

**DICKSON**

**THE PROMISE  
of the  
HOLY SPIRIT**



**Direction From God  
Into The Unknown**

# The Promise Of The Holy Spirit

– Direction From God Into The Unknown –

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## Preface

The four books of the *Biblical Research Library* that focus on the Holy Spirit are a culmination of several years of study. The original material was first published in a single hard cover volume. However, because of the extensive material that has been added to the original 1995 edition, the single volumes have since been published as four separate eBooks. The four books have also been published in the single volume of the *Biblical Research Library*.

Throughout the four eBook volumes the reader will find quotations from various authors. These quotations are not meant to be authorities in connection with the areas of study under which they are quoted. The quotations are only added as resource material to give the reader other ideas on the subject. Anyone who studies this subject must be disciplined to form his or her own understanding of the subject that is based solely on what the Bible teaches. Outside influences, including one's own, must be set aside while delving into what is the mystery of the work of the Holy Spirit.

The author has discovered that any book that is written on this subject will often find an audience of those who would disagree. Few people agree on the subject of the Holy Spirit simply because the subject is often subjectively studied, that is, one's understanding of the Spirit is often subjected to one's personal emotions and experiences that lie outside the realm of the Bible. We have all had our experiences with the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives, experiences in which the Spirit has allowed us the opportunity to grow in faith. But we must be cautious that these experiences do not cloud our objectivity

in studying this subject in the Bible.

It is difficult, therefore, to come to a totally objective study of the Scriptures on the matter of the Holy Spirit. Each reader, including the author, asserts his or her own personal experiences as hermeneutical foundations upon which to interpret various statements in Scripture on the subject of the Holy Spirit. It is for this reason that the reader must be cautioned concerning the author's summations. Nevertheless, we all understand that subjective interpretations are flawed, if not divisive. We must not, therefore, sacrifice our objective study of this subject in defense of our own subjective experiences.

There is one principle upon which we all must agree when studying the work or influence of the Holy Spirit: The Holy Spirit will do His work regardless of our knowledge or understanding of His work. His work can never be governed by our fallible and personal knowledge of how He works in the affairs of this world, or how He influences our lives. If we lead ourselves to believe that His work is governed by our knowledge of what He does in our lives, then we are left with the position that those who have studied the Holy Spirit for many years must be the guardians of the truth on the matter. At least, the novice student is sometimes intimidated by those who have studied the subject for years.

Regardless of our source of our knowledge of the Spirit, we must never base our understanding of the subject on the proclamations of those who have little or no knowledge of the subject in the Bible. Allowing those who have little knowledge of the Bible to be the authori-

ties upon which we base our understanding of the paranormal is certainly not wise, for in doing such one is easily led astray into some religious cult that claims every sort of supernatural phenomena as the foundation of his or her faith.

Nevertheless, we can be sure of one thing. If we become arrogant about our much study of the subject, then we know that the Spirit is not the product of such an attitude. And if we consider our experiential encounters in life to be the judge and lawgiver on this subject, then we also have a tendency to become arrogant. We cannot but conclude that such an attitude is against the fruit of the Spirit.

Therefore, we must agree that the Holy Spirit is not controlled by our experiences. He is God, and as God, He will do what He has come into this world to do, regardless of our lack of understanding of His work. We must resign ourselves to faith in the fact that only God can fully understand God. And since we are not God, then any dogmatic affirmations concerning the total work of God must be questioned.

In view of John 16:14, we must never allow the Holy Spirit to become the foundation of our faith. The Holy Spirit came to glorify the Son of God, not Himself. Our faith is solidly founded upon Jesus as the Son of God. If we would ever turn this around, we know that we misunderstand the work and influence of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit is working in this world in order to bring all glory to the incarnate Son of God. He does not glorify Himself. Regardless of our lack of understanding in all matters as to how He does this, we trust that He is doing His job.

We have also discovered in studies of the Holy Spirit the great influence that

the misguided religious world has on the matter. We live among religions with interpreters who promote all sorts of theological meanderings concerning the Holy Spirit. These theologies, with their cute statements, have thoroughly confused the general religious world on the matter of the Holy Spirit. As a result, students come to the Bible with an assortment of misguided words and phrases that they have picked up over the years that have been proclaimed from pulpits of religionists around the world. We would consider this a particular problem today because some consult the social media more than they read their Bibles.

Therefore, one of the most difficult challenges of the Bible student who seeks to be objective in his or her study of this subject is to allow the Bible alone to state and define the words and phrases that we will use in our interpretation of those passages that deal with the Spirit. This is particularly true in reference to the work and influence of the Spirit.

The problem with using our own words and phrases that are loaded with the baggage of interpretations from those who know little or nothing about the Bible, is that the religious influences of the world are brought into the Scriptures. If fact, we would be so bold as to say that if one does not allow the Bible to define the words and phrases that were used by the Spirit to inspire the Scriptures to be written, then one will have great difficulty in understanding the Bible on this subject. The unfortunate consequence of this is that we might miss out on the work and influence of the Spirit that He is actually doing in this world. Therefore, we come to this subject with as much objectivity as possible.

## INTRODUCTION

**The purpose of the Old Testament was to prepare Israel for a new dispensation of God's work on earth through the gospel of the Son of God. When John the Immerser came as the voice of one crying in the wilderness, all Israel was sensitized to the fact that something was near. John prepared the people to accept the incarnate Son of God. When He began His earthly ministry, the incarnate Son came preaching the gospel of the kingdom. Throughout His ministry, Jesus led His disciples to the conclusion that all the prophets' prophecies concerning the redemption of man were fulfilled in Him. Throughout His ministry, therefore, He promised the coming of the Holy Spirit who would continue God's involvement in this world. He made specific promises to the apostles concerning the initial work of the Spirit. Jesus also made promises concerning the work of the Spirit during the gospel dispensation that was to come after His death, resurrection and coronation. Ever since the Spirit was poured out on the day of Pentecost in A.D. 30, the world has never been the same. King Jesus now reigns from heaven and the Holy Spirit works among those who are the submitted subjects of the kingdom.**

The Holy Spirit was active in the world long before His outpouring on the day of Pentecost in A.D. 30. His work among the early fathers and prophets is often not as clear as we would like it to be. This is especially true concerning the spectacular events that occurred before and at Mount Sinai when God established a covenant relationship with Israel. Nevertheless, during His work through the prophets of Israel, His activity in revelation and inspiration was revealed for our learning. Our understanding of the present work of the Spirit among Christians must begin with our understanding of His work through

the Old Testament fathers and prophets.

We must construct an Old Testament foundation upon which we can establish New Testament interpretations of the person and work of the Spirit today. This is important because much of the New Testament Scriptures were written to Jewish Christians, whose religious terminology and understanding of the Spirit were developed by the person and work of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament Scriptures. Therefore, one of the first principles of interpretation for understanding the teaching of the Holy Spirit in the New Testament is

**to understand the teaching of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament.**

The Old Testament must be our first commentary on the New Testament, especially in reference to salvational matters and the Holy Spirit.

Unfortunately, we live in a religious world of “reverse interpretation” in reference to Bible study concerning this subject. By this we mean that people who are religious in nature, often read their religious experiences **into the Bible**. At least their personal experiences greatly affect their objectivity in understanding this subject.

This practice of reading modern-day experiential religion into the pages of the Bible has caused a great deal of confusion in the religious world. This manner by which people have understood biblical teachings concerning the Holy Spirit have greatly distorted correct Bible teaching in reference to how the Spirit works in our lives.

Since one’s understanding of the work of the Holy Spirit is often an emotional matter in biblical interpretation, we would expect the emotionally driven interpreter to lose some objectivity when approaching the Bible in determining exactly what is taught in the Scriptures concerning the work of the Spirit. We must remember that our final conclusions concerning this subject must not be determined by

what we feel, but by what the Bible actually says. Through the word that He inspired to be written, the Holy Spirit must be allowed to define both His person and work.

For example, there is a great deal of confusion surrounding the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Some have read their emotional experiences into the text of Scripture, and by doing such, have assumed that they experienced the baptism with the Spirit. In fact, the following statement was made concerning the baptism of the Spirit:

**In practically every denomination throughout the world today there are men and women who are experiencing the baptism of the Holy Spirit and speaking in other tongues,** just as that little group in the Upper Room in Jerusalem did on the day of Pentecost [emphasis mine, R.E.D.].<sup>1:71</sup>

It is taught by some that “the baptism in the Holy Spirit accomplishes a remarkable and wonderful work within the believer.”<sup>2:12</sup> In fact, it is claimed that some “**have had the experience of being baptized in the Holy Spirit before ever reading about it in the Scriptures or even understanding it** [emphasis mine, R.E.D.].”<sup>2:29</sup>

Concerning the promise of the baptism with the Holy Spirit, the following is also stated by some today:

It is an experience that changed the lives of the early believers, and is doing the same for those who accept it today, **for it is the promise of the Father to us** as well as those of the apostolic age [emphasis mine, R.E.D.].<sup>71:72</sup>

It is a common belief among many religious groups that people today can receive the baptism with the Spirit by asking the Father. If one would only ask, he or she can be baptized in the Spirit just as the apostles were baptized with the Spirit in Acts 2.

There are a host of other views today concerning the work of the Holy Spirit that are constantly circulated throughout the religious world. These views are often so distorted and confused that it makes it almost impossible for people to maintain an objective view of the Holy Spirit from what is actually taught in the Bible. In fact, those who have given up the Scriptures as the only authority for faith and behavior, will never come to a knowledge of the truth on this matter if they continue to refuse to allow the Bible to be our final source of authority in faith. When experiential behavior in the absence of Bible knowledge controls what one believes, then he or she will not be able to come to a correct understanding of the Holy Spirit. When one's source for understanding

the Holy Spirit is first determined by experiential events in his or her life, and the Bible is only used as a backup to the experiences, then one's interpretation of the work of the Spirit as taught in the Bible becomes very distorted.

We must remind ourselves that our understanding of any work of the Spirit must be limited to the Spirit-inspired definition of His work that is explained in the Bible. In other words, we would know nothing of the Spirit if the Spirit had not revealed to us His presence and work through the Bible.

Since it is easy for men to be misled by their own delusions (2 Th 2:10-12), then we must assume that God wants us to go directly to His word in order to determine our understanding of what the Spirit does in the life of the Christian. We must assume, therefore, that any other source of definition concerning the work of the Holy Spirit must first be determined by what we read in the Bible.

We must note also that in prophecies of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament and the gospel records, **emphasis was first on the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, and then teaching concerning the Spirit in reference to the revelation of the gospel.** As one studies the prophecies of the Spirit in the Old Testament, there is always an emphasis on what the Spirit

was going to do in reference to the revelation of the gospel. Both John and Jesus maintained this same emphasis throughout their ministries. In other words, the prophets were not so much interested in explaining the presence of the Spirit as they were in focusing on the work of the Spirit in reference to the revelation of the gospel. Their emphasis was on the work of the Spirit at His time in history when He would play a very important role in beginning and continuing the gospel dispensation of the Lord Jesus Christ.

It is for this reason that we would conclude that the Spirit works today throughout the world in order to continue the work of the gospel in this world. This is the work of God in bringing all things to a conclusion in order to usher the saints into eternal dwelling. When we study the New Testament, therefore, we investigate what the Spirit is doing in the lives of

the saints whose task it is to preach the gospel to the world.

As a word of caution, we must always remind ourselves concerning Jesus' statement to the apostles in John 16:13,14: "*When He, the Spirit of truth, has come ... He will glorify Me.*" It would be the work of the Holy Spirit to glorify Jesus after He was poured out on the day of Pentecost in A.D. 30. We would correctly conclude therefore, that if we glorify the Holy Spirit over Jesus, then we have created a religion after our own desires. In fact, we could conclude that the Spirit would never glorify Himself over the Son of God. Therefore, any religion that glorifies the Holy Spirit to the marginalization of the incarnate Son of God is a false religion that is made up of adherents who think more of their own supposed experiential encounters with the Spirit than the Son of God.

## Chapter 1

### THE PROMISE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

In order to understand the work of the Holy Spirit in the lives of the early Christians and our lives today, we must first have a general understanding of the work of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament. Before the wonderful events of Acts 2, the Holy Spirit

was active in the lives of individuals throughout the period of history that is recorded in the Old Testament. He was not idle during the days before the giving of the Sinai law to the Jews on Mount Sinai. He was active from the creation to Sinai, but especially



active during the history of Israel.

The Spirit indwelt and worked through special people in the Old Testament in order to accomplish God's eternal gospel plan of redemption. At the time, the Father reigned over the universal kingdom of mankind. He worked through the Holy Spirit in order to direct all humanity to the time when the Son of God was incarnate in the flesh of man, and eventually would ascend to reign over all things until the end of time.

### A. The Spirit's indwelling and work before Mount Sinai:

There are not many statements in the Bible concerning the work of the Spirit before the giving of the Sinai law to Israel on Mount Sinai. However, the statements that are given establish the fact that the Spirit has always been at work in the affairs of the created world.

**1. The Spirit worked in creation.** The first mention of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament is Genesis 1:2. After the initial creation of all things, "*the Spirit of God was hovering over all things.*" From this we would assume that the Spirit actively worked in creation, though by Jesus "*all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth*" (Cl 1:16). However, "*by His Spirit He*

*adorned the heavens*" (Jb 26:13). David said, "*You send forth your Spirit, and they are created: and you renew the face of the earth*" (Ps 104:30). In some way, therefore, the Spirit had a very active role in the creation of the worlds. As a part of the Godhead, we must assume that every entity of the Godhead worked together as one in order to bring all things into existence (See Gn 1:26).

**2. The Spirit worked in revelation.** God created man and revealed through chosen individuals laws by which man should live. Revelation of these instructions for man was the work of the Spirit. Through revelation the Holy Spirit revealed God and His work to man. Therefore, during the Old Testament era God in "*various times and in different ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets*" (Hb 1:1). Pharaoh of Egypt recognized that the Holy Spirit indwelt Joseph. Moses recorded, "*And Pharaoh said to his servants, 'Can we find such a one as this, a man in whom is the Spirit of God?'*" (Gn 41:38). Because of Joseph's close relationship with God, Pharaoh could perceive that the Spirit was in him. Because of this close relationship with God, Joseph interpreted dreams by the power of the Holy Spirit.

### B. The indwelling and work of the Spirit in the Old Testament:

On Mount Sinai God revealed His law to His chosen people, Israel. He then began a long history of work through this nation in order to bring the Redeemer into the world for the salvation of humanity. Throughout the centuries, God the Holy Spirit worked through Israel in order to preserve Israel until the incarnation of God the Son (Gl 4:4). The purpose for the choosing of Israel was to preserve the seedline of woman until the Seed was born into the world (See Gn 3:15). Therefore, the work of the Spirit through Israel was to preserve Israel for the coming of the Redeemer of the world.

### 1. *The Spirit was “upon” them.*

Several statements are made in the Old Testament concerning the Holy Spirit being **upon** a particular individual. By the use of the word “upon” it was meant that in some way the Holy Spirit worked through a particular individual in order to accomplish either a specific or general work of God to preserve Israel. For example, Samuel told Saul that “*the Spirit of the Lord will come upon you, and you will prophesy*” (1 Sm 10:6). The Spirit did eventually come **upon** him “*and he prophesied*” (1 Sm 10:10). The result of the Spirit’s coming upon Saul was that he prophesied. He spoke forth the word of God.

Another example is the coming

of the Spirit upon Balaam and Jephthah. “*The Spirit of God came upon*” Balaam and he **spoke by inspiration the oracles of God** (Nm 24:2ff). The result of the Spirit’s coming upon Balaam was that he also spoke the word of God by inspiration. “*The Spirit of the Lord came upon Jephthah*” (Jg 11:29; see also Jg 14:6,19; 15:14; Is 59:21; 61:1).

From these examples it is clear that the coming of the Spirit **upon** someone resulted in something miraculous happening. The miraculous that happened was that Saul prophesied. Balaam and Jephthah spoke the oracles of God. The coming of the Spirit upon someone, therefore, must be interpreted as a miraculous event with miraculous consequences.

### 2. *The Spirit was “in” them.*

It is also said in the Old Testament that the Spirit was **in** the prophets. By use of the word “in” reference was to a **close relationship** between the Spirit and the one in whom the Spirit dwelt. We must not conclude that by use of either the words “upon” and “in” that the Scriptures are seeking to convey a location of the Spirit in reference to the one who was influenced by His power. In the context wherein the influence of the Spirit is mentioned, a metaphorical interpretation must be understood.

We must not think that we can locate God. It is in Him that we live,

move and have our being (At 17:28). When the Scriptures speak of His being in us, therefore, something more than a literal use of the word “in” is to be understood. It is for this reason that we must look beyond the literal meaning of the words “upon” and “in” when studying the subject of the relationship of the Spirit with any person.

The Old Testament reveals how close God worked with those He used to guide Israel. The Spirit worked so close to the one who was inspired that it is stated that the Spirit actually was in that person. The Spirit was **in** Joseph (Gn 41:38). Joshua was “*a man in whom*” was the Spirit of God (Nm 27:18). Nebuchadnezzar recognized that the Holy Spirit was in Daniel (Dn 4:8,18). Others recognized the presence of the Spirit in chosen individuals (Dn 5:11,14).

Nebuchadnezzar recognized that the Spirit was in Daniel because of Daniel’s miraculous prophecy and interpretation of dreams. The Spirit was in all the true prophets of Israel. Isaiah stated that God had put the Spirit “**within them**” (Is 63:11). Peter said that “*the Spirit of Christ who was in them*” indicated the things to come (1 Pt 1:10-12).

When the Spirit was in someone in the Old Testament, that particular person had a special relationship with the Spirit that resulted in his participation with the miraculous activity of De-

ity. When the Spirit was in them, we must not think of location, but of a working relationship. The working relationship resulted in the miraculous activity of the one in whom the Spirit dwelt.

**3. The Spirit “entered” them.** By the Spirit’s use of the word “enter” we would assume that the phraseology is expressing a miraculous activity through the particular person in whom the Spirit dwelt. For example, God said to Ezekiel, “*I will speak to you*” (Ez 2:1). Ezekiel explained, “*Then the Spirit entered me when He spoke to me, and set me on my feet; and I heard Him who spoke to me*” (Ez 2:2; 3:24). This “entering” resulted in the Lord speaking **directly** to Ezekiel. It resulted in the Lord revealing visions **directly** to Ezekiel. We would say, therefore, that this was a miraculous entering with miraculous results.

It must again be emphasized that the “entering” does not emphasize a locating of the Spirit. God the Spirit could, in human terms, “enter” Ezekiel from across the universe. We say this in order to again caution ourselves about placing our literal definitions on words that the Spirit used in order to convey the work that He was doing. What He was doing through Ezekiel was directing the prophet to speak by inspiration of the word of God.

**4. The Spirit “filled” them.** To

be “filled” with the Holy Spirit meant that the one filled was miraculously given knowledge or ability to accomplish a work for God. Concerning the construction of the tabernacle, the Lord said to Moses concerning Bezaleel, “*And I have filled him with the Spirit of God, in wisdom, in understanding, in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship*” (Ex 31:3).

Bezaleel was given the knowledge by which to construct the tabernacle. The word “filling” was used to emphasize something that was done, not some location to which the Spirit went. The result of the filling by the Spirit is explained by Micah. “*But truly I am full of power by the Spirit of the Lord*” (Mc 3:8). The result of the filling of the Spirit was miraculous activity that was directed toward accomplishing God’s work.

In these “fillings of the Spirit,” individuals were miraculously given the will of God and directed by the Spirit. They were given knowledge. They were filled with knowledge in order to accomplish God’s purposes.

In view of the context of the above statements concerning the work of the Holy Spirit in the affairs of man, three conclusions must be drawn:

**a. The Spirit was working.**

All of the preceding concepts concerning the relationship of the Holy Spirit with individuals refer to the

work of the Spirit in the Old Testament. When the Spirit was upon an individual it was the same as the Spirit being in that person or that person being filled with the Spirit. The result of the “in,” “upon” and “filling” was the same.

The Spirit was accomplishing a specific work of influence. His relationship with the individual was to accomplish a specific work in order to accomplish the purpose of God through the nation of Israel to eventually bring the Savior into the world. The work of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament, therefore, was to bring humanity, and especially Israel, to the revelation of the Savior of the world into the world. Once this mission was accomplished, then we assume that the Spirit changed the focus of His ministry in this world.

**b. The Spirit was working miraculously.** As a result of one being “filled,” or “entered,” or “come upon” by the Spirit, something miraculous was accomplished. Though the result of the miraculous work varied from one person to another, the work was still miraculous. Bezaleel was miraculously instructed to build the tabernacle. Daniel and Joseph were miraculously empowered to interpret dreams. Micah, Isaiah and all the prophets were miraculously enabled to speak concerning future things. All were miraculously en-

dowed with ability, wisdom or knowledge that was given specifically by the Holy Spirit to accomplish God's purpose to bring the Savior into the world.

**c. The Spirit was working miraculously through selected individuals.** God was selective concerning those to whom He gave the Spirit in the Old Testament. He spoke to Israel *"by His servants the prophets"* (2 Kg 24:2). Through Jeremiah God said, *"Since the day that your fathers came out of the land of Egypt until this day, I have even sent all My servants the prophets"* (Jr 7:25). The Spirit worked **in** the prophets in order to direct Israel (Ne 9:30). Nehemiah wrote, *"You also gave Your good Spirit to instruct them"* (Ne 9:20).

Upon these special men and women whom He chose to be heralds of His message, God gave the Holy Spirit. In other words, during the Old Testament times God was selective in reference to the influence of the Holy Spirit. He was selective in order to instruct certain individuals to proclaim His will to the nation of Israel. Abraham, Isaiah, Deborah, Daniel and others were special people of God to whom was assigned the Spirit of revelation and inspiration. However, there would be a time when this would change. In some way, the Spirit would be given to all classes of people. He

would be poured out on all flesh.

### C. Prophecy concerning the promise of the Holy Spirit:

At the time of the existence of national Israel, the prophets prophesied that there was a time coming when God would expand the work of the Holy Spirit outside the use of selected individuals who were Jews only. There would be a time when the Spirit would not be upon or in a special group of people. Prophecies of this time contained a **"promise"** of God concerning things to come. God specifically promised a great outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon every nation of people. He would pour out the Spirit upon both Jews and Gentiles, both male and female, servants and slaves. The Old Testament records the prophecies of a multiple cultural and race outpouring. In the gospel records, Jesus led the Jews to the fulfillment of this promise. In Acts 2 the promise was initialized. From the apostles in Acts 2, the promise went forth to all flesh.

There are several key prophecies of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament that refer to this promise. The prophecies of Joel and Ezekiel are especially central to the fulfillment of the promises concerning the Holy Spirit.

**1. God promised through Joel an outpouring of the Spirit on all flesh.** Joel 2:28-32 is a very significant prophecy concerning the Holy Spirit. It is a foundational prophecy concerning the activity of the Holy Spirit among the disciples of the first century.

In Acts 2:16,17 Peter quoted the prophecy of Joel 2:28-32. He applied the fulfillment of the promise of this prophecy to what had just occurred in Acts 2:1-4. Therefore, Peter's reference to Joel's prophecy introduces us to the significance of the promise of the Holy Spirit.

*And it shall come to pass afterward that I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions. And also on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days. And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth: blood and fire and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the coming of the great and awesome day of the LORD. And it shall come to pass that whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved. For in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be deliverance, as the LORD has said, among the remnant whom the LORD calls.*

The following are important points to understand from the preceding prophecy of Joel 2:28-32:

**a. "Afterward":** The events about which Joel 2 spoke would come to pass **afterward**. In quoting this prophecy on the day of Pentecost, Peter interpreted "afterward" to mean "last days." **This would be a reference to the last days of national Israel.** The promise would be fulfilled after the return of the Jews from the captivities by the Babylonians and Assyrians. It would take place during the end of God's special work through the nation of Israel to bring the Savior into the world. The prophecy would find its fulfillment after the captivities and after the almost four hundred years of "inspirational silence" from the prophet Malachi to the days of John the Immerser.

During the four hundred years following the work of the prophet Malachi, there was no inspired prophet in Israel until the time of Jesus and John. The fulfillment of the Joel 2 prophecy, therefore, would mark the end of the inspirational period of silence. It would also signify the beginning of the last days of national Israel.

The outpouring would take place in the last days, not at the beginning of the last days. The term "last days" always refers to the finality of a dis-

penetration, not to the dispensation itself. This was a promise that was made to Israel concerning the last dispensation of their special relationship as a covenanted nation with God. Therefore, according to the prophecy of Joel, the faithful of Israel waited in anticipation of the time when Joel's prophecy would be fulfilled.

**b. "Pour out My Spirit":**

Reference here is to the **manner** by which the Spirit would come or be given. "Pour out" is a metaphor. It must not be understood literally. Water is literally poured out of a bucket. But we must not think of the Spirit being literally poured out on all flesh as water is poured out of a container. Deity is not poured out like water from a bucket.

We must not interpret in a literal sense the manner by which the Spirit was to come upon all flesh. In view of the fact that the Spirit was already with Jesus (Mt 3:16), and was with the apostles (Mt 10:19,20) before Acts 2, we would interpret the pouring forth of the Spirit to refer to a time when men (the apostles) would be immersed in the will of the Spirit at the beginning of the age of the gospel. The Spirit would come upon those whom He would inspire to accomplish the purpose for which He was poured out, that purpose being to glorify on earth the Son of God (Jn 16:14).

In Joel 2 **God's initiative** is emphasized in contrast to man's ability or righteousness to warrant the reception of the Spirit. From the perspective of when Joel wrote, **this outpouring would be something that God would do**. It would not be something that men would do in order to call upon the action of God. God was going to do something, but not something in response to the pleas or actions of man. The Spirit would not be poured out because men on earth cried out for Him to come upon them.

In preparing the way for Israel to accept the crucifixion and the outpouring of the Spirit in A.D. 30, Zechariah prophesied,

*And I will **pour** on the house of David and on the **inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit, the Spirit of grace and supplication**; then they will look on Me whom they have pierced; they will mourn for Him .... **In that day there shall be great mourning in Jerusalem** (Zc 12:10,11).*

In that day, the Lord says, "*I shall have **poured out My Spirit***" (Ez 39:29). God promised, "*I will **pour My Spirit on your descendants***" (Is 44:3; see 32:15). The outpouring of the Spirit would be accomplished in a day that God planned. It would be a specific event. **The result of the outpouring would lead men to mourn**

**over Someone they had pierced.** When the event actually occurred, Luke recorded, “*Now when they [the Jews on Pentecost] heard this, they were cut to the heart*” (At 2:37). On the day of Pentecost, therefore, Peter reminded his Jewish audience that the stage had been historically set by the prophets for the coming Savior.

**c. “All flesh”:** It must first be understood that “all flesh” does not refer to both believers and unbelievers. We do not understand this from the prophecy itself. However, when we continue our study of the ministry and teachings of Jesus, the “all flesh” is narrowed down first to the apostles, and then extended to “those who believe.” In other words, the Spirit would first be poured out on the apostles. From the apostles, it would then go to all who believe through the laying on of the apostles’ hands.

In the context of Joel 2, what follows the statement of “all flesh” explains what was meant by the outpouring on all flesh. Sons and daughters, old men and young men, menservants and maidservants were included in the “all flesh.” **The Spirit would not be poured out on a special class and culture of prophets as in the Old Testament Jewish dispensation. It would not be for the Jews only.**

The Holy Spirit would not be given only to special old men who were prophets of the special Jewish

people. **He would be poured out on sons, daughters, old men, young men, male and female, servants and slaves.** The emphasis here is not so much that the Spirit would be given to every individual, but that **He would be given to every class and culture of individuals.** The outpouring would be in contrast to how the Spirit was given during the Old Testament era. Under the Sinai law the Spirit was given to selected older prophets who were Jews (2 Kg 24:2; Hb 1:1). A time was coming, however, when even the lowest class of society (servants and slaves), and even the Gentiles, would receive the Spirit as the esteemed aged prophets of the Old Testament.

**d. “Shall prophecy”:** Not only would the outpouring be miraculous when the Joel 2 prophecy was fulfilled, the result of the outpouring would be miraculous. Prophecy is first the speaking forth of the word of God. Throughout both the Old Testament and New Testament, the definition of prophecy is the preaching or teaching of the word of God. However, in reference to inspired prophecy, the preaching or teaching of the word of God was by inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

The Old Testament and New Testament prophets spoke by inspiration in view of the absence of the inspired written word of God that was



preached and taught by inspired New Testament prophets. In the context of the promise of Joel 2, inspired prophecy is under consideration. The direct result of the outpouring would be manifested by the inspired work of prophecy and teaching by men and women after the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

e. **“Wonders”**: Joel 2:30-32 continues the prophecy of what God would do in the last days of national Israel. The metaphors in these passages refer to the finality of national Israel. The fall of celestial bodies in symbolic language was used to portray figuratively the termination of earthly kingdoms (See Is 13:9,10; 34:4; Mt 4:1,5,6). The sun usually referred to the president or king of the nation. The moon and stars referred to the governors, generals and captains who received their power from the king. When a nation was to fall, the Old Testament prophets metaphorically portrayed such by the fall of the sun, moon and stars.

Joel did the same in reference to national Israel. He prophesied of a time when national Israel would be terminated. The outpouring of the Spirit in the last days, therefore, was a signal of the end of national Israel in the eyes of God. The signaling of the beginning of the gospel dispensation also meant the end of the dispensation of national Israel.

f. **“The great and awesome day of the Lord”**: The word “day” refers to the time when God would begin the end of national Israel. It was a great and awesome day for believers. It would be a sad day for those who would not be of those who believed on the Messiah. The “day of the Lord” would be a day of judgment for those who would not accept the Messiah in fulfillment of all the prophecies concerning the gospel.

g. **“Shall be saved”**: Salvation here does not refer to salvation from the calamity that would come upon national Israel. Salvation would be for those who would turn to God by “calling on His name.” This salvation would be redemptive in reference to sin. Though the ones who would accept the Lord would be saved from the destruction of A.D. 70, the time of the termination of national Israel through the fall of Jerusalem would still take place.

Since the prophecy of Joel 2 is the prophecy that was quoted by Peter in reference to its fulfillment in Acts 2, this prophecy becomes special in the Old Testament. However, we must keep in mind that other prophets spoke of the same events about which Joel spoke. Though other prophecies do not go as much into detail as Joel 2, other prophets collaborate with what Joel proph-

esied.

**2. Promise of the Spirit within:** Ezekiel looked beyond the restoration of Israel from the captivity of Babylon. He prophesied of a time when Israel would have a changed attitude; they would have a spirit of obedience. Ezekiel 36:24-28 is a significant prophecy of a special time that was to come:

*For I will take you from among the nations, gather you out of all countries, and bring you into your own land. Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them. Then you shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; you shall be My people, and I will be your God.*

Verse 26 of Ezekiel 36 discusses a **new attitude** as opposed to Israel's rebellious and stiffnecked attitude before the captivity. They would have a spirit of obedience to the one God as opposed to serving the idols of many gods that were in the minds of those from whom they would return as cap-

tives.

In verse 27 God promised, *"I will put My Spirit within you"* (See Ez 37:14). It would be good to compare this prophecy with a similar prophecy of the same period to which Ezekiel looked. In Jeremiah 31:31-34 God affirmed that during this new time, *"no more shall every man teach his neighbor ... for they shall all know Me"* (Jr 31:34). The Jewish babies did not know the Lord when they were born into a national covenant relationship with God. They had to be taught to know the Lord as they grew up in the Jewish nation. However, during the period that was coming, **those who were spiritually born of the word of God would already know the Lord at the time of their birth into a covenant relationship with God.**

Christians walk in the statutes of God because they have been begotten by the Spirit-inspired word of God (See 1 Pt 1:23). They know God at the time they are born into Christ. Herein is the concept that the ones coming into a covenant relationship with God would have the Spirit in them because of their close relationship with the will of God from their new birth into a covenant relationship with God. These will be people who responded to the gospel of Christ that was preached through the medium of words. At the time of their birth, they

“knew God.” The Spirit will have worked in them through the preaching of the gospel message in order to bring them to the new spiritual Israel. Upon their obedience to the gospel in baptism, the Spirit would be “in” them through their continued obedience of the inspired word of the Spirit.

The above prophecies established anticipation in the Jews’ hearts concerning the future. The prophecies established the setting for the coming of the Spirit. A great day was coming when God would do something great in Israel. The Jews, as in all prophecy, did not fully understand all the implications of the prophecies when they were made. Nevertheless, they were led to believe that some-

thing great was coming. Therefore, when John and Jesus came preaching the gospel of the kingdom, the Jews were awakened to the promises and the imminent fulfillment of the prophecies.

All prophecies concerning the Spirit center around what the Spirit would do through inspiration and miraculous activity. Therefore, when we come to the fulfillment of the prophecies in the New Testament, we must focus on what the Spirit would do. Emphasis is not on locating the Spirit here or there, but on the work of the Spirit in reference to accomplishing the work of God to first bring the Savior into the world, and then bring the saved of the world into eternal dwelling.

## Chapter 2

### JESUS AND THE PROMISE

As a prophet of God, John the Baptist went forth “*in the spirit and power of Elijah*” (Lk 1:17; see Mt 11:9,10). He was the forerunner of Jesus. He was specifically chosen to prepare the minds of the people for the coming of the Messiah. At the time of John’s coming, the Holy Spirit was working through Simeon and Anna. “*The Holy Spirit was upon*” Simeon (Lk 2:25-28). Anna was a Spirit-inspired prophetess (Lk 2:36-38). The Spirit indwelt both Anna and Simeon for the purpose of calling

people’s attention to the coming of both John and Jesus.

After Jesus was baptized, the Holy Spirit descended “*upon Him like a dove*” (Mk 1:10). We do not know exactly how this transpired. In this case, a simile is used to refer to the coming of the Spirit. The Spirit did not incarnate into the form of a physical dove. He only descended on Jesus **like** a dove (Mt 3:16). “*Then Jesus, being filled with the Holy Spirit, returned from Jordan [where He was baptized] and was led by the Spirit*

into the wilderness” (Lk 4:1).

John 3:34,35 is significant concerning the power by which the Spirit worked in the life of Jesus. John recorded, “*For He whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for God does not give the Spirit by measure. The Father loves the Son, and has given all things into His hand.*”

In His incarnate state, the Son of God spoke the “*words of God*” by inspiration of God the Spirit (See 2 Tm 3:16,17). In other words, His inspiration was full or complete. Inspiration is always full and complete because of what John said of God’s work through inspiration: “*For God does not give the Spirit by measure.*” This is a general statement concerning God’s work through inspiration.

Because the Father loved the Son, He gave “*all things into His hand*” at the time of the Son’s earthly ministry. This included full inspiration that is always the Father’s means by which He directs the minds of those whom He has chosen to speak for Him. In other words, there is no such thing as partial inspiration when it comes to the work of the Holy Spirit in His ministry of inspiration. There is no such thing as measures of inspiration. As John stated, **God does not give the Spirit by measures of inspiration.**

It is not our belief that John 3:34,35 teaches a “portioning out” of

the Holy Spirit. The context of the passage is discussing inspiration, **not a personal influence.** In inspiration, it has never been God’s policy to “*give the Spirit by measure.*” To make this passage refer to a “portioning out” of the Holy Spirit seems to be an interpretation that is directly contrary to the principle that it teaches concerning the work of God in inspiration. In inspiration, God always worked completely. The statement by John affirms that in inspiration God never worked in a manner that was either obscure or partial. Bruce Terry once wrote in reference to this point:

It is quite biblical to talk about measures of faith or of Christ’s gift (referring to charismatic gifts and ministries – Rm 12:3 and Ep 4:7), **but it is not biblical to speak of measures of the Spirit. The words “unto him” in John 3:34 in italics indicate that there are no corresponding words in the Greek original.** A literal translation of the phrase would be “**for He does not give the Spirit by measure.**” **The passage says plainly that there is no such thing as “measures of the Spirit.”**<sup>3:193</sup>

Throughout His ministry, Jesus made various promises concerning the coming of the Holy Spirit. We must understand these statements of promise in view of the Old Testament

prophecy of Joel 2 and similar prophecies concerning the coming of the Holy Spirit. Joel's prophecy centered around a miraculous outpouring of the Spirit with miraculous results. Throughout Jesus' ministry, He affirmed the coming fulfillment of this miraculous outpouring.

### A. Jesus promised a baptism with the Holy Spirit.

In Matthew 3:10-12 John said of the work of Jesus,

*And even now **the ax is laid to the root of the trees.** Therefore every tree which does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. **He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.** His winnowing fan is in His hand, and **He will thoroughly clean out His threshing floor,** and gather His wheat into the barn; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.*

John said to all those who came to hear his preaching and see his immersing that the One coming would **"baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire"** (Mt 3:11). We must assume that John had Joel 2:28 in mind when he

made this statement. By inspiration, what John stated was in view of the events of both the day of Pentecost in A.D. 30 and the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, though John did not know of these events in the future. However, through inspiration he figuratively foretold that something was coming.

Seated therefore in the historical context of the prophecy and fulfillment of the Joel 2:28 passage, John made the statement of Matthew 3:11. The statement applies to two groups, **the obedient and the disobedient. The obedient would receive the blessings that would come from the baptism of the Holy Spirit. The disobedient would be baptized with fire.** However, not all the obedient were baptized with the Spirit as was historically pointed out by Luke in the fulfillment of this prophecy in the book of Acts. Only the apostles, who in the context of Matthew 3 did not yet exist as apostles, were baptized with the Spirit in Acts 2. The result of the Holy Spirit's baptism, however, was a blessing to the entire church. In fact, it was the event of this baptism that began the unveiling of the prophecy of John.

**The baptism of fire referred primarily to the destruction of the disobedient Jews in A.D. 70 when Jerusalem and the temple were burned.** However, not all the disobe-

dient were baptized in fire because not all disobedient Jews were destroyed in A.D. 70. Therefore, John was prophesying that representatives of the group of obedient would be baptized with the Spirit—the apostles. Likewise, representatives of the group of the disobedient would be baptized with fire—the Jewish hierarchy in Jerusalem in A.D. 70. Nevertheless, all the disobedient will eventually be destroyed by the baptism of fire in the eternal destruction of hell (See 2 Th 1:6-9).

Some have proposed an alternative meaning of the baptism of fire by applying the reference to Acts 2:3. Some affirm that the tongues as of fire that sat upon each one of the apostles in Acts 2 was the baptism of fire. However, we do not agree with this interpretation because the “setting upon” of the tongues of fire was not an “immersion in” (or, “baptism of”) fire.

Secondly, the significance of the tongues of fire in Acts 2:3 was probably only for the purpose of giving a visual indication to the almost 120 people present that it was only the apostles who had been baptized with the Spirit on the occasion. The “tongues of fire” and the “speaking in languages” were the Spirit’s reaffirmation that the Twelve only were the true Christ-sent apostles whom He had immersed.

## B. Jesus would give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him.

Jesus stated,

*If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him* (Lk 11:13).

The parallel passage to this promise is Matthew 7:11. In Matthew’s account, Jesus said that the Father would “*give good things to those who ask Him.*” By comparing these two passages—Lk 11:13 & Mt 7:11—we would conclude that the meaning of both is that the Father would give the good things (plural) **of the Spirit**. In other words, as a result of the coming of the Spirit, the recipients would receive “good things.”

The Luke passage is a metonymy, that is, **the cause is placed for the effect**. The Holy Spirit is the cause. The effect are the good things. The Holy Spirit is stated as the cause in the text of Luke 11:13 for the good things about which Matthew wrote in Matthew 7:11. When the Spirit would work in the gospel dispensation, He would produce good things. **Luke emphasized the cause. Matthew emphasized the effect.**

We will later see that these good

things would be the miraculous gifts and inspired word of the Spirit that were given for the benefit of those who believed and obeyed the gospel. Emphasis in Matthew 7:11 and Luke 11:13, therefore, is not on the actual receiving of the Holy Spirit, **but on the things with which the Spirit would bless those who ask of the Father.** This passage is not teaching that one should pray for the Holy Spirit. It is teaching that the disciples should pray for the good things that were to come from the Spirit.

The events of Acts 8 would be a fulfillment of the statements made by Jesus that are recorded in both Luke 11:3 and Matthew 7:11. When Peter and John came to Samaria after the preaching of Philip, Luke recorded,

*Now when the apostles who were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them, who, when they had come down, **prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit** (At 8:14,15).*

Peter and John came from Samaria to lay hands on those who had been immersed. When they did, the Holy Spirit came upon them (At 8:17). Though the apostles, Peter and John, had been given the authority to lay hands on people in order that the disciples receive the Holy Spirit, it

**was evidently the decision of the Spirit as to those upon whom He would come.** For this reason, Peter and John prayed that the baptized believers of Samaria might receive the Spirit by the laying on of their hands.

A second illustration of the fulfillment of Luke 11:3 and Matthew 7:11 would be 1 Corinthians 14:13. Paul wrote to the Corinthian church, *“Therefore let him who speaks in a tongue pray that he may interpret.”* Reference here was to the ones among the Corinthian disciples who had already had hands laid on them to receive the gift of speaking in languages (tongues). Those could pray that they also receive the gift of interpretation. In this context, therefore, it was the choice of the Spirit to give an added gift. It was the choice of the Spirit to distribute to each disciple as He so willed (1 Co 12:11).

If members had had hands laid on them by the apostles, then they could pray that the Spirit distribute to them the appropriate gift to be used in their ministry for the edification of the church. The decision concerning the one on whom a Christ-sent apostle would lay hands was the decision of the apostle. However, it was the decision of the Spirit as to what miraculous gift was to be imparted.

**C. Jesus promised that the Spirit would be given.**

In John 7:38,39 John recorded,

*He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water. **But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.***

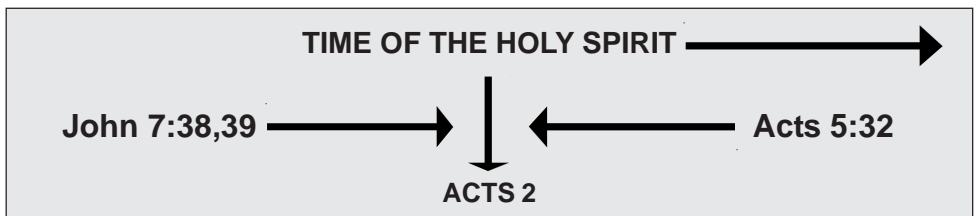
The promise of the outpouring had not yet happened at the time Jesus made the statement that is recorded in John 7:39. Jesus thus made this statement in view of the coming of the Holy Spirit. John recorded, “*The Holy Spirit was not yet **given**, because Jesus was not yet glorified.*” The word “given” is not in the Greek text, though the interpretive addition of the word does no harm to the meaning. The passage should literally read that “*the Holy Spirit was not yet.*” In other words, **it was not yet the time for the Holy Spirit to be given.**

A time would come when the Spirit would play a major role in revealing all truth in order to establish and edify the church. The Spirit had worked from creation to the cross.

However, His miraculous work was consummated in the revealing of all truth to the Christ-sent apostles and in giving inspired guidance to the church in the first century through the miraculous gifts. Therefore, it is true that when the last person died on whom the apostles had laid hands to receive a miraculous gift, then the miraculous work of the Spirit through the gifts ceased.

The word “Spirit” is without the article (the) in John 7:39, and thus, **reference is to what the Spirit would accomplish. Jesus was discussing an operation, or function of the Spirit, not His person.** The word “Spirit” without the article expresses the manifestation of the work of the Spirit. Emphasis would not be on the person of the Spirit, though the cause of the work is the Spirit Himself. Nevertheless, Jesus was emphasizing what the Spirit would do during His time of work.

This point must not be ignored. While people want to focus on the Holy Spirit Himself, **what Jesus was promising was that which would result from the work of the Spirit.** In the historical context of the fulfillment





of the promise, that which resulted from the Spirit was His leading of the apostles into all truth, the miraculous gifts of the Spirit for the edification of the church, as well as directing through inspiration the hands of those who gave us the inspired Scriptures of the New Testament.

**During the time of the Spirit, the Spirit would do His work in carrying out God's continued work of redemption among men.** In John 7:38,39, Jesus and John connect the "giving" of the Holy Spirit with the ascension of Jesus. The "giving," or time of the Spirit, would begin sometime after Jesus' ascension. In Acts 1 Jesus ascended. In Acts 2 the Spirit came. John 7:38,39 looks forward to Acts 2. Acts 5:32 looks backward.

The commentary passage of Acts 5:32 looks **backward** to the Acts 2 event: "*And we are His witnesses to these things,*" Peter stated, "*and so also is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey Him.*" "All flesh," that is, all classes and cultures of believers, began to be given the miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit in Acts 2. Only the apostles on the day of Pentecost received the baptism of the Spirit. However, we would assume that they immediately laid hands on most of the three thousand who were baptized in order that the gifts be spread to all those who believed. By the time of the events of Acts 5,

"all flesh" had begun to receive the gifts.

The "living water" of John 7:38 is a reference to the miraculous gifts that came through the laying on of the apostles' hands after Acts 2. These gifts came forth from the early Christians who had received the Spirit in a miraculous manner by the apostles laying their hands on them. The purpose of the blessing of the gifts was the good that came from the miraculous gifts. The good that came from the gifts was the edification of the church and the evangelization of the world (See 1 Co 12-14).

The emphasis of John 7:38,39, therefore, is on the result of the Holy Spirit's coming. The result was the good things of the miraculous gifts. The result of the gifts was the edification of infant disciples who did not have the written word of God. The long-lasting result of the Holy Spirit's outpouring was the recorded inspired Scriptures that have now continued with the church throughout the centuries.

The visible good things that came forth from the Holy Spirit were the miraculous gifts of the first century. However, we would not conclude that the Spirit has ceased to work simply because we are not empirically perceiving His work. Though the miraculous gifts have ceased, we would not conclude that

the Spirit has ceased His work. God still works all things together for the good of the saints (Rm 8:28). He is still the God who is able to work exceedingly abundantly above all that we think (Ep 3:20). Simply because the Christian does not perceive the work of the Spirit today through the senses, does not mean that He has ceased to work.

Since the Spirit continues to work today, then we must conclude that John 7:38,39 also includes the non-miraculous work of the Spirit in the lives of Christians, including ourselves today. Since we cannot conclude that the Spirit ceased to work simply because He ceased to work in a miraculous manner, then we must view John 7:38,39 from the viewpoint that Jesus was referring to the totality of the work of the Spirit in the Christian's life until Jesus comes again. Though the initial fulfillment of Jesus' prophecy referred to the miraculous reception of the Spirit, we must not discount the continuing work of the Spirit in our lives today.

#### **D. Jesus promised that the Spirit would be in the apostles.**

In His personal conversation with the apostles in John 14, Jesus specifically promised the apostles the following:

*And I will pray the Father, and He will give you [apostles] **another Helper**, that He may **abide with you forever**—the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you [apostles] know Him, for He dwells **with** you and will be **in** you. I will not leave you [apostles] orphans; I will come to you (Jn 14:16-18).*

In the context of what Jesus said above, it is imperative to understand that Jesus was in a **personal discussion with the eleven apostles**. At the time He made the preceding statement, He was making a personal promise to the apostles who would have a special relationship with the Holy Spirit after the events of Acts 2.

Jesus said to the apostles concerning the Spirit, "*He dwells **with** [meta] you and will be **in** you [en human]*" (Jn 14:17). In verse 16 Jesus said that the Comforter (Helper) would abide with (*meta*) them forever. Verse 26 is a commentary on what is meant by the Spirit being with them in verse 17. Jesus said to the apostles that the Spirit would teach them "*all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you [apostles].*" **A miraculous relationship with the Spirit, therefore, was under discussion.** The apostles would be inspired by the Holy Spirit

to both remember what was personally taught them by Jesus, as well as to receive all truth. The Spirit would complete the truth that Jesus only started to reveal to them.

In some way, the Helper (the Holy Spirit) would be with them as Jesus was with them. However, Jesus was with them in a personal physical presence, but the Spirit would not be with them in this manner. He would be with them in a close relationship, but not in an incarnate presence.

The Greek word *allon* (translated, “another”) refers to **another of the same kind**. It would be as David Libscomb once stated: “Thus the Holy Spirit would be another Comforter of the same kind or like Jesus.”<sup>4:211</sup> In the text of John 14 Jesus was comforting the apostles by telling them that the Spirit would be in them in the gospel dispensation to come. They would not be left without help. They would not be left as orphans.

John 14:17 is often confusing. It must first be noted that there is a variant reading in the Greek text here about which translators disagree. The variant reading concerns the tense of the verb, whether it should be present or future tense. The *King James* and *American Standard Version* encourage the future tense of the verb by translating that the Spirit “**shall be in you.**” The *New International Version* maintains this translation in the text,

but adds a footnote that some early manuscripts read “and is.” However, the United Bible Societies Greek text has stayed with the **present tense** (*en humin estin*), though Marshall’s text maintains the future tense.

Nevertheless, many translators have opted for the present tense. Welmouth translated the text, “*You know Him, because He remains by your side and is in you.*” Lamsa translated, “... *because he abides with you, and is in you.*” The *New English Bible* reads, “... *he dwells with you and is in you.*” However, the *New English Bible* adds the footnote, “Some witnesses read ‘shall be.’” In view of the variant reading of this text, it would not be wise to be too dogmatic in our understanding of the text.

In view of the Holy Spirit being **in** the Old Testament prophets, and the Spirit’s work with and in the apostles during the ministry of Jesus, **it would be a consistent interpretation to say that the present tense of the verb in John 14:17 is correct.** The Spirit was in the apostles before Acts 2 in the sense that He was also in the prophets throughout the Old Testament. The disciples had already been on many preaching tours where they spoke by inspiration of the Holy Spirit and worked miracles (See Mt 10:5ff; Lk 10:1ff).

On the other hand, the Spirit would also be “in” the apostles after

Acts 2. It is our understanding that in this context Jesus was discussing both. He was reaffirming the close relationship of the Spirit with and in the apostles **at that time they were with Jesus in His earthly ministry.** They had worked many miracles during Jesus' ministry and preached on many occasions. But Jesus was at this time affirming that the Spirit would continue His close relationship **with and in** them in the time to come. They would not be left orphans.

The same phrase (*en humin*) is also used in John 14:20 in reference to Jesus. In **that day**, the day of the coming of the Spirit in Acts 2, Jesus would be **in them**. In order to understand what Jesus meant in John 14:20, we must keep in mind that in John 10:38 Jesus said, "*Believe that the Father is in Me, and I in Him.*" This same concept is expressed again in John 14:10,11. The Greek word *en* is used in both contexts to describe a **close personal relationship**.

When *en* is used in reference to God, there must always be a metaphorical understanding of how the word is used. In reference to God's relationship with humanity, it is also consistent to assume that a metaphorical meaning is in the mind of the Spirit. When Jesus made the statement of John 10:38, the Father was **in heaven**. However, Jesus was **on earth**. Nevertheless, they were in one

another by common goal, purpose and work.

Jesus was explaining to the apostles in John 14:17 the same concept. **He was discussing the close relationship the Spirit had with them at the time they were personally with Jesus.** If we read the future tense into the text of John 14:17, Jesus was then pointing them toward the close relationship they would have with the Spirit after Acts 2. The passage, therefore, **is discussing the indwelling of the Spirit as they allowed the Spirit to reveal all the truth of the gospel to them that they would voluntarily commit themselves to believe and obey.** This indwelling presence of relationship was with them during the ministry of Jesus. The same relationship would continue with the apostles after the ascension of Jesus because the apostles would continue to be obedient to the desires of Jesus, as well as the truth of the gospel that would be revealed by the Holy Spirit.

John 14:18 reemphasizes Jesus' reassurance of the apostles in the above context. Jesus would not leave them as orphans. The Greek word *orphanous* is used only here and in James 1:27 in the New Testament. Jesus wanted the disciples to know that Deity would stay with them when He personally departed from their presence. They would not be left

without a divine Helper. This concept harmonizes with John 16:13 and John 14:26.

### E. Jesus promised a relationship based on His word.

In His personal prayer for the apostles immediately before the denial and crucifixion, Jesus prayed,

*I do not pray for these [apostles] alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me (Jn 17:20-23).*

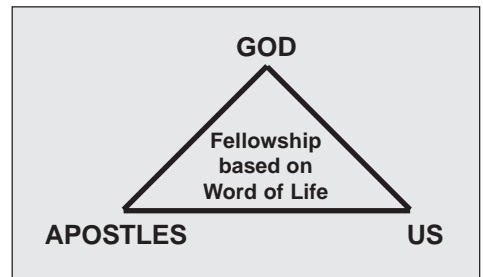
In the context of this statement, Jesus discussed the relationship between the Father, Son, apostles and “those who will believe in Me through their word.” Jesus used the Greek preposition *en* in order to emphasize a relationship between the Father, Son and the apostles. **The use of this Greek preposition emphasized a close relationship between Deity and the disciples.**

The Greek preposition *en* is sometimes difficult to understand in its metaphorical use. In their Greek lexicon, Bauer, Arndt and Gingrich explained the New Testament use of the Greek word *en*:

The uses of this preposition are so many-sided, and often so easily confused, that a strictly systematic treatment is impossible.<sup>5:“en”</sup>

However, in their definition of the preposition in the manner by which Paul and John often used the word, the theologians stated that it was used to designate **a close personal relationship**. Thayer’s lexicon agrees with this explanation, but further explains that *en* is used ...

... locally ... of that in which any person or thing is inherently fixed, implanted, or with which it is **intimately connected** ..., of a person to whom another is **wholly joined** and to whose power and influence he is subject, **so that the former may be likened to the place in which the latter lives and moves**. So used in the writings of Paul and John **particularly of intimate relationship with God or with Christ**, and for the most part involving contextually the idea of power and blessing resulting from that union [emphasis mine, R.E.D.].<sup>6:“en”</sup>



The significance of the above statement is important in reference to understanding how the Holy Spirit indwells men on earth. Because the Spirit was to have a special close relationship with the apostles according to John 17:20-23, He would be considered **in them**. Though He and the Father would exist in a heavenly realm, they would be **in** the apostles in a close relationship because of the Spirit's work through the apostles to carry out the continued mission of Jesus on earth. This oneness in mission would be evidence to the world of unbelievers that they were truly disciples of the Son of God.

Here again is the emphasis on what the Spirit would do in this gospel dispensation. The metonymy of the prophecies, therefore, **does not focus so much on the person of the Spirit. The meaning is on what the Spirit was going to do when He came**. When we interpret the prophecies of the coming of the Spirit, therefore, we must understand that the prophets were emphasizing the work of the Spirit, not so much the Spirit Himself. They mentioned the Spirit in prophecy in order to exemplify His ministry among men. The reason for this is that when the Spirit came, it would be His work to glorify the Son, not Himself (See Jn 16:14).

In reference to the time when Jesus was with the apostles, the au-

thority of the disciples over the supernatural was something that would eventually be given to the believers. Such authority would allow the apostles and early Christians to command the miraculous that originated from the environment of God. They would be given the authority to touch the physical environment of this world with the supernatural. The result would be miraculous occurrences in history. These miracles would indicate a very close relationship between God and those with whom He chose to work. In the working of miracles, the apostles were actually given control to manifest the realm of Deity. No greater close relationship could be enjoyed until we all step into eternity.

The above close relationship is often not emphasized when interpreters stress a literal locality of the Spirit. In other words, by emphasizing that the Holy Spirit was actually and literally inside the Old Testament prophets and New Testament apostles, the beauty of the close working relationship with which the Spirit worked in the apostles' lives through inspiration and miraculous works is often marginalized.

The unity of the Godhead with humanity is majestically expressed with the preposition "in" in many contexts of the New Testament. We are often distracted from the close working relationship we have with God by

concentrating on a literal meaning of the preposition “in.” We often miss the beauty of the metaphorical use of the word in describing a close relationship between God and man. We must challenge ourselves, therefore, to think beyond efforts to locate the Spirit of God. We must do this in order to focus on the relationship of the Spirit with the believers.

#### **F. Jesus promised a relationship of unity.**

During the ministry of Jesus, the close working relationship between God and the apostles was first manifested by the disciples’ submission to the word of Jesus. In the context of John 17, Jesus was praying for unity among all those who “*believe in Me through their word*” (Jn 17:20). A parallel and commentary passage is found in 1 John 1:3. John communicated the “*Word of Life*” in order that his fellow readers “*may have fellowship with us; and truly our [the apostles’] fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.*”

John 17:20-23 and 1 John 1:3 are parallel. Both contexts emphasize the oneness of believers that is based on a common belief in and obedience to the gospel of Jesus. In other words, the word of the truth of the gospel is the foundation upon which fellowship is established with both the Godhead

and the representatives (the apostles) through whom all the truth of the gospel was revealed. If one refused to obey the truth of the gospel, then he could not have a relationship with either God or the apostles.

**Again, we would caution Bible interpreters in using literal definitions of time and location to refer to God, especially God the Spirit.**

Because of our physical being and presence, we are here or there in relation to one another or some object. Two people stand apart from another because the two individuals are different bodies and can therefore be located at different places. However, God is spirit. **To “localize” God in a particular place is to humanize His presence.** God is “in heaven” simply because there is no other way in human terms to express the concept of His “location.” He is in heaven, but at the same time here. In Him we live, move and have our being (At 17:28). This does not mean that heaven is here. It simply means that God cannot be placed in a location as a man. For this reason, therefore, we must be careful not to place human characteristics on God, and thus literalize either His work or existence in a manner by which we can understand Him.

We should also be careful not to place physical locations on the Holy Spirit. This is one reason why we find it difficult to “localize” the Spirit of

God in relation to the location of a man. The presence of the Holy Spirit is greater than His indwelling in any man, for it is in Him that we live and move and have our being. The work and existence of the Holy Spirit is far beyond His presence in those who are of the flesh. The Spirit does His work regardless of where we want to locate Him in our minds.

### G. Jesus promised the promise of the Father.

Luke 24:36-49 is a very important context concerning the fulfillment of the promise that God made through Joel. The statements of this context were made by Jesus **after** His resurrection and **before** His ascension. At the time Jesus made these statements, the fulfillment of the promised Spirit of Joel 2:28 would be fulfilled in a short time after Jesus was speaking to His disciples in Luke 24:36-49.

It is important to first understand those to whom Jesus was speaking when He made these statements. Jesus was resurrected on Sunday morning a few weeks before. He immediately appeared to the apostles, and periodically throughout the seven weeks between Passover and a week before Pentecost.

On the same day He was raised, possibly in the afternoon, He appeared to two men on the road to Emmaus

(Lk 24:13). After He revealed Himself to these two men, and ate some food with them, they excitedly returned to Jerusalem (Lk 24:33). They arrived in Jerusalem late Sunday evening, or possibly early Monday morning (Lk 24:33). The two men found the apostles still together and others gathered with them.

They revealed that they had seen Jesus. As they said these things to those who were gathered, Jesus appeared in the midst of them, and subsequently, made the statements of this context. We must assume, therefore, that what Jesus said in the context of Luke 24:36-49 was made to those who were gathered on this occasion. This would include the apostles and those who were gathered with them.

In the context of Luke 24, Jesus said to those who were gathered, “*Behold, I send the **Promise** of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with **power from on high**.*” When the promise would be fulfilled, the Spirit would **endue**, empower or clothe the ones upon whom He would come. The power would originate “from” (*ek* - “out of”) heaven. The meaning here is that the ones who would receive the promise would be clothed with power. The promise would be **from** the Father. The **power** would originate from the heavenly environment of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.



It is often difficult to determine exactly to whom Jesus was making reference in Luke's account when He made the statements of Luke 24:49. The difficulty comes in determining the antecedent of the pronouns of the text. However, when considering the historical context of those who were gathered on this Sunday evening, it is clear that Jesus was speaking to the group that was gathered on that occasion. But keep in mind that **Jesus did not state how they would be endued with power from on high.** In the prophecy of Joel 2, Joel only stated that the Spirit would be poured out upon "all flesh." Jesus does not here talk about the baptism with the Holy Spirit. He simply stated that the promise would come. It would come first to the disciples in Jerusalem.

The book of Luke was written to Theophilus. Theophilus probably had only this letter and the book of Acts to research the events of Jesus' life, and especially the details concerning the final activities and teachings of Jesus prior to His ascension. Therefore, we must understand the statements of Luke 24:36-49 from the same standpoint as Theophilus.

Luke 24:33 seems to establish the antecedent for the pronouns of the rest of the chapter. "*So **they** rose up that very hour and returned to Jerusalem, and found the **eleven** and **those** who were with them gathered to-*

*gether.*" Gathered here in this meeting were **the two disciples** to whom Jesus had appeared on the road to Emmaus. The **eleven apostles** were present. There were also "**those**" who were not identified, but undoubtedly were the women and others, possibly Justus and Matthias. Throughout the remainder of this context, therefore, consistent interpretation would force us back to Luke 24:33 in order to determine the antecedent of the pronouns "they," "them," and "you."

Luke 24:36 states that Jesus appeared to all of the above while they were assembled. In verse 44 "*He said to **them**,*" that is, He addressed all His disciples, including those immediate disciples who were present at this appearing. "*He opened **their** understanding that they might comprehend the Scriptures*" (Lk 24:45). Verse 48 states, "*You are witnesses of these things.*"

We know from Acts 1:21-23 that there were several men who had "*accompanied us [the apostles] all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us*" (At 1:21). Of these men, Barsabas (Justus) and Matthias were nominated to be special witnesses with the apostles. Lots were cast and Matthias was chosen to "*become a witness with us [the apostles] of His resurrection*" (At 1:22). The apostles were not the only witnesses of Jesus' life and resurrection.

In Luke's account, therefore, we would not be wrong to assume that there were many witnesses "of these things" to which Jesus referred in the text of Luke 24:48. We might refer to these as "general witnesses" in view of the fact that the apostles were His "special witnesses." These general witnesses gave testimony of the resurrection because they had seen Jesus after His resurrection. According to 1 Corinthians 15:6, there were at least five hundred of these general witnesses of the resurrection to whom Jesus had appeared.

In view of the above, therefore, **Luke 24:49 is Luke's general application of the promise of Joel 2:28 to all believers.** "*Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you.*" Here again the pronoun "you" would find its antecedent in the group that is mentioned in verse 33. This is in harmony with the promise of Joel 2:28 which states that the Spirit would be poured out upon all flesh. It is also in harmony with Mark 16:17,18 where Jesus affirmed that "*those who believe*" would manifest the miraculous power of the Holy Spirit in their lives.

Luke's account does not explain **how** all who believe would receive the promise. Jesus simply commanded, "*Tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high*" (Lk 24:49). We have no problem in understanding that

Luke's account is emphasizing the "*enduing with power*" by the Holy Spirit upon "all flesh." But we must determine how the Holy Spirit would be transferred on to those who believed and obeyed the gospel.

Luke wrote with a general understanding of the fulfillment of the prophecy just as the prophecy of Joel 2:28 was general in its promise. However, when we come to Luke's account to Theophilus in Acts 1, Luke was specific. He was specific because in Acts 1 he discussed the baptism with the Holy Spirit and who would receive such while the disciples waited in Jerusalem. He was specific in naming **the apostles** as the actual recipients of the baptism. He was specific in Acts 2 in defining that this was what historically happened. The apostles were initially endued with the power of the Holy Spirit by the baptism with the Spirit in Acts 2:1-4. However, this power of the Holy Spirit was passed on to the rest of the disciples through the laying on of the apostles' hands (At 8:18).

It has been traditionally argued that the statement of Luke 24:49 refers **specifically** to the apostles. In comparing Acts 1:8 to this verse, it would be a convincing argument in view of the fact that Acts 1:8 is specific in reference to the apostles. The Acts 1:8 passage is in the context of the baptism with the Holy Spirit that

was specifically made to the apostles. It is not necessary to force Luke 24:49 to apply only to the apostles in the context. This is true because the promise of the Spirit was to all “who believe.”

In Mark 16:15-18 Jesus expanded the miraculous activity of the Spirit to all who believe. The fact is, therefore, that one does not have to confine Luke 24:49 to the apostles alone simply because the promise of the Spirit, and the endowment of miraculous power, went beyond the apostles both in promise and in historical fact. For example, Philip manifested such power in Acts 8:13. Though he had been endowed with power from the Holy Spirit, he had not been baptized in the Spirit as the apostles. He and the other disciples who had the miraculous gifts were endowed with power by the laying on of the apostles’ hands.

We must keep in mind also that the statements of Luke 24 took place either the Sunday evening of the day of the resurrection or early Monday morning. On the other hand, the events wherein Jesus made the promise of the baptism of the Holy Spirit to the apostles took place about **forty days later**. Jesus made the promise of the baptism with the Spirit at the time just before He ascended to the Father (At 1:9).

Now consider the entire group of

the 120 disciples of Acts 1:15 who were obeying Jesus’ command to wait in Jerusalem until they had been given the promise of Luke 24:49: “***But tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endowed with power from on high.***” It could be that the first mention of these disciples is made in Luke 24:33. There were the eleven, the two men from Emmaus and the others. Luke 24:49 is a command that all who were in the meeting of Luke 24:33 should be in Jerusalem for the great revival and outpouring event of the Holy Spirit on the apostles. This would infer, therefore, that the 120 disciples of Acts 1:15 could have been present in Luke 24:33. For some reason, at least, they were all present and together when the Holy Spirit came in Acts 2:1-4.

## **H. Jesus promised the baptism with the Holy Spirit only to the apostles.**

This brings us to the historical context of the meeting of Acts 1:1-8 that took place a little over forty days after the meeting of Luke 24. Luke was specific in Acts 1:1-8 as to whom the baptism with the Holy Spirit would apply. The antecedent of the pronouns “they,” “them” and “you” in this context is definitely the **apostles** of Acts 1:2. On this occasion, that was different from the meet-

ing and appearance of Luke 24, Jesus promised the apostles, “*You shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now*” (At 1:5).

Luke also records in Acts 1:4, “*He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, ‘which,’ He said, ‘You have heard from Me’.*” Jesus had referred to this promise with the apostles at some time **during His ministry**. This discussion was surely within the statements of John 13 – 17, as well as in the promise of John 7:38,39. The promise, the Holy Spirit, would be given to them. The **promise** would specifically teach the apostles all things and bring to their remembrance all that Jesus had personally taught them (Jn 14:26). The **promise** would reveal to them all truth of the gospel (Jn 16:13). The promise would be something miraculous, inspiring and direct. The promise, therefore, was directed toward all activities of the Holy Spirit in reference to His ministry with the establishment of the church.

The promise was something very significant. It was something prophesied by the prophets of old. It was something for which the Jewish faithful had been waiting for centuries. It was the miraculous outpouring and empowering of the Holy Spirit upon all classes and cultures of believers that were mentioned by Joel.

In the context of Acts 1, however, Jesus had the apostles in mind when He stated, “*But you [apostles] shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses of Me*” (At 1:8). Though there were many witnesses of Jesus’ resurrection, in some way the apostles were the special witnesses of Jesus. This is brought out in the apostles’ selection of Matthias to be “*a witness with us of His resurrection*” (At 1:22).

These special witnesses would not only receive power when the Holy Spirit came upon them in a baptismal manner, they would also receive the authority to give miraculous gifts to others. They were thus special in that Jesus personally called them to give witness to His resurrection. The power of their witness would be in the confirming miracles that they would command. Through the exercising of the authority to impart the promise of the Holy Spirit to others, the blessings of the promise would go to all who are afar off, that is, to all Gentiles who would believe and obey the gospel.

Joel had first prophesied that the outpouring of the Spirit would be upon all flesh. In Luke 24 Jesus stated that the promise would go to those believers who were gathered with Him the Sunday or Monday after His resurrection. In Acts 1, Jesus nar-

rowed down the recipients of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit to the apostles. However, from the baptism with the Holy Spirit in Acts 2, through the laying on of the apostles' hands, the outpouring of the Spirit would benefit all those who believe. In this

way, the fulfillment of Joel 2 would go to all those who believe. Therefore, throughout history until Jesus comes again, all believers would benefit in some way from the outpouring of the Holy Spirit of Acts 2:1-4.

## Chapter 3

### THE PROMISE TO THE APOSTLES

The baptism with the Holy Spirit was specifically promised to the apostles. Acts 2 is a record of this historical event that happened on the Pentecost of A.D. 30 in the city of Jerusalem. This marked the beginning of a new dispensation, the gospel dispensation that will continue until Jesus consummates all things with His final coming. The Pentecost event was the fulfillment of the promise of Joel 2 that was made centuries before. On this day came the "good things" for the apostles that were promised by Jesus during His earthly ministry.

In discussing the baptism with the Holy Spirit, we must first understand that the Bible teaches that the Acts 2 event was a onetime historical event. It was onetime in the sense that what was accomplished with the outpouring of the Spirit on the apostles on Pentecost was complete and has never happened since.

Since the preceding is true, then

there is no baptism with the Holy Spirit today. If this baptism was specifically promised to the apostles, then it was not given to all Christians throughout all history. There are two specific things to remember concerning the baptism with the Holy Spirit. First, **Jesus was the administrator** of this baptism. Second, Jesus promised that **only His apostles would receive this baptism**. The first point reveals the origin of the baptism and the second reveals the ones on whom the Spirit came on Pentecost.

#### A. **Jesus was the administrator of the Spirit.**

The Father told John, "*Upon whom you see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, this is He who baptizes with the Holy Spirit*" (Jn 1:33). In Matthew 3:11 John the Baptist stated that the One who would come after him would "*baptize you*

with the Holy Spirit and fire” (See Mk 1:8; Lk 3:16). These are references to what Jesus would do. He would be the one who would baptize with the Holy Spirit. The point is that God is the one who would **give the Holy Spirit** (1 Th 4:8), but **Jesus would be the administrator of the baptism with the Holy Spirit**. No man would have such power or authority. Not even the Holy Spirit would assume the act of baptizing people with Himself. The baptism with the Holy Spirit, therefore, was not left to the self-initiative of the Holy Spirit. God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit worked as one in order to bring about the baptism with the Holy Spirit on the apostles in A.D. 30.

### **B. The promise of the baptism was made only to the apostles.**

**It is important to understand that the baptism with (or “in”) the Holy Spirit was a promise that was made exclusively to the apostles.** As previously discussed, John 13-17 is the key context to understand this point. As stated before, it must be clearly understood that these few chapters in the book of John contain a personal conversation **between Jesus and the eleven apostles**—Judas had already left the group in order to betray Jesus.

Since this was a **personal** con-

versation between Jesus and His apostles, Jesus made specific promises to His chosen apostles. Everyone else, including ourselves, are included only in a **secondary sense**. By secondary, we mean that these promises apply to us in an **indirect way**. They apply to us only in the sense that Jesus commanded the apostles to teach us “*to observe all things that I have commanded you*” (Mt 28:20). However, we must keep in mind that in the Matthew 28:20 passage, Jesus told the disciples to teach what was **commanded**, not what was promised specifically to them. The baptism with the Holy Spirit was a promise to be received, not a command to be obeyed. In the context of John 13-17 Jesus made some promises specifically to the apostles that do not include us.

Anything that is stated in the context of John 13-17 would apply to us only when Jesus said it applied to us. We cannot arbitrarily claim promises that were made specifically to the apostles in this personal encounter between Jesus and the apostles. Therefore, the statements of John 13-17 apply to us only when Jesus took the application of what He said outside the immediate discussion He had with the apostles. For example, in the context we are directly addressed when Jesus made such statements as “*If anyone....*” We are the “*anyone*”

when we believe on Jesus. We must keep in mind, however, that when reading these chapters, only those statements that are directly associated with the “anyone” would apply to us today.

If we say that everything in John 13-17 applies to all Christians of all ages, then we have left ourselves in a position of not allowing Jesus to make **specific promises exclusively to His chosen apostles** without having those promises apply to all Christians of all time. But the fact is that Jesus did make special promises to the apostles that do not apply to us today.

This personal conversation between Jesus and His apostles began in the first part of chapter 13. The conversation extends through the end of chapter 17 with the prayer of Jesus. In John 15:26,27 Jesus promised the apostles,

*But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you [apostles] from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me. And you [apostles] also will bear witness, because you have been with Me from the beginning.*

The apostles had been with Jesus from the beginning, not us. Therefore, they would be His **special witnesses** because they had been with Him from the beginning of His ministry. It was

to these apostles that Jesus was directing these very important promises. One of these special promises was the coming of the “Helper,” the Holy Spirit.

In John 14:26 Jesus personally promised the apostles that the “Helper” or “Counselor” would ***“teach you [apostles] all things, and bring to your remembrance of all things that I said to you”*** (Jn 14:26). Jesus said that He would *“pray the Father”* that **they** (the apostles) receive this “Helper” (Jn 14:16).

The Greek word *paracletos* is used here and is translated in different versions either “Helper,” “Counselor,” or “Comforter.” This same word is also used in reference to Jesus in 1 John 2:1 concerning Jesus’ relationship with all Christians. It is unfortunately translated “comforter” in John 14:26 and 15:26 in the *King James Version* and *American Standard Version*. The *New International Version* translates it “Counselor,” which is better. However, this translation still does not convey the complete meaning of the word.

The Greek word *paracletos* refers to one being an “advocate,” “lawyer,” or “helper.” Vine emphasized that the meaning refers to one who is “called to one’s aid .... It was used in a court of justice to denote a legal assistant, counsel for the defense, an advocate.”<sup>7:208</sup> This is the meaning

that we want to take into the context of John 14. Jesus promised that He would not leave the apostles as orphans (Jn 14:18). The counseling, helping advocate, the Holy Spirit, would come and be with them as He had personally been with them throughout His ministry.

The “Spirit of truth” would come from the Father and bear witness of Jesus (Jn 15:26). However, He would not come unless Jesus went away (Jn 16:7). In the context of John 13-17, Jesus was on His way to the throne of David. The Holy Spirit was about to come to the apostles as their helper to begin the gospel dispensation of preaching the gospel to the world.

In this context it is crucial to know the specific things that the Spirit of truth would do when He came upon the apostles. Notice the following three things that the Holy Spirit would do for the apostles when He came to be their helper in the new dispensation to come:

**1. *The apostles would receive all truth.*** Jesus promised that the Spirit “*will teach you all things*” (Jn 14:26) and “*guide you into all truth*” (Jn 16:13). This promise of Jesus to the apostles included the receiving of all truth. No one would need to teach the apostles for the Spirit would **directly** teach them. This should be enough evidence to prove that this

promise is not for us today. We must be taught the Scriptures in order to know the truth. We must study the Bible in order to discover the “all truth” that was revealed directly to the apostles through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit (See 2 Tm 2:15; 3:16; 2 Pt 1:10-12). The apostles were immersed into the will of the Holy Spirit, and thus received all truth which they delivered to the rest of the disciples.

**2. *The apostles would be reminded of Jesus’ teachings.*** The Spirit would **bring to the apostles’ remembrance** of all that Jesus had personally taught them during His personal ministry on earth with them (Jn 14:26). This statement of John 14:26, and the promise therein, is further proof that this context was a personal conversation between Jesus and His apostles. How could the Spirit bring to our remembrance today those things we never learned directly from Jesus in a personal walk and conversation with Him while He was on this earth? The apostles were there. They personally received the teaching of Jesus. It was the work of the Holy Spirit that they not forget what they saw and heard (See 1 Jn 1:1-3). This promise of Jesus was not for us today. It was for the apostles alone. We receive those things of which the apostles personally heard from Jesus only through our study of the inspired record of the New Testament Scriptures.



**3. The apostles would be told the things to come.** Jesus promised, “*He [the Holy Spirit] will tell you things to come*” (Jn 16:13). Things that were to come were revealed to the apostles. Specifically, information concerning the consummation of national Israel was revealed to the apostles (See Mt 24; Mk 9:1). This was revealed in order that they teach the Jewish disciples. They were to warn the Jewish disciples not to become involved in the Jewish insurrection against Rome that culminated in the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70.

Revelation is a book of Jesus’ promise to reveal those things that were to come. In Revelation, John spoke of things that must shortly come to pass in the lives of those to whom he wrote (Rv 1:1). Once again, the emphasis of the message that was given personally by Jesus in John 13-17 was directed specifically to the apostles.

In His personal conversation with His apostles after His resurrection and prior to His ascension, Jesus became more specific concerning the effects of the baptism with the Holy Spirit. Only a **few days** before Pentecost, Jesus promised the apostles, “*For John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now*” (At 1:5). The pronoun “you”

in this verse finds its antecedent in verse 2. The promise of this context, therefore, is made specifically to the **apostles**. Jesus was saying that within a few days from the time He made the promise, the apostles would be baptized with the Holy Spirit. In the Luke 24 context Jesus had made a general promise by stating, “*Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high*” (Lk 24:49).

Though given at different times, the thoughts of Luke 24:49 and Acts 1:8 are similar. Jesus was making a general statement concerning the reception of the promise in Luke 24. However, the promise was made specifically to the apostles in Acts 1, because in Acts 1 Jesus was discussing the baptism with the Holy Spirit that only the apostles would receive and did receive.

Acts 1:8 was a definite promise to the apostles because the antecedent of the “you” in verse 8 is the eleven apostles of verse 2. “*But you [apostles] shall receive power,*” Jesus promised, “*when the Holy Spirit has come upon you*” (At 1:8). It was the apostles who would initially receive this power from the Father. They would receive the first good things of the promise. The apostles would be baptized with the Holy Spirit. This promise was to “all flesh,” but it

would first be fulfilled in the baptism with the Spirit upon the apostles.

The effect of this baptism, therefore, would go to “all flesh” as promised in Joel 2:28. Through the laying on of the apostles’ hands, the promise would go to those who believe. All Christians today are the descendants

of those who originally believed and had hands laid on them by the apostles. Every Christian throughout history, therefore, has benefitted from the miraculous blessing that was bestowed on the early disciples by the laying on of the apostles’ hands.

## Chapter 4

### THE APOSTLES RECEIVE THE PROMISE

Acts 2 is the beginning of the fulfillment of the promise of God concerning the outpouring and baptism with the Holy Spirit. As we study through the letter of Acts, we must remember that all things in reference to the fulfillment of prophecy must be studied in the historical context of the first century. Since the prophecies concerning the future were not fully understood when they were initially made, then we should allow the historical fulfillment of the prophecies to interpret the prophecies themselves. This is especially important in reference to all prophecies that were initially fulfilled in the first century concerning the Holy Spirit.

The unveiling of the prophecies concerning the Holy Spirit took place in the first century. Our commentary of the work of the Holy Spirit in this dispensation, therefore, must be the Spirit’s definition of His work that

was recorded in the New Testament in the first century. Therefore, the New Testament must be our first and final dictionary concerning the fulfillment of the prophecies of the Spirit in this gospel dispensation of the work of the Spirit.

We live in a world today of experiential religion. This is religion that is based on the different experiences of individuals who base their faith on personal emotional experiences. Consequently, there are many experiential religionists today who are emotionally driven by their own enthusiastic spirit, and then they read these emotional experiences into the Spirit’s work in the New Testament. The final authority of their faith is their emotional experiences, not the word of God.

If one is prone to doing this, then it will be difficult to study the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies in

reference to the Holy Spirit as they were fulfilled in the first century. Nevertheless, we must not allow our own experiences of today to distort our objectivity of how the prophecies concerning the Holy Spirit were fulfilled. We must allow the New Testament to explain all things in reference to the fulfillment of prophecies concerning the work of the Holy Spirit. This is particularly important concerning the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives today.

### A. Promise and prophecies are fulfilled.

Immediately before His ascension, Jesus commanded that the apostles tarry in Jerusalem until they were baptized with the Holy Spirit. This exhortation to tarry in Jerusalem was first to all the disciples in Luke 24, **but specifically to all the apostles in Acts 1**. There were, as a result of Jesus' command to tarry in Jerusalem, about 120 disciples who were in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost in A.D. 30. They were waiting for something, though they did not know exactly what to expect.

Acts 2:1-4 is the first case history of the work of the Holy Spirit in reference to the gospel dispensation. It is in this historical record of Luke that the apostles received the promised baptism with the Holy Spirit. Un-

fortunately, it is a common misunderstanding that the approximately 120 individuals of Acts 1:15 also received the baptism with the Holy Spirit in Acts 2:1-4. However, this belief does not harmonize with what the text actually states. Neither does it harmonize with the promises and fulfillment of the blessings that the Spirit brought to the apostles. The following are reasons why the text does not teach that the Holy Spirit came upon all the 120 disciples in Acts 2:1-4 in a baptismal manner:

**1. The antecedent of the plural pronoun in the text of Acts 2:1-4 refers only to the apostles to have been baptized with the Holy Spirit.** In the context of Acts 2:1, the antecedent of the pronoun "they" is the apostles of Acts 1:26. Acts 2:1 states, "*Now when the Day of Pentecost had fully come they [the apostles] were all with one accord in one place.*" It was upon this "they" that the Spirit came in verses 2-4. By referring back to Acts 1:26, one can easily determine the antecedent of the third person plural pronouns of Acts 2:1-4. Acts 1:26 reads, "*And they [the apostles] cast their lots, and the lot fell on Matthias. And he was numbered with the eleven apostles.*" Beginning in 2:1, the pronoun "they" refers back to the apostles of 1:26. By keeping this in mind, it is easily understood that it was the

apostles who were baptized with the Spirit in the context of Acts 2:1-4. They were the ones who initially received the good things of the promise.

**2. *The tongues of fire sat upon the apostles.*** When the Spirit came on the apostles, there appeared to the entire group “*divided tongues as of fire*” which “*sat upon each one of them [the apostles]*” (At 2:3). The apparent reason for this phenomenon was **to identify the true recipients of the baptism with the Spirit among the 120 disciples who were gathered on that occasion.**

The Holy Spirit was not the fire. The text says tongues **as** fire. This is a simile. Whatever signal the Spirit used to identify those whom He directly influenced on that occasion, it had the appearance of fire. This was the Spirit’s “stamp of approval” upon the apostles alone in order that no one be confused as to who was validated and inspired by the baptism with the Spirit.

In Luke 6:13 Jesus “*called His disciples to Him; and from them He chose twelve whom He also named apostles.*” In Acts 2:3 the Holy Spirit in a sense was doing the same thing. He was re-selecting from the group of 120 the Christ-sent apostles who would receive special authority and inspiration by His baptism. These would be the special witnesses of

Jesus. During the event of Acts 2:1-4, the Spirit reaffirmed Jesus’ call of His apostles.

**3. *Only the apostles spoke with tongues.*** Those who spoke in languages in Acts 2 were accused of being drunken with wine (At 2:13). “*They [the apostles] are full of new wine,*” the accusers mocked. The antecedent of the pronoun “they” is the apostles of 1:26.

Eleven apostles were thus speaking. In the next verse, Peter, “*standing up with the eleven, raised his voice and said ...*” (At 2:14). It was the eleven who were accused of being drunk with wine because it was only the apostles who were speaking in tongues. Peter then joined them in explaining what had happened.

**4. *Only Galileans were baptized with the Spirit in Acts 2:1-4.*** All who were baptized with the Holy Spirit in Acts 2 were Galileans (At 2:7). All of the apostles were Galileans (At 1:11). We could rightly assume that not all the 120 disciples of Acts 1:15 were Galileans. In fact, we could possibly assume that most of them were from Jerusalem and Judea. Therefore, we must conclude that only the apostles, who were all Galileans, were the only ones baptized with the Holy Spirit on this day.

**5. *Peter stood up only with the eleven who had been baptized with the Holy Spirit in Acts 2:1-4.*** In Acts

2, only the apostles received power to speak in other languages (tongues) by inspiration of the Holy Spirit. All those who were baptized with the Spirit in Acts 2:1-4 spoke in other languages. Notice that it was the **apostles** who were accused of being drunken with new wine because they were the ones who were speaking in other languages (At 2:13). Peter stood up with these who were accused, the apostles, and preached the first gospel sermon (At 2:14).

The approximate 108 other disciples were not accused of being drunk. The proof that they were not the ones speaking in other languages is in the fact that Peter stood up with the eleven other apostles **who were already speaking** (At 2:14). He did not stand up with all the other disciples. They were not speaking. They were just as amazed as everyone else concerning the events that had just transpired.

## **B. The apostles received power and authority.**

A distinction should be made between the words “power” and “authority” in reference to the work of God. This distinction is often difficult to see in some translations since the Greek word *dunamis* (power) is sometimes translated with the English word “authority.” Nevertheless, in

reference to the work of God, the Greek word *dunamis* is used to refer to **the working or manifestation of the environment of Deity into the physical world in which we live**. For example, the Hebrew writer stated that Sarah was given power to conceive (Hb 11:11). The reference is to power from God giving her the **ability** to conceive since she was past the age for women to conceive.

In reference to the work of the apostles, Luke recorded, “*And with great power the apostles gave witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus*” (At 4:33). Reference here is again to the miraculous testimony of the Lord. This is what Jesus had promised to the apostles. “*But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you*” (At 1:8). Power (*dunamis*), therefore, refers to the direct and miraculous manifestation of God in the affairs of this physical world. The apostles were given authority to unleash this power upon the physical world.

The Greek word that is translated **authority** (*exousia*) refers to “privilege.” The apostles were given the authority (the privilege) to reveal truth (Jn 14:26; 16:13). They were given authority to reveal the supernatural realm of God in order to change the environment of man. But they were also given the authority to impart to others the authority to unleash,

through the miraculous gifts, the supernatural.

This they gave to other Christians by the laying on of their hands (At 8:18). The word *dunamis* is used to refer to this power in both Luke 24:49 and Acts 1:8. One must see, however, that **authority refers to the individual** who has been given the privilege to release the power of God in the affairs of the material world. **Power refers to what caused the change in the physical world. Authority refers to the one who unleashed the power.**

It is true that previous to the baptism in the Holy Spirit in Acts 2, the apostles and other believers had the authority to unleash the power of God. They could also cast out demons. The fact that they had this power is proved by what they did when Jesus sent out the seventy in Luke 10. Nevertheless, Acts 2 was special. It was special in that this was a unique day and a unique beginning. It was unique because of the promise of Jesus that the Holy Spirit would bear witness of Him in Acts 2 (See Jn 15:26).

There are two important points that manifest the unique power and authority that was invested in the apostles on the great day of Pentecost as recorded in Acts 2:

**1. The apostles received authority to manifest power by the working**

**of unique miracles.** It was on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2 that “*many wonders and signs were done through the apostles*” (At 2:43). During the time immediately before His ascension, Jesus had promised the apostles this privilege to command the supernatural (Lk 24:49; At 1:8). On and after the day of Pentecost, the apostles manifested this authority by working many miracles.

2 Corinthians 12:12 also indicates that the apostles were invested with special authority over the supernatural, which authority validated their apostleship. Paul wrote, “*Truly the signs of an apostle were accomplished among you.*” The word “signs” is **plural**, and thus signifies that the apostles had special authority in the area of working special miracles. Others, as Philip, could work miracles. However, there was something unique about the miraculous authority of the apostles that other Christians did not possess. For example, the apostles could raise the dead (At 9:36-41). God worked special miracles through the apostle Paul in Ephesus (At 19:11,12). Another sign of a Christ-sent apostle was the following authority:

**2. The apostles received authority to impart gifts that were miraculously distributed for the edification of the early disciples.** The apostles at some time in their lifetime, and be-

fore Acts 8, received the authority to impart miraculous gifts to others. Acts 8:18 teaches that the apostles had this authority.

Philip had preached in Samaria and worked many miracles (At 8:6). However, Philip could not impart the ability to work miracles to those who had believed and obeyed the gospel in Samaria. It was the work of the Christ-sent apostles to impart the authority to command the supernatural. “Now when the apostles who were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent [the apostles] Peter and John to them” (At 8:14).

It was the work of the Christ-sent apostles to impart the gifts to people of their choice in order to build up the early church. However, it was the choice of the Spirit as to which gifts were to be distributed (1 Co 12:4-11) Peter and John, therefore, were sent to Samaria in order to impart the miraculous gifts to the new disciples through the laying on of their hands.

Simon noticed a very important event in the context of Acts 8. “Now when Simon saw *that through the laying on of the apostles’ hands the Holy Spirit was given*, he offered them money” (At 8:18). Though misguided, Simon did recognize that it was through the authority of Peter and John, not Philip, that the people **received the Holy Spirit**. Paul was also

given such authority. He said that one reason why he wanted to go to Rome was that “*I may impart to you some spiritual gift*” (Rm 1:11). He had also imparted a miraculous gift to Timothy: “*Therefore, I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands*” (2 Tm 1:6).

We must not confuse this statement in 2 Timothy 1:6 with 1 Timothy 4:14 where Paul wrote, “*Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery.*” In 2 Timothy 1:6 the preposition is *dia* in the genitive case. It is translated “by” or “through.” **Timothy received a miraculous gift through the laying on of Paul’s hands.**

However, in 1 Timothy 4:14 the preposition is *meta* in the genitive case, which is translated “with” or “to the accompaniment of.” **The correct interpretation is that at the same time the elders commissioned Timothy to the work of an evangelist, Paul also laid hands on him in order that he receive a miraculous gift of the Holy Spirit.** The elders commissioned him by the laying on of their hands as the church laid hands on Paul and Barnabas in Acts 13:1-3. However, Timothy received a miraculous gift through the laying on of Paul’s hands.

So the question is, when did the apostles receive the authority to impart to others the privilege of unleashing divine miraculous power into this physical world? They did not have this authority before Pentecost in Acts 2. They had the authority **after** Acts 2. The conclusion, therefore, is that they received this authority as a result of the baptism with the Holy Spirit in Acts 2.

The other 108 disciples who were present in Acts 2 did not receive this authority, and thus, none of the 108 disciples were sent out by the apostles to lay hands on others that they might receive the miraculous gifts. They did not receive the authority to work the “*signs of an apostle*” (2 Co 12:12). They could not impart the miraculous gifts. Therefore, they did not receive the baptism with the Holy Spirit as did the apostles.

It must be concluded, therefore, that the early Christians received the fulfillment of the promise of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit of Joel 2 in an **indirect manner**. The apostles received the **direct** outpouring of the Spirit in Acts 2 in a baptismal manner. They imparted the miraculous gifts to others by the laying on of their hands. The early Christians partook of the promise of the Holy Spirit in Joel 2 by the laying on of the apostles’ hands.

### C. The Spirit was poured out on Cornelius and his household.

The outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the household of Cornelius in Acts 10 must not be confused with the baptism of the Holy Spirit on the apostles in Acts 2. Cornelius and his family did not receive the authority to do the “signs of an apostle.” Neither did they receive the authority to impart miraculous gifts to others. Also, they were not miraculously inspired to receive the “truth of the gospel.” The miraculous outpouring of the Spirit on the household of Cornelius was for a special reason that happened almost ten years after the baptism with the Holy Spirit in A.D. 30 in Jerusalem.

**1. There is a difference between the power and baptism with the Holy Spirit.** It is crucial to understand that there is a difference between the miraculous power of the Holy Spirit and the **event** of the baptism with the Holy Spirit. There is a clear distinction in the New Testament between the **manner** by which the Spirit was poured out and the empowering authority that the Spirit gave to the ones on whom He was poured.

The term “baptism” is used as a metaphor and simply explains the **manner** by which the Spirit came upon those who were baptized with



the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit was poured out on the household of Cornelius in **the same manner as the apostles**. However, this household did not receive the same authority as the apostles to unleash the supernatural in order to work miracles.

Peter makes it clear that the outpouring in Acts 10 was like the “baptism with the Holy Spirit” (At 11:16). He also explained that “*God gave them the same gift as He gave us [the apostles] when we believed on the Lord Jesus Christ*” (At 11:17).

The Greek word *isos* (“same” or “equal”) is correctly translated “same.” Reference is to that which is equal in quality, rank or measure. The outpouring on Cornelius was the same gift as that which was poured out on the apostles in Acts 2. It was a miraculous event of the Holy Spirit. The **manner** by which the household of Cornelius and the apostles received the Holy Spirit was the same, though the authority that came with the outpouring was different. The immediate **result** of the outpouring was the same. Both the household of Cornelius and the apostles spoke in languages. However, **the authority that was given was different**. We must conclude that the blessings of the baptism of the Holy Spirit went beyond the outpouring of the Spirit.

This is true because we have no record of the household of Cornelius

having the authority to impart miraculous gifts to other individuals. Nor did the household of Cornelius have the authority to work the “signs of an apostle.” Only the apostles could impart miraculous gifts and work the signs of an apostle (At 8:18; 2 Co 12:12). However, it was the same gift in that it was the same Holy Spirit who came upon them in an outpouring which was identified by their speaking in languages. Both the apostles and Cornelius received the same outpouring. However, the result of the apostles being baptized with the Spirit went far beyond the outpouring of the Spirit on the household of Cornelius.

We must understand that the household of Cornelius did not receive an “equal” result of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit as that which the apostles received in Acts 2. The coming of the Spirit on Cornelius was only an “outpouring.” In witnessing this event, Peter was reminded of the outpouring with the Holy Spirit that he and the other apostles had experienced about ten years before (At 11:16).

Peter and the apostles personally experienced an outpouring of the Holy Spirit in Acts 2. Therefore, they would be credible witnesses to explain that the outpouring of the Spirit on the household of Cornelius was a similar experience. But we must remember that the baptism with the

Holy Spirit was specifically promised to the apostles. **The full authority of that baptism was promised by Jesus to the apostles, and thus only the apostles received all the promises that came with the baptism of the Holy Spirit.**

The apostles received all the authority that came with the baptism with the Spirit. The case of Cornelius was a “like gift.” It was like only in the **manner** by which the Spirit came upon Cornelius and his household. There was no authority invested in Cornelius and his household as a result of the outpouring of the Spirit in their case. They did speak in languages. Nevertheless, no record is given concerning their being able to work the signs of an apostle. We would justly conclude by saying again that the outpouring with the Holy Spirit upon the household of Cornelius was unique and for a different purpose than the outpouring on the apostles ten years before. Nothing like it had happened since Pentecost and nothing has happened like it since Acts 10.

**2. The outpouring of the Spirit on the household of Cornelius did not result in the revelation of the gospel, as it did with the apostles.** When we compare the result of the two outpourings, there is a significant difference between the result of the baptism with the Spirit on the apostles

and the outpouring on the household of Cornelius. In John 16:13 Jesus made a specific promise to the original apostles. Other than Paul and the New Testament prophets, the revelation of the following statement applies to no one else (See Ep 3:1-7). He promised, *“When He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all the truth.”*

When Jesus used the word “truth” in this statement, He was not referring to general truth that would be revealed. The word must be understood with the explanation that Paul gave when he encouraged the Galatian disciples with the following statement: *“So that the truth of the gospel might continue with you”* (Gl 2:5). At one time, Peter and some other Jewish disciples in Antioch, momentarily faltered in behaving according to the truth of the gospel. So when Paul later referred to this situation, he wrote the following words: *“But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel ...”* (Gl 2:14).

The early Christians went forth and preached **“the truth** of the gospel” that was first revealed to the apostles on the day of Pentecost in A.D. 30. Paul later wrote of this “truth” to the Colossian disciples: *“... for the hope that is laid up for you in heaven, of which you heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel”*

(Cl 1:5). It was this truth of the gospel that was revealed to the apostles, and then by word of mouth this truth of the gospel was delivered to others.

We must consider this in view of the fact that when Jesus was crucified, the apostles had no idea that His hanging and dying on a cross was the eternal redemptive plan of God. They did not connect the dots, even when Jesus was raised from the dead. In fact, on one occasion after these events, Peter simply said to some of the other apostles, *“I am going fishing”* (Jn 21:3).

Since Peter made this statement in Galilee about seventy-five kilometers north of Jerusalem, the apostles had walked all the way back home, not knowing that the cross and resurrection were the events on earth that were to reveal the truth of the gospel (See 1 Co 15:1-4). Even when Jesus walked with them after His resurrection, and connected all the dots between the prophecies and His fulfillment, they still could not fully understand that His mission into the world was beyond the Jewish theology of a Messiah and King on earth (See Lk 24:47). In fact, at the time of the ascension, *“They asked Him, ‘Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom of Israel?’”* (At 1:6). Their thinking still could not get beyond Jesus being an earthly Messiah and King. Until the baptism of the Holy Spirit, their

thinking was still earthly.

It was not until the Spirit of truth was poured out on them on the day of Pentecost that all the dots were connected. In this baptism, the Holy Spirit revealed to them the truth of the gospel. And from the apostles, this truth of the gospel went forth to all nations as others were taught by the apostles that Jesus was not simply the Messiah, but also the Savior of the world (See Mt 28:19,20; At 2:42). But we must keep in mind that it was not until the day of Pentecost in A.D. 30 that the apostles were finally endowed with all knowledge concerning the truth of the gospel.

Therefore, when the Spirit was poured out on the household of Cornelius, **it was not for the purpose of revealing the truth of the gospel.** On the contrary, Peter went to the house of Cornelius in order, as he told Cornelius, to *“tell you words by which you and all your house will be saved”* (At 11:14). Peter preached the word of the truth of the gospel to the household of Cornelius. This was the means by which they understood the gospel. The Holy Spirit had revealed none of the gospel to them.

Cornelius and his household were as the apostles after the resurrection of Jesus. They knew of the crucifixion, and had heard of the resurrection. However, as the apostles, they too had not connected all the

dots. It took Peter to speak to them words by which they would be saved in order to understand the truth of the gospel. It was the Holy Spirit working through Peter that the truth of the gospel was revealed to Cornelius and his household. This was not the work of the Holy Spirit when He was poured out on the household of Cornelius.

**3. The purpose for the outpouring of the Spirit on the household of Cornelius was a divine signal to the Jews that the Gentiles were to be accepted into the kingdom of God.** The Gentiles also had a right to the blessings of the gospel. After the outpouring, it was Peter who proclaimed, *“In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality. But in every nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him”* (At 10:34,35).

The problem that had developed among the Jewish Christians was that they initially placed little emphasis on preaching the gospel to the Gentiles. They had not yet fully understood that the “all nations” of the great commission meant more than the Jews only. They had not yet understood the mission that the gospel must go to every ethnic group of the world.

The Jewish Christians had taken the gospel throughout the world to the synagogues of the Jews of every nation. However, it seems that they had

not concentrated on taking the gospel specifically to Gentiles. What God did through the case of Cornelius, was a signal to the Jews that they must get serious about getting the gospel to the Gentiles.

The significance of the prophecy of Isaiah 28:11,12 cannot be overemphasized in the context of the household of Cornelius speaking in languages after the Spirit was poured out upon them. Paul quoted Isaiah’s prophecy in 1 Corinthians 14:21 in reference to the miraculous speaking in languages being the signal of God that He was now working with those who responded to the gospel of Jesus Christ. *“Therefore,”* Paul wrote, *“languages are for a sign [from God], not to those who believe, but for unbelievers”* (1 Co 14:22). The speaking in languages by the apostles on the day of Pentecost was God’s signal to all unbelieving Jews at the time that God was now working through those who believed and obeyed the gospel of His Son.

In the case of Cornelius, the speaking in languages served a similar purpose. For those Jews who had obeyed the gospel, the miraculous speaking in languages by the household of Cornelius was God’s signal to them that He sought to also work among the Gentiles. Therefore, they must preach the gospel to all nations.

When Peter returned to Jerusa-

lem after visiting Cornelius, “*those [believing Jews] of the circumcision contended with him*” for going into the house of a **Gentile** (At 11:2). They accused Peter of not being a good Jew because he went into and ate with Gentiles, which thing was contrary to Jewish custom (At 11:3). However, when “*Peter explained it to them in order from the beginning*” (At 11:4), “*they glorified God, saying, ‘Then God has also granted to the Gentiles repentance to life’*” (At 11:18).

These Jewish Christians got the point. The outpouring on the household of Cornelius had accomplished its purpose. It had signaled to all believing Jews that God had also accepted the Gentiles into the new Israel of God.

**4. The outpouring on the household of Cornelius had not happened since the Pentecost of A.D. 30.** Acts 11:18 is very important here. It is a statement made by the Jewish brethren concerning the **uniqueness** of the outpouring on the household of Cornelius. After Peter’s explanation of what took place, the Jewish brethren recognized that God had granted repentance to life to the Gentiles. This statement explains both the **purpose** of the outpouring, as well as its **uniqueness**.

The purpose of the outpouring was to prove to the Jewish Christians that the Gentiles as a whole were ac-

cepted into God’s grace. Evidently, they had not completely understood this mission that was inaugurated at Pentecost of A.D. 30, which mission was earlier given by Jesus in Matthew 28:18-20. This mission was also assumed in the Joel 2:28 prophecy. The outpouring of the Spirit upon the household of Cornelius, therefore, signified a **divine approval** that the Jewish Christians should reach out to the Gentiles.

**The fact that the Jewish Christians recognized this event as different from every other Christian experience since Pentecost is evidence that this type of event had never happened since the Pentecost of A.D. 30.** This was only the second time that something as this had happened since the beginning of the church about ten years before.

The outpouring happened with Cornelius, therefore, for a special purpose. After this purpose was accomplished, **then there was no need for God to miraculously approve again the Gentiles’ acceptance through an outpouring of the Holy Spirit.** The Holy Spirit had not been poured out since the Pentecost of A.D. 30. Until the time that the Spirit was poured out on the household of Cornelius, the disciples had not experienced such for about ten years. This is clearly understood in Peter’s statement that the event reminded him of the Pentecost

outpouring about ten years before. And since the event of Acts 10, Jesus has not given the Holy Spirit in such a manner even to this day.

There were many cases of baptism in water for the remission of sins in the New Testament from Pentecost to the event surrounding Cornelius' household. However, we have only the records of Acts 2 and Acts 10 of the outpouring with the Holy Spirit in the New Testament. This clearly indicates that Acts 2 and Acts 10 were unique events. They were events that have never been repeated.

This of course brings up the point as to what is happening among people today who experience what they claim to be a "baptism with the Holy Spirit." Since Acts 2 and 10 were unique events, then there must be another explanation for what people experience today. They are certainly not experiencing a baptism with the Spirit. The fact is that they are experiencing an emotional outburst wherein they lose sensory control of themselves. Since this emotional hysteria happens during some religious service, it is claimed that such is a baptism with the Spirit. But it is not. What is actually happening is that in a state of emotional hysteria some have simply collapsed in an assembly of those who have little understanding of the Bible on these matters. (See 2 Th 2:10-12; download Book 44: *Experiential Re-*

*ligion vs Word-Based Faith*, Biblical Research Library at the website on the cover page.)

**5. *The Gentiles received the gift of the Holy Spirit.*** The purpose for the outpouring of the Spirit on the household of Cornelius was to convince the Jewish Christians that they must focus on the Gentiles in their evangelistic efforts. However, the divine initiative of the Holy Spirit to be poured out on the Gentiles was not only for the purpose of reaffirming their entrance into the kingdom, but also to stir the Jews to go evangelistically into the Gentile world.

The apostles already knew that the gospel was for every ethnic group throughout the world (Mt 28:19,20). Though they may have neglected this ministry since they were still ministering primarily in Jewish Palestine, they knew that the Gentiles must receive the gospel. However, in the case of Cornelius, it was God's purpose through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit to convince the early Jewish Christians in Jerusalem that the gifts of the Spirit must also go to the Gentiles. They too must have hands laid on them in order that they receive the miraculous gifts of the Spirit.

Acts 10:45 is a statement of Luke about the reaction of the Jewish Christians who went with Peter to Cornelius. They were astonished "*because the gift of the Holy Spirit has*

been poured out on the Gentiles also.” Their astonishment is evidence of the fact that hands had not been laid on the Gentiles to this point of time in order that the Gentiles receive the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Though Gentiles had been baptized for remission of sins (See At 2:10, “proselytes” were Gentiles by birth), evidently they had not yet been given the miraculous gifts of the Spirit. This may have been the result of the prejudice of the Jewish-oriented disciples in Jerusalem. Or, it may have simply been the lack of an opportunity to do such since the primary work of the apostles was still among the Jews in Jerusalem and Judea. Whatever the case, Luke’s record in Acts 10:45 is evidence of the fact that God accomplished the purpose of getting the gift of the Holy Spirit to the Gentiles through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the household of Cornelius.

**6. The outpouring of the Holy Spirit did not mean more than what God intended.** The outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the household of Cornelius did not do what some have claimed it did for Cornelius and his household. Contrary to the teaching of those who believe that one can be baptized in the Holy Spirit today, the outpouring of the Spirit on Cornelius and his household **did not** do the following:

**a. The outpouring did not**

**make Cornelius and his household devout.** Cornelius was already “a devout man and one who feared God with all his household” (At 10:2). The experience of the outpouring was not given in order to reveal that he was already accepted as a son of God. He was a devout person religiously, but his religiosity did not save him. He had to hear and obey the gospel.

**b. The outpouring did not cleanse their hearts.** When Peter reported these events in Jerusalem several years later at a meeting of Judean church leaders, he stated that God “made no distinction between us [Jews] and them [Gentiles], purifying their hearts by faith” (At 15:9).

In the Greek text of this statement, the article is present before the word “faith.” Therefore, the translation should read that God purified “their hearts by *the* faith.” It was **their faith and obedience to the truth of the gospel** that cleansed their hearts. **This is the word of faith in the truth of the gospel by which we are sanctified** (Jn 17:17; Jd 3). Peter wrote, “You have purified your souls in obeying *the truth*” of the gospel (1 Pt 1:22).

Peter had spoken to the household of Cornelius the message of the gospel (At 11:14; Js 1:21). The household of Cornelius was cleansed by **their obedience to the word** that instructed them to obey the gospel. In

this obedience, their sins were washed away by the gospel of the blood of Jesus (At 22:16). Therefore, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit was not meant to be a salvational experience in the lives of either Cornelius or his household.

**c. The outpouring did not produce faith in their hearts.** It is the preached truth of the gospel that produces faith in Jesus (Rm 10:17). This preached gospel produced faith in the hearts of Cornelius and his house. In rehearsing this event, Peter stated that by his mouth the Gentiles heard “*the word of the gospel and believed*” (At 15:7). Therefore, it was through Peter that Cornelius heard the gospel and believed in Jesus. After Cornelius heard the gospel, then he and his household were immersed for the remission of their sins (At 2:38).

**d. The outpouring did not save them.** The angel that told Cornelius to send for Peter to come and preach to him, also stated that Peter would be the one “*who will tell you words by which you and all your household will be saved*” (At 11:14). However, the Spirit came upon Cornelius and his household when Peter first began to speak. Peter recalled for the brethren in Jerusalem, “*And as I began to speak, the Holy*

*Spirit fell upon them, as upon us at the beginning*” (At 11:15). Therefore, they were not saved by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit **because Peter had not yet spoken to them words by which they could be saved.**

In order to be saved, Cornelius and his household had to obey the gospel (2 Th 1:7-9). One obeys the gospel through immersion in water for the remission of sins (At 2:38; 22:16). When Peter had finished speaking to them “words by which they would be saved,” then they obeyed the gospel by immersion for the remission of their sins. It was after the Spirit had come upon them, that Peter “*commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord*” (At 10:48).

The prophecy of the promise of the Holy Spirit that was made in Joel 2 was initially fulfilled in Acts 2. The apostles were baptized with the Holy Spirit. They received the authority to work the supernatural in the natural environment of this world. They also received the authority to entrust to others the authority to open the realm of the supernatural in order to minister to the church with the miraculous gifts. In this way, the early church was established in the absence of the written word of God.



## Chapter 5

# FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT

Being filled with the Holy Spirit refers to the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of God's people. This filling can either be described as miraculous or non-miraculous, depending on the historical context in which the phrase is used. It is a biblical teaching that when one fills his life with the gospel of Jesus Christ, he is filled with the Spirit. When one allows his or her life to be directed by the gospel that came to us through the work of the Spirit in inspiration, then he or she is filled with the Spirit.

One of the first principles of Bible study to follow when considering this subject is to allow the Bible to interpret itself. When a phrase as "filled with the Spirit" is used, then it is necessary that the Bible interpreter consult all contexts wherein the phrase is used. Once each context has been studied, then the interpreter can form his or her definitions as to what is meant by the phrase, "filled with the Spirit."

In order to understand what it means to be "filled with the Holy Spirit," we must consult two sources. First, the phrase "filled with the Spirit" was originally used in the Old Testament. Because the New Testament was written on the foundation

of Old Testament revelation, then the biblical interpreter must consult the Old Testament in defining New Testament concepts surrounding incidents where people were filled with the Spirit.

From the context of how the phrase "filled with the Spirit" was used in the Old Testament, we interpret the New Testament. The first Christians were Jews. The first inspired teachings and writings of the New Testament were directed primarily to Jewish Christians. Therefore, in order to understand the concept, "filled with the Spirit," we must understand how the phrase was first understood by the Jews of the Old Testament.

Second, a term must first be defined by the context in which it is actually used. In other words, we must limit ourselves to understand the filling with the Spirit to those who first received the Scriptures. How the first readers of the Scriptures understood the filling with the Spirit is how we must understand it today. We cannot interpret biblical words and concepts by modern-day emotional experiences. The Bible must be allowed to speak for itself. It must be allowed to define its own terms. This is very

important in reference to the subject of this chapter.

We must also note that a **metonymy** is used in the phrase, “filled with the Spirit.” In other words, the Spirit is the cause. The effect is either miraculous activity or a changed and Spirit-guided life by the gospel. Thus the Holy Spirit (the cause) is used instead of the effects of the gospel that He revealed. **When one was filled with the Spirit in the first century, emphasis was on what that person did as a result of the Spirit’s work through him.** Emphasis would not be on the person of the Spirit, but on the results of the work of the Spirit through the gospel.

In order to understand this concept, we must examine the contexts of scriptures wherein people were filled with the Spirit. In the Old Testament, the filling of the Spirit generally referred to things other than the gospel. For example, when the Old Testament prophets were filled with the Spirit, miraculous inspiration occurred in their lives. As previously stated, Bezaleel was filled with the Spirit (Ex 31:3). The result of this filling was that **he was miraculously given knowledge, wisdom and understanding by the Spirit in order to construct the tabernacle.** Micah, as well as all the Old Testament prophets, were also full of the Spirit, and thus miraculously spoke the word

of God (Mc 3:8).

When we come to the New Testament, therefore, we must first understand the filling of the Spirit through the understanding of the Jews to whom Jesus and John came. The following points emphasize the New Testament usage of being filled with the Spirit in reference to the coming of the Holy Spirit on the apostles and early Christians:

#### A. Zacharias was filled with the Holy Spirit.

Luke 1:67 refers to the filling of the Holy Spirit before the Spirit was poured out on the day of Pentecost: *“Now his [John’s] father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Spirit, and prophesied.”* Zacharias was the father of John the Baptist. He lived **before** Acts 2. It is significant to note that his filling with the Spirit **was not related to a baptism.** He was a man of God who spoke forth God’s word **by the miraculous inspiration of the Holy Spirit.** In this context, therefore, being filled with the Holy Spirit meant miraculous inspiration by the Spirit to speak the word of God.

It is significant to note that when Zacharias and others were filled with the Spirit, **they were filled with a message of God that they spoke.**

The message came to them miraculously. The message originated

from God by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, two important concepts must be understood in reference to the filling of the Spirit. First, **how** the truth originated places emphasis on inspiration by the Spirit (See 2 Tm 3:16,17). Second, the **content** of what was revealed before Acts 2 was the word of God (2 Pt 1:20,21).

This introduces us to how one is filled with the Spirit today. Though the miraculous inspirational filling has passed away, the efforts of perspiration through serious study and obedience of the gospel continues on. One is filled with the Spirit when he or she allows the gospel to permeate his or her life. One who is truly living the gospel of Jesus Christ is truly filled with the Spirit, though the knowledge of the gospel has come through the written New Testament.

### **B. Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.**

Keeping in mind the filling of the Spirit before the outpouring of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2, Luke stated, *“And it happened, when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, that the babe leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was **filled with the Holy Spirit**”* (Lk 1:41). As a result of this filling, by inspiration of the Spirit, Elizabeth blessed Mary (Lk 1:42). It is significant to note that

Elizabeth also lived before Acts 2 and her filling with the Spirit was not related to any baptism. Both Zacharias and Elizabeth lived under the Old Testament law. When the Spirit filled them, they both miraculously received and spoke truth as a result of the Spirit’s work in and through them.

### **C. John was filled with the Holy Spirit.**

Luke 1:15 states that John the Baptist was *“**filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother’s womb.**”* In conjunction with Luke 1:41 in the same context, we would interpret this passage to mean that the Holy Spirit had a close relationship with John from the time of his birth. Beyond this we do not fully understand what is meant by the following statement of Luke 1:41:

*Now it came to pass when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb. **And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.***

The preceding historical statement would at least mean that the Spirit was with John from the time of his birth. Since he was a chosen messenger to prepare the way for the Messiah, we must assume that he had a special relationship with God from His birth to his death. During his ministry, John

spoke the word of God by inspiration of the Spirit. He was the voice of one crying in the wilderness to prepare the way for the Lord. The totality of his life, therefore, was under the direction of the Holy Spirit.

#### **D. Jesus was filled with the Holy Spirit.**

Luke 4:1 reads, “*Then Jesus, being filled with the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness.*” The clear implication of this passage is the miraculous guidance of Jesus by the Spirit. The Spirit miraculously guided Him into the wilderness. While in His incarnate state on earth, Jesus enjoyed a miraculous relationship with the Godhead through the Holy Spirit. After the temptation of Jesus, He “*returned in the power of the Spirit*” from the wilderness (Lk 4:14). It was because of this Spirit-given power that Jesus worked miracles.

When the Son of God came in the form of man, He gave up an equality with God. He emptied Himself, and took on Himself the incarnate flesh of man (Ph 2:5-8). We do not know to what extent He lowered Himself when He became as man. Luke 4:14 simply states that He went forth after the forty days of temptation in the power of the Spirit. We would assume from this statement that Jesus

had emptied Himself through incarnation to the extent that it was necessary for the Spirit to empower Him with the power of the Godhead. However, these are simply speculations about which we can only imagine and carry on discussions.

#### **E. The apostles were filled with the Holy Spirit.**

Acts 2:1-4 states that when the Holy Spirit came upon the apostles in Acts 2:1-4, “*they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.*” This case defines the result of being filled with the Spirit. The apostles not only miraculously spoke in other languages, they also spoke the revealed word of the gospel by inspiration.

We must again note that in this case also, the work of the Spirit was emphasized, not the person of the Spirit. The Spirit was the cause, but the apostles’ speaking in languages was the result. The result of the coming of the Spirit on the apostles initiated their ministry of preaching all truth of the gospel that was delivered to them. Their being filled with the Spirit was both instantaneous and miraculous.

#### **F. Peter was filled with the Holy Spirit.**

Acts 4:8 states that Peter was filled with the Spirit. When he stood before the Jewish religious leaders, Luke recorded of the incident, “*Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them ....*” Jesus promised the apostles that when they were brought before synagogue assemblies, rulers and authorities, they must “*not worry how or what you [apostles] should answer, or what you should say. For the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say*” (Lk 12:11,12; see Mk 13:11).

Acts 4:8 is an example of this promise being fulfilled in the life of Peter. Peter was filled with the Holy Spirit in the sense that the Spirit inspired him concerning what he should say. In Luke 12:11,12, Jesus explained what the “filling of the Spirit” meant. In this case, reference was directly to miraculous inspiration of the apostles concerning what they must say when standing before authorities who would stop their work of preaching the gospel. They were filled with the truth of God concerning what they must say when put on trial.

Peter was baptized in the Holy Spirit in Acts 2:1-4. However, he was neither baptized in the Holy Spirit nor water in order to be filled with the Spirit in the Acts 4 situation. The Holy Spirit **directly** guided what he was to say to the Jewish religious leaders on that particular occasion.

## G. Many of the disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit.

Acts 4:31 and 13:52 state that some disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit after two special events.

**1. Filled with the Spirit and boldness to speak:** After Peter and John were released from prison in Acts 4, they went to a house where they prayed with other disciples. After the prayer, “*they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness*” (At 4:31).

It is significant to note on this particular occasion that the disciples prayed in wonder as to why the nations raged concerning their stand for the gospel. What they said in the prayer extends from verses 24 to 30. Some have misunderstood this prayer by saying that they “prayed in the Spirit” because they were filled with the Spirit. But this is not correct. The text actually states that after they reached out to God in prayer, they were then filled with the Spirit:

*Now when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together. Then they were all filled with the Holy Spirit. And they spoke the word of God with boldness* (At 4:32).

The order of the occurring events was as follows: (1) they prayed, (2) they were then filled with the Spirit, (3) then they went forth and preached the word of the gospel with boldness. Therefore, they were not filled with the Spirit in order to pray. They were filled in order to go forth and preach the gospel with boldness. The filling of the Spirit was for the purpose of empowering them to continue preaching of the gospel in an environment of great hostility towards the gospel.

This speaking forth of the word should be understood in the context of Zacharias, Peter and others who preached and taught the word of the Lord by inspiration. In reference to all the disciples after Acts 2, the filling of the Spirit resulted in their being blessed with boldness to preach the gospel that had already been revealed. There was no new truth revealed through this filling. In the context of Acts 4, they simply quoted Psalm 2:1,2.

Here again a metonymy is used in reference to the work of the Holy Spirit. The emphasis was not on the Holy Spirit, but on the result of the Spirit's work in the lives of these early Christians. In the text, the Holy Spirit was mentioned for the effect that resulted from His filling. **The Holy Spirit, therefore, was the cause.** The effect was a miraculous endowment of boldness in order that they continue

the preaching of the gospel. Paul asked for the same blessing of boldness through prayer when he was in prison in Rome (Ep 6:19). The disciples received boldness from the Spirit when requested in prayer. The cause (the Spirit) is mentioned instead of the effect, for the effect was boldness to preach the gospel.

**2. Filled with joy and the Holy Spirit:** Acts 13:52 states, "*And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.*" This passage may be a case where both the miraculous and non-miraculous indwelling of the Spirit was manifested in the lives of the early disciples. In the miraculous context of the Spirit-inspired prophets in the early church, the prophets themselves were filled with the word of God by the inspiration of the Spirit. The church as a whole was being filled with the word of God through the teaching ministries of the apostles and New Testament prophets. In this sense, therefore, there was both a direct and indirect filling of the Spirit.

On the other hand, Acts 13:52 does not say that each individual was filled with either joy or the Spirit. Emphasis may be on the disciples as a **group**. As a group they were filled with joy, though some of them had certainly not caught the spirit of joy. However, as a group they were joyous. The same would be true concerning their possession of the miraculous

gifts. The disciples were the group of “**those who believe**” (the church) of Mark 16:15-18. This group possessed the miraculous gifts, though certainly not every individual of the group had received the laying on of the apostles’ hands in order to receive a miraculous gift.

In the historical context of the miraculous gifts, we would correctly conclude that those disciples who received the miraculous gift of prophecy received the word of God through the inspiration of the Spirit. They were thus filled with the Spirit. Those disciples who did not have the gift of prophecy were being filled with the word of God by earnestly listening to the prophets. They were thus filled with the Spirit in an indirect manner.

## H. Stephen was filled with the Holy Spirit.

Acts 6:5 mentions that Stephen was one of the original seven who were all “full of the Holy Spirit.” Acts 6:8 states that Stephen was “*full of faith and power.*” As a result of this “filling,” he was able to do “*great wonders and signs among the people.*” Those who opposed him “*were not able to resist the wisdom and the Spirit by which he spoke*” (At 6:10). In Acts 7:55,56 Luke recorded, “*But he, being full of the Holy Spirit,*

*gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God.*” The result of this filling was that he gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God and Jesus. Therefore, Stephen’s filling with the Holy Spirit meant that he spoke the word of God by inspiration, worked miracles, and saw a vision. Everything surrounding his filling of the Spirit was miraculous.

## I. Paul was filled with the Holy Spirit.

In Acts 9:17 Luke recorded what Ananias said to Paul when he first approached him after Paul’s three days of blindness. Ananias said, “*Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you came, has sent me that you may receive your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.*”

Ananias was sent to Paul in order that Paul receive two things. First, Paul was to receive his sight. Second, he was to be filled with the Holy Spirit. As a result of his filling with the Holy Spirit, he immediately “*preached [the gospel of] the Christ in the synagogues, that He is the Son of God*” (At 9:20). By inspiration of the Holy Spirit, therefore, he received and spoke the word of the gospel.

Paul later explained to the Ephesians what he received when he was

filled with the Holy Spirit on this occasion. He explained, "... by revelation He made known to me the mystery, as I wrote before in few words" (Ep 3:3). Paul received his understanding of the event of Jesus' death and resurrection directly from the Holy Spirit, as the apostles did when the Spirit came upon them at the beginning (At 2:1-4).

The preaching of Paul after the occasion when Ananias came to him in Damascus is similar to his statement in the context of miraculous gifts in 1 Corinthians 12. He wrote, "*No one can say that Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit*" (1 Co 12:3).

What Paul was doing immediately after his baptism in Damascus was the result of what he was discussing in the context of 1 Corinthians 12. In other words, after his baptism in Acts 9:20, **it was by inspiration of the Spirit that he confessed Jesus as Lord.** Being filled with the Holy Spirit in the 1 Corinthians 12 context meant that one was moved by the Spirit to speak the truth of the gospel by inspiration. This is precisely what Paul affirmed when he wrote to the Galatians.

*But I make known to you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, **but it came through the***

*revelation of Jesus Christ* (Gal 1:11,12).

Being filled with the Spirit while he was in Damascus not only referred to the miraculous reception of the truth of the gospel message, but also to the miraculous proclamation of this truth. Paul's argument to the Galatians was that he did not receive his message of the gospel from other teachers. He received it directly from Jesus Christ through his filling of the Holy Spirit. This happened in Damascus when he was filled with the Holy Spirit.

On the occasion of Acts 13:9, Paul was also filled with the Spirit. Because of the antagonism of Bar-Jesus, Luke recorded Paul's response to the obnoxious religionist, "*Then Saul, who also is called Paul, **filled with the Holy Spirit, looked intently at***" Bar-Jesus. As a result of this filling, Paul struck Bar-Jesus blind.

The point again is that the filling of the Spirit resulted in the miraculous activity of the Spirit in the affairs of man. The emphasis is on the result of the filling, not the person of the Spirit. The statement "filled of the Spirit" made by the inspired writers was given in order that we understand the source of the effect. It was not Paul who personally had the power to carry out the blinding of Bar-Jesus. Because the Scriptures state



that this blinding was a result of the filling of the Spirit, the Holy Spirit wants us to know that He was the one who caused the blindness. However, in mentioning Himself as the cause, He wants us to focus on the result of His power.

In the case of Acts 9 when Ananias came to Paul, we must not assume that Ananias laid hands on Paul in order that he be filled with the Holy Spirit. The text does not say this. Acts 8:18 gives credit only to the apostles for having the authority to impart the miraculous gifts of the Spirit, though we would define the filling of the Spirit to be the cause of the miraculous gifts. The term “filled with the Spirit” refers primarily to God coming to man through the work of the Holy Spirit. The miraculous gifts refer to the result of the filling by the Spirit.

Christians were either filled with the Spirit directly from the Son of God, as in the case of the apostles in Acts 2 and the household of Cornelius in Acts 10, or they were filled by the laying on of the apostles’ hands. In Paul’s case in Damascus in Acts 9, he was filled with the Spirit **directly from the Lord Jesus**. Paul affirmed this in Galatians 1:11,12. The “filling,” therefore, was the cause; the miraculous gifts were the result. In Paul’s case, the filling of the Spirit in Acts 9 and his receiving the gospel

by the revelation from God in Galatians 1:11,12, refer to the same thing. Through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, the mystery of the gospel was revealed to Paul (See Ep 3:3-5).

### **J. Barnabas was filled with the Holy Spirit.**

Acts 11:24 states that Barnabas was “*a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith.*” In order to be consistent, we must assume that Barnabas’ filling with the Spirit means the same as the preceding cases. Barnabas was an inspired preacher of the gospel. He was full of the truth of the gospel as he was full of faith. In fact, we would say that he was full of faith because he was full of the inspired truth of the gospel (See Rm 10:17).

### **K. The Ephesians were filled with the Holy Spirit.**

Ephesians 5:18 is a statement where Paul **commanded** the Ephesians to be filled with the Holy Spirit. He said, “*And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit.*” We could assume that this passage is parallel with Colossians 3:16 wherein Paul commanded the Colossians to **let the word of Christ dwell in them**. Colossians 3:16 is a **hortatory state-**

**ment** where Paul says, “*Let the word of Christ dwell in you.*” Ephesians 5:18 is an **imperative** command. As an imperative command, the meaning is that the Ephesians had a choice as to whether they would be filled with the Spirit.

If we consider Colossians 3:16 to be a parallel thought with Ephesians 5:18, then we must conclude that the Ephesians had a choice of allowing the gospel of Jesus to permeate their lives as opposed to the influence of wine. Instead of allowing wine to control their thinking, Paul encouraged them to allow the gospel to take control of their lives. Since Ephesians 5:18 is an imperative command, then the Ephesians had to make a choice as to whether they would submit their minds to the intoxicating influences of wine, or to the inspired influence of the truth of the gospel that came to them through their inspired teachers who were filled with the Spirit.

According to Thayer’s Greek Lexicon, the Greek word for “be filled” in Ephesians 5:18, means “to make full, to fill, to fill up.”<sup>6</sup> In Ephesians 5:18 it is used with the preposition *en* with a dative of the instrument (*en pneumati*). Thus, the Spirit is the instrument that does the filling. The Spirit is not that with which one is filled. One is filled with that which the Spirit uses as the instrument of His

work. Since Colossians 3:16 would be a parallel passage, then the instrument is the truth of the gospel.

Other examples of this Greek phraseology (*en pneumati*) would be Romans 15:16 where Paul stated that we are sanctified **by the Spirit**. This does not refer to the indwelling of the Spirit. Reference is simply to sanctification that is accomplished **by the Spirit because of our response to the gospel**. The Spirit is the cause, but the instrument is that by which we are sanctified.

The same phrase is in 1 Corinthians 12:9 where it is affirmed that the Corinthians were given the miraculous gifts by the Spirit (*en pneumati*). Therefore, since the Christians in Ephesus already were indwelt with the Spirit, Paul could not be commanding them to be filled again with the indwelling of the Spirit. **He had to be referring to something the Spirit did in their lives.** The content with which they were to be filled was not the Spirit. The metonymy of the phrase is emphasized. Since the Spirit causes the effect, He uses Himself for the effect. Therefore, being filled with the Spirit in the context of Ephesians 5 meant being filled with the effect of the gospel that came to them through the inspiring work of the Spirit.

Suppose for now that we assume that the filling of the Holy Spirit in

Ephesians 5:18 refers to the prophets in Ephesus exercising their use of the miraculous gift to instruct the Ephesians in the gospel of Christ. Paul's command was directed both to them, as well as to the entire church throughout the world. He was saying to all Christians in Ephesus and Colosse that they must listen to the inspired teaching of their prophets who were working among them. Paul commanded, "... *be filled with the Spirit.*" The imperative command in relation to exercising one's miraculous gift of the Spirit was also used on another occasion in the case of Timothy. Paul commanded Timothy to "*stir up the gift of God which is in you*" (2 Tm 1:6). The prophets, therefore, were commanded to teach the truth of the gospel. The church was commanded to listen to this teaching of the gospel of the incarnate Son of God.

We would certainly not accept the idea that Paul was commanding in Ephesians 5:18 that the Ephesians be filled with the person of the Spirit. The Spirit was not subject to the will of man, nor does the Bible teach that one is to pray for the indwelling of the Spirit. **Nowhere in the Bible is one commanded to submit to the indwelling of the Spirit.** The filling of Ephesians 5:18, therefore, **must refer to something that the Spirit does.** In this case, the individual has a choice.

In the historical context of the miraculous gifts in the early church, Paul wanted his readers to exercise their miraculous gifts of the Spirit that were subject to their free moral choice. In conjunction to this, the Ephesians were subject to the command of Ephesians 5:18 in that they must give heed to the Spirit-inspired message of the gospel that was spoken by the inspired teachers (prophets) in their midst.

Among the Ephesian disciples there were those who were endowed with the miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit. These inspired teachers evidently, as Timothy, neglected the use of their gifts to minister teaching concerning the gospel. At the same time, there were evidently some among the disciples who were discouraging the teaching of the prophets concerning the incarnate Son of God and the atoning sacrifice of the cross. In the Ephesian letter, Paul was commanding everyone to receive the word of the gospel by submitting to the inspired teaching of the teachers.

A similar imperative command was made to the Thessalonian disciples: "*Do not quench the Spirit*" (1 Th 5:19). The inspired teachers, as Timothy, were not exercising the gifts of the Spirit for the benefit of all the disciples. Some among the disciples were refusing to listen to the Spirit-inspired word of the gospel that was

taught by their gifted teachers. And since the Spirit was subject to the one who possessed any particular gift (1 Co 14:32), the possessor because of discouragement or idleness, failed to carry out the purpose for which the gift of teaching was originally given. Paul was instructing the Thessalonian disciples not to discourage their inspired teachers. To discourage the inspired teachers was to quench the work of the Spirit through the medium of those whom He inspired to teach.

The Ephesians 5 context concludes these thoughts. In the context Paul contrasted the riotous living of some who were being “*drunk with wine*” (Ep 5:18) with the gospel-driven life that was revealed through the Spirit-inspired teachers. In contrast to a riotous life-style, he commanded them to “*be followers of God as dear children*” (Ep 5:1). In other words, “*be filled with the Spirit*” (Ep 5:18). “*See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but wise*” (Ep 5:15).

In order for one to walk circumspectly, or carefully according to the gospel, he or she must allow the Spirit to direct his or her life. The Spirit directs through the teaching of the gospel. Our lives today are directed by the Spirit through the preaching and teaching of the truth of the gospel. Therefore, one is filled with the Spirit when he allows his life to be

directed by the Spirit-inspired gospel of Jesus Christ. He is filled with the will of the Spirit because he has allowed his life to be permeated by the gospel.

In the historical context of the Ephesians, Colossians and Thessalonians, the Christian must listen to and live by the gospel that has come to us through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. This message came directly to the early Christians through the inspiration of their prophets. The responsibility of the members of the body was to listen to this Spirit-inspired instruction. Therefore, in contrast to being filled with a spirit of disobedient behavior, the early Christians were to be filled with the Spirit-revealed gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Spirit’s work through the prophets was not to be quenched (1 Th 5:19). The recipients of the teaching were not to despise the teaching of the gospel (1 Th 5:20). They were to give heed to the word of the gospel that was able to build them up (At 20:32).

The imperative of the phrase, “*be filled with the Spirit,*” is **present passive**. Therefore, the recipients were commanded to allow the inspired message of the gospel to work in their lives. The passive emphasizes the fact that the action is to work upon the subject. The Ephesians must not reject the teaching of the prophets, but submit to their instructions concerning

the truth of the gospel. They must allow the gospel to work on their hearts in order that their lives be directed by the gospel. This same concept is in the command of Paul to the Corinthians in 1 Corinthians 16:15,16:

*I urge you, brethren—you know the household of Stephanas ... that they have devoted themselves to the ministry of the saints—that you also submit to such, and to everyone who works and labors with us.*

The Corinthians were to submit to the ministry of the household of Stephanas. It was the work of the prophet to motivate discipleship of Jesus through the teaching of the gospel. It was the responsibility of the

rest of the disciples to submit to the teaching of the gospel. For this reason, Paul charged Timothy and all teachers “*before God and the Lord Jesus Christ .... Preach the word [of the gospel]! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching*” (2 Tm 4:1,2).

Those who choose not to submit to the teaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ are refusing to be filled with the Spirit. They are refusing to conduct their lives according to the power of the gospel. By rejecting the gospel of God’s grace, one rejects being filled with the Spirit. One cannot be filled with the Spirit, therefore, if he or she fails to live according to the motivation of the gospel.

## Chapter 6

### THE BAPTISM WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT

There are a host of misunderstandings circulated in the religious world today concerning the baptism with the Holy Spirit. Misleading interpretations have confused many people. Unfortunately, such interpretations have led to the false expectations of many, if not intimidation of those who supposedly have not been baptized in the Spirit.

There are some who teach that almost every time the word “baptism” is used in the New Testament, it must

be understood that reference is made to the baptism of the Holy Spirit. If one is not so “baptized” today, then his or her spirituality is questioned. For example, John A. Schep once wrote that the baptism ...

... with the Spirit ... is a blessing given by Christ to those who by the Spirit have been incorporated into Christ’s body, the Church. Our Lord baptized them with His Spirit, pouring the Spirit out upon them. He fills them

with the Spirit, thus granting them power from on High for witness and Christian service.<sup>8:21</sup>

To this affirmation, Willard Cantelon added,

If the very purpose of God in providing the Baptism of the Holy Spirit is to empower men to carry on His work, then this power is essential so long as the work of Christ goes on.<sup>9:</sup>  
read, "Purpose"

These men and others have very successfully propagated a modern-day "Holy Spirit baptism" in many religious circles. The charismatic movement throughout the world that was unique in the later part of the last century has now moved into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The teaching and "practice" of "Holy Spirit baptism" is very common.

The movement that assumes that there is a baptism of the Holy Spirit today encourages us to study again the contexts of the New Testament where there were two unique outpourings of the Holy Spirit in the first century (See At 2,10,11). These three cases of the Holy Spirit's coming upon people is the "dictionary" as to how we should define this event. It is essential to review these cases of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in order to compare these real cases with what is proclaimed to be happening today in the

religious world. Once we have studied these true outpourings of the Spirit, it is easily concluded what some people experience today. We conclude that those people confuse a momentary state of psychological disorientation with the baptism of the Holy Spirit that occurred in the first century.

It is necessary to repeat that the Bible, not our feelings, must be the dictionary to form any understanding of what happened in the first century in reference to baptism with the Holy Spirit. Since the subject of the baptism of the Spirit was surveyed in a previous chapter, as well as the filling of the Spirit, there are some concluding concepts that must be covered in reference specifically to the baptism with the Spirit.

### A. **Definition of the baptism with the Holy Spirit:**

The Greek word *baptizo* means to "dip," "plunge" "immerse" or "overwhelm." Literally speaking, one is baptized by immersion into something. By immersion into water, one is overwhelmed by water. In relation to the Holy Spirit, **one is immersed into the will of the Spirit.** J. W. Roberts correctly explained,

A baptism in the Holy Spirit would signify an immersion of the indi-

vidual who receives it into the Holy Spirit, either literally or figuratively. It is not easy to understand just what that would mean unless it meant that the person would come under the complete direction of the Holy Spirit. Thus when the apostles were baptized in the Holy Spirit their wills were submerged in the will of the Spirit.<sup>10:36</sup>

In a metaphorical sense, therefore, the recipients of the baptism were immersed into the direction of the Spirit. They were overwhelmed by the influence of the Spirit. As a result, they were either blessed with a miraculous reception of God's will, a miraculous speaking in languages, or both.

It seems that the speaking in languages was only the signal to the recipients, and those in their presence who actually received the baptism. The speaking in languages signaled that those who were immersed with the Holy Spirit were endowed with the truth of the gospel from the Holy Spirit. At least we know that the speaking in languages resulted from the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. The apostles spoke in languages on the day of Pentecost, and subsequently, they received and proclaimed the gospel that was revealed to them (At 2:1-4). In the case of Cornelius, he and his household spoke in languages, but

they had to be taught the truth of the gospel by which they would be saved (At 10:44-46).

In the baptism with the Spirit, the word "baptism" (immersion) is used in a metaphorical manner. In its normal use, the word "baptism" as we use it refers to a physical or literal immersion in water. However, baptism with the Spirit is spiritual, miraculous and greater. We have no earthly parallel with such an experience, and thus by inspiration, the Holy Spirit selected the word *baptizo* when He explained how He came upon certain people in the first century. Jesus and the Holy Spirit used the only word in our dictionary with which we are familiar in order to explain this divine action upon men. H. Leo Boles wrote:

We should understand that **literally** there is no such thing as a "pouring forth" of the Holy Spirit, or a "drinking" of the Spirit, or a "baptism" in the Holy Spirit; these are all figures designed by the resemblance they suggest, to present to the mind in various aspects and form various points of view the most lively and correct ideas of a fact.<sup>11:151</sup>

We do not know exactly what transpired when the Holy Spirit came upon an individual in a baptismal or outpouring manner. All we know are the results of the event. In the cases

of the apostles and the household of Cornelius, all miraculously spoke in languages that they had never before studied. However, in neither case did the recipients lose control of their senses. No one lost control of his emotions and commenced rolling uncontrollably on the ground. No one became emotionally disoriented.

When the apostles spoke after they were baptized with the Holy Spirit, they were coherent. Peter spoke logically and rationally before thousands of people in the languages of the people. When the household of Cornelius received the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, the Jews who were present heard them praising God in languages they could understand (At 10:46). The household of Cornelius, therefore, spoke rationally and not in some senseless gibberish that could not be understood.

Therefore, the result of the baptism of the Holy Spirit in the New Testament did not bring about emotional disorientation in the lives of those who were baptized. They spoke in languages, but what was spoken could be understood by all who heard them speak.

## **B. Unique characteristics of the baptism with the Holy Spirit:**

The unique characteristics that surrounded the baptism with the Holy

Spirit lead us to conclude that it occurred only one time in history. The baptism with the Spirit was promised by Jesus exclusively to the apostles. When the Spirit was poured out on the household of Cornelius, it was not a baptism, but only an outpouring. The evidence of the outpouring was the same in the sense that both the apostles and household of Cornelius spoke in languages. How the outpouring of the Spirit was revealed in both cases was similar, but the result was different. In the case of the apostles, the gospel was revealed by the Spirit. But in the case of the household of Cornelius, after the Spirit was poured out upon them, they had to hear the word of the gospel from Peter in order to believe and obey the gospel.

The following points review these characteristics that surrounded these two unique historical events. After reviewing these two unique events, we must conclude that the Spirit has not come upon anyone today as it did upon the apostles and household of Cornelius in the first century. In fact, we must conclude that the Spirit was never again poured out as He was on the day of Pentecost on the apostles, and ten years later on the household of Cornelius.

**1. *There are only two cases of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the Bible.*** Regardless of the claims



that every baptism in the New Testament is a Holy Spirit baptism, there is actually only one case. This is the case of the apostles that is recorded in Acts 2. There is the case of Cornelius and his household that is recorded in Acts 10, but we have concluded that this was simply an outpouring of the Spirit. Few will disagree with the Acts 2 event, though some would affirm that all 120 in the upper room on Pentecost were baptized with the Spirit. We would question the event of Acts 10 as actually being a baptism with the Spirit. We would do so because the word “baptism” is not used in the explanation of the event. Therefore, we would conclude that this was not actually a baptism with the Holy Spirit, but an outpouring of the Spirit.

The case of Cornelius was certainly an outpouring of the Spirit because of what actually happened. Peter explained that the “*Holy Spirit fell upon them, as upon us at the beginning*” (At 11:15). In Acts 15:8 he also stated in reference to the event, “*So God, who knows the heart acknowledged them, by giving them the Holy Spirit just as He did to us.*” Therefore, the manner by which the Spirit came upon the apostles and Cornelius was the same. At least the Spirit was poured out upon Cornelius and his household as He was in Acts 2, but the resulting blessings were dif-

ferent.

The apostles and household of Cornelius are the only two cases in the New Testament concerning the outpouring manner by which the Spirit came upon people. If the baptism or outpouring of the Spirit was a common occurrence in the first century, then we would surely have more recorded cases in the New Testament than what we presently have.

The first argument against the baptism of the Holy Spirit today is the fact that it is not emphasized in the New Testament as a common event in the lives of the early Christians. If it was so emphasized, then we would have more cases that explain exactly what happened when one was baptized with the Spirit.

**2. *Jesus was the administrator of the baptism with the Holy Spirit.*** We must remember that it was Jesus who baptized with the Holy Spirit (Jn 1:33). The Spirit was the element of the baptism. This fact is contrary to some today who affirm that the Spirit comes upon anyone He so chooses. There is no statement in the Bible that states that the Holy Spirit baptized anyone into Himself. **It was Jesus who takes the initiative to have someone baptized with the Spirit, not the Spirit.**

**3. *The baptism with the Holy Spirit was a promise, not a command.*** It was a promise that was

made specifically to the apostles (Lk 24:49; At 1:3-8). **It was not a command to be obeyed.** On the contrary, it was a promise to be received. However, one had to be of a receptive mind in order to accept it as a promise. This is certainly the meaning of John 20:22 when Jesus commanded the apostles to “*receive the Holy Spirit.*”

On the other hand, a command is free-morally obeyed. The apostles were commanded to “receive” the Holy Spirit. They were promised to be “*baptized with the Spirit.*” They **were not** commanded to be baptized with the Spirit, for in a command the recipient takes the initiative. As a promise, it was Jesus who took the initiative to baptize His apostles with the Spirit. H. Leo Boles correctly concluded,

So the baptism of the Holy Spirit was definitely a promise, and not a command; no one was ever commanded to be baptized in the Holy Spirit. Baptism in water was a command, but baptism in the Holy Spirit was a promise.<sup>6:151</sup>

As a command to be obeyed, one must first understand the command, and particularly the blessings that one would receive in obedience to the command. For example, when Peter instructed those who believed on Pentecost, he stated that they repent and

be baptized (At 2:38). The promises in obedience to the instructions were the remission of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit. But the apostles on the same day had no previous idea what they would receive as a result of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. They did not understand what such was before the experience. They were simply obeying the command of Jesus to wait in the city of Jerusalem until they were clothed with power from on high (At 1:4-8).

**4. *Speaking in languages followed the baptism and outpouring with the Holy Spirit.*** In both cases of the outpouring with the Holy Spirit in the New Testament, the recipients spoke in languages (tongues). The speaking in languages was a signal that something had inwardly happened. The speaking in languages was not the baptism. The speaking in languages was an outward sign that the Holy Spirit had acted in an unusual manner upon those who spoke in languages.

In the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, the speaking in tongues was an indication that people had been blessed with the miraculous gift of speaking in tongues separate or apart from the laying on of the apostles’ hands. The revelation of all the truth of the gospel was the evidence that the apostles alone had been baptized with the Spirit. Cornelius later had

to hear this gospel from the mouth of an apostle who was baptized with the Spirit on Pentecost (At 11:14).

Languages was one of the many miraculous gifts that were bestowed upon the early Christians. The Holy Spirit used this gift to signal His coming upon the apostles and the household of Cornelius. The speaking in languages was the gift. The baptism was the event.

The fact that Cornelius was enabled to speak with tongues was not a demonstration, because the mere existence of tongues was not a sign of Spirit baptism, but of a gift, such as prevailed among members of the churches during the time of spiritual endowments. There are numerous examples of the use of tongues for special purposes which had no connection at all with the Holy Spirit baptism.<sup>12:197</sup>

**5. *The baptism with the Holy Spirit was unexpected.*** Before the event of Acts 2, the apostles knew that something was going to happen. Jesus had promised them, “*You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you*” (At 1:8). He had also promised them, “*You shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit*” (At 1:5). Regardless of the statements of these promises, **the apostles did not know what to expect. They did not**

**know what the baptism in the Holy Spirit was.** Because they did not understand what Jesus was saying, they could not have been praying for the baptism with the Holy Spirit as some claim we must do today.

The case of Cornelius is more explanatory in defining this point. Neither Peter, nor the Jews with him, had any idea of what was about to take place when they arrived at the house of Cornelius. When Peter first arrived at the house of Cornelius, he did not have time to explain anything to Cornelius concerning obedience to the gospel or the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. He later explained what actually happened when he began to speak: “*And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell upon them ...*” (At 11:15).

Peter could not have explained that they should pray for a baptism or outpouring with the Holy Spirit. It simply happened **when he began to speak**. It happened without their expectations.

The fact that neither Peter nor the Jewish brethren who were with him expected the Holy Spirit to come upon the household of Cornelius is emphasized in the fact that they were all astonished to see that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on Cornelius and his household (At 10:45).

If the outpouring of the Holy

Spirit had been a common thing among Christians unto the time of this event, then certainly these beholders would not have been so amazed at what happened. One might argue that their amazement was because the Holy Spirit had come upon the household of Gentiles. But we must keep in mind that this event took place about ten years after the establishment of the church. We would certainly assume that by this time the miraculous gifts of the Spirit had already been given to Gentiles by the laying on of the apostles' hands. This was true on the day of Pentecost when there were possibly Gentile proselytes baptized of those who were in Jerusalem on this day (At 2:11).

The amazement of the Jewish brethren when the Spirit was poured out on the household of Cornelius, was more than their witnessing that the Spirit had come upon Gentiles. It was also in the fact that the Spirit had not come upon anyone since Pentecost in such a manner, as well as the fact that He came upon the Gentiles.

Therefore, we would assume that if the outpouring of the Holy Spirit were a common occurrence in the first century, then it would not have been such a surprise to Peter and the accompanying Jews in the case of Cornelius. In order to explain the event to Jewish Christians when he returned to Jerusalem, **Peter had to**

**refer back to the only other time in history when an outpouring of the Spirit had happened.** This time, as Peter explained, was like “*at the beginning*” (At 11:15). This was the beginning of the church in Acts 2.

**Why would Peter refer to the Acts 2 event if the outpouring of the Spirit on Cornelius' household were a common event in the lives of the early disciples?** The fact is that it was not common. The Acts 10 event was an unexpected occurrence that the disciples had experienced only one time before. When the Spirit came upon the household of Cornelius, it was a surprise to everyone.

### **C. Before the end of the first century, the Bible taught that there was only one baptism.**

There is only one valid baptism today. This is an immersion in water for the remission of sins. It is affirmed by some that there is a baptism with the Holy Spirit today, as well as a baptism in water. However, the New Testament affirms that baptism in water for the forgiveness of sins is the only baptism for those today who believe the gospel.

**1. There are six baptisms in the New Testament.** The Greek word *baptizo* is used in the New Testament to refer to six different occasions

where people were “baptized.” Understanding these baptisms helps us to come to the conclusion that out of the six, only one baptism is valid today.

**a. The baptism of Israel in the cloud and sea:** Paul wrote concerning Israel, “... *all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea*” (1 Co 10:2). The Israelites were baptized (overwhelmed) by the cloud of God’s protection and guidance after they passed through the Red Sea in their flight from Egyptian captivity (Ex 13:21; 14). What actually occurred was that the entire nation of Israel passed through the cloud. All were thus overwhelmed by the sea and in the cloud. Everyone who was not so baptized, perished.

**b. The baptism of John the Baptist:** Mark recorded, “*John came baptizing in the wilderness and preaching a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins*” (Mk 1:4; Lk 3:2,3). The baptism of John was an immersion in water for the remission of sins (Mk 1:4,8). It was “unto” repentance. It was God’s call to Israel through John that Israel turn to God in order to accept the coming Messiah (Mk 1:4,7; At 19:4).

**c. The baptism of fire:** John stated,

*I indeed baptize you with water unto*

*repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire* (Mt 3:11).

The baptism of fire probably refers to the immersion in the fiery destruction of national Israel in A.D. 70 that awaited those who rejected Jesus as the Messiah. This happened in the disciples’ generation in the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. This will also happen to all the disobedient at the end of time (Mt 25:41; 2 Th 1:7-9; 2 Pt 3:9-13).

**d. The baptism with the Holy Spirit:** John said that Jesus would baptize with the Holy Spirit (Mt 3:11). Before His ascension, Jesus specifically identified those who would be baptized with the Spirit. He promised the apostles, “*For John truly baptized with water, but you [the apostles] shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now*” (At 1:5). The baptism with the Holy Spirit refers to immersion into the will of the Holy Spirit. Such was a promise to the apostles and was to be received only by them.

**e. The apostles’ baptism of suffering:** Jesus said to James and John, and to the rest of the apostles, “*You will indeed drink the cup that I drink, and with the baptism I am baptized with you will be baptized*” (Mk

10:38,39). Jesus stated that the apostles would be immersed (baptized) in the responsibilities and sufferings of leadership because of their commitment to follow Him.

**f. The baptism in water for remission of sins:** Peter said to the multitudes on Pentecost, “*Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins*” (At 2:38; see 22:16). The only baptism that God intended to last throughout time is the baptism in water for the forgiveness of sins. This one baptism is the principal baptism that is mentioned in the New Testament. This baptism is commanded. It is the one to which believers must submit in obedience to the gospel.

**2. Only one baptism remains that must be obeyed.** Paul wrote to the Ephesian disciples in A.D. 61,62. In this letter he stated that there was only **one baptism** (Ep 4:5). Of those baptisms that were previously listed, Paul affirmed that only one was valid at the time he wrote. Since the baptism with the Holy Spirit was not for the remission of sins and salvation, we would conclude that Ephesians 4:5 is not talking about Holy Spirit baptism. Since baptism in water for the remission of sins is in obedience to the gospel, then we must conclude that Paul was discussing water baptism in Ephesians 4:5.

The Ephesians had been baptized with the one baptism. They were baptized in water in the name of Jesus for remission of their sins (See At 19:5). This was not Holy Spirit baptism. It was baptism for remission of sins (At 2:38; 8:36-38; Rm 6:3-6).

#### **D. Separating water baptism from baptism with the Holy Spirit:**

There is a persistent effort on the part of some to read baptism with the Holy Spirit into passages that clearly discuss baptism in water for remission of sins. Even passages in the imperative mood (command) in reference to baptism in water as Acts 2:38 and Acts 22:16 are often twisted to refer to baptism with the Spirit. By making such interpretations, it is taught that baptism with the Spirit is a command to be obeyed. However, this interpretation is based on a failure to recognize the difference between the command of water baptism and the promise of baptism with the Holy Spirit.

The following twelve points are set forth in order to make a distinction between water baptism for the remission of sins and baptism with the Holy Spirit. In each case of baptism in the New Testament, these simple points can be applied in order to separate the two baptisms in the context in which the word “baptism” (immersion) is used.

**1. *Water is the element in water baptism.*** If **water** is mentioned in the text as the element into which one is immersed, then reference is to water baptism (See Mt 3:16; Jn 3:23; At 8:35-38). If the **Holy Spirit** is mentioned as the element, then it is baptism with the Holy Spirit (See Mt 3:11; At 1:5; 11:16,17).

**2. *Water baptism is in the name of Jesus.*** If the baptism that is mentioned in any text is in the **name of Jesus**, then it is water baptism, for baptism in the Holy Spirit was never mentioned to be in the name of Jesus (See Mt 28:19; At 2:38; 10:48; 19:5).

**3. *Water baptism is administered by man.*** If the baptism is mentioned to be **administered by a man**, then reference is to water baptism (See Mt 3:11; 28:19,20; At 8:35-39). Jesus was the administrator of the baptism with the Holy Spirit (Mt 3:11).

**4. *Water baptism is a command.*** If the baptism in the text is a **promise**, then reference is to baptism with the Holy Spirit (See Lk 24:48,49; At 1:5). Water baptism was not a promise, but a command to be obeyed. On the other hand, the baptism with the Spirit was a promise to be received, not a command to be obeyed.

**5. *Water baptism is for remission of sins.*** If the baptism **resulted in remission of sins, and thus salvation**, then it is water baptism. The

New Testament mentions only this baptism that will result in the blessings concerning our salvation (At 2:38; 22:16; 1 Pt 3:21).

**6. *Water baptism is not poured out upon someone.*** If the element was **poured out upon or fell upon**, then it was baptism with the Holy Spirit (See J1 2:28; At 2:1-4; 10:44,45; 11:15-17). In water baptism, one is immersed into the water. The water is not poured upon the one who is baptized.

**7. *Water baptism brought salvation, not speaking in tongues.*** If the recipients who were baptized **received power or spoke in tongues**, then it was baptism with the Holy Spirit (See At 1:8; 2:4; 10:44-46). No one ever spoke in tongues as a result of being immersed in water for the remission of sins.

**8. *Water baptism was for repentant believers.*** If the action of the baptism was **for a penitent believer**, then it was water baptism, for all who believed on the Lord and repented were commanded to be baptized in water for remission of sins (Mk 16:16; see Mk 1:4; At 19:4).

**9. *Water baptism is valid until Jesus comes.*** If the baptism is mentioned to last until Jesus comes again, then it is water baptism (See Mt 28:19,20).

**10. *Water baptism is into Christ.*** If the baptism that is mentioned in the

text is to bring one “**into Christ**,” then it is water baptism, for one is baptized into Christ (See Rm 6:3,4; Gl 3:26,27).

**11. Water baptism was a washing.** If the baptism is mentioned to be a **washing of the one baptized**, then it is water baptism, for in water baptism one contacts the blood of Jesus that washes away sins (At 22:16; see Ep 5:26; Ti 3:5).

**12. Water baptism was in obedience to the gospel.** If the baptism that is mentioned is a **burial and resurrection**, then it is water baptism, for water baptism is an obedience to the gospel of the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus for the remission of sins (See Rm 6:3-6).

Any baptism that is mentioned in the New Testament that is in the context of the preceding definitions, is a reference to the one baptism of Ephesians 4:5. It is a reference to the baptism that is for remission of sins. This is the baptism to which one must be obedient in order to obey the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus. This is the baptism without which one cannot be saved unless he obeys (See 2 Th 1:7-9).

### **E. The purpose of baptism with the Holy Spirit:**

There is no need for a baptism with the Holy Spirit today. The rea-

son for this is that the purposes for which baptism with the Holy Spirit was promised, were accomplished in the first century. The following purposes have been accomplished:

**1. The purpose of the baptism with the Holy Spirit was to empower and inspire the apostles.** Jesus promised the apostles that the Holy Spirit would teach them **all things** and **bring to their remembrance all that He had taught them** (Jn 14:26). The Holy Spirit would **guide them into all the truth of the gospel** (Jn 16:13).

At the end of His ministry, Jesus told His apostles to wait in Jerusalem until they were “*endued with power from on high*” (Lk 24:49; At 1:8). This promise was fulfilled in Acts 2:1-4. The baptism of the apostles on the day of Pentecost was when they received the truth of the gospel. They began to proclaim this truth on that very day. They continued to verbally preach the truth of the gospel throughout the world (See At 20:20,26,27). They did such as the Spirit inspired them **to speak** by His guidance. When they were on trial for preaching the gospel, Jesus promised them, “*The Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say*” (Lk 12:12), “*for it is not you who speak but the Spirit of your Father that speaks in you*” (Mt 10:20; see Lk 21:15).



All truth has now been delivered to the saints (Jd 3). All that is necessary for Godly living is in our hands today through the inspired Scriptures (2 Tm 3:16,17). Therefore, the purpose for the baptism with the Holy Spirit to empower and reveal the truth of the gospel to the apostles has been accomplished. There is no more need for truth to be revealed today through the empowering of the Holy Spirit.

**2. *The purpose of the baptism with the Holy Spirit was to inspire the New Testament prophets.*** The continuing results of the baptism with the Holy Spirit on the apostles resulted in their laying hands on faithful men who thus spoke and wrote by inspiration. In other words, **the purpose of the baptism with the Spirit was to inspire and empower the apostles to not only speak by inspiration, but also to lay hands on others that they also might speak by inspiration and record divine truth.**

The New Testament prophets spoke by inspiration. Disciples as Mark, Jude and Luke, who were not Christ-sent apostles, recorded that truth in inspired writings. Though they were not baptized with the Holy Spirit as the apostles, they spoke and wrote by inspiration of the Spirit because they had had hands laid on them by the Christ-sent apostles. Therefore, the truth, or the faith, “*was once for all delivered to the saints*” by both

the apostles and prophets of the New Testament (Jd 3).

The church has been granted “*all things that pertain to life and godliness*” through the recorded truth of the apostles and prophets (2 Pt 1:3). We have the “*perfect law of liberty*” (Js 1:25), in order “*that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work*” (2 Tm 3:17). The church was firmly grounded and established in the first century by the revelation of all truth. The disciples continued to be grounded by the inspired recording of that truth (See Ep 4:11-16). Therefore, we do not need the baptism with the Holy Spirit today because the Holy Spirit accomplished the purpose for which He was poured out on the apostles in the first century.

**3. *The purpose of the baptism with the Holy Spirit was to signify the beginning of the gospel dispensation.*** Before the events of Acts 2, the church was always referred to with the **future tense**. Jesus said, “*Upon this rock I will build my church*” (Mt 16:18). However, after Acts 2 the church was always mentioned as in existence. Thus the Scriptures point directly to Acts 2 as **the beginning** of the church. This is exactly what Peter said in Acts 11 in reference to the baptism with the Holy Spirit. In referring to the baptism with the Spirit of the household of Cornelius, he said,

*“And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell upon them, as upon us [the apostles] at the beginning”* (At 11:15).

Peter’s statement infers first that nothing as the outpouring of the Spirit had happened since **the beginning**. But just as important, Peter referred back to **the beginning** and the fact that the outpouring of the Holy Spirit signified the beginning of the church. **It was the beginning of the church because it was the first time men and women responded to the first announcement of the gospel that was revealed through the apostles.** Therefore, it was the purpose of the outpouring of the Spirit to signal the fulfillment of Joel 2:28-32, and thus mark the beginning of this present gospel age. This purpose has been completed. Therefore, there is no more a need to signify the beginning of the church through any baptism or outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

**4. *The purpose of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the household of Cornelius was to signify that the gospel must go to the Gentiles.*** In Acts 10 and 11 Luke recorded Peter’s visions and mission to the Gentile household of Cornelius. The result of his visit was the outpouring of the Spirit on Cornelius and his household. Because the word “baptism” is not used in what actually happened in this case, Peter stated that

the event was only like what happened to all the apostles in the beginning of the church in Acts 2 (At 11:15). We would assume that Peter referred only to the manner by which the Spirit came upon the apostles, as well as upon the household of Cornelius.

The reason for the outpouring on the household of Cornelius was to signify that God wanted the gospel preached to the Gentiles. He also wanted the apostles to lay hands on the Gentiles in order that they be blessed with the miraculous gifts of the Spirit.

When Peter reported to the Jewish brethren from Jerusalem what had happened to Cornelius, they rightly concluded, *“Then God has also granted to the Gentiles repentance to life”* (At 11:18). Luke recorded their conclusion in order to identify why the Spirit was miraculously poured out upon Cornelius. Therefore, the outpouring on the Gentiles has already taken place. God does not have to signal again that the Gentiles must be reached with the gospel.

**5. *The purpose of the baptism with the Holy Spirit was to bear witness to Jesus.*** Jesus personally said to the apostles that *“when the Helper comes [the Holy Spirit] ... He will testify of Me”* (Jn 15:26). In John 15:27 Jesus continued, *“You [apostles] also will bear witness, because you have been with Me from the beginning.”*

Not only did the apostles bear witness to Jesus through their personal lives, but also by the Holy Spirit miraculously working through them (At 5:12). They became the medium through whom the Holy Spirit miraculously worked by confirming their word to have originated from God (Mk 16:20). The apostles were baptized in the Spirit for the purpose of preaching the gospel, and to reveal that they had been with Jesus (See At 4:13). Through the work of the Spirit, the apostles were the miraculous witnesses to the sonship of Jesus (At 4:33). This witness has been recorded for us today. John wrote,

*That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the **Word of life**. The life was manifested, and we have seen, **and bear witness**, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us—that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ (1 Jn 1:1-3).*

No one today can be a special witness as were the apostles. No one today was with Jesus from the beginning of His earthly ministry. There-

fore, no one today can claim to be a special witness to Jesus as were the apostles.

**6. *The purpose of the baptism with the Holy Spirit was to bear witness to the truth.*** The message of the apostles was not preached with “*persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power*” (1 Co 2:4). God bore “*witness both by signs and wonders, with various powers and gifts of the Holy Spirit*” (Hb 2:4), “*confirming the word through the accompanying signs*” (Mk 16:20). Therefore, the apostles’ word was confirmed by the signs and wonders they worked by the power of the Spirit (See At 2:43). It was the purpose of the Holy Spirit to do such. This word has been confirmed. It has been written. The miraculous work of the Spirit, therefore, has been accomplished.

From the preceding points it is clear that God has accomplished all purposes for which the Holy Spirit miraculously came upon man in a baptismal manner. Once He accomplished His purpose, there was no more need that anyone be baptized with the Holy Spirit. Therefore, if someone claims to be baptized with the Holy Spirit today, then he is saying that God did not accomplish His purposes for which baptism by the Spirit was originally intended.

## F. Interpreting 1 Corinthians 12:13:

In 1 Corinthians 12:13 Paul wrote, “For *by* [en] *one Spirit we were all baptized into one body.*” It is important to first understand the context of this statement. **In the context, Paul was defending the unity of the church that is based on the oneness of the Spirit and His work through the miraculous gifts** (See vs 12,27). Through the inspired apostles and prophets, the Spirit produced one body, one church. The Corinthians were baptized into this one body that resulted from the unifying influence of the Spirit-revealed gospel through the apostles and prophets. In other words, when one obeys the gospel in baptism for remission of sins, he is baptized into Christ (Rm 6:3-6). Being in Christ means that one is in the body of Christ. He has been added to the body by God (At 2:47). Baptism into Christ, therefore, is the choice of the individual, not the Holy Spirit.

The above understanding is revealed by the **instrumental** use of the Greek preposition *en*. This same use of *en* is in Luke 22:49: “*Lord, shall we strike with [en] the sword.*” The instrumental use is also in 1 Corinthians 12:3 and 9. With this understanding, 1 Corinthians 12:13 would correctly be translated, “**By means of**

*the Spirit we were all baptized into one body.*” **We would interpret the passage to mean that we were baptized in water into one body, which concept and practice was revealed to us through the Spirit-inspired word of God.** In other words, the whole concept of the one body and baptism has been revealed to us through the inspired word of the Spirit. Therefore, by the work of the Spirit through revelation we were all baptized into one body.

Other translations render *en* in a manner whereby it signifies the element into which one is baptized (See the *American Standard Version*). This locative meaning is in Matthew 3:11 where John stated, “*I indeed baptize you with [en] water unto repentance ....*” Some individuals have argued that 1 Corinthians 12:13 is a baptism into the Spirit, the Spirit being the element into which one is baptized. It is agreed that the locative case is the more common meaning of *en*.

It would be our first inclination to translate the passage with the locative meaning if such were demanded by the context. However, even with the locative translation we would not derive a meaning from the text that assumes anything close to either the baptism of the Spirit or outpouring of the Holy Spirit as in Acts 2 and 10. Baptism with the Spirit was not “into” the Holy Spirit, but “with” the Holy Spirit.

For the following reasons, we must affirm that baptism with the Holy Spirit is not in the context of 1 Corinthians 12:13:

**1. *The purpose for baptism with the Holy Spirit was not relevant to the Corinthians.*** When Paul went to Corinth, “*Crispus ... believed in the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed and were baptized*” (At 18:8). Paul came to them with a simple message of “*Christ crucified*” (1 Co 1:23). “*For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified*” (1 Co 2:2). Paul preached the simple message of the gospel (1 Co 15:1-4). Many believed and were baptized in water for the remission of sins.

Paul did not preach baptism with the Holy Spirit. The Spirit had already been poured out on the apostles. The purpose of this baptism had already been accomplished. The Corinthians were receiving the benefits of this baptism **through the mystery of the gospel that was revealed to Paul and the apostles.** The Corinthians were baptized in obedience to the gospel that was revealed through the apostles. They did not need to be baptized with the Spirit in order to be saved members of the universal body of Christ.

**2. *The Spirit produced the one***

***body into which individuals are baptized.*** One is saved in Christ (2 Tm 2:10). Through revelation by the Spirit, it was revealed that one must be in Christ in order to be saved. One must be in the body of Christ (the church) in order to be eternally saved. In this sense, therefore, the church exists because of the work of the Holy Spirit through His inspired word.

In the context of 1 Corinthians 12:13 Paul discusses this one body. He thus reminds the Corinthians that it was through the work of this one Spirit that we have come into a saving relationship with God. In the context, therefore, Paul is discussing baptism in obedience to the gospel that he preached to the Corinthians. This is water baptism for remission of sins, not Holy Spirit baptism.

**3. *Not all the Corinthians spoke in tongues.*** In Acts 2 and 10, those on whom the Holy Spirit was poured out **spoke in languages.** As stated before, the speaking in languages was not the outpouring, it was only the signal that such had occurred. However, not all of the Corinthians spoke in tongues (See 1 Co 12:30; 14:5). But all of the Corinthians were baptized “in one Spirit.” We would conclude, therefore, that water baptism is here under discussion, not Holy Spirit baptism.

Those who promote a miraculous

outpouring of the Spirit today are in a dilemma with this passage. 1 Corinthians 12:13 teaches that **all** the Corinthians and other Christians had been baptized with the baptism mentioned in the context of their obedience to the gospel. However, in some churches today there are hundreds and thousands who have not been baptized with the Spirit. If reference in 1 Corinthians 12:13 is to the supposed Holy Spirit baptism of all the Corinthians, then we would certainly question any church today in which most of the members have not been so bap-

tized with the Spirit. If water baptism is under consideration in 1 Corinthians 12:13—and it is—then no problem exists.

All of the Corinthian Christians had obeyed the gospel by immersion in water for the forgiveness of their sins. The statement of 1 Corinthians 12:13 applies to them because all of them had been baptized for remission of sins. 1 Corinthians 12:13 makes sense only if the baptism about which Paul speaks is water baptism. If it is not water baptism, then we can never understand 1 Corinthians 12:13.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

### OLD TESTAMENT

Genesis - **Gn**, Exodus - **Ex**, Leviticus - **Lv**, Numbers - **Nm**, Deuteronomy - **Dt**, Joshua - **Ja**, Judges - **Jg**, Ruth - **Rt**, 1 Samuel - **1 Sm**, 2 Samuel - **2 Sm**, 1 Kings - **1 Kg**, 2 Kings - **2 Kg**, 1 Chronicles - **1 Ch**, 2 Chronicles - **2 Ch**, Ezra - **Er**, Nehemiah - **Ne**, Esther - **Et**, Job - **Jb**, Psalms - **Ps**, Proverbs - **Pv**, Ecclesiastes - **Ec**, Song of Solomon - **Ss**, Isaiah - **Is**, Jeremiah - **Jr**, Lamentations - **Lm**, Ezekiel - **Ez**, Daniel - **Dn**, Hosea - **Hs**, Joel - **Jl**, Amos - **Am**, Obadiah - **Ob**, Jonah - **Jh**, Micah - **Mc**, Nahum - **Nh**, Habakkuk - **Hk**, Zephaniah - **Zp**, Haggai - **Hg**, Zechariah - **Zc**, Malachi - **Ml**

### NEW TESTAMENT

Matthew - **Mt**, Mark - **Mk**, Luke - **Lk**, John - **Jn**, Acts - **At**, Romans - **Rm**, 1 Corinthians - **1 Co**, 2 Corinthians - **2 Co**, Galatians - **Gl**, Ephesians - **Ep**, Philippians - **Ph**, Colossians - **Cl**, 1 Thessalonians - **1 Th**, 2 Thessalonians - **2 Th**, 1 Timothy - **1 Tm**, 2 Timothy - **2 Tm**, Titus - **Ti**, Philemon - **Pl**, Hebrews - **Hb**, James - **Js**, 1 Peter - **1 Pt**, 2 Peter - **2 Pt**, 1 John - **1 Jn**, 2 John - **2 Jn**, 3 John - **3 Jn**, Jude - **Jd**, Revelation - **Rv**