

3. The outpouring of the Holy Spirit

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Among all the Christian doctrines, the doctrine of the Holy Spirit is one of the most controversial ones you can find. While one camp of the Christianity goes to one end of the spectrum, the other one goes to the opposite end. While one camp says, "Anything, just about everything goes beyond norm is good," the other side declares, "Anything other than what we do is from demon."

My standard is from the Bible, not according to what the denomination believes. For an example, I don't see anywhere the Bible says that the Holy Spirit stops working in the same manner as He did in the first century. But the same time, the Bible is completely clear about what we are supposed to do with the gifts He allows us to use for the glory of Jesus.

Tonight we are going to go over the outpouring of the Holy Spirit that mentioned in Joel 2:28-32.

A. THE OUTPOURING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Joel 2:28-32 "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. 29 And also on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days. 30 "And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth: Blood and fire and pillars of smoke. 31 The sun shall be turned into darkness, And the moon into blood, Before the coming of the great and awesome day of the Lord. 32 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.

God is telling us that in the last days He would pour out His Spirit on all people. In the OT, the Holy Spirit would just come on certain people at certain times. Here are a few examples:

The craftsmen who built the tabernacle were filled with the Spirit of God, as well as Joshua, Othniel, Gideon, Jephthah, Samson, Saul and David to do His will.

But when we go to the NT, we see a different story.

Acts 1:4-5 And being assembled together with them, 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; 5 for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."

Jesus promised to us that the common born-again believers would be filled with the Holy Spirit.

Acts 2:16-17 But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: 17 'And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, That I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, Your young men shall see visions, Your old men shall dream dreams.

Peter uses the prophecy of Joel to show them that things are different now, just as God said they would be. Now God offered a New Covenant relationship, and part of the New Covenant was the outpouring of the Spirit for all who receive in faith.

B. BREATH, WIND AND SPIRIT?

You may be surprised to know that the Bible talks a lot about 'air'. The Old Testament Hebrew term for it is 'ruach.' The New Testament Greek term is 'pneuma'. We get our English word 'pneumatic' from it. The English Bible, however, doesn't translate either of these words as air. Our Bibles typically choose one of three words to convey the nuances of the Hebrew and the Greek,

1) **Breath:** "God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life." Genesis 2:7

2) **Wind:** "Like the blowing of a violent wind" Acts 2:2

3) **Spirit:** "my spirit rejoices in God my Savior" Luke 1:47

4) **The Holy Spirit:** John 14:26

John 14:26 But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.

A number of synonyms have been used for the Holy Spirit – words like Helper, Advocate, Counselor, Convicter, Restrainer, Exhorter and Reprover. The Spirit also is portrayed by symbols as well, such as a dove, fire, wind and even water. In the Gospel of John Jesus calls Him "Living Water."

John 7:37-38 On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. 38 He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water."

The Spirit of God is the dynamic of life. In fact, the Greek word for 'power' often associated with the Spirit is 'dunamis,' from which we get our English word 'Dynamite.'

C. WHO IS THE HOLY SPIRIT?

Many people hold some pretty strange ideas about the Holy Spirit, most of them erroneous. In fact, when people attempt to explain their beliefs, they are often most confused about the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. Let's examine three important truths:

1) **The Holy Spirit is a distinct person. He is a 'Him,' not 'it.'**

John 14:16-17 And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever-- 17 the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you.

The Counselor came and became a part of our lives deep within. No longer merely with us, but in us. That's a mind-staggering truth. And notice that He is called "He" or "Him," never "It." Nowhere in any version of Scripture is the Spirit of God referred to as "It."

2) **The Holy Spirit is active and involved.**

John 16:7-8 Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you. 8 And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment

John 16:13-15 However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. 14 He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you. 15 All things that the Father has are Mine. Therefore I said that He will take of Mine and declare it to you.

When the Holy Spirit moves among a body of believers, He mobilizes and empowers. He brings an understanding of spiritual truth from the Scriptures as well as a conviction of sin within our inner being.

We become sensitive, motivated, spiritually alive. We are cleansed. We are purged, enthusiastic, actively excited about right things. Who hasn't been in worship services or in meetings where the Spirit's presence made the place electric? But when He is absent, the atmosphere is dreadfully dead, desperately and horribly lifeless. I have witnessed both. The contrast is undeniable.

3) The Holy Spirit is deity. He is God!

1 Corinthians 3:16 Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?

Christians have been known to stand in strong defense of the deity of Jesus Christ and we certainly should. But what about the deity of the Spirit? Pause and ponder this: The third member of the Godhead, the invisible, yet all-powerful representation of deity, is actually living inside our being. Therefore, the limitless capabilities of God Himself are resident within us, because He indwells us at all times.

The Holy Spirit exists in an invisible realm. We will never see His presence or power, though we are convinced of His reality. We will only see His working – the results of His enabling, His filling, His guiding. But when He, the Spirit of God, is in control, the results are nothing short of phenomenal!

D. THE HOLY SPIRIT AND BELIEVERS

We believe there is an empowering experience with the Holy Spirit that is separate and distinct from conversion. We acknowledge a three-fold relationship between the Holy Spirit and the believer that is represented by three Greek prepositions - 'para', 'en', and 'epi.'

1) The Holy Spirit is dwelling WITH a person prior to conversion.

He is the One convicting a non-believer of his sin, convincing him that Jesus Christ is the only answer. The Holy Spirit is constantly testifying of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment to come. This has the first Greek preposition 'para'.

2) The Holy Spirit who lives IN the hearts of the born-again believers, provides the power in the life of the believer to give him victory over sin and over the flesh.

We are taught to walk after the Spirit and not after the flesh. He that walks after the Spirit will not fulfill the lusts of the flesh. The Holy Spirit is the power over the flesh life, giving us power over our fallen nature. He is the power in our life to conform us into the image of Jesus Christ. This has the second Greek preposition 'en'.

2 Corinthians 3:18 But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.

3) There is a third relationship that the believer can have that is separate and distinct from the first two. This relationship is when the Holy Spirit comes UPON us.

The word is 'epi' in the Greek, which means 'upon' or 'over.' I prefer the translation of 'overflow' because I believe that this experience allows the Holy Spirit to flow forth out of our lives.

Acts 1:8 But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.

Our lives then are not just a vessel containing the Spirit, but they become channels by which the Spirit flows forth to touch the people around us. This 'coming upon' experience provides evidence of the dynamic power of the Holy Spirit, allowing us to be effective witnesses for Jesus Christ. That is God's ideal and plan, that my life be the instrument through which He can reach the world around me as the Spirit flows forth, as the dynamic of the Spirit goes forth out of my life.

So it's one thing to be filled with the Spirit, and it's quite another to have the Spirit flowing out. The inlet of the Spirit is powerful and dynamic, but there has to be that flowing forth of the Spirit from my life to affect and touch others around me.

Some call this a baptism of the Holy Spirit. Some call it being filled with the Spirit. Some call it the empowering of the Spirit. It means being overflowed with the Spirit.

This only can happen when we yield the control of our lives to the Holy Spirit. Some times, we can slip away from the close relationship with the Lord because of our carnal selfish nature. That is when we have to come back to God so that we can be refilled and overflowed with the Holy Spirit.

When some charismatic denominations think that baptism of the Holy Spirit means that they speak in tongue. That would be a side effect or one of the end results for the believer, not the main point.

E. THE OBJECTIVE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

If you get involved in a ministry that glorifies itself instead of Jesus Christ, the Spirit of God is not in that ministry. If you follow a leader who is redirecting the glory to himself or to that ministry instead of to Jesus, the Spirit of God isn't empowering his leadership. Mark it down: THE SPIRIT GLORIFIES JESUS CHRIST.

I'll take it even one step further. If the Holy Spirit Himself is being emphasized and magnified, He isn't in it! Jesus Christ is the One who is glorified when the Spirit is at work. The Spirit does His work behind the scenes, never in the limelight.

F. THE METHOD OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

1) The Holy Spirit **MELTS us, before He starts any work in our lives.**

What we think good and what God think good are completely different in many ways. We tend to satisfy with less standard with our own preferences. God's standard demands nothing but perfection since He is perfect, holy and righteous.

The Holy Spirit would not be happy with what we think good enough, so He melts our characters and lives before He starts to do anything.

2) The Holy Spirit **MOLDS us into the shape of Jesus.**

It's nothing short of amazing how such a process in our lives clears up our sight, freeing us to pursue wrong directions. The Spirit's presence is there to mold us and reshape us. Let me add that it can get pretty painful when He begins to poke and prod. Yet the Spirit who shapes us is also "the Counselor." He will be with us to help us. Right now, right where you are, ask the Spirit to mold you into what He would have you be.

Romans 12:1-2 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. 2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

3) The Holy Spirit FILLS us with His power, perseverance and wisdom if we let Him.

Because the Holy Spirit is real and relevant, it is remarkable how He turns that day we may have dreaded into opportunities to experience His power and feel His peace, as we run with perseverance the race marked out for us. But there is one condition, we have to let Him control our lives, not just giving advices.

4) The Holy Spirit USES us to touch, to influence and to show others about Jesus.

Ask the Spirit of God to use you with the gifts and abilities that He's given you. Secure in the confidence that God is in control of your life, you will be free to serve Him with joy and effectiveness.

G. APPLICATION

If we are sincerely willing to be restored, reshaped, refreshed and renewed by the Spirit of God, we will begin to discover a dimension of living we've never known before. A whole new process will start in our lives. And the best part is this: Jesus Christ alone will be glorified!