mean the elect people will be brought to their inheritance, the Kingdom of God and its fulfilment of resurrection, inheritance, and glorification. Meanwhile the Spirit aids the church, giving it gifts, enabling it in love, unity and fellowship, so that it builds itself up in love.

16. Finally we examined the relationship between regeneration and enduement. We saw that regeneration and the fruit of the Spirit normally go together, and the coming of the Spirit simultaneously effects both. Whilst regeneration may in one sense be an ongoing process, so power, once given, must be replenished by continuing infilling or—where there are lapses—successive infillings. It is not possible to think of the renewal of man as one event separate from enduement with power.

17. The conclusion took into account variant views of Spirit-baptism, suggesting that whilst believers may have post-conversion experiences of the Spirit, they can be explained on grounds other than the primary one claimed, namely that Spirit-baptism is posterior to, and not coincident with conversion. This in no way is a rejection or denigration of what appear to be post-conversion experiences.

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## APPENDIX 1

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### ***Greater Works Than These Shall You Do***

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As usual we need to put statements like the one above into their context. Jesus has just shown that he does not do his own works, but the works of the Father. The Father who dwells in him does the works. This is why they (the disciples) should believe that whoever has seen the Son has really seen the Father. If they cannot see the Father in the Son, and the Son in the Father, then they must believe *because the works have been done*.

‘Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I go to the Father’ (John 14:12). In this verse Jesus is first asking for faith in him. Only that one will do greater works than he has done. What then

are the greater works? The answer must lie in the fact that (i) Jesus is about to complete the work he has been sent to do (cf. John 9:4; 13:31–32; 17:4–5); (ii) going to the Father means the work is both complete and accepted (John 16:10), and the Son has no more work *of this kind* which he has to do. On the Cross he said, ‘It is finished.’ The believing disciple then *will now work on the basis of what Christ has done*.

Note, however, that John 14:13–14 shows that what the disciple does will really be the work of the Son—‘If you ask in my name, *I will do it*’. The disciple will be in the same relation to the Son as the Son is to the Father. Hence he could say, ‘I say nothing of myself. The Son who dwells in me, he does the works. Believe me that

I am in the Son and the Son in me . . .’ Of course the Son will still be in the Father so that what the disciple does will equate with the principle of Matthew 5:16, ‘Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven’.

What then are the works? A survey of the Acts will show that when it comes to miracles and wonders, what the apostles did never exceeded what Christ had done; although some of them resembled what he had done, e.g. raisings from the dead. The greater works must surely be the fruits of the Cross (cf. Isa. 53:11a). At Pentecost 3,000 came to Christ, and this was more than had responded in his three years of ministry. However, it was not just numbers (quantity). It was the amazing transformation of men and women through the dynamic of the Atonement. Christ had done the atoning work. The disciples would see the results of that, through the ministry

of the Spirit. Even so they would have to ask in his name (cf. John 15:7; 16:24).



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## APPENDIX 2

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### *The Spirit & the Seal of God*

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In Ephesians 1:13–14 we read:

In him you also, who have heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and have believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, which is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.

What then is the seal, and when was it affixed, i.e. when were we sealed? The passage has some difficulties. For example, *what* is the seal? Generally speaking a seal was used to denote whose possession it was. Ephesians 4:30 speaks of ‘. . . the Holy Spirit of God *in whom* you were sealed’. Commentators see either that believers are sealed by the Spirit, i.e. he seals them for God, and unto the day of redemption, or he himself is the seal. That is, he comes as the promised Spirit (cf. Gal. 3:16; 3:14; Acts 1:4;

Luke 24:49; Acts 2:39). It may be that both are the one, i.e. the Spirit seals them for the day of redemption for the inheritance here mentioned, and is himself the seal. In Romans 8:11 it is the Spirit’s presence with them which assures them their ultimate resurrection. What seems to fortify the idea is that the *pledge* or *guarantee* is the Spirit himself, always present. This *arrabon* is in fact a payment of part which carries the assurance of a coming full payment. If, then, we link the thought in II Corinthians 1:22, we have the fact complete, ‘he has put his seal upon us and given us his Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee’. The presence of the Spirit in our hearts assures us of the seal, whether it is himself or not. Without the Spirit we would only be informed of the seal.

What concerns some writers on the Holy Spirit is whether the seal is immediately or later received. Because Abraham was sealed with the circumcision sign, and this happened many years after he was justified (Gen. 15:6) and had been given the covenant promise, it is claimed that the seal does not happen coincident with believing. In fact here in Ephesians 1:13, and also in Acts 11:17 and 19:2, we have coincident aorist participles. That is the two actions (believing and being sealed or receiving the Spirit) happened simultaneously. In the Acts the Spirit is received when hearers believe. In fact Paul may well be referring actually to the events of Acts 19 when the Ephesian church began.

It seems like special pleading to insist that there was (or could be) a time lapse between believing and being sealed. One might also see a time lapse between repentance and faith, or faith and repentance. One might see a time lapse between repentance and conversion (Acts

3:19), and even conversion and the forgiveness of sins. Often called 'the initiation complex', the whole matter of believing must embrace all the events which are manward and Godward.

Some see the seal as the mark God puts upon us to show we are His. In Ephesus this idea would be well known, as logs which were cut in the forests above Ephesus and sent down the river to the harbour were marked by the loggers with their respective seals by which they recovered them in the harbour. In the Book of the Revelation the term is often used. See 5:1, 2, 5, 9; 6:1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 12; 7:2-8; 8:1; 9:4; 10:4; 20:3; 22:10. In 9:4 (cf. Ezek. 9:4; Rev. 7:2-3) it is clearly used for the people of God. In 14:1 the 144,000 have the name of the Father and the Lamb on their foreheads, and this is the case of all the redeemed in 22:4. In John 6:27 it is the Son upon whom God has set His seal. We could argue a case for the seal being the presence of the Spirit in Revelation and John 6:27. This is not necessary.

What we need to see is that the presence of the Spirit is in fact a seal or image stamped upon our hearts, and in conformity with which we live. It parallels the thought of Paul in Galatians 4:19 where Paul travails in pain that Christ's *form* be caught in them. *The New English Bible* has it, 'until you take the shape of Christ'. The first fruits of the Spirit are our experiences of the Spirit, as also his fruit in us, and by these we are assured of the coming inheritance. In any case he has sealed us for that day!

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## APPENDIX 3

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### *The Spirit & the Kingdom*

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Scattered through our study are references which link the Spirit and the Kingdom. It is necessary for us to see the relationship between the Spirit and the Kingdom, for often in modern evangelism and proclamation of the Gospel, little, if anything, is spoken of the Kingdom. Hence evangelism becomes individualized and personalized, whereas its primary context is the Spirit.

1. The Spirit and the Kingdom in prophecy. We saw from Acts 1:4-8 that the Spirit and the Kingdom are linked. In prophecy the promise of the outpouring of the Spirit relates to the restoration of the Kingdom to Israel.
2. John the Baptist seemed to understand this matter of the Spirit and the Kingdom. He saw the outpouring

of the Spirit coming through Christ, and also the coming of the Kingdom. He saw 'the Holy Spirit and fire' linked, i.e. judgement would come with the Spirit. Also the renewal of the people of God would come, this involving both life and judgement.

3. The Kingdom and the Spirit are linked in the baptism of Jesus. He is proclaimed King in line with Psalm 2:6–7, and Isaiah 42:1. Jesus himself quotes Isaiah 61:1f. in relation to his anointing and the action he is about to take. He rationalizes both of these in the words of Matthew 12:28, 'But if it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the Kingdom of God has come upon you.' He does nothing in the matter of the Kingdom apart from the Spirit. It is true to say that where Jesus was the Kingdom was, but it is even more true to say that where the Spirit was the Kingdom was. In other words, Jesus was always 'led by the Spirit', and did what he was guided to do. In this sense the man Jesus is under the Spirit always.
4. The Spirit, in some sense, was in the work of the Cross (Heb. 9:14), and also raised Jesus from the dead (Rom. 8:11; 1:4), and caused him to ascend (cf. Rom. 8:11 and Eph. 1:20). On ascension the Lordship of Christ is established without doubt. In this sense the Kingdom is sealed, and its victory sure. Now the Lordship of Christ, i.e. the true Messianic Kingdom, can be proclaimed.
5. The Spirit is sent to cause the Kingdom to be proclaimed. This is the message of the Book of the

Acts. The proclaimers are already *in* the Kingdom. It is *from* the Kingdom that they proclaim it.

6. The life of the Kingdom is lived by aid of the Spirit (Rom. 14:17; I Cor. 4:20). In Matthew 21:41 and 43 Jesus says the Kingdom will be taken away from those who do not produce its fruits and will be given to those who do. The subject of the Kingdom and fruits is no little one. The fig tree which is cursed represents the fruitless Kingdom as it is in the hands of the Jews. It promises fruit, but gives none. Without doubt the fruit of the Kingdom is the fruit of the Spirit, but such fruit should be seen as dynamic and not merely as pietistic. Since the Kingdom is all about love (Col 1:13; Rom. 14:17), then the Spirit of love must always be linked with the Kingdom.
7. In the widest perspective, that of salvation history, the whole sweep of the Kingdom from creation to the end, shows the Spirit as the Spirit of creation and life. He is there at the beginning. He is there at the end. We have seen in the Book of the Revelation that he speaks to the churches (chs 2 and 3), that he is the power behind 'the testimony of Jesus', and so all prophecy, and that at the end he is there with the invitation to salvation, and the invocation of Christ in the parousia.

We conclude then that the Kingdom and the Spirit are inseparably linked. This is borne home by Christ's words that except a man be born of the Spirit he cannot enter the Kingdom of God. Romans 8:9–11 makes it clear

that only the possession of the Spirit will make one a member of the Kingdom. Others are 'the natural man' or 'those devoid of the Spirit'. Of course the life of the Kingdom (which is life within the church in this era) is all by the Spirit. Obviously faith, hope and love are by the Spirit, and those who do the works of the flesh shall not inherit the Kingdom. Those who bear the fruit of the Spirit are those who shall.

We see then that being baptized in the Spirit is both entrance into the Kingdom and the assurance that one can live the life of the Kingdom, and so ultimately inherit it for ever.

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## APPENDIX 4

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# *Regeneration & Spirit-Baptism*

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We have suggested that the disciples were already regenerate. This seems to be the thrust of John 13:10: 'Jesus said to him, "He who has bathed does not need to wash, except for his feet, but he is clean all over; and you are clean, but not every one of you."' Jesus is saying that apart from Judas the others are clean. In 15:3 he says, 'You are already clean through the word that I have spoken unto you.' It was a matter of epoch or dispensation that they had not received the Spirit. 'He is among you, but he will be in you' (14:17). Acts 11:17 has coincident aorist participles, i.e. having believed, the gift of the Spirit was given them. Whether this belief was suddenly stimulated at Pentecost does not much matter. The 120 were in a different position altogether to that of their listeners. These in no sense had believed. They were not regenerate.

The Spirit had to come upon them, from above (John 3:3–6) for new birth. When, then, they called out for direction, they were told, ‘Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.’

Without doubt *the prior work of the Spirit* had already been done in accordance with John 16:7–11, i.e. conviction of sin, righteousness and judgement. But as yet they had not received the Spirit. Repentance, faith, the reception of forgiveness and the Spirit all happen at that point. Some Reformed theologians saw the need for the Spirit to regenerate a person before he could really believe. Other theologians see the action of repentance, faith, reception of forgiveness and the Spirit as the *crisis* of regeneration. In accordance with II Corinthians 5:17 they see the new creature born at this point. This would seem to accord with the promise of Ezekiel where the new heart and the new Spirit come simultaneously. It may be reasonable enough to speak also of regeneration as a continuing *process*, but as a process within a regenerated person. Conviction of sin, righteousness and judgement may be a preliminary work of the Spirit, but the person about to believe does not yet possess the Spirit as a gift.

Whatever happened to the disciples was not *normative* for history following Pentecost. The true normative experience is that of Cornelius and his household in Acts 10 and 11. Peter says nothing concerning the Spirit, except that God had anointed Jesus with him. His message was that Jesus is Lord of all, and that the prophets said that whoever believed on him (Jesus) would receive remission of sins. At that point the Spirit fell on all present.

Obviously they *had faith* in the promise and believed on Jesus. Yet in 11:18 the Jews saw that this meant *they had repented*. Instantaneously then, the Gentiles had believed, repented, received forgiveness and the gift of the Spirit. It is difficult not to see that the Spirit had come with the gifts of faith, repentance, and the forgiveness of sins.

We have already seen in Romans 8:9 that if anyone has not the Spirit of Christ then he is none of his. The person without the Spirit is not converted or regenerated. He cannot receive the things of the Spirit, much less the Spirit (I Cor. 2:14). Jude speaks of such as being ‘devoid of the Spirit’ (Jude 19). In Paul’s eyes they are such as produce the works of the flesh (Gal. 5:19–21). In Romans 8:5–8 Paul shows that one has *either* the mind-set of the Spirit *or* the mind-set of the flesh. One does not have both. When it comes to the question of the Spirit and *power* we must approach it from two angles. If the Spirit primarily comes for power to proclaim the Kingdom, so that his coming for regeneration is subsidiary to the power effusion, then we must examine the nature of regeneration and that of proclamation. It is altogether wrong to look at regeneration as a comparatively minor event over and against a power enduement. We ought to understand that the ‘greater works’ Jesus promised are the bringing of men and women to salvation. There can be no greater miracle than the conversion and transformation of a sinner. To say otherwise is to fail to see the state of sinful man, the demanding holiness of God, and the impossible dilemma of weak and sinful humanity. This work of the Spirit—i.e. the application of the dynamic of the Cross and Resurrection—requires enormous moral power. Conviction is difficult enough, but the application

to the human person of the redeeming, cleansing, liberating work of Christ is a vast miracle. Its results are of enormous dimensions.

What seems to have been missed by many scholars is the fact that the New Testament speaks of the great *response of love* to the *act of redeeming love*. I Peter 1:8 shows the love the believer has for Christ because of his work (cf. II Cor. 5:14 with Gal. 2:20; Eph. 5:2; 6:24). There is love for God because of His love (I John 4:19; cf. Eph. 2:4; II Thess. 2:16), and it is from this that believers wish to proclaim the Gospel. This is most evident in I Thessalonians 1:5–10. Whilst love may be said to be the greatest motivation, it is the Spirit who naturally supplies the *power* needed to fulfil the thrust of love. Hence, Romans 5:5 says that God's love is flooded into our hearts *by the Holy Spirit who has been given to us*. In the context of Romans 5:5–10 it may be seen that the inflooding love comes from the revelation of man's sinful dilemma and God's great grace. It is at conversion the Holy Spirit brings the love of God as revelation and experience, and does not do this without himself coming. *He brings all with him*. It is the Spirit coming which constitutes true conversion, salvation, regeneration. Why then should we exclude the influx of power at this point? Doubtless the apostles had not had that power, but dispensationally they were not able to receive such power until Pentecost. Pentecost has come and all may receive power!

It goes without saying that if churches are as deficient as some of Revelation chapters 2 and 3, that there will be little faith-anticipation of an anointing of power. Faith comes by the humble hearing of the Word spoken, and if

the promises of forgiveness and the Spirit are not dynamic then no radical experience can be anticipated. Perhaps it is in this area that our current problems are situated.

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**SECTION TWO**

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***SPIRIT-LIVING***

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# 1

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## ***Introduction to Spirit-Living***

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### **The Getting of Perspective**

We have already seen that much confusion about being baptized in the Spirit arises because we do not approach the subject in perspective. We fail to see it in the context of the Kingdom of God. We, for the most part, ignore the roots of the subject as they are in the Old Testament. We are thinking in terms of acceptable change, of the coming of needed power, and of the dynamic for living which we know is lacking in ourselves. Hence we take an atomistic view of the subject.

Doubtless many fair-minded people see Spirit-baptism as an initiation into a more dynamic, useful and serving life. This, of course, is what it is all about. However, others do not see it that way. They see it as a quick and

sure-fire method of having a virile and successful life. Naturally enough they glory in any ecstasy which might attend the new life, and they are more than intrigued by the gifts. They are positively captured by them. Outward signs, success in the use of the gifts, and they are sure this is what Spirit-baptism is all about. The current charismatic movement, often called the 'renewal movement', has many sad things about it. It has its fashions, its gimmicks, its whims, and its ever-changing teaching. Of course these do not characterize the entire movement, but they are often present. Some within the movement are ever seeking some new thing, and what was new last year is now stale, effete, and neglected. Again this is by no means a judgement on the entire movement.

It is not our purpose to examine or be critical of any movement. Rather, we do need to see whether our own faith is biblical and our practice in conformity with it. Some have doctrine and little congruent practice. Others have Christian practice and little biblical understanding of it. It is best to have both, and there is no reason why they should not and cannot go together, hand in hand.

For this reason we need to study the person and work of the Holy Spirit in history, and of course to have parallel understanding of the person and work of the Father, and the person and work of the Son. The three must be one by nature of the case, although the work of each member of the Trinity is unique. In order to place our understanding of the Spirit so that we may know what he is doing in this age, we need to study the whole of Scripture. Having done this, and having brought our subject into perspective, we may legitimately see what is life as we live it in the Holy Spirit.

## **THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE OLD TESTAMENT**

### **The Holy Spirit is Person**

It would be difficult for us to understand how the Hebrews viewed the Holy Spirit. They simply knew him as 'the Spirit of the Lord', and doubtless the idea of the Trinity was not consciously known. Nor did they have a view of God as Binity, i.e. God *and* the Spirit. As to the *person* of the Spirit, we cannot understand what they thought. Even so, they saw the Spirit as one of power as he moved, in the creative scene, across the face of the deep. Passages such as Job 26:13, 'By his breath [Heb. *ruach*, 'spirit', 'wind', 'air'] the heavens were made fair'; Psalm 33:6, 'By the word of the Lord the heavens were made, and all their host by the breath of his mouth'. Here the Word and the Spirit are one. Again in Psalm 104:29-30 we have an important statement,

When thou hidest thy face, they are dismayed;  
when thou takest away their breath, they die  
and return to their dust.  
When thou sendest forth thy Spirit, they are created;  
and thou renewest the face of the ground.

In Genesis 2:7 we are told that God breathed into man the breath of life and he became a living being. It is true that the Hebrew word here is *neshamah* (also used for life of animals), but *neshamah* and *ruach* have been used interchangeably.

Looking at creation we would be excused for thinking that the Spirit is a power or influence. Some of the symbols used for him such as water, air, oil and fire,

would confirm that impression. Even so, in Isaiah 63:10 we are told that Israel ‘vexed his holy Spirit’. This indicates the *person* of the Spirit. The New Testament develops the idea of his personhood, yet in a passage such as Isaiah 11:2 the Spirit is given attributes such as wisdom, understanding, counsel, might, knowledge and fear (of the Lord). These, too, strongly indicate personality. We understand persons to have the elements of knowing, willing and feeling. These can be predicated of the Spirit even in the Old Testament.

### **The Holy Spirit is in Creation**

We have seen that the Spirit is creative. Our point in speaking of him in this role is to show that the Spirit of creation *is concerned primarily with the outcome of creation*. To create may be one thing, and to bring that creation to a successful conclusion another. Hence we must understand history as being primarily *heilsgeschichte*, that is salvation history. We do not have to see this history above or behind history as we know it, but as the very stuff and substance of it, although the secular minds do not see it that way. We mean that the Spirit is primarily concerned with the plan of God in creating the universe in general and man in particular. Many Scriptures show us that this is the new creation, the redeemed elect of God, and the ultimate glorification and vindication of God as Creator (cf. I Pet. 4:19).

Psalms 104:29–30 shows us the Spirit sustains the creation in providential fashion. In fact this approximates to what the Son does in Colossians 1:17 and Hebrews 1:3. Man is dependent upon the Spirit for continuing life,

but then the Spirit upholds man with a view to what God is doing.

The purpose of God is seen primarily in the covenant with Abraham. All the nations of the earth will be blessed through this. What precedes the announcement of that covenant is what some scholars call ‘pre-history’. They see the first 11 chapters of Genesis as given to rationalize the covenant promise. The point of the covenant would be lost without an understanding of creation, man’s fall, and his journey into death and evil. The proto-evangel of Genesis 3:15 is most important, as is also the prophecy of Jacob in Genesis 49:10, for it points to the person of one to come who will rule universally. As we have seen in our former section, all prophecy is by the Spirit, and relates to the full plan and purpose of God.

When, then, we say the Spirit is in creation, we do not simply mean *at* creation or even *sustaining* creation. We mean he works *in, through, and for* the creation according to the will of God. If we have a short-sighted peering at the details of the Spirit’s work we might miss the purpose of that work, and so fail to achieve useful perspective.

# 2

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## ***The Spirit in the Old Testament—1***

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### **The Spirit and Antediluvian Man**

If our claim is correct—that man as created is a creature of spirit—then we must accept that his fall brought a difference to him. He died, particularly in relationship to God, and so to himself and to the woman (his neighbour). This does not mean he did not remain a spiritual being, but in this case a contradiction of that true spiritual being, a perverse spiritual being, and from God's point of view, dead (Gen. 2:17). What is interesting to note is that one son 'was of the evil one' (I John 3:12) and the other, a righteous man, in fact a prophet (I John 3:12; Heb. 11:4; Luke 11:51). Cain is omitted from the 'generations of Adam', Seth being the substitute for Abel (Gen. 4:25—5:4). We draw the conclusion then, that through grace men like Abel and Enoch (for example) were true men of

the Spirit (cf. Gen. 5:21–24; Jude 14), being prophets (cf. I Pet. 1:10–12; II Pet. 1:21).

When we come to Genesis 6:1–3 it seems that the godly line of Seth and the ungodly line of Cain—'sons of God and daughters of men'—are now joined and such evil takes place as can be called 'evil with a high hand', i.e. the evil of presumption. At this point God changes His pattern of the use of His *ruach*. Genesis 6:3 can mean a number of things, but generally it appears to mean that man has forsaken his creative being of spirit, and has become flesh. This is a perversion of his true created being. For this God will judge, or abandon him, even though 120 years will elapse in which Noah will proclaim the truth of God (cf. II Pet. 2:5). We assume then that despite the Fall, the Spirit worked not only in his capacity of creative and sustaining Spirit, but also with man to give him the powers of true spiritual being. The Flood came as judgement upon sinful man. Only Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord. He, of all, must have been a man of the Spirit.

### **The Spirit of God and the Covenant with Abraham**

The first covenant of grace is given, through Noah, to mankind. Judgement, in the nature of the Flood, will not again come to man, no matter how deeply he sins (Gen. 8:21–22). The normal rhythm of creation will proceed uninterrupted by this kind of judgement. Man, then, sees what grace is. Nevertheless a covenant of (grace-) blessing is not given universally until God appears to Abraham. See Genesis 12:1f. and compare with Acts 7:2ff. It is

clear from Genesis 10 and 11 that man does not intend to obey the creational mandate (Gen. 1:28ff.), not even in its post-flood form (Gen. 9:1–7). Nimrod disobeys it, and the men of Babel spurn it. Yet God appears to Abraham.

In the text of Genesis we have no explicit reference to Abraham and the Spirit. However, Galatians 3 and 4 speak not only of Abraham being justified (Gen. 15:6), but his son Isaac was ‘born of the Spirit’, and not like Ishmael, ‘of the flesh’. If Isaac, the heir of the Abrahamic promise, is a man of the Spirit, so even more is Abraham. Even Sarah seems included in this as ‘the free woman’. Abraham, of course, is known as a prophet (Gen. 20:7), as prophets are, in some sense, men of the Spirit, as we have seen. Jacob, Isaac’s son, is also a prophet, as Genesis 49 well shows (see especially verse 10). Of his son Joseph, Pharaoh asks, ‘Can we find such a man as this in whom is the Spirit of God?’ We take it then that the Spirit moved amongst these (covenantal) patriarchs, and of course this fact is pointed out in Hebrews 1:1.

Later we will see that the covenant which was given to Abraham, although for an epoch confined, so to speak, within the Mosaic Covenant, eventually flowers out (in accordance with the prophecies) into the New Covenant, which is the covenant of universal blessing, embracing both Jew and Gentile. For the moment, however, we need to examine the Spirit and the Mosaic Covenant.

### **The Spirit and the Mosaic Covenant**

As we examine these epochs we should see them as forward-moving steps within the plan of God, and not endeavours upon the part of God to rectify regrettable

errors and rebellion on the part of man, and even His own chosen people. We will see then that the Spirit was doing that work which would build towards the ultimate intention God had for His creation.

Moses is depicted as a man of the Spirit. Not only does God appear to him personally and speak with him in a way which even other prophets did not (and would not) experience (Num. 12:6–8; cf. Deut. 18:15ff.), but it is explicitly stated that Moses was a man of the Spirit (cf. Num. 11:16–29). In another sense others are equipped with the Spirit for special artisan’s works. This we see in Exodus 28:3 and 31:1ff. Under Moses the seventy elders have the Spirit come upon them (Num. 11:16ff.). Joshua is also a man of the Spirit (Num. 27:18; Deut. 34:9). Later we see explicit happenings of the Spirit coming upon those whom God appointed as judges in Israel. See for this the Book of the Judges.

In Isaiah 63:10–14 we see that the Holy Spirit was present with Israel in the exodus from Egypt to Canaan. In the Book of Judges (see 3:10; 6:34; 11:29; 13:25; 14:6, 19; and 15:14) we see the Spirit move on such men as Gideon, Jephthah and Samson. This is to teach, rebuke and save the people of Israel. In Haggai 2:4–6 God speaks to Zerubbabel and Joshua—the prince and priest of His people—telling them to be courageous. He says, ‘My Spirit abides among you; fear not.’ The sense could be, ‘My Spirit has always been among you, even in exile, and he is here now, and will so remain’. We know from the prophecy of Ezekiel that the glory of the Lord left Israel at the exile, and yet we are also to understand that God never left His people. The prophecy of Ezekiel 36:24–28 was intended to convey, along with Ezekiel 37:1–15,

that God would renew His people in the Spirit, and wonderfully beyond anything they had ever known.

It is when we come to the prophets, as we shall see in our next chapter, that the Spirit is seen not only to be in Israel, ministering through the prophets, but through the prophets makes promises so wonderful as to be almost inconceivable. All of these relate to Israel, and to the Kingdom of God. In fact the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of Israel appear to be identical in the prophetic teaching and predictions.

# 3

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## ***The Spirit in the Old Testament—II***

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### **The Holy Spirit, the Prophets and Prophecy**

In Revelation 19:10 we are told that ‘the testimony of Jesus is the spirit [or, Spirit] of prophecy’. This is stated as a general principle. Hebrews 1:1 says that in many ways and at various times *God spoke to the fathers by the prophets*. It compares this with what happens in the last days: ‘in these last days he has spoken unto us by a Son’. Yet that Son is the subject of all prophecies. This is seen in Luke 24:25–26 and 24:44–47. In the Gospels Jesus is said to fulfil the prophets by what he is and does, and the claim is made in Acts that he has done these things, whilst the Epistles assume the same. I Peter 1:10–12 says quite explicitly that the Holy Spirit, speaking to and through the prophets, was ‘the Spirit of Christ’.

We need to see then, that the line of prophets spread

from Abel to Zechariah (Luke 11:51), and ultimately to John the Baptist, whose ministry we will regard. Without doubt, prophecy in a very special way began a different course from Samuel onwards. This is verified by Acts 3:24 and 13:20 (cf. Heb. 11:32). However, as we have seen, the first nominated prophet was Abel. Enoch is also a prophet. The patriarchs had prophetic ministry to some degree. Balaam is a prophet declaring oracles even though he would wish to curse Israel for money. He is forced, prophetically, to divine a glorious future for this people of God, Israel. David at first sight would not appear to be a prophet, but II Samuel 23:1ff. makes it clear he was a prophet. Of Balaam it had been said:

And the Spirit of the Lord came upon him, and he took up his discourse and said,  
‘The oracle of Balaam . . .’

Of David we read:

The oracle of David, the son of Jesse . . .  
‘The Spirit of the Lord speaks by me,  
his word is upon my tongue.  
The God of Israel has spoken . . .’

In Acts 2:30 Peter, using Psalm 16, says, ‘[David] being therefore a prophet.’ In Acts 4:25 another prophecy (Psalm 2) is accorded to David. David, then, was very much a prophet, and many of his psalms spoke of the Messiah-King to come. Our main point, however, is that it was by the Spirit he prophesied (II Sam. 23:2).

### **The Spirit and the Prophets**

There is no true prophecy without the Spirit of God. Pharaoh recognized Joseph’s dreams as prophecy or

divination, and this was consonant with Numbers 12:6 where God says He speaks to the prophets in dreams and visions. Hence Pharaoh said Joseph was a man ‘in whom is the Spirit of God’ (Gen. 41:38). In I Kings 22:24 the test of the false prophet and the true prophet is the one in whom the Spirit of God is. In fact Micah set out the principle, ‘I am filled with power, with the Spirit of the Lord, and with justice and might, to declare to Jacob his transgression and to Israel his sin’ (Micah 3:8). In Isaiah 48:16 the prophet says, either of himself or another, ‘And now the Lord God has sent me, and his Spirit.’ In Ezekiel 11:5 the classical pattern is shown of the prophet and the Spirit, ‘And the Spirit of the Lord fell upon me, and he said to me, “Say, Thus says the Lord. . .”’. When the Spirit came upon the seventy elders they began to prophesy, even though only on that occasion (Num. 11:25). In Acts 2 a similar thing happens when the Spirit falls on the 120, and in that special book of prophecy, Revelation, the writer is ‘in the Spirit on the Lord’s day’, and it is at that point he commences ‘the word of the prophecy’ (Rev. 1:10; cf. 1:3).

In I Peter 1:10–12 the writer tells us that the prophets prior to Christ were moved by the Spirit of Christ. This surely was ‘the testimony of Jesus’, the same testimony that John, the writer of Revelation, is exiled for to the Isle of Patmos. The principle of prophecy is stated in II Peter 1:20–21:

First of all you must understand this, that no prophecy of scripture is a matter of one’s own interpretation, because no [true!] prophecy ever came by the impulse of man, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.

If we add to this such statements as in Zechariah 7:12



that the Lord had sent the law and the words *by his Spirit through the former prophets* (i.e. the action and operations contained within the books from Joshua to Nehemiah), and Nehemiah 9:30, 'Many years thou didst bear with them, and didst warn them *by thy Spirit through thy prophets*; yet they would not hear . . .', then something of great importance begins to emerge. It is this:

Not only is the Spirit the Spirit of creation and sustaining providence, but he is the Spirit who has to do with every phase of man's history. Whilst man is dependent upon him for his biological existence, he (the Spirit) is at one with God the Creator-Redeemer in making sure that the plan of God is known, and in particular to the covenant people of God, Israel. The prophecy which he stimulates and controls not only has prediction, but warning and exhortation. A study of prophetic ministries in Israel's history shows that men of the (prophetic) Spirit were marked out from others. Moses wished that God would pour out His Spirit on all flesh, and not confine it to the seventy elders, so powerful was the effect of the Spirit.

Of course there are strange things, such as when Saul suddenly becomes as another man when the Spirit grips him. A prophet may even be caught up and translated in a strange manner to some distant place (cf. I Kings 18:12; II Kings 2:16; Ezek. 8:3; 11:24). If he is caught up, then the Spirit catches him up. It has been observed by some commentators that the later canonical prophets—the major and minor prophets—rather seemed to play down the manifestations of the Spirit, for in fact they were rather sent with the word of God than came as persons under

some possession of the Spirit, which we today might call psychic. Yet while it is true they come with the word, it is also true that the earlier prophets came with the word of God. Whilst the *modes* of the prophets may have differed in various generations or epochs, they still experienced the same thrust—the prophets were those through whom the Spirit of God communicated. Hosea 9:7 has it that the prophet is the man of the Spirit.

### The Substance of the Prophetic Word

Each prophet was intended to speak to his own people and their circumstances. As we saw, they brought 'the words and the law', and they warned as well as predicted. It was of great importance that a prophet was present to the people, even though the words of the prophet often caused them to reject him, persecute him, and in many cases kill him. As we have it in I Samuel 3:1, 'The word of the Lord was rare in those days; there was no frequent vision'. It was of this matter that the writer of Proverbs spoke: 'Where there is no prophecy [vision] the people cast off restraint' (Prov. 29:18). This makes the ministry of the Spirit, so to speak, indispensable to the exercise of continuous restraint or constraint.

The Spirit then must continuously relate to the people in this prophetic manner. Hence the significance of a statement such as I Samuel 3:21—4:1, 'And the Lord appeared again at Shiloh, for the Lord revealed himself to Samuel by the word of the Lord. And the word of Samuel came to all Israel', i.e. the word now was not so rare in Israel!

However, there gradually grew to be a wider word of the Spirit through the prophets. Some call it the eschatological word, for the horizon widens far beyond the times contemporary to the prophet who uttered the prophecy. It even seemed, often, to extend beyond Israel and become universal, and sometimes reached to the end of time and history. None of these great themes was unrelated to Israel's plight at the time of the prophet. If they were under judgement, and going into exile, then there was the promise of the restoration of the Kingdom to Israel. If they were judged because of their idolatry and impurity, then a time would come when they would be washed and renewed, returned to their own land, and the name of God, far from being profaned, would again be honoured by the (new) holiness of His people.

So great themes emerge, the themes of the New Covenant, the Kingdom of David, the renewal of God's people, the greatness and victory of the Messiah, or the Son of man, as also the mysterious, not-easy-to-be-understood references to the Suffering Servant. The latter could possibly be the nation or a person, or even the pure seed, the holy remnant of the elect. Whatever these great themes, there was an enormous dynamic of hope given through the prophets, and this was the widening ministry of the Spirit as he prepared the covenant people for the events to come.

We would have to be honest and say that few, if any, would have thought of 'the spirit of prophecy' as 'the testimony of Jesus'. Some may have seen much of it as 'the testimony of Messiah'. Certainly a great deal of teaching was given about the Spirit himself. In Isaiah 11:2 he is the sevenfold Spirit (cf. Rev. 5:6; etc.), as

well as at the same time, the Spirit of Messiah. Likewise in Isaiah 61:1–3 he is the Spirit of Messiah, enabling him to do his varied and dynamic work. In Isaiah 59:16–21 God raises up His powerful Intercessor who intervenes for His people. God promises (verse 21) that the Spirit will remain upon His covenant people to all generations, and as a consequence so will His word be for ever in their mouths.

The Spirit is greatly connected with renewal in many Isaianic passages. It is probably to one or more of these that Jesus refers in John 7:37–39, and even possibly in John 3:6–10. Such passages are 32:14ff.; 35:1–10; 43:18ff.; and 44:3ff. There are many such renewal passages not connected directly with the Spirit. In Ezekiel 36 and 37 we find such passages, whilst in Joel chapter 2 is the explicit prophecy of the pouring out of the Spirit in 'the last days'. The 'last days' or 'the day of the Lord' are often spoken of graphically, as times of calamity and catastrophe, as well as of restoration. But then they are also days of Messiah, the days of the New Covenant and the days of the Kingdom.

With the advent and completion of the minor (canonical) prophets, the prophetic series comes to a close. Does this mean, then, that the spirit of prophecy is not working? The answer is that the substance of the prophets, i.e. the prophetic deposit, is now before God's people. It remains now only for the predicted elements to be fulfilled. It is obligatory upon God's people to respond to the exhortations, warnings and admonitions of the prophets, and be people true to the covenant God who is their God of grace.

The prophets then are not a matter of antiquarian

interest. Their prophecies are dynamic. The people must anticipate the coming of Messiah or the 'Son of man'. They must prepare for the full restoration of the Kingdom which is now in bad shape. They must anticipate the New Covenant with its promise of the forgiveness of sins, and they must look to see the universal outpouring of the Holy Spirit of God, i.e. 'on all flesh', with the consequent ministry of prophecy from its recipients.

These and other matters must occupy them, and it is true that many of these matters were in the minds of the people of Israel, the Jews of Judea and Galilee. Some of their notions were hazy, some quite awry, and some—for very few—quite clear. It needed the coming not of false messiahs or fierce revolutionary zealots, but the coming of John the Baptist, the last and greatest of all the prophets to appear. He was to be the catalyst who crystallized the expectations of his people. He was to be the true precursor to Messiah himself.

**Conclusion:  
The Spirit in the Old Testament**

We rightly understand the Spirit when we see him as the Spirit of creation, and the Spirit of prophecy working towards the coming of Messiah and the triumph of the Kingdom. We must not look at his works in the period prior to the Flood, in the Patriarchal period, and Israel's history, as though they were different things in different times. In one sense they were, but they were all with a view to Messiah's coming and his work, and then the ultimate coming of the eschaton, and the fulfilment of God's plan. Only as we have this perspective does much

in the New Testament make sense to us. It also conditions the way we understand the Spirit and are willing to be subject to him.

# 4

## ***Anticipation of the Coming of Messiah & the Outpouring of the Spirit***

In order to obtain the full picture of this period of the Spirit's work we need to read over again chapters two to five of Section 1. Even so, the material given in those chapters concerns the attitude of the people to the message of John the Baptist, and the message and ministry of Jesus. For purposes of recapitulation we set it out as follows:

### **The Prophetic Continuity in John the Baptist**

It is a fact of history that there was great expectation of the Messiah in the time of the Gospels. False messiahs

had come and gone without fulfilling Messianic expectation. Communities had grown up which looked for Messiah's appearance. John the Baptist insisted he was not Messiah, but Messiah's messenger sent in conformity with the prophecies of Scripture such as Isaiah 40:3f. (Matt. 3:3), Malachi 3:1 (Mark 1:2; Luke 3:4–6). When John said Messiah would bring in the Kingdom and baptize in/with the Spirit, then doubtless they saw these three elements of which John spoke—forgiveness, the Kingdom, and the Spirit—as constituting the one new era.

When Jesus came on the heels of John and was attested to by John, then he could be no less than Messiah. He was asked for signs of the Kingdom but refused to give such. On the other hand he was giving the signs of the Kingdom. John's Gospel gives the clue to this when in John 2:23—3:14 Jesus was saying to Nicodemus that he had failed to read the signs of the Kingdom, and this was the evidence that he needed to be begotten from above by the Spirit. It is clear from 2:23–25 that instead of reading signs some saw only miracles. Hence they did not let themselves be conducted to the Kingdom.

Jesus himself commented on John in a number of ways. He links the prophecy of Malachi 4:5 with John, i.e. that it is John who has come in the Spirit and power of Elijah (cf. Matt. 11:14). Zechariah, the father of John, had been told this by the angel of the Lord (Luke 1:16–17; cf. Mal. 4:5). In John's Gospel John denies he is 'the prophet' or 'that prophet', by which is meant the prophet of whom Moses prophesies in Deuteronomy 18. However, the Isaianic and Malachi prophecies make John an authenticated prophet, and this especially because he was filled with the Holy Spirit from his mother's womb (Luke 1:15; cf. 1:41).

This makes him unique amongst the prophets, and shows us the special work of the Spirit. Hence Jesus is also uniquely vindicated by him who is indeed a prophet, but ‘more than a prophet’.

### **The Spirit, Jesus, and the Kingdom**

We have seen that in conformity with Psalm 2:6–7 and Isaiah 42:1 (cf. 61:1f.), Jesus is acclaimed Son of God. That is he is the King-Messiah. The Spirit was the one through whom he was conceived in the womb of Mary, the one by whom he was anointed, and the one who led him into the wilderness to be tempted, and so to prove his (tested) Sonship. He returns from Jordan in the power of the Spirit. He ministers in the power of the Spirit, proclaiming by word and deed the Kingdom itself, and so effecting the power of the Kingdom. It can be said uniquely of him that ‘he brought forth the fruits of the Kingdom’.

At the Cross he effected the victory of the Kingdom over the resistant powers of evil. The Epistles draw out this truth, but Jesus himself asserted that this was what he would do. More than a hint is given in Luke 11:21ff., and in John 12:31, 14:30–31 and 16:11 he speaks of the victory he will accomplish as though already successful.

He says little about the Holy Spirit during the time of his ministry. Apart from assuring his listeners that God will give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him (Luke 11:13), and speaking of the blasphemy against the Spirit (Matt. 12:31–32), he says little else. John’s Gospel is the exception of the four Gospels. In that Gospel he speaks of the Spirit in relation to the Kingdom in John 3. In John 4

he speaks of worship in and by the Spirit—most profound words. In John 7:37–39 he promises the Spirit to all who believe in him. The Spirit will flow from them as rivers of living water. Probably the living water is the same as he promised to the woman at the well in John 4. In chapters 14–16 he speaks much of the Spirit, but even then in relationship to the continuity of his own ministry, and in relation to the Father. On the night of the resurrection he breathes on the apostles (ten of them being present) in much the same spirit as we find in Genesis 2:7.<sup>1</sup>

All-in-all Jesus teaches little about the Spirit. By contrast he teaches much more about the Father. Then again he does not say much about forgiveness of sins. On the night of his betrayal he speaks about the Kingdom (Luke 22:28–30; cf. 12:32), and also announces his death is for the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the New Covenant of Jeremiah 31:31–34. As we have observed, he also teaches concerning the coming of the Spirit. In his post-resurrection appearance of Luke 24:44–49 he refers again to the Spirit.

If he teaches little about the Spirit and much concerning the Kingdom, yet all his ministry, including his death, resurrection and ascension is by the Spirit. Everything, too, is Kingdom! Some have concluded that he was deluded about the establishment of the Kingdom, but this is not so. For him the Cross did not result from an error in judgement. In Mark 8:31, 9:31, and 10:33, he had repeatedly insisted that his death was part of the plan and prophecies. In this determination he was aided by the Spirit.

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix on ‘The Johannine Pentecost’.

### **The Promise of Pentecost**

John's announcement of the three significant elements—the Kingdom, the remission of sins, and the outpourings of the Spirit—were now to come to pass. In Acts 1:4–8 Jesus makes this clear, linking the baptizing in the Spirit with the matter of the Kingdom, although not in the way, precisely, that the apostles were thinking. The Kingdom was not to be limited to Israel. Even so, he commanded his disciples to wait for the coming of the Spirit. Calling this 'the promise of the Father', he expected them to remain until they had been baptized in the Spirit

The event, when it happened, is explained by Peter in Acts 2:14ff. He aligns the event with Joel 2:28ff. So far as Jesus is concerned, Peter says that he was exalted at the right hand of God (Lordship) and was given the promise of the Father (the Spirit), and it is he who has now poured out the Spirit, which fact all could *see* and *hear* (Acts 2:33).

### **The Effects of Pentecost**

The impact of Pentecost is powerful. Also it is deeply significant. Pentecost is the opening of a new era. It was the era of which the prophets spoke, and to which Israel looked, for it was the era of the Kingdom, and of the Spirit. A reading of Peter's sermon reveals the following:

As prophesied by Joel, in the last days God will pour out His Spirit, and this He has now done. His promise was that He would pour out His Spirit upon all men and women. He would give to them visions and dreams—the characteristic way of informing prophets. This He has done in front of you. You

have heard them telling the wonderful works of God. You have seen the evidences of His Spirit come. This era will continue until the Lord's Day, that great and terrible Day! Whoever now calls upon the Name of the Lord will be saved.

So far as Jesus is concerned he has proved himself attested by God through what he has done. Even though you killed him, yet it was God's plan. However, the death makes no difference to him, for God has raised him up. This is in accordance with Psalm 16, which certainly does not refer to David, whose mortal remains lie in the grave. God has raised Jesus, and has exalted him to the place of authority, and given him the Holy Spirit, who, as you see, has been poured forth by him. Psalm 110 is the prophetic word for that act. So then this Jesus has thus been shown to be both Lord and Messiah.

The impact was tremendous. Of the large gathering thousands were stricken at the act they had done and cried out, asking what they should now do. Peter told them in the words we have studied so much. This they did, 3,000 of them being baptized. They knew they were separating from the Jews who still rejected Christ.

Then the new life began.

# 5

## *The New Life Begins*

If we view the matter merely as spectators we may be deeply impressed by what happened. At the same time we will miss the essence and feel of what happened, as spectators often do. Pentecost is not an event one merely watches. Or if it is, then it must be with mounting joy and wonder and a desire to be a participant.

The fact is that the church of Jesus Christ began that day. He had said, 'I will build my church,' and here was its beginning. Doubtless there was much release of human spirit, and much joy. Three thousand people had come into the total forgiveness of sins, had become the people of Jesus the Messiah, had come under his directive Lordship, and had been given—amazingly enough—the gift of the Holy Spirit! No wonder they suddenly became a community of unity and love, sharing their possessions. They lived in the atmosphere of 'Kingdom action', i.e. in

the midst of apostolic signs and wonders. We are told that they, 'devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers'.

We can easily reconstruct the kind of life they lived. The apostolic teaching had, as promised in John 14:26, 15:26 and 16:12–15, now been crystallized. *The apostles knew what it was all about!* They had a new thing in apostolic fellowship. This was love and unity beyond dreaming. It was Psalm 133 in fulfilment:

Behold, how good and pleasant it is  
when brothers dwell together in unity!

They broke bread, which may well have been the constant and dynamic remembrance of the victorious death in the Supper of the Lord. Also they shared food from house to house. This new social experience must have been exhilarating. It must also have been a sight to see thousands move up to the temple at the set hours of prayer from dawn until evening.

However, it was the new life of each person which must have been no less than thrilling. Paul's statement that the love of God is flooded into our hearts by the Holy Spirit was for them not mere reportage, but vital reality.

Was it however, only for these participators in Pentecost?

### **New Life for All Believers**

It is at this point that we abstract from the New Testament, both from the Acts and the Epistles, the material which tells us what it is to respond to the Gospel, and to receive the Spirit. We have seen in the former section



of this book that the test of being a Christian is the reception and possession of the Holy Spirit (cf. Rom. 8:9–11; I Cor. 2:14; Jude 19). Romans 8:5–8 makes a clear distinction between those who have the mind-set of the Spirit and those who have the mind-set of the flesh. The term ‘who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit’ does not refer to two choices (or ways) one has *within the Christian life*. The ‘way of the flesh’ is not Christian. It is evil. The ‘way of the Spirit’ is the only way that a Christian may live. Whilst it may be true that the flesh seeks to entice and enslave the believer, the way of flesh is not his way. In Galatians 5:16–26 Paul shows that it is the Spirit who battles the flesh to prevent it doing what it would in us and with us.

What then is the initial experience of the Gospel as it comes to us through the Word and the Spirit? It is important that we know this, otherwise our ignorance can make great difficulties for us. Both the Acts and the Epistles give us important information, and it is as follows:

- (a) The message of the Gospel, through the Spirit (I Cor. 2:4–5; I Thess. 1:5; I Pet. 1:12; cf. Heb. 2:14) is itself effective (I Cor. 1:17, 18, 23). See also John 16:7–11.
- (b) The Gospel demands a response which equals obedience (Acts 6:7; 17:30; cf. II Thess. 1:8; Rom. 10:16).
- (c) Repentance is demanded (Acts 2:38; 3:19; 17:30). Repentance is a change of mind, attitude and understanding. It is a gift (Acts 5:31; 11:18).
- (d) Faith is required (Acts 16:31; 10:43; 13:48; cf. Eph. 1:13–14). Faith is a gift (Phil. 1:29; Eph. 2:8).

See also Romans 10:17 and Galatians 3:5.

- (e) Converting (turning around) is commanded (Acts 3:19; 26:20; cf. II Cor. 7:10).
- (f) The effects of repentance, faith, converting, and obeying the Gospel are:
  - (i) Forgiveness, that is the remission or taking away of all sins, including the power and penalty of those sins (Acts 2:38; 3:19; 10:43; 13:38; cf. Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:13–14).
  - (ii) The cleansing of all pollution and defilement (Acts 15:9; Heb. 1:3; 9:14; 10:22; cf. I Cor. 6:9–11; Titus 3:5; Acts 26:18).
  - (iii) Sanctification. Cleansed, the believer is admitted into God’s holy people (Acts 15:8–9; I Cor. 6:9–11; Acts 26:18; II Thess. 2:13; I Pet. 1:2).
  - (iv) Justification (Acts 13:38–39; Rom. 6:7; 5:1; 8:1; 3:24ff.; Gal. 2:16–21). This covers justification from the penalty of sin, liberation from guilt, and the non-imputation of sins, but the imputation of Christ’s obedience, the latter being seen in Romans 5:12–21.
  - (v) Adoption, i.e. sonship (Gal. 4:4–6; Rom. 5:14–17; cf. I John 3:1–3).
  - (vi) The gift of the Spirit (Acts 2:38; 2:4; 8:17; 10:44; Gal. 3:2, 13–14; II Cor. 1:22; Rom. 5:5; II Tim. 1:14).
  - (vii) The gift of life (Acts 13:48; II Tim. 1:10; Rom. 6:23; Eph. 2:5).

- (viii) The gift of love (Rom. 5:5; cf. I John 4:19; I Pet. 1:22).  
This is God's love.
- (ix) Regeneration or the gift of being a new creation (II Cor. 5:17; Gal. 6:15; cf. Titus 3:5-7; Gal. 2:20).
- (g) The outcome of these effects and gifts of the Gospel are:
  - (i) The bringing forth of the fruits of repentance (Acts 26:20).
  - (ii) Incorporation into the Kingdom of God (Col. 1:13-14) and into the church, the body of Christ, the family and people of God (I Cor. 12:13; cf. Acts 2:39-41; 15:8-9; Eph. 2:11-22; I Pet. 2:9-10).
  - (iii) The obligation to full fellowship, and the loving use of gifts within the church, as also the proclamation of the Gospel to those outside the church.

### **The Beginning of the New Life**

What we have set out so factually above, can find no adjective to describe it fully. Rightly understood this amazing Gospel of 'repentance to God and faith in Jesus Christ' which is 'the gospel of the grace of God' and 'the preaching of the kingdom' (Acts 20:21; 24-25) is so effective in man that its radical impact completely changes him. Whilst we must always keep in mind that its perfect work will not be complete until the Day of Jesus Christ

when the final fruit shall be 'the sonship, that is the redemption of the body' (Rom. 8:23), yet the rich work of the Word and the Spirit now in our lives, explains the freedom and the love which Pentecost brought to the believing people. It can bring precisely that to us, who believe today.

# 6

## ***Beginning in the Spirit***

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### **The Community Begins in the Spirit**

In Galatians 3:3 Paul says, ‘*Having begun in the Spirit*, are you trying to mature by the flesh [human effort]?’ His point is, certainly, that if one *begins* in the Spirit then one will only, ultimately, come to *maturity* by the same Spirit. How then does one begin in the Spirit? What does it mean to a person? How does one go about such a commencement?

We have already seen what happens. In our previous chapter under the heading, ‘New Life for All Believers’ we saw what happens at the beginning of the new life. The first thing we have seen generally is that in the Old Testament God promised the outpouring of His Spirit upon His people, Israel. To take three of those predictions is to grasp the nature of the work and effects of the

Spirit. Briefly we see that in Ezekiel 37:1–14 the coming of the Spirit will bring revival to Israel which is bereft of life. Its dry bones will become fleshed. Its slain state will dramatically change to life. The nation will become a great army, obviously to conquer under God. In Ezekiel 36:16–38 Israel will be gathered from the places where it has been scattered (in exile) and will come to its own land. Then God will do a regenerating work. This will be a national work, but also it will be a personal work. God will cleanse the long-standing idolatry. He will change stony hearts to warm hearts of flesh. He will give each person a new spirit, placing this within his heart. This will be by placing His own Holy Spirit in them, and they will be wonderfully regenerated, even to the point of heart-obedience (cf. Deut. 30:6). Joel 2 is a chapter in which renewal is presented on a full scale. Verses 28ff. are quoted in Acts 2, showing that God, in pouring out His Spirit, will give His Spirit not only to a few, but to all; not only to men, but also to women. They will now be the prophetic community. This passage in Joel does not spell out the effects of conviction, repentance, forgiveness and faith which come with the Spirit, but Peter leads the listeners into these effects, not only at Jerusalem, but in other places also.

We have, then, the church beginning in the Spirit at Pentecost, and gathering life and numbers, as also community and experience, with the successive events of the Spirit-outpouring at Samaria, Caesarea and Ephesus. When we realize that the Acts describes only the initial ministry of Peter, and the ministry of Paul in its widest scope, then we can understand that the whole apostolic ministry in the Spirit must have been widespread.

However, it is primarily with the depth of the experience of the Spirit that we are here concerned. An examination of this will show us what it means to live in the Spirit.

### **The Church Beginnings**

These can be described simply and briefly, but they are of immense significance. Also they are of great depth. Simple description might easily miss the personal and emotional depths, as also the usefulness of the new life in the Spirit. What we have said about the initiation-conversion-complex will have to be enlarged, but in any case each person was affected and brought to true life by the initial work of the Spirit. Each had a personal beginning in the Spirit, as the church, generally, had its beginning in the Spirit.

Accepting the fact that Pentecost was the time of the outpouring of the Spirit in a new era, and that the phenomena signified this, we nevertheless see the effects of that outpouring in rich prophetic utterance. We also see that it was only the prophetic beginning. Prophetic ministry was also to follow, and the era was to climax eventually in the 'great and notable Day of the Lord', i.e. in the Last Day. The people of God were to expect things eschatological to happen in this new and final era. They were to be a people of hope. They also showed themselves to be people of faith and love.

### **The Beginning of Love**

A glance at a concordance will reveal the fact that the word *love* is never used in the Book of Acts. A reading

of Acts will show that its presence as a way of living is present on every page. From the moment of the Spirit's coming the community of new believers is one. Doubtless the work of the Spirit in bringing men and women under the Lordship of Christ, and in bringing them to regeneration, has also brought them dynamically to love. The rationale of this is given in the Epistles.

In what way do we see love? The answer is in the life of the church. There is 'the fellowship'. This is mentioned in 2:42, but it is lived out in the life of the community. The pooling of resources and the use of them to supply the needs of the group is the true practice of love. The Epistles reveal the fact that the poor were always provided for, and that orphans and widows were visited and helped. Not only were material needs supplied, but emotional needs were also cared for. However, it is the strong relationships within the community which are outstanding. See the statements, '... all who believed were together and had all things in common...'; '... the company of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one said that any of the things which he possessed was his own, but they had everything in common'. Here it is added, 'And with great power the apostles gave their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all'.

### **The Beginning of Worship**

It is said of the community that they were 'praising God', and that they attended the hours of prayer at the temple. We see in addition that they spent much time in prayer for the proclamation of the Gospel, and for their needs as

a proclaiming community. An example of this is prayer for Peter when he was in prison. A window is given into the manner of worship in Acts 13:1–3 where prophets and teachers are ‘... worshipping the Lord and fasting...’. In this context the Spirit speaks to them. In Acts 10:9 we see Peter on the housetop praying at mid-day.

Even so, it is not these scattered references alone which give us a view of the early church. The Epistles show us that they had a very full life of worship. This we will later examine. The worship of the apostolic community related to the proclamation of the Gospel to the world, and must be understood much in that light.

### **The Beginning in Power**

Jesus had promised power in Acts 1:8. There is no question of any wrong desire for power. Power was indispensable for the preaching of the Gospel. Only the Spirit could break through the sinful, uncomprehending minds of listeners. The Gospel is always puzzling to humankind. Paul speaks of its ‘scandal’ to religious people and to those who are intellectual.

We see that the power of the Spirit convicted and converted. We see also that the power of the Spirit gave evidence of the presence of the Kingdom of God in signs and wonders and miracles. These things were not done simply to convince people God was at work. They were acts of mercy, for exorcisms, and healings took place. Wherever such take place, they relieve humanity of dreadful pressures and tyrannies. The principle of the matter is given in Acts 8:6–8:

*And the multitudes with one accord gave heed to what was said by Philip, when they heard him and saw the signs which he did. For unclean spirits came out of many who were possessed, crying with a loud voice; and many who were paralysed or lame were healed. So there was much joy in that city.*

No wonder there was ‘much joy in that city’!

The principle which we see is that at times of special need, people such as Peter, Stephen, and Paul are said to be suddenly filled with the Holy Spirit. It is clear that they were habitually filled anyway, but then appeared to need a special filling at a point of crisis. Otherwise the general life of the church is carried out in the fullness of the Spirit.

### **The Beginning in Holiness**

Little is said in the Acts concerning holiness. The people nevertheless know they are the sanctified people of God. In Acts 15 when the leaders of the Jerusalem church were discussing the admission of Gentiles to the Christian community, Peter says of their admission, ‘And God who knows the heart bore witness to them, giving them the Holy Spirit just as he did to us; and he made no distinction between us and them, but cleansed their hearts by faith’ (Acts 15:8–9). He thereby reveals the fact that all who are received by God have their hearts cleansed. This parallels Paul’s statement in 26:18, ‘... those who are sanctified by faith...’

Even so, it is the general life of the church which is holy. Jewish morality is the order of the day, although richly stimulated and motivated by love and grace. Idolatry is forbidden, as also unchastity. Deception such

as Ananias and Sapphira tried to effect has salutary judgement. A wrong approach to the gift of the Spirit by Simon Magus is sternly rebuked. The church is a holy community, although we see nothing of dreary legalism or preoccupation with introversion. The church is extraordinarily healthy in its outlook and practice of life. The Epistles reveal the fact that holiness is the calling of the church as well as its customary manner of life.

### **The Beginning in Proclamation**

One of the hallmarks of the early community was its eagerness to proclaim the Gospel. In some ways this seems mainly what it is about. To live in the Spirit means to proclaim the good news. Not all members were gifted as apostles and evangelists, yet it appears from Acts 11:19–22 that a number felt compelled to preach the Gospel to others and even to Gentiles. Whatever the case may have been, the whole church was supportive of those who had the direct ministry of proclamation. This is evident from Acts 4:30ff., where the apostles are supported in prayer by the whole church for the purpose of bold proclamation. Doubtless this was the general and continuing situation.

Doubtless the apostolic community was continually motivated and energized by the Spirit for this special work. Even so, we must see their community-living as an integrated whole. That is to say that love, fellowship, mutual service, the life of holiness, and the proclamation of the Gospel in power, were all of the one piece. They were never separate exercises. The church then began in the Spirit, and also went on in the Spirit.

We need to learn the lessons available to us from the church's beginnings in the Spirit, and we will now proceed to examine them.

# 7

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## ***Beginning in the Spirit as Persons—I***

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### **The Personal Beginning**

Galatians 3:1–6 gives us the beginning as the Galatians experienced it. Paul’s main point is that he set forth, before their eyes, Christ crucified. That is he proclaimed the matter of the Cross. In I Corinthians 1:17 and 2:1–4 he insists that he gave the matter plainly, not attempting to seduce the minds of men by eloquent or enticing brilliance. He ‘told it like it is’. Nor, we imagine, was his word only theological. In I Thessalonians 1:5 he says the gospel came, ‘not in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction.’ He adds, ‘You know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake.’ His exposition was personal, powerful, and his manner of life aligned with the word.

The Galatians must have come to see the grace of the Cross. Paul’s exposition of justification was what must have released them; also the outworking of the grace of the Cross. In Galatians 1:4, 2:20, 5:24, and 6:14, Paul speaks of the Cross being effective against this current and corrupt age (world), against his sinful self, the flesh, and the world. They had had a beginning where they had been set free by Christ (5:1), and delivered into an experience of love (5:13–14; 22–23; cf. 4:14–15).

As persons it is impossible for us to describe the richness of the conversion happening. Yet we must describe it, even if only to ourselves, to see that *we have really begun in the Spirit*. This present writer has clear and powerful memories of his own conversion. Doubtless that colours his thinking about many things theological. Yet the sheer relief of sins forgiven is truly indescribable. Let us look again at the elements of that conversion-complex as we have outlined them in chapter 5, pages 149–154. We must translate these theological facts into the experience of the one beginning in the Spirit.

### **Conviction by the Spirit**

Man, because of his sinfulness and because of the innate deceit of sin, does not know God, nor does he have any tug towards God. To the contrary he seeks to alienate himself entirely from God, for confrontation by God is demanding to the point of discomfort and even excruciating pain. John 16:7–11 speaks of the conviction of sin, righteousness and judgement that the Spirit brings. What a demanding experience! Yet this is the first step towards understanding the nature of God and the nature of evil.

The battle with God is joined. Man is drawn by the Spirit of truth to see the truth, i.e. the nature of God as holy, and man as impure and guilty.

At Pentecost this Spirit came under Peter's announcement of the crucifixion and resurrection. Not to be free of this fearful conviction was intolerable. The crowd cried out, 'What shall we do?' The answer was clear. They were now ready for the gifts of repentance and faith.

### Repentance and Faith by the Spirit

In Acts 5:31–32, as also in Acts 11:18, repentance is shown to be a gift. Without it man cannot repent. With it he is obligated to repentance. Faith as such is not directly said to be a gift of the Spirit. It is, however, said to be a gift (Phil. 1:29; Eph. 2:8), and in Romans 10:17 it is said to come from hearing the Word, which is of course given by the Spirit. In I Corinthians 12:9 there is a *charisma* of faith given by the Spirit, and we may assume that saving faith is inspired by the Spirit.

We need to go back and examine the events at Caesarea. Here Peter speaks of having faith in Messiah, the result of which will be the forgiveness of sins. What we cannot avoid seeing is that the Spirit falls upon them immediately, and that this must mean *faith and repentance have been exercised and the gift of forgiveness received*. Since these things happen simultaneously with the gift of the Spirit, we conclude that *faith and repentance come with the gift of the Spirit*. It is true that in Acts 2:38 they seem to form a sequence in action, and perhaps time, but *the sequence is undoubtedly simultaneous*.

### The Effects of Repentance, Faith and Forgiveness by the Spirit

This is the revolution in the life of a Spirit-baptized person. This is the transformation of the sinner. This is the new birth. This brings the fact and experience of becoming a new creation. Whilst it is true that in some lives the experience is scarcely felt emotionally, being as it were hardly a ripple on the surface, yet in the depths of a person it can be no less a dynamic experience than that manifested visibly in another recipient of grace. One cannot come into cleansing of impurity, release from the power of sin, deliverance from the guilt and penalty of sin and see it as a minor matter, or even one of indifference! That is why Paul, in Galatians, is astonished that one can move so quickly from an experience so dynamic.

Of course forgiveness by God immediately has its effects in inspiring the forgiven to forgive others. Thus relationships with others—as we saw at Pentecost—are radically changed. We will look at this change under the heading of beginning in love, but we can understand the immense relief of the human spirit when guilt, pollution and the sense of penalty are removed. No wonder Paul highly prizes 'beginning in the Spirit', for this is what happened to him. In Acts 9:17 and 22:16 he is told that being baptized and the remission of sins brings to him the filling of the Spirit. No doubt there is no definitive order given, but the forgiveness of sins and gift of the Spirit go together. No wonder Paul said, 'If any man has not the Spirit of Christ he does not belong to him.' Paul saw the Spirit coming with the gifts of repentance, faith and forgiveness. Not to have the Spirit is not to have these!



### **The Act and Experience of Regeneration by the Spirit**

Christ said that without rebirth by the Spirit, without being begotten from above, a person could not: (i) see the Kingdom of God; and (ii) enter it. 'From above' is exactly where the Spirit came from at Pentecost. This rebirth by the Spirit is linked with repentance, faith, and the forgiveness of sins. In Titus 3:3–7 Paul states our state prior to regeneration as being incorrigibly evil. He speaks of us being saved '... by the washing of regeneration and the renewal of the Holy Spirit.' The washing of regeneration is the same as 'having the conscience purged from dead works by the blood of Christ' (Heb. 9:14). 'Dead works' must mean sins which have laid on the conscience throughout the life of the now purified person. The affects and effects of such sins cause the state which the writer of Hebrews calls 'a consciousness of sin', and 'an evil conscience'. Paul calls it a 'corrupted conscience' (Heb. 10:2, 22; Titus 1:15). In I Timothy 1:5 Paul allies three elements, 'a pure heart, a good conscience and a sincere faith', and says that love issues from them.

In I Corinthians 6:9–11 Paul speaks of many of his readers as having previously been idolaters, adulterers, homosexuals, alcoholics, thieves and robbers. These states are such that the subjects are gripped wholly by their perversions. Seemingly without remedy by natural human effort or aid, Paul insists that although they were in these conditions, yet *that has all changed!* 'But,' he says adversatively, 'you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ

and by the Spirit of our God.' If we read the passage of Titus 3:1–7, we see that it parallels the I Corinthians passage. Men who are 'hating and hateful' are transformed by the removal of their sins, guilt and pollution. Being justified they are free from condemnation (Rom. 8:1; 5:1) and they can now love.

Whatever we may think of regeneration—whether as a crisis or process—we must insist that it is primarily a crisis of incredible dimension. To take a heart which is described by Jeremiah (17:9) as 'deceitful above all things and desperately corrupt', and by Jesus as the source of all outflowing impurity (Mark 7:20–23; cf. Prov. 25:26), and by God through the prophet Ezekiel as 'a heart of stone', and to change that heart into a warm, palpable, loving entity is without doubt the greatest miracle humanity can witness. Through the crisis of regeneration this heart (i.e. the whole person) is now set on a path of hatred of sin, love of God and man, pure endeavour, rich obedience and all that goes with these things.

Some sacramental views of baptism (e.g. baptismal regeneration) tend to obscure the crisis of regeneration. They emphasize an *ex opere operato* effect of the sacrament or rite of baptism, as though the event itself effected the desired results, and in the case of infant baptism without the knowledge or response of repentance and faith by the recipient. However, not only sacramentalism tends to obscure the nature and dimensions of regeneration, but also all movements which lay emphasis on 'the second blessing', or speak of a 'crisis of entire sanctification', and even a post-conversion 'blessing of the Holy Spirit'. Whilst one dare not denigrate evident *experiences* of persons in post-conversion contexts, yet one must doggedly

insist on the Scriptural order of man's regenerating experience. We must also insist on the objective fact that God always takes the initiative in regeneration. This is seen in I Peter 1:2, 'chosen and destined by God the Father and sanctified by the Spirit for obedience to Jesus Christ and for sprinkling with his blood', and again in II Thessalonians 2:13, 'But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God chose you from the beginning to be saved, through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth'. Acts 13:48 says, '... as many as were ordained to eternal life believed'. In the same sense Peter says in Acts 15:8f., 'And God... cleansed their hearts by faith.'

We see then that the regeneration of the people of God as portrayed in Ezekiel 37:1-14 and in Ezekiel 36:24-28 is in fact the new heart given by God which brings a new (i.e. a renewed) spirit in man, and indeed is all contingent upon the Holy Spirit who now dwells in man, bringing with him those regenerative powers which transform the sinner.

### **The Spirit Always With Us**

Whilst we are at this point we may note two things:

- (a) *The powers which transform the sinner are those of God.* It is true to say that the power of the Cross is what effects regeneration in man (I Cor. 1:18; Gal. 2:20; 5:24; 6:14). Even so it is that power which Christ effected through his willing death (aided by both Father and Spirit) and which now is applied by the Spirit. This can be seen in Romans 8:1-3,

and II Corinthians 3:6 and 17. Yet the Spirit in his power applies the power of the Cross. Hence in Romans 8:1-3, I Corinthians 6:11, and other passages, the Spirit and Christ work as one.

- (b) *The Spirit never leaves us.* David pleaded that the Spirit should not leave him, doubtless because he saw the Spirit had left Saul, through Saul's sin. When we say the Spirit never leaves us we do not mean we can presume upon the presence of the Spirit. We mean he is always present with a view to his work in us, and his work through us. We do not have to invoke him to come or to stay. Hence we can be sure of the work going on within us. In this sense we do not have to be uneasy about living in the Spirit.

# 8

## *Beginning in the Spirit as Persons—II*

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### **Beginning in Justification**

In at least four places Paul links justification with the work of the Spirit, namely Romans 5:1–5, 8:1–3, I Corinthians 6:9–11, and Titus 3:3–7. In Acts 13:38–39 and Romans 4:1ff., Paul joins forgiveness and justification. He means that justification frees us from the condemnation and penalty of law and so breaks the tyranny of the law and of sin.

In practice, to be justified is a wonderful experience. It means in fact that we do not have to justify ourselves before God and man. If we are wrong then we are free to say so, and if we are not wrong it does not matter. It is through the Spirit that we initially come to know we are justified. Thus to live in justification is to be freed from the weight of guilt. It also means we relinquish using law

as a way of justifying ourselves (Gal. 2:19–21; Rom. 4:1ff.). Paul says, ‘He that has died is justified from sin.’ This means the fear of penal death is obviated. How free then is a person who knows this! This means, of course, that the Spirit has brought the truth of ‘no condemnation’ home to the recipient in a radical and dynamic way.

Thus, in the Spirit, one now has freedom to obey the true law—the law of love and of Christ—in ‘the newness of the Spirit’ (Rom. 7:6). True obedience then springs from justification. We do not desist from obeying the law because we are freed from its penalty. Being freed we now are at liberty to obey it. Indeed we are thus motivated.

As we shall see, ‘beginning in the Spirit’ and ‘going on in the Spirit’, are really much the same. In Galatians 5:5 Paul says, ‘For through the Spirit, by faith, we wait for the hope of righteousness.’ He means we know *by faith* that we are now justified. The Spirit keeps us in this living hope for the ultimate day when faith and love will not be required in regard to justification.

### **Beginning in Love**

In Chapter 6, page 157, we spoke of ‘The Beginning of Love’. Now we describe the beginning *in* love, in the Spirit. Romans 5:5 informs us that the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit. This, of course, is primarily from the *revelation* of the love of God, e.g. as seen in Romans 5:5–10, I John 4:9–10. However the revelation is accompanied by the *effective impact* of the work of the Atonement. We mean that with the coming of the Spirit, repentance, faith, forgiveness, justification, sanctification and sonship (adoption), are received

as gifts. The *idea* of these is one thing: the *reception* of them is another. The vast work of regeneration is not merely *about* love, but is love itself being effective. Hence the new believer is launched in love, by the Spirit.

We saw in Acts that love immediately manifested itself in the common sharing of all goods. There was care for the poor, the hungry, the sick, the widows and the orphans. This accords with Paul's injunction, 'By love serve one another.' John can say, 'If any man have this world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart of compassion, how does the love of God dwell in him?' (I John 3:17). John then says, 'Let us not love in word or thought, but in deed and in truth.' It is true to say that on the whole the early church knew that love. Hence Paul could write, '... I have heard of your love towards *all the saints*', and, '... your love in the Spirit' (Eph. 1:15; Col. 1:8). Without doubt love is the true order of the day, and the necessity to love is continually emphasized by the writers of the Epistles.

If we were to read the New Testament casually we could get the idea that love is an option. If achieved, then commendable, but not a dire necessity, and not wholly indispensable. Then we would be wrong in our reading. Love is what the new life is all about. One must live in the Spirit for one must love in the Spirit. The intelligent use of a concordance will show us that love is the root of all things, and at the core of everything.

### The Things Which Work by Love

Time and again the triad of faith, hope and love appear. In fact it is surprising to see how many times they are

mentioned, often explicitly, and often implicitly. We are forced to the conclusion that the early church thought in terms of this triad. Further, we see that one without the other is not really possible. Christians lived with an eye to the future. In all things they worked by faith and not by sight. Yet their hope and faith were dependent upon love. No doubt love was also dependent upon them. The statement then, 'Now abide faith, hope and love', is by no means a casual one. It is the very essence of true living.

In Romans 5:5 Paul tells us that we are not ashamed to hope because the love of God has flooded our hearts by the Spirit who, himself, has been given to us. In Galatians 5:5 he tells us that we wait, through the Spirit, by faith, for *the hope* of justification. He tells us in the same breath of 'faith which works by love.' In I Corinthians 13:1-3 he points out that a great work of faith, i.e. removing mountains, is of no value unless it is done in love. As a matter of fact, in this context Paul shows us that all the gifts, and the use of them, are worthless unless they work by love.

I Peter 1:22-23 introduces us to the fascinating thought that our new birth (regeneration) is with a view to a *sincere love of the brethren*. He enjoins believers to 'love at the stretch'. No less do John's three letters follow the same theme. In fact one knows one has passed from death to life because one loves the brethren (I John 3:14). We cannot but conclude that life in the Spirit is with a view to knowing the love of God, and knowing that love, to love God in return, and simultaneously to love the brethren. The principle of I John 4:19 is simply that we love (i.e. God and man) because the Father first loved us, and in fact, because He goes on loving us.

### **The Spirit, the Love, the Gifts and the Fruit**

We devote, further on in our study, a section to the Spirit and ministry, but here we should correct vague or incorrect thinking concerning the gifts and the fruit of the Spirit. One view is that the gifts which the early church knew are not extant today, or if some are, then they are few in number. It is doubtful whether this view can be substantiated. It carries the idea that the canon of Scripture being completed, the use of certain gifts—such as prophecy, words of wisdom and knowledge, healings and miracles—are no longer needed. It is doubtful whether this exegesis can be sustained. Gifts are not indicated as either perfection or imperfection. *They are primarily present to meet the current needs which face the church.* In fact gifts are love's way of meeting certain needs. They make love not to be abstract but concrete. It is doubtful whether the basic needs of persons have altered much over 2,000 years of church history. Even if we concede that medicine has lessened the need of a healing ministry, the true healing of persons is, in the ultimate, spiritual, and that need has not diminished.

Another error which needs to be corrected is that one may choose between gifts or fruit. This, also, cannot be substantiated. If the gifts are used without love and for any other goal than love itself, then they are pointless, and even wrong. Hence one needs the fruit of the Spirit in order to truly exercise the given gifts of the Spirit.

### **Conclusion: The Whole Matter of Love**

Love deserves a full treatment of its own. Love is brought to us by the Spirit, and we continue to love in the Spirit.

Not to love God is to be cursed (I Cor. 16:22). For a church to abandon its love can mean the end of its usefulness as a church (Rev. 2:1–7). To be caught in divisions is loveless carnality, and is fissiparous (I Cor. 3:1–4). The church must walk in love (I John 1:5–7; 2:7–11; 3:10–18; 4:7–5:3) as Christ walked in love (Eph. 5:1–2). It must increase in love (Phil. 1:8f.; I Thess. 3:12; II Thess. 1:3), so that it love all men. Also, through love, it must do good unto all men (Gal. 6:10). Furthermore it must work at keeping itself in love (Jude 20–21), and this it can do by mutual exhortation and encouragement to 'love and good works' (Heb. 10:24–25).

As to love in the *eschaton* (the last and climactic age) we must see that it is love which is, all the time, edifying, that is building up persons, and the very church itself (I Cor. 8:1; Eph. 4:7–16; Rom. 14:15, 19). In fact nothing is built of a permanent nature other than by love. For this reason we must go on 'loving in the Spirit', leaving the ultimate outcome to God, but being obedient in love.

# 9

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## ***Beginning in the Spirit as Persons—III***

### **BEGINNING IN HOLINESS**

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Three Scriptures tell us of a sanctifying work of the Spirit. They are I Peter 1:2, II Thessalonians 2:13–14, and I Corinthians 6:11. I Peter 1:2 seems to indicate that the sanctifying work of the Spirit was before regeneration, and probably before time. We were chosen to be part of the holy people of God. In Acts 26:18 the statement is, ‘those who are sanctified by faith in me [Christ]’. Doubtless that faith is an action of a person previously not in sanctification. However, it also carries the idea that there is a holy people of God into which one is incorporated. A comparison of Exodus 19:5–6 with I Peter 2:9–10 shows us that the holy people of God—Israel—is now the church. Yet that holiness is not one

which is primarily innate in the persons who are incorporated in the whole people, so much as they are set apart by God for His purposes. Sanctification by the Spirit is primarily, then, the sanctification achieved for a person before he even believes.

There is, however, a sanctification which believers know experimentally. Hebrews 9:14 speaks of a purification of the conscience by the Atonement. Likewise in I Corinthians 6:11 Paul says of former idolaters, adulterers, alcoholics, homosexuals and thieves, that, ‘You were washed . . . you were sanctified.’ He says that was ‘in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ and *by the Spirit of our God.*’ This parallels the famous passage of Titus 3:5–7, where Paul speaks of ‘the washing of regeneration and the renewal of the Holy Spirit.’ In these passages we see two things: (i) the purification of the Cross (Heb. 1:3) is applied by the Spirit to the believer, thus making him pure; and (ii) the person is sanctified, that is being cleansed, is set apart as belonging to God’s people and so launched into a life of experimental holiness.

Calls to holiness, and exhortation to continue in sanctification, are liberally spread throughout the Epistles. See, for example, II Corinthians 6:14–7:1; Romans 6:15–23; I Thessalonians 4:3–7; 5:23 (cf. I John 3:1–3); I Peter 1:13–17; II Peter 3:10ff.; and other Scriptures. However it is not simply explicit calls in which we are involved. It is teaching about the life which should be holy. Theologians speak of the principles of mortification of the flesh, and vivification of the believing person by the positive acts of obedience and love. In fact the major portion of the Epistles may be said to be given over to the life of holiness.

## **The Spirit and Holiness**

We have seen, briefly, that the Spirit is present dynamically in the conversion-initiation-complex. A closer look at Acts will show us that bringing to us the gifts of repentance, faith, forgiveness and justification, he effects the cleansing of our hearts by faith (Acts 15:8–11). We have seen that the application of the Cross to us constitutes the powerful work of regeneration. Hence it is through the Spirit we are launched into holiness. Even so it is the daily walk in holiness with which we are practically concerned, and it is this we must examine.

One of the key passages is Galatians 5:16–26:

*But I say, walk by the Spirit, and do not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh; for these are opposed to each other, to prevent you from doing what you would. But if you are led by the Spirit you are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are plain: fornication, impurity, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, anger, selfishness, dissension, party spirit, envy, drunkenness, carousing, and the like. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such there is no law. And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.*

*If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit. Let us have no self-conceit, no provoking of one another, no envy of one another.*

It must also be considered in the light of Romans 8:12–14.

*So then, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh—for if you live according to the flesh*

*you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body you will live. For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.*

In the Galatian passage Paul is saying that we must: (i) be led by the Spirit; and (ii) walk in the Spirit. These are virtually the same. In Romans 8:14 the true children of God allow themselves to be led by the Spirit. This is because they are the children of God, and the Spirit cries within them, ‘Abba!’, that is, ‘Father!’ Thus believers give the obedience to God that is the obedience of children to their loving Father. As many as are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God. Thus in Galatians 5:16–26 we must see that the Spirit is leading the children for their own good.

We must see that when the principle of the flesh (i.e. the old rebellious spirit of man against God) seeks to draw the new man in Christ away from his new life back into the patterns of the old, then the Spirit steps in. He is more powerful than the flesh and overcomes the flesh. Otherwise the dupe or victim of the flesh would end up in the works of the flesh. If a man does the works of the flesh he cannot inherit the Kingdom of God.

It is interesting that in Galatians 3:1–5 and 5:18–21 Paul equates living by law with living in the flesh! At first sight this is not easy to understand. What he must mean is that living by law is a work of the religious ego. Man believes he can do it. All this in spite of Paul’s warning in Galatians 3:10, ‘For all who rely on works of the law are under a curse; for it is written, “Cursed be every one who does not abide by all things written in the book of the law, and do them.”’ So he says, ‘If you are led by the Spirit then you are not under the law.’

The person who is led by the Spirit and walks in him will bring forth the fruit of the Spirit, and against this there is no law. Such is truly lawful in the right sense of that term. Look then at the fruit (Gal. 5:22–23), ‘But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control’. We conclude that this is a rich life of holiness.

Paul’s conclusion then is a good one. He says (5:25), ‘If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit. Let us have no self-conceit, no provoking of one another, no envy of one another.’ He means, ‘Since we came into life by the Spirit, and since we live by the Spirit, let us move into action by the Spirit, i.e. let every action of our lives be directed and inspired and enabled by the Spirit’. Spirit-life overcomes flesh-temptation.

Life in the Spirit also enables us to put to death things which are incongruous with true Christian living. A noble example of this is Romans 8:13, ‘for if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body you will live’. Notice that Paul does not speak of putting to death the works of the *flesh*, but the works of *the body*. What does he mean? Surely that the body is not evil, but that its natural desires are in danger of carrying the person over into that extension of natural desire which then proves to be lust. In eating, drinking, seeing, and the like, we have legitimate actions. If we allow them to extend beyond the true norm they land us in excessive acts which are then lusts. If we try to mortify the body by our own powers, then we—like the man of Romans 7:14–25—find we have good desires but no power to fulfil them. Only the Spirit can empower us. How, then, does he do this? The answer is twofold:

(i) by keeping us in the love of God through the Atonement; and (ii) by supplying the moral power to do good (and desist from evil) which we do not possess innately. In any case, whether or not we understand *how* the Spirit helps us to mortify the flesh and vivify our daily living, the fact remains true: he is the Spirit of holiness.

And then *why* holiness? The answer is, ‘God is holy’, that is, ‘The Father is holy. The Son is holy. The Spirit is the holy Spirit.’ Hence the family must be holy (I Pet. 1:16; II Cor. 6:17–18; I John 3:1–3). Ultimately it will be the *holy* family which will inherit the new heavens and the new earth (Rev. 21:27; II Peter 3:13), for they will constitute a holy priesthood, and a royal race (I Pet. 2:4–5, 9–10; Rev. 5:10). We simply know we are not living in the Spirit when we are impure. There is genuine grief in the heart when we do not live in holiness for,

They that fain would serve you best  
Are conscious most of wrong within.

### The Spirit, Love and Holiness

It is a matter for some sorrow that in history holiness has often been identified with a certain form of asceticism. It has not been seen to be the source of genuine serenity and quiet joy, but rather as a rejection of the good things of God. I Timothy 4:1–4 shows that demonic powers teach we should abstain from certain foods and from marriage. The Eastern idea that foods and functions connected with copulation, fertility and the like, are wrong, is an attack upon the nature of creation, and therefore upon God. ‘He has given us all things richly to enjoy’, and ‘Everything



created by God is good', and to be enjoyed (I Tim. 6:17; 4:4).

Holiness is effected and fulfilled in the context of love. This is seen in I Timothy 1:5, '... the aim of our charge is love that issues from a pure heart and a good conscience and sincere faith'. We do not have opportunity here to fill out this great theme of holiness in and through love. Yet it is at the very heart of the New Testament. Where love is absent, so is authentic holiness. Yet holiness is not the primary goal, if indeed it is looked at as a goal in itself. Two key passages are Philippians 1:9–11 and I Thessalonians 3:11–13. The first says:

*And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, so that you may approve what is excellent, and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruits of righteousness which come through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.*

Note, then, that love leads to the testing and practice of what is 'pure and blameless', the outcome of which is 'being filled with all the fruits of righteousness for the day of Christ'. Likewise the second passage says:

*Now may our God and Father himself, and our Lord Jesus, direct our way to you; and may the Lord make you increase and abound in love to one another and to all men, as we do to you, so that he may establish your hearts unblamable in holiness before our God and Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints*

so that the outcome of love is 'hearts unblamable in holiness . . . at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ'.

Love, working in the context with faith and hope, has as its outcome experimental purity of life, and eschatological holiness. Now we see how it is that 'the pure

in heart shall see God'. This, then, is holiness beginning in the Spirit, and continuing in the Spirit, and climaxing in the Spirit.

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# 10

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## *Beginning in the Spirit as Persons—IV*

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As with our other themes we noted the beginning of the community of love on the day of Pentecost. In the heart of the new fellowship was the desire to worship, and in worshipping to praise, and also to pray. These are the objective facts of the church as declared and described in the Book of the Acts. The new company attended the hours of prayer at the temple, gathered no doubt as a group in the courtyard. They also met from house to house, having meals together, and incorporating, it appears, the Lord's Supper in the simplest way. The apostles who wished to proclaim the word of God had to leave other things in order to give themselves to prayer. In such prayer the church joined that the apostles might declare the word with boldness. In such prayer Peter was prayed free from prison, and Paul and Barnabas to

the regions of Asia Minor and Europe.

The Epistles disclose clearly that the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of worship, of praise, and of prayer. Worship is primarily seen as service in every part of life. It is first a matter of attitude, then of the use of the body in all departments of living. Romans 12:1–2 (cf. Heb. 9:14 and Rev. 7:15) gives us the principle of worship, namely that the offering of the body in every aspect of its use is 'reasonable worship' or 'spiritual worship'. No longer is sacrifice through a dead sacrificial victim. The responsibility of those living in the Spirit is to make every action a witness to Christ and the Father (Acts 1:8; Matt. 5:16).

Christ had already told the Samaritan woman that worship was primarily to the Father, *was by the Spirit*, and that the Initiator was God the Father, who Himself draws His worshippers to offer their adoration, praise and prayers. Paul, in a number of places, shows that prayer is by the Spirit (cf. Eph. 6:18; I Cor. 12:3; cf. Jude 20; Acts 4:24ff.). He also shows that worship is by the Spirit. In Philippians 3:3 he says, 'We are those who worship God in [by] the Spirit.' In Ephesians 5:18–20 he shows that true worship, in all its elements, comes from being filled with the Spirit. These two latter references are simply an expansion of the principle Christ communicated to the woman at the well, and this principle is spelled out in the words of John 4:21–24.

Given that prayer, praise and worship are by the Spirit, we need to see that worship is not merely a helpful exercise for believers. It is in fact the very expression of the life lived in the Spirit. In Luke 10: 21–22 we read:

*In the same hour he rejoiced in the Holy Spirit, and said, 'I thank thee, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast*

hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to babes; yea, Father, for such was thy gracious will. All things have been delivered to me by my Father; and no one knows who the Son is except the Father, or who the Father is except the Son and any one to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.'

When we examine the context we see the principle of prayer and worship. *It is the knowledge and acceptance of the will of the Father, even though that will presents great difficulties, and often hardships.*

The Lord's Prayer is the paradigm for all prayer, and indeed all praise, especially as the church has attached the doxology which rounds it off. This prayer is intimately dedicated to the matter of God's will coming to pass, here, on earth. We see then that worship with prayer is oriented to the completion of God's plan for history, in history.

### Man's Weakness and the Spirit's Strength

We saw in Romans 8:13 that man's innate weakness prevents true mortification of the body's deeds. The Spirit then enables authentic mortification. Likewise in prayer the same innate weakness appears. In this case it is inability to know what to pray for, i.e. inability to know the will of the Lord. It is interesting that knowing the will of the Lord is linked in Ephesians 5:17-18 with the Spirit. So it is in Romans 8:26-27:

Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with sighs too deep for words. And he who searches the hearts of men knows what is the mind of the

Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

This passage is quite startling for it shows us the beautiful intimacy that the Spirit has with the hearts of the children of God, for the heart of man and the mind of the Spirit are, so to speak, at one, or as one, although in fact they are both distinct entities.

In I Corinthians 2:11 Paul says that no man knows a man's thoughts except the spirit of a man which is in him. When we link this idea with Romans 8:26-27 then we see how intimate is the Spirit within us. According to I Corinthians 2:11 no one comprehends the thoughts of God but the Spirit of God, and he searches the deeps of God. Correspondingly no one really knows the thoughts of a man except the Spirit of God. Not even a man knows his own thoughts wholly. Thus when it comes to prayer and worship, we can see the necessity for the presence and operation of the Spirit. We might say that for man to be truly man he needs to have the Spirit of God. This certainly agrees with the Old Testament doctrine of the creation of man, for in Genesis 2:7 God forms man of the dust of the earth and breathes into him the breath of life. Even though it is not said explicitly that this 'breath of life' is the Holy Spirit, yet we must come to that conclusion. Psalm 104:29-30 says:

When thou hidest thy face, they are dismayed;  
when thou takest away their breath, they die  
and return to their dust.

When thou sendest forth thy Spirit, they are created;  
and thou renewest the face of the ground.

Elsewhere the Spirit is called 'the breath of life', and in any case he is the Spirit of creation and life. In fact in

John 20 we are told that Jesus breathed on his disciples, telling them to receive (or, take) the Holy Spirit. Thus we see that to live true life we must be the recipients of the Holy Spirit. As we say, Jesus rejoiced in the Holy Spirit and prayed to his Father in the spirit of worship. So it must be with us.

### **The Spirit and Corporate Worship, Praise and Prayer**

We have glimpsed in the Book of Acts the corporate prayer and worship life of the church. We have seen that this has been under the inspiration of the Spirit. When we come to the Epistles we find the same principle. Resource materials are liberal, and we can by no means cover them in the sketchy kind of survey we are employing. What we do see in I Corinthians chapters 12 to 14 is that the gifts given to the church are given for the function of true worship and praise. The *locus classicus* is I Corinthians 14:26–33. Here Paul speaks of the contribution of each gift to the worship of the Christian community. These gifts are generally known as the gifts of the Spirit, and in that sense spiritual worship is possible.

Doubtless worship was the service not only rendered to God, but also rendered to man. Hence in Ephesians 5:18–20 the worship is inspired by the Spirit. Those who are filled with the Spirit are enjoined to ‘*address one another* in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your hearts to the Lord, always and for everything giving thanks in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God the Father.’ Notice that much that happens in worship is directed to the group for its edification.

This thought is also found in Colossians 3:16 where the congregation is told to ‘admonish one another in all wisdom.’ The passage referred to above—I Corinthians 14:26–33—can be summed up in the statement, ‘by love serve one another’. It seems that when the gathered community is serving God in worship, it is likewise exercising general service within the community.

### **The Priestly Service of Worship**

As usual we cannot understand the meaning of our current living in the Spirit without reference to the eschaton. The Book of the Revelation depicts celestial and terrestrial creatures all worshipping God. This worship is on three accounts, namely creation (4:7–11), redemption (5:9–14), and the righteous judgements of God (the vindication of God’s righteousness and holiness as seen in 15:3–4, 5–7; 19:1–3). However, what immediately concerns us is that God has planned that His elect will be ‘a kingdom of priests’, and that they will ‘reign on the earth’, and ‘reign forever’. That is the glorified community is a priestly one, and a royal one. What this will mean in eternity is not wholly revealed, but to be priests ‘unto God’, must mean the worship and service of God as depicted in 7:15, ‘... wherefore they serve [worship] him day and night in his temple’. It must also mean a service to the creation, for the ministry of priests is from God to those in need, and to God for those in need. Doubtless the ministry of the mandate depicted in Genesis 1:28 was intended to be priestly, and it may well be that this mandate will in some sense obtain in the new heavens and the new earth.

It is Peter who emphasizes this priestly ministry. In

I Peter 2:5 he enjoins, 'and like living stones be yourselves built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.' A 'spiritual house' (cf. Eph. 2:22) must mean, 'a house of the Spirit'. Likewise, 'spiritual sacrifices' must mean 'sacrifices in and by the Spirit'. The nature of such sacrifices is described in Hebrews 13:15–16:

*Through him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name. Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.*

Our conclusion then is that all worship must be offered in the Spirit. The fact and nature of that worship is what is essential for the life, growth and ultimate maturation of the people of God, both as persons and as the community. We are probably unaware, for the most part, of the enormous power and value of the life of worship, praise, service and prayer, as lived in and by the Spirit. We need to be deeply grateful for this grace of God which has changed us from blind and unthankful creatures into those whose heartfelt adoration is for the living God, for Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The living God has drawn us into life, and how wonderfully rich it is!

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# 11

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## ***Beginning in the Spirit as Persons—V***

### **BEGINNING IN MINISTRY**

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#### **The Ministry of Proclamation**

The early church began in ministry. This was the fact and occasion of Pentecost. The first impulse under the Holy Spirit was to declare 'the wonderful works of God'. Indeed this is what both attracted and impressed thousands of hearers. From the day of Pentecost onwards, to be living in the Spirit—in the Book of Acts—was to proclaim the Gospel.

And why not? Jesus had given his instructions concerning the preaching of the Gospel to all nations, and to every person. There would be little need to urge these early believers to do so because they were filled to overflowing with the good news. The church stood behind

its primary proclaimer—the apostles—and prayed for boldness in utterance by them. They needed this support in the face of the heavy opposition which confronted them.

We need not amplify the principles of this proclamation. The church came to know eventually that the Kingdom was being opened not only to Jews, but to believing Samaritans and Gentiles also. Very soon we find not only apostles and evangelists, but others also ‘gossiping the Gospel’. The ministry of proclamation was being taken up by the whole church.

It is difficult for us to understand the nature of the early church if we miss the point that its whole life was directed outwardly to the preaching of the Lordship of Christ. We need not particularize on the details of the *kerugma*—the new proclamation based on the events of Christ as understood and interpreted by the prophecies of the Old Testament—but we can see that the order of the proclamation was that Christ is Lord over all because of his atonement, the resurrection proving his victory. This proclamation would then offer the forgiveness of sins contingent upon repentance and faith. With this forgiveness was also the offer of the gift of the Spirit, the gifts of justification and sonship (adoption).

Even so, this proclamation was not confined to the salvific. It envisaged the gathering in of the people of God from Judaism, Samaria, and the nations (Gentiles). This, too, was in conformity with the ancient Scriptures and their prophecies (‘We speak nothing but what the prophets have said’). The community understood itself as the eschatological community. Pentecost was couched in such ideas as ‘in the last days’, and ‘until the great and notable day of the Lord come’. It was glad to ‘suffer for

the Kingdom of heaven’s sake’. It was constantly on the alert for the triumphant return of its Lord, and the ultimate revelation of the eternal Kingdom of God. It lived in the tension of God’s electing purposes, and the never-changing urgency of the present-time.

The community was, itself, the very witness of Christ in his past victory, his current action (cf. I Cor. 15:24–28), and his coming climactic triumph when the kingdoms of this world will be the Kingdom of God and His Christ.

### **The Ministry of the Community**

We have seen, under various headings, the life of the church in service. We mean the service rendered within the community by its members to its members. We have seen under the idea of love that the gifts of Christ—distributed by the Spirit—were used for the mutual upbuilding of the body of Christ, member serving member. In fact the use of the term ‘service’ or ‘the service’ shows us that ministry was not confined to the hierarchy of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers, but was spread throughout the entire church. Everyone was in the matter of ministry. Hence the all-embracing statement, ‘By love serve one another’. The corollary to this was, ‘Be subject one to another in the fear of the Lord’.

We repeat the principle found in Philippians 2:4ff., namely that we ought to consider others better than ourselves, and look not only on our own interests, but also on the interests of others. This magnificent principle is at the root of true service. As Jesus pointed out, he who would be greatest should be servant. In Romans 12:3ff.

Paul exhorts us to have a sane estimate of ourselves. We are not to think more highly of ourselves than we ought. We should have others in mind, and to this end humbly direct the gifts God has given us. He says (v. 10), 'Love one another with brotherly affection; outdo one another in showing honour.'

So, then, there is a ministry within the community which builds the church up in love. At the same time ministry is not confined to those within the community. We are to do good unto all men, and our love is to be towards all men. Likewise we are to pray not only for those within the household of God, but those also who are not. We are to pray for all men everywhere (Gal. 6:10; I Thess. 3:12; I Tim. 2:1-3; I Pet. 2:17). Even those in Adam are our brethren by creation, and we must love them all (Matt. 5:43-48).

Whilst much of what we have said does not have explicit references to the Holy Spirit, yet it is clear that there are numerous implicit or linking references. Even so this is not the point. The Spirit is the living source of love, unity, goodwill, and the like. He is always present in and to the community, drawing it on in the purposes of love. He is urgent when it comes to the outward ministry of the church—proclamation. He is no less urgent when it comes to the inner life of the church.

He can rightly be called 'the Spirit of service; the Spirit of ministry'.

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# 12

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## ***Daily Living: Going on in the Spirit***

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We have examined living in the Spirit under two general heads, namely the beginnings of the Spirit in the church, and then personal beginning in the Spirit. Our main reference was to Paul's statement, 'Having begun in the Spirit are you now made mature by the flesh?' The inference is that some, having begun in the Spirit, had left the way of the Spirit to go on—they imagined—in the flesh. In the immediate context Paul is referring to the works of the law as contrasted with the fruits of grace. One, of course, cannot progress in the flesh. One becomes stunted when one operates from the flesh (I Cor. 3:1-4), and indeed produces the works of the flesh. Those who produce the works of the flesh shall not inherit the Kingdom of God (Gal. 5:19-21).

We conclude, then, that we begin in the Spirit, and

we go on in the Spirit. In the chapters immediately above we have spoken of personal beginnings in the Spirit. We see from Paul's statement in Galatians 3:3 that he means the way we have commenced (i.e. in the Spirit) *is the way we go on*. There is no other way. We really should not speak of a 'higher life' or a 'deeper life', but simply a progressive life, i.e. life in the Spirit. This is, as we have seen, life in the Father, and life in Christ the Son. It is the life of the Kingdom. It is life lived within the community.

### **The Life of Habituation**

Life in the Spirit, then, involves love, unity, fellowship, community. It is related to the gifts of Christ and his Spirit, to the outworking of ministry both in proclamation of the Gospel, and in the mutual upbuilding of members of the body of Christ, the Church. It involves daily experience of, and progress in, holiness. It is related to constant spiritual warfare, and to personal mortification of sin, and vivification of our beings through godly obedience.

When we look at this comprehensive list of what it means to live daily in the Spirit, we might at first sight be discouraged, or we may think such a life too demanding. Yet for the most part true Christian living is fairly intuitive, and mostly unconscious. We are not in fact working out a series of techniques. The Father energizes within us (Phil. 2:12-13; 1:6), and the power of Christ is also internally at work. The Spirit aids us in holiness of life. Even mortification and vivification are for the most part the natural outworking of the Spirit's presence in our lives.

Given all that, we are called to the practice of obedience.

By 'practice' we take the two meanings of the word: (i) practice in the sense of going over and over the same exercises; and (ii) practice in the sense that it is the manner of our living. To bring this to more immediacy we should then speak of *habituation*. If we follow the principle that man—even redeemed and Spirit-filled man—is of himself *impotent*, then it must be that what is required is the *will* of man to be submitted to God, and also active in desiring to do His will.

If, then, God supplies the power for what the will desires to do, then the Christian life is an endless series of choices. These choices confront the Christian, and he must make his decisions. The continual making of right decisions is the basis of true habituation. It is an interesting fact that the New Testament speaks of 'a spirit of faith', 'a spirit of wisdom and revelation', 'a spirit of sonship', 'a spirit of love, and of power, and of self-control'. Negatively it speaks of 'a spirit of slavery', and 'a spirit of fear'. In each case we see this 'spirit' is really something which has become habitual to the person because he has habituated himself in it. This means he has constantly made his choice along a certain and consistent line of action. In one sense his 'spirit' has become second nature to him.

Of course behind the habituation lies the ministry of the Spirit. We habitually are filled by him, walk in him, and are led by him. Whilst we lack innate power, he always supplies it. We cannot even bear the fruit of the Spirit unless he works in us, but then we are bound to habituate ourselves in what he is producing. In one sense we cannot produce love, peace, and joy, which are fruit of the Spirit, but by an act of love-gripped will, we can



habituate ourselves in these fruit by deliberately loving, by being at peace by faith, and having joy by insistence.

### **Going on in Everything**

We have really made our point wholly in the materials in the above chapters. What we have begun in, we must go on in. This means practice. It means habituation. It also means progress, growth, development and maturation in successive steps. II Corinthians 3:18 assures us that God is changing us from one stage of glory to another. Philippians 1:6 assures us that God is working to complete His work, and will finish it at the very last moment—the day of Jesus Christ.

Failure at any point is not greatly significant. Warfare is unremitting. Persecution is unrelenting. Evil is ruthless. Satan is cunning. Flesh is divisive. Death keeps pressing for our attention and our fear. The world is ever about us, pouring into us its ideas, and seeking to mould us in its ways. With such odds against us it is no wonder that we sometimes—even often—fail. Even so we can—if we will—learn from our mistakes. We are told to count it all joy when we have many testings. The Spirit led Christ into the wilderness to be tested. He emerged triumphant in the Spirit and returned in the fullness of that Spirit. So can we. Christ learned obedience by the things that he suffered: so must we. He did not learn *to be* obedient. He was always that. He learned what is involved in *being* obedient. So do we.

Going on in the Spirit then *is simply the daily extension of what it meant to begin in the Spirit*. As Paul says, ‘We walk by the same rule. We mind the same thing’ (Phil. 3:16),

sometimes translated, ‘We hold true to what we have already attained’.

### **We Progress Corporately**

We need to keep in mind that individualistic Christian living is not part of the New Testament lifestyle. We need each other. No matter how personal our faith and life is, it is always in need of the support, care, and exhortation of others. They too need our personal contribution. We have to exhort one another daily (Heb. 3:13), and provoke one another to love and good works (Heb. 10:24–25). It is a lifestyle that is lived as a community, and that community is in the Holy Spirit. In other words we go on in the Spirit as the church, the fellowship, the community of the Holy Spirit, the family of the Father.

This is what it means to live daily in the Spirit.

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# 13

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## *Always Filled with the Spirit*

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Paul says clearly enough in Romans 8:9, ‘. . . you are in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you.’ True enough in places such as Revelation 1:10 and 4:2 John is ‘in the Spirit’, and this is a very special event and experience. However, rightly understood it must mean that John was being given a very special experience which would help to meet, view, understand and communicate the prophecy in which he was involved. For the most part being in the Spirit is the norm for all Christian living.

We have seen in the first section of this book that without the Spirit we are as yet unborn of the Spirit, and as yet ‘the natural [psychical] man’. We are not yet new creations. We cannot then be new creations without the Spirit. He now indwells us. Even so we may have special affusions of the Spirit—or, as some say, ‘anointings’—in

order to carry out special tasks. In the Book of the Acts Peter is shown as being filled at Pentecost and proclaiming the word with power (cf. I Pet. 1:12). Shortly after-wards this ‘Spirit-filled’ man is shown as ‘being filled with the Holy Spirit’ (Acts 4:8) as he speaks to the Sanhedrin (the Jewish Parliament). In 4:31 all the apostles were filled afresh, and for that matter so were all those assembled. The result was a boldness in preaching which then had great effects.

In Acts 6:1–6 we see the selection of men to serve at tables in the daily distribution. These had to be persons who were ‘full of the Spirit and wisdom’. One of them, Stephen, is later prorogued by the Sanhedrin. In his reply Stephen is ‘full of the Holy Spirit’ (7:55), and he sees the Son of man standing at the right hand of God. For this ‘fullness’ and its utterance he is killed by stoning.

In Acts 9:17 it is clear that Saul of Tarsus is filled with the Spirit. Even so in 13:9 we see him receive, so to speak, another filling as he confronts Elymas the sorcerer in his nefarious work. We conclude then that one receives the Spirit, and is, normally speaking, filled with the Spirit. From time to time one receives special affusions for special tasks, but even so the norm for Christian living is to be habitually filled with the Spirit.

### **‘Be Filled with the Spirit’**

This much quoted verse of Ephesians 5:18 does not say ‘Get filled with the Spirit’, but, ‘Go on being filled with the Spirit’. In technical fact it can be translated ‘Go on being filled *in* spirit’. The Greek preposition *en* is translated by some persons as an instrumental dative (‘be filled *by* the Spirit’),

and sometimes as though the element *with which* we are filled is the Spirit. The other possible translation makes the *en* to be a locative dative, i.e. we are to be filled *in* our spirits. Naturally, whether the Spirit fills us, or we are filled with the Spirit, or our spirits are filled, the work is that of the Spirit himself.

When Paul says, 'Go on being filled,' he must be assuming that we have already been filled. Also he must be aware that there is a danger of us going unfilled. He may also be saying, in effect, 'If you, having been filled are now not filled, then make sure now that you be filled.'

What is so patently evident is that to live in the Spirit must require constantly being filled with the Spirit. When we ask, 'What is being filled with the Spirit?', then the answer must be, 'Be totally in relationship with the Spirit. Be subject to him. Walk in him. Be led by him. Apply to him for power and help. Lean upon him for your action of life. Relate fully to him.'

In another place Paul says, 'Be aglow with the Spirit' (Rom. 12:11). Others translate it as 'Be fervent in [your] spirit'. Others as, 'Be fervent in the Holy Spirit'. It does not much matter. One cannot be authentically fervent in one's spirit apart from the Holy Spirit.

In Galatians 3:5 Paul says, 'Does he who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you do so by works of the law, or by hearing with faith?' He must mean by this that God goes on giving His Spirit to those who as yet have not received him, and also that the believer is always given the 'supply of the Spirit' as he has need. In other words Romans 12:11 and Galatians 3:5 tell us that we have to keep choosing to be filled with the Spirit.

We have to keep receiving in the sense that we are always accountable to the Spirit.

Philippians 1:19 speaks of 'the supply of the Spirit', or 'the help of the Spirit'. By this is meant not only that the Spirit is supplied to us, but that he himself supplies us with what we need. This supply is on many levels, and in regard to various things. Those things we have already examined. What is significant to us is that *there is never any lack of supply wherever we have a need.*

### **How Do We Go on Being Filled with the Spirit?**

There are positive injunctions to go on being filled. Such filling is a matter of willing, of desiring, of believing we can, and of receiving what is given to us. Most of this will be habitual, and much of it unconscious. It should not be largely a matter of feelings. The positive exhortations to walk in, to live in, and be led by the Spirit are related to continual infilling by the Spirit.

There are also negative injunctions such as 'Don't grieve ['vex', cf. Isa. 63:10] the Spirit' (Eph. 4:30), and 'Don't quench the Spirit' (I Thess. 5:19-20). The contexts of these commands reveal their meanings. In the first it is that the Spirit is grieved when we are disobedient, hard-hearted, unforgiving and unloving. In the second case it is when we ignore the gifts, especially prophecy.

Romans 5:5 speaks of the love of God being poured into our hearts by the Spirit, adding that he himself is given to us. This is the assurance that love is always with us. Thus by being positive in love, forgiveness, in holiness, worship, praise, prayer and proclamation, the

believer will always have the Spirit attending him. The resources needed for this life will always be present. It is only when we are seeking to do harm or evil that the Spirit will not aid us. In fact we will feel, rightfully speaking, a check in our own spirits when the Spirit is grieved, quenched, or ignored.

In practice then we will need to walk in the Spirit, be led by him, obey his commands, follow his guidance, and be positive in the life which he supplies. To be 'aglow with the Spirit' is not necessarily an emotional matter. It is often a matter of hard practical fact, sometimes devoid of feelings of any kind. On the other hand we may, from time to time, have many indications of the Spirit filling us with himself. We may know great power in moral living, and in proclamation of the Gospel. We may even see the fruit of the Spirit in our lives. We may cry, 'Abba!' ('Father!') with great joy and love, and we may know love in great proportion. We may witness rivers of living water flowing from us to others. We may know in great measure 'righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit'. We may worship by the Spirit, and be 'always praying in the Holy Spirit, keeping ourselves in the love of God'.

At other times we may be like Stephen, who, being filled with the Spirit, was crushed to death by flying stones, or like the apostles hauled before the Sanhedrin who received a beating. Likewise we may be like Paul whose lists of persecution, sufferings and hardships are recorded in II Corinthians 6:4-10 and 11:23-29. To be filled with the Spirit may be to be corrected or even chastised by the Spirit.

In fact to be filled with the Spirit may mean many

things we do not envisage it would mean. This does not greatly matter. We simply need to be of a good mind. When we have that attitude of acceptance and obedience which Christ had to the Spirit, then we too will know what it is to be filled with the Spirit.

This, after all, is what being baptized in the Spirit is all about. It is also what daily living in and by the Spirit is all about. So we can say with Paul:

*If we live by the Spirit,  
let us also walk by the Spirit.*

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## ***Conclusion to the Book***

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### **A Précis of Ideas**

It is difficult to draw a brief conclusion to the materials we have examined in this volume. The first section of the book sought to rationalize what has been called today 'Spirit-baptism'. This in itself is a vast subject. We saw that unless we take an historical perspective of the whole person and work of the Spirit, then we will view this nominated subject atomistically. In fact we will reduce it drastically.

It is best then to see the work of the Holy Spirit as commencing at creation, and operating through to the end of time, and the renewal of the heavens and the earth. Creation, we take it, is with a view to the ultimate new creation. In this case the Spirit is working from the beginning with a view to the end. If we take any other view ourselves then we will miss the panoramic sweep of history, and we will tend to see the Spirit working in

various epochs (dispensations) without seeing that the first is with a view: (i) to the next; and (ii) to the ultimate (epoch). Thus we will unwittingly stereotype the ministry of the Spirit. Hence when we examine what we call 'Spirit-baptism', then we do so without that perspective which alone makes it authentic.

We noted that God's ultimate for creation is to glorify it. Then He will be seen to have triumphed in His purposes for creation. Another way of saying this is that the Kingdom will be seen to have triumphed (I Cor. 15:24–28; Phil. 2:9–11; Rev. 10:1–7; 11:15; cf. 12:10). It is the Kingdom which is prophesied, and so often linked with the restoration of Israel, with Messiah the Davidic King, and with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. In the New Testament the coming of the Spirit is also linked with these things, but Acts 1:7–8 shows that the Spirit comes not only to Israel, but to the Samaritans and the Gentiles also. Likewise the Kingdom is opened to all these peoples.

Thus we see the significance of the coming of the Spirit, and of being baptized in the Spirit into the Kingdom, the church, the people of God. For the apostolic band the coming of the Spirit is to give power to proclaim the Gospel. To others it is the action of the Spirit which evokes their response and draws them into the Kingdom. Of course it is not only this, for the initiation-complex of conviction, repentance, faith, conversion, new birth, regeneration, justification, sonship and the gift of the Spirit, are all required for life within the people of God and His Kingdom.

In other words the New Testament is not at all preoccupied with persons being baptized in the Spirit for

their own sake, or for the sake of Spirit-baptism itself! The New Testament has in mind the whole process of God's salvation history, His concern for His creation, which means the bringing to glorification of man and the creation which has been subjected to futility. Only then will God have achieved His planned intention as Creator, and only then will Messiah have completed his work as the Son of the Father. Only then, as well, will the Spirit have fulfilled his task. That is to say, within the wide view of the eternal purposes of God do we see in its true perspective the person and work of the Spirit. We see in right proportion the place of Spirit-baptism and Spirit-living.

### **The Plan of God and the Enduement of the Spirit**

If we examine the second portion of our book we see that the Spirit, whilst being given for the edification of each recipient, is not only present for that element. He is present to enrich the Body of Christ with life, with unity, fellowship, and love. This is that the church might bear the witness of Christ or 'the testimony of Jesus'. The church is endowed with gifts—both natural and spiritual—that it might be strong internally, and effective externally, in the proclamation of the Gospel.

When again we look at the plan of God in the Scriptures, we see that its fulfilment involves the church. The Epistle to the Ephesians and the Letter to the Romans give us much of the scope of this plan, whilst the Book of the Revelation shows the outworking of theodicy, the fulfilment of God's purposes. The church is, of course,

deeply involved. In one sense it has been made indispensable to the completion of God's plan. If we look at the current operations of Christ in I Corinthians 15:24–28, and compare this action with the principle stated in Ephesians 3:1–12 and Ephesians 1:19–23, then we are drawn to the truth that God has invested His church with the power of the Holy Spirit that it may share in His planned accomplishments.

Another way of saying this is that Jesus was anointed with a view to his triumphant functional Sonship in history (Ps. 2; cf. Matt. 3:17; 17:5; Acts 4:24–28; 13:32–33; Rom. 1:4; Heb. 1:5; 5:5; Rev. 2:27; 19:15), the eschatological victory of the Kingdom of God. Likewise Christ's community—the Messianic community—needs the same anointing. We can even call that baptism of the Messianic people 'the anointing within the anointing'.

### **The People of Christ the Army of God**

The principle of Christ ruling the nations with a rod of iron (Ps. 2:7–9; cf. Rev. 2:27; 19:15) is linked with 'the sharp sword' which issues from Messiah's mouth (Rev. 1:16; 2:12, 16; 19:15). This sword is spoken of as 'the Word of God'. The ultimate victory will not be through actual material weapons, but through this most potent of all arms, the Word of Christ (Rom. 10:17).

The army of God is the church. Doubtless the Revelation depicts celestial creatures as also involved, but in one sense the battle of man is fought by men, and these are led by the Holy Spirit. Thus in the Acts the Spirit guides the sons of God (Rom. 8:14) in what they do. It

is, as we have seen, God's way of fulfilling the prophecy of Genesis 49:10 and Psalm 2:6ff. Romans 1:5, 15:18, 16:26 (cf. 10:16) speak of this 'obedience of the nations' as the prime goal of the Gospel. They cannot do this, however, without seeing the triumph of the Kingdom as synonymous with that goal.

The church therefore is involved in battle. The use of the sword, the Word of Christ, is never in doubt. Yet it is the Spirit's sword. His hand, so to speak, is on the hand of the church. The spiritual armoury of the church is the armoury of the Spirit. The hateful enemy which time and again hurls itself against the church cannot prevail. The victory has been won (I Cor. 15:55-58; II Cor. 2:14; Rom. 8:31-39) and the Victor dwells with and in his people (I John 4:4; 5:4). He is there to aid them in their battle of obedience (Matt. 28:19-20; Mark 16:16ff.).

The Spirit's armoury is well described in Ephesians 6:10-18. If we are not careful we will revert to our pietistic thinking concerning this spiritual conflict. We will think of it only as a battle within the personal life of the believer, much as we see it in Galatians 5:16ff. Of course it is a personal battle, but primarily it is a corporate battle against the forces of darkness. The church wrestles 'not with flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world rulers of this present darkness, against the spiritual host of wickedness in the heavenly places'. These principalities and powers have not only to do with persons, but nations (cf. Gen. 28:12; Dan. chs 10-11; John 1:51; Col. 2:14-15; Eph. 1:19-21) and so with the national, international and historic events of the human race.

The spiritual weapons are not merely defensive. They

are aggressive. They bring the victories which pull down strongholds of evil (II Cor. 10:4). The Kingdom marches on relentlessly, not in the horrific and murderous ways of evil and bitter men, but in the ways of weakness which are the true strength. The Lion of Judah is the Lamb-as-it-had-been-slain. True humility achieves the victory of the Cross (Phil. 2:9-11). The fruit of the Spirit is more powerful than the aggressive evil of demons and men. It is the Sword which will ultimately smite the nations. That Word was originally the Creative Word through the mouth of God, the Breath of the Spirit. It is equally the Redemptive Word, the Word of the Father and His Christ, uttered by the Spirit. So it is the Eschatological Word, the Word of Ultimate Triumph. The Kingdom of God is not in word only, but in power (I Cor. 4:20; I Thess. 1:5).

### **The Triumph of the Spirit**

In Revelation we see it is the Spirit who is so powerful. John cannot comprehend the great word of prophecy without him. He must be 'in the Spirit' (Rev. 1:10; 4:2; 17:3). When Christ writes to the seven churches it is really the Spirit speaking to them (chs 2 and 3). The Lamb has his power in the sevenfold Spirit (5:6-7). At the very end it is the Spirit who is one with the Bride as they both say, 'Come!' The ultimate invitation of grace is given by them together.

We see then that the Spirit who began his ministry in time with the creation, now completes it with the new heavens and the new earth. God's plan of glorification is completed. The Spirit of glory has laboured patiently

through the endless millenniums to bring the purpose of God to final fulfilment.

We need, then, to set aside petty arguments about this gracious and holy Lord of history (II Cor. 3:18) and the ways and means he uses. He is not subject to our categories or classifications, for he is 'The Lord, the Giver of life'. We bow down to him in great awe and holy humility—the very gift he gives us. We worship him as we worship Father and Son.

We are filled with praise and wonder that we may be called 'the people of the Spirit', and may drink of his fountains of living water in the new eternity into which he has brought us.

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## APPENDIX 1

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# *The Johannine Pentecost*

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Anyone who reads the Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark and Luke) recognizes a core in these three which is common to all Gospel accounts. When John's Gospel is read it is seen to be a quite different Gospel. Although many of the events and much of the teaching parallels elements in the Synoptic Gospels, it is obviously a quite different Gospel. It is of course written from a different vantage point, and its aim differs to the common aim of the Synoptics. Whilst each of the Synoptics has its own emphasis, that of John is quite different. His aim is stated in John 20:30–31:

*Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in his name.*



In other words, John is recording signs with their accompanying events to disclose the truth that 'Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God'. This is because he wants his readers to believe and receive life through that name.

It is natural then that the Gospels will differ. For example, there is no account of Gethsemane in John, although it is in the three Synoptics. Commentators have been quick to point to John 12:27–28 as a Johannine Gethsemane. This may be because Jesus appears confused and in slight momentary doubt. However, if he really is, then he recovers quickly, affirming the reason for his coming death, and signifying his acceptance of it.

When we come to John 20:19–23—the appearance in the upper room to the disciples on the Sunday, the day of his resurrection—we see in verses 21–23 the sending command of Jesus, and the breathing upon them, giving them the Holy Spirit. This, then, has been called the Johannine Pentecost. Many questions arise. Did Jesus actually give the Holy Spirit, at this point in time, to his disciples? If so, were there two occasions for giving the Holy Spirit? Since the Synoptic writers do not mention this occasion, does it mean John confused it with Pentecost?

The answer must be that at that point Jesus made a factual gesture of giving the Spirit. It is not said in the actual text that he 'breathed on them', but that 'he breathed'. 'Breath' of course stands for the Holy Spirit. It may then have been an anointing to the ten present (Judas was dead, Thomas absent) to assist them to have insight and understanding up to Pentecost. It may have been for anything, but was clearly for the ministry of the forgiveness and retention of sins. The fact is we do not know

why he gave the Spirit at this point. We can agree *they needed* the Spirit! It may have been a gesture intended to let them know the Spirit was theirs in accordance with the original promise of baptism in the Spirit, and the talk concerning the Spirit on the night of the Last Supper.

Whatever it meant, it cannot be said to be normative for times ahead. Pentecost stands in its own right as the days of empowerment for 'witness to Jesus', i.e. the proclamation of the Gospel. We do not, then, deny its immediate value (and fact) for the ten disciples. If we accept it simply then it is no enigma. That they were not fully empowered is seen in both Luke 24:49 and Acts 1:8. It may even have been that the Spirit was given proleptically, and not actually at that point in time. It does not much matter. There is no need to see any conflict in this Johannine with the Lukan Pentecost, any more than the Johannine 'Gethsemane' and the Synoptic Gethsemane.

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## APPENDIX 2

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### *The Second Blessing*

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Andrew Murray, in his book, *The Two Covenants* (James Nisbet, London, n.d., pp. 168–172) has a note on the second blessing. He likes the term ‘second blessing’ because it covers the experiences of many persons, some of whose stories he then proceeds to describe. Without doubt these people experienced what can be called by no other name than ‘second blessing’. In fact history, especially church history, has a large number of testimonies to very rich experiences posterior to conversion.

We have seen already that the apostles and their friends received the anointing of the Spirit at Pentecost. Subsequent to this they were again filled with the Spirit in the events described in Acts 4. We have noted that men such as Peter, Stephen and Paul were subject to fresh ‘fillings’ at certain points of crisis and need. However, none of

these can be correctly described as ‘second blessings’. It is not as though something of truth was hitherto unrevealed, and, it being suddenly revealed to them, they then came into a ‘second blessing’. Rather it was the continuum of the initial anointing received in Spirit-baptism.

We have also seen that the events described in Acts 8 and 19 of the Samaritans and the Ephesian disciples of John the Baptist have a logical explanation in the light of the Kingdom and the Spirit. They were not, technically speaking, second blessings. Even so, it does seem in both the Acts and the Epistles that there are elements which might be called ‘second blessings’.

In Acts 19:11–20 there is the strange account of itinerant Jewish exorcists who sought to exorcize evil spirits and were overthrown by those very spirits. The result of this event was to draw attention to the power of Paul and the Gospel. Verses 18–20 tell their story:

*Many also of those who were now believers came, confessing and divulging their practices. And a number of those who practised magic arts brought their books together and burned them in the sight of all; and they counted the value of them and found it came to fifty thousand pieces of silver. So the word of the Lord grew and prevailed mightily.*

A close look at the text tells us that ‘many who were now believers came, confessing and divulging their practices’.

The question we must ask is, ‘Were they believers prior to this event, but had retained their links with the occult, or were they those who had only at that point believed and were destroying their occultic connections?’ Most commentators believe the latter. Is it conceivable that under the preaching of Paul believers would still have retained links with the occult? It seems hardly likely,

although not impossible. Simon Magus in Acts 8 seems to have shared the conversion experience of other Samaritans, but Peter tells him he is in the 'gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity', which seem to be indications of Simon's persistence in magic.

What we do know is that throughout the world many who claim to be Christians are still linked with the occult. Were they to utterly sever such links they would undoubtedly receive great blessing. Would this then be a second blessing, or simply the fullness of that which is first—the conversion experience?

It is fair to say that down through the Christian centuries people have experienced blessings which they could call 'second'. They have discovered truth in the Gospel which they had not seen before, and to them it was a brilliant revelation. It seemed to dwarf all they had previously known. Probably there are few Christians who have not had such experiences. Some would claim 'third' experiences, 'fourth' experiences, and so on. Paul assures that we have been blessed with 'all' or 'every kind of' blessing (Eph. 1:3). Even so, Paul nominates these blessings in the following verses and it is doubtful whether they parallel what are called 'second blessings'.

In the Epistles we seem to be directed to new blessings. Romans 12:1–2 is one of the few places where Paul seems to urge the surrender of the body. In Romans 6:12–23 he also seems to be urging readers to present their bodies to be instruments of righteousness. In Romans 12:2 and Ephesians 4:22f. he appears to exhort readers to 'put off the old man, and put on the new'. In Colossians 3:5ff. there seem to be imperatives linked with the mortification of the flesh. And so on. However, when we

read the texts closely we see that these injunctions are exhortations to the believers to be consistent with what they have already been taught. Doubtless they will be blessed freshly if they conform to these, and much that they will experience may seem like a second blessing.

### **No Second Blessing?**

The truth that many have experienced a major blessing following conversion should warn us against denying such blessing. On the other hand, because the Scripture seems reluctant to speak of anything as a second blessing, we should be warned against making a doctrine of the idea. There may be many explanations showing why a second blessing was something which had always been available, anyway, to a believer. Lack of teaching, lukewarmness, a tepid environment and other factors may have prevented a person coming to the blessing which was always available to him. The letters in Revelation chapters 2 and 3 warn us that any church can be spiritually and doctrinally deficient at any point in its life and experience.

Even so, we have church history to show us the way in which the Spirit has come to churches and brought magnificent revival. Great events have happened which have seemed to bring new and enlarged visions of God, of holiness, and of great power—the Moravian church, the churches of the New England in the days of Jonathan Edwards, the Evangelical Revival in England, and the Welsh revival at the commencement of this century. Holiness churches developed their doctrines of a baptism in the Spirit bringing sanctification, and the later

Pentecostals had experiences of the Spirit bringing power along with unusual manifestations.

Who can deny these things have happened in history? Who can say that the claims of many persons to have experiences which seemed to transcend those of previous events in their lives are unauthentic? We must never deny the testimonies of sincere persons even though we may not agree with their theological rationalizations of those events. To put such things down to unbridled enthusiasm, and even the occult, may well be wrong. Even if in some situations this is the case, that does not by any means cover all the visitations of God amongst His people.

We must conclude then that any experience posterior to conversion may well be a second blessing. It may even be the 'first blessing' for all the person knows. It does not much matter. It is only when the claim is made that this is the fixed order of God in His dealings with man that the idea of a second blessing can be wrong. This makes a second blessing a stereotype and part of a fixed order. It also exalts one kind of experience over another. It may even posit a 'second work of grace'—something which is utterly against the nature of grace. It is best, then, not to develop a doctrine of the second blessing.

Having said this, we repeat that if persons discover some deficiency which needs to be remedied, some enrichment which they find necessary, then they should not be denied it. All Christians will be finding, continually, that this is the case. However, this does not alter the fact that God has withheld nothing from His people that is for their good, and that He goes on doing them good, whether they will receive that good or not. That some have come at a later point than their conversion to receive

further blessings does not validate the idea of a second blessing as part of God's fixed order.

### **Spirit-Filling a Second Blessing?**

We have seen that the thrust of Ephesians 5:18 is not 'Get filled with the Spirit', but 'Go on being filled with the Spirit'. It is an imperative—a command to be open to the action of God upon one's being. What if one is not already filled with the Spirit, and seems not to have been? The answer must be, 'Get filled'. Does this then mean one has received the Spirit but not been filled? It may mean that or it may not. Whatever the case—if indeed we can wholly understand it—the present imperative is to be filled, and we must be about that. However, to say that a person born of the Spirit is never filled with the Spirit except in a situation posterior to conversion is a statement fraught with great problems, and even danger. To have had a filling of the Spirit posterior to conversion is by no means a stereotype, and must not be presented as such. Equally a problem is the claim that once a person has been filled he is always 'Spirit-filled'. This would make nonsense of Ephesians 5:18, Romans 12:11, and Galatians 5:16–26.

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