

The Holy Spirit

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Lesson 2: His Work During Bible Times

INTRODUCTION:

- A. Does the subject of the Holy Spirit scare you, make you uneasy, or seem ungraspable?**
1. The Holy Spirit is seen by many people as being a mysterious being... a subject that maybe we cannot get a good grasp on till we reach Heaven → This isn't true!
 2. God has not revealed anything to us that we cannot understand! Yes, some subjects and passages are meatier than others, but understandable! (**Ephesians 3:1-4**)
 3. Let's refresh our memories on what we learned last week about the Holy Spirit:
 - a. He is not a force, a mysterious casper-like being, or even the revealed word but He is a being, with a personality, just like the Father and Jesus Christ
 - b. The Holy Spirit possesses the fullness of deity – He is part of the Godhead
 - c. The Holy Spirit can be pleased & grieved... He has a mind, thoughts, and feelings
- B. Remember** – There are two extremes people take in their views of the Holy Spirit:
1. One extreme: Believes the Holy Spirit takes a person's heart and directly changes it, saves the man, and changes the way he lives, outside of the revealed word
 2. Another extreme: Sees the error of the first view and responds by saying that the only work that the Holy Spirit does today is through the revealed word of God
 3. Let us try not to jump to an extreme in our view of the Holy Spirit whether through a misunderstanding of His work or by a reaction to those who misunderstand His role!

I. THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT DURING OLD TESTAMENT TIMES:

- A. As we noted last time in defense of the person-hood and deity of the Holy Spirit, He played a very involved role in the creation of the universe!**
1. We noticed last week that the Holy Spirit took part in the creation: (**Gen 1:1-2; 26**)
 - a. What specifically the Spirit did I don't think we can be completely sure
 - b. But there were three beings, each of which are God, that were working together in the creation of the universe and in the creation of mankind
 - c. We were created in THEIR image: Not just the Father, But the Son & H.S. as well
 2. This role was not just a role of hovering and watching, but was an active role involving great power and wisdom! (**Psalm 104:30; Psalm 33:6; Job 26:13**)
 3. The question could be asked: Did the Holy Spirit play such an active role in the creation of the world and then just drift into inactivity until the time of Christ?
 - a. This is how some approach the Holy Spirit & Jesus – We speak of their actions in the creation & then speak as though they just went dormant for a long time!
 - b. Does it make sense to see them so involved and then to suddenly disappear?
- B. It was through the Holy Spirit that the will of God was revealed to mankind:**
1. Peter says, men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit! (**2 Pet 1:19-21**)
 - a. When men of God spoke, they were not relaying their own opinions or ideas that could be subjective or relative! Men could be wrong or change their mind!
 - b. Their prophecies and the words we have recorded are the words of God!
 2. When you consider the nature and accuracy of what these men spoke of, there is only one way to explain them: Their prophecies were from God!
 - a. Even though they wrote separated by many years, in different lands, with different backgrounds, & under different circumstances they consistently agree!
 - b. Every single prophecy made by these men was fulfilled exactly as they spoke it!
 3. Consider two examples: One from prophecy one from the science realm:
 - a. Isaiah's prophecy made concerning Babylon – The (**Isaiah 13:19-22**)
 - b. David's words as he spoke about the path's in the sea (**Ecc. 1:7; Ps 8:6-8**)

4. The Holy Spirit filled these men with the words which they would speak!

II. THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT DURING THE LIFE OF CHRIST:

A. The Holy Spirit played a very active role in the life and ministry of Jesus:

1. The Holy Spirit was involved from the very conception of Jesus: **(Luke 1:34-35)**
 - a. You can see her confusion – She was a virgin, how could she become pregnant?
 - b. The details of how this worked we do not know – But somehow the Spirit caused a conception to happen within Mary's womb and placed Jesus there!
 - c. Others were filled with the Holy Spirit so they could make prophecies concerning the coming Messiah – Elizabeth, Zacharias, and Simeon
2. From the beginning of His ministry, the Spirit witnessed of Jesus' identity **(Mat. 3:16)**
 - a. Three witnesses present: John's words, God's testimony, the Holy Spirit's witness
 - b. The Holy Spirit didn't become a dove, but descended in the form of a dove
 - c. His actions showed Heaven's authority was behind Jesus & that He is the Christ!
3. The Holy Spirit was with Jesus as He was in the wilderness & tempted **(Luke 4:1, 14)**
4. The Spirit was powerfully at work throughout the ministry of Jesus **(Luke 4:16-21)**
 - a. The Spirit anointed Him recognizing His place as the Messiah and having authority and the Spirit was also with Jesus in presence throughout His ministry
 - b. It was by the power of the Holy Spirit that Jesus worked the signs, wonders, and healed those who were sick during His ministry!

B. Jesus gave some promises to His apostles of a coming day when the Holy Spirit would be with them in a very special sense:

1. When Jesus informed His apostles that He would be leaving them shortly to return to His Father in Heaven, they understandably became very anxious and fearful!
 - a. They left EVERYTHING to follow Jesus & be His disciples! He was their life!
 - b. If Jesus left who would be their Master & Teacher? Who then would they follow?
 - c. Jesus taught them many new things and told them there was much more they needed to learn – Who would teach them the truth if Jesus left them?
2. It's in this context that Jesus promised them a coming "Helper" **(John 14:16-17, 26)**
 - a. Some translations say "COMFORTER" – The apostles needed this help & comfort!
 - b. This would partly be in His presence as they carried out the Great Commission
 - c. The Spirit would guide them into all truth and remind them all the things that Jesus had taught to them – A calm to their fears as Jesus would soon be leaving!
 - d. Together with the apostles the Spirit would bear witness of Christ **(John 15:26-27)**
3. He would teach the disciples what Jesus was not able to finish teaching **(John 16:12-14)**
 - a. The apostles had come a long way but they still had many misunderstandings and Jesus did not have enough time in three years to teach them everything!
 - b. Jesus promised the Spirit would come and they would know and understand in full!
4. When Jesus gets ready to ascend to the Father after His death and resurrection, He tells His disciples to go and wait for this promise to be fulfilled! **(Acts 1:7-8)**

III. THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT DURING THE DAYS OF THE EARLY CHURCH

A. There's only 2 occasions in the N.T. where people were baptized with the Holy Spirit:

1. The first occasion happened to the apostles on the day of Pentecost **(Acts 2:1-6)**
 - a. The apostles were gathered together in Jerusalem awaiting the promised coming of the Holy Spirit just as Jesus had instructed them to do
 - b. While the word "baptized" is not used, the idea is certainly there – The Spirit fell upon them, they were filled with the Spirit... Thus overwhelmed or immersed
 - c. These words the apostles spoke were not "gibberish" or some "heavenly language"
 - 1) Notice each man understood in their own language, their native tongues!
 - 2) They spoke real languages, but languages which they had not been taught!
 - d. This day and the events within it was the subject of many of the prophecies as the prophets looked to the future with an eye of desire & expectation!
2. The Holy Spirit was also poured out on Cornelius and his household **(Acts 10:44-48)**

- a. This was another very special occasion → It was the first time when the gospel had been preached to a Gentile audience! Could they be baptized as well?
- b. This pouring out took place in order to show the Jews that Gentiles could now be saved just like them... God no longer showed any distinction!
- c. Peter says this was just like what they experienced on Pentecost (**Acts 11:15-16**)
- 3. This baptism wasn't the baptism that one seeks in order to be saved! (**Rom 6:4; Col 2:12**)
 - a. Some wish to interpret almost every instance of baptism as being "Holy Spirit" baptism – Making water baptism the exception & H.S. baptism the rule!
 - b. Baptism that provides the remission of sins is something people were commanded to do, not something that happened TO them outside of their power!
 - c. Paul says there is one baptism that unites us! Which one is it? Well, which one were the apostles commanded to go teach and administer? (**Eph. 4:1**)

B. He was also at work revealing the will of God, just as He did during the Old Testament!

- 1. The writers of the scriptures wrote under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit: (**2 Tim 3:16-17**)
 - a. This verse probably has reference back to the O.T. scriptures since the New was still being written – However it applies because it says ALL SCRIPTURE
 - b. Inspiration means: "God Breathed" – It's God speaking through those men
- 2. The Spirit brought the revelation to men just as He did throughout time! (**1 Pet 1:10, 12**)
- 3. When we read the Bible we must remember that they are not opinions or beliefs of men!
 - a. It's not my place to question whether or not the instructions are what is best and it does not matter whether or not I agree with what it teaches! It's God's word!
 - b. It's not that times have changed and the Bible is outdated! Man's respect for God & his desire to do right is what has changed! (homosexuality & woman's role)
 - c. These words are the absolute truth because they are from the source of all truth!

C. We also see the work of the Holy Spirit through gifts which He bestowed on people:

- 1. During the time when the church and the new covenant was in it's infancy stages, there were special gifts of the Holy Spirit given to men: (**1 Cor 12:4, 7-11**)
 - a. These gifts were "manifestations" of the Spirit, simply meaning they were given as evidences for the Spirit's influence, authority, and presence!
 - b. No human being could work these gifts on his own power, only through the H.S.
- 2. Why did the Spirit give these gifts? They were to confirm the word! (**Hebrews 2:3-4**)
 - a. This time period certainly had it's difficulties! There was no "New Testament" as we have it today – It was in it's infancy stages being revealed piece by piece!
 - b. One would bring a revelation claiming it was from God – How would you know it was true or not? This is where spiritual gifts served to confirm what was truth!
 - c. Some gifts were gifts that actually revealed God's will (knowledge and prophecy for example) and some of the gifts were given as signs of authority from Heaven!
- 3. They didn't make one person more of a Christian or stronger than others (**1 Cor 12:28-29**)
 - a. Just when you consider their purpose it's clear that not everyone would need them
 - b. Some Christians possessed one gift, some another, some didn't even have one!
 - c. The gift of the Holy Spirit (**Acts 2:38**) isn't the same as these gifts – The gift was given to EVERYONE who obeys the gospel – The gifts did not come this way!
- 4. How did one receive one of these gifts of the Holy Spirit? (**1 Cor 12:8-11; Acts 8:14-19**)
 - a. Regardless how it was given, the Spirit Himself was the ultimate giver of the gift!
 - b. Certainly in the two cases of Holy Spirit baptism, gifts were given directly to men
 - c. Outside of those two very special cases, the gifts of the Holy Spirit were always given through the laying on the apostles hands! Yet, it still came by the H. S.!
 - d. Just anyone who had a gift was not able to impart gifts to other people!
 - e. Note: There is a possibility that some could have received a gift through prayer, though it's not necessary to conclude it would be given directly (**1 Cor 14:13**)
- 5. There are some things this teaches us about spiritual gifts today: (**1 Cor. 13:8-13**)
 - a. We have the completed revealed word of God! To claim to go back to spiritual gifts would be to leave the perfect for the imperfect, the mature for the immature!

- b. The comparison is between partial knowledge & perfect knowledge (brought to its end, finished, complete, wanting nothing necessary to completeness, perfect)
- c. Two problems: (1) God's will has been completely revealed so gifts to confirm & reveal aren't needed! (2) The apostles have died, who will lay hands on us?

D. Finally, the Holy Spirit played a role in the spread of the gospel

- 1. It was the Spirit that connected the Etheopian Eunuch with Philip! (**Acts 8:29, 39**)
 - a. How exactly this occurred seems mysterious to us, but it was the Spirit at work
 - b. The Spirit knew exactly who needed the gospel and who was able to teach and saw to it that the two crossed paths with one another
 - c. This seems to have occurred both miraculously and in seemingly normal ways
- 2. This does not seem to be an isolated instance, but the Spirit often showed an interest in connecting one who needs the gospel with one who can teach it! (**Acts 10:19; 16:7**)
- 3. This probably occurred much more often than we realize it and is recorded for us!

CONCLUSION: We owe so much praise and thanks to the Holy Spirit for all of the wonderful work He accomplished! Let's not be guilty of neglecting the Spirit through ignoring the great things He has done!