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PNEUMATOLOGY I

**The Doctrine of the Holy
Spirit**

**Cameroon Biblical Seminary
Class Transcripts**

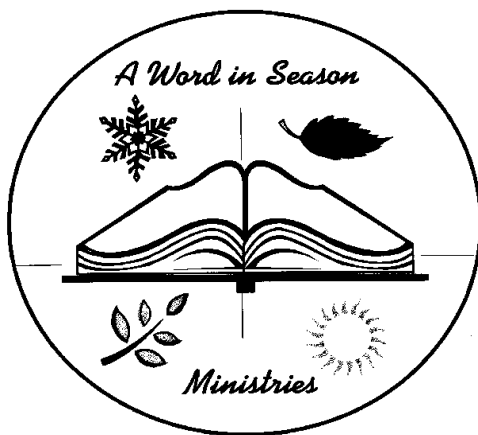
Earl Cooper, Ph. D.

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ὁ λόγος ἐν τῷ λαῷ ὁ λαός ἐν τῷ λόγῳ

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PREFACE

It has been my responsibility since 2003 to be involved in International Theological Education with the Canadian mission Across Borders for World Evangelism. In seeking to evaluate my teaching performance, I audio recorded all my classes that I taught over the following 15 years. In 2018, Kathi, my wife, and I determined to develop a book for each course I taught by combining the student manuals with transcripts of the classes. These we intend to supply for the school libraries where I have taught. This book is our second. The format we decided upon was simple. Each class transcript is clearly marked. Within each class transcript, the interactions between the students and professor are in italics. Multiple student responses are preceded with a dash (-). The lecture content for each class is in regular text with the major student manual outline interspersed. Bible text are usually from the NKJV. The Bible texts are italicized with regular text Bible references.

Please note: In the transposition of the recorded classes, it was the English portions of the recordings that were transposed, as some of the French language was untranslated in the class recordings. If, in reading the Bible texts, the reference is wrong, this is due to the difference between the French and English language Bibles. A perusal of the verse context should enable finding the proper verse reference in question. It is my prayer that each person reading this book will be motivated to read, memorize, study, and live by the Scriptures, being moved by the awesome grandeur and insurmountable wonder that by the Bible: God has spoken!

Pneumatology is a condensed study of what the Scriptures say about the nature and work of the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Godhead Trinity. It examines the role of restraint the Holy Spirit plays in the world and the work of salvation and sanctification He accomplishes among Christians.

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THE DOCTRINE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Introduction

It is imperative that believers recognize the essentiality of the Holy Spirit in salvation and sanctification, as well as their own responsibility regarding these areas, in order for the body of believers to function in a manner "worthy of God's call" and directed towards God's purpose. Such an understanding, it is hoped, will enhance the appreciation of God's grace as well as deepen the daily dependence of believers upon the Spirit.

The goal of this study is to establish a series of lectures which deal with the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the past and present. The series itself consists of two parts. The first looks briefly at the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament, and in the world of the unsaved; however, greatest emphasis is upon the practical ministry of the Holy Spirit in the New Testament, in the lives of believers as a result of Pentecost.

Part two takes a look at the gifts of the Holy Spirit with a view to challenge each believer with the responsibility of service for Christ as well as addressing the controversial doctrines of the charismatics.

CLASS 1

THE IDENTITY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT INTRODUCTION

During one of his missionary trips, the Apostle Paul questioned a group of Ephesian "church members" (actually, they were disciples of John the Baptist) about the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. Their answer must have shocked him somewhat, for they replied, "*.... We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost*" (Acts 19:2).

If Paul was shocked, surely the Father and Son were saddened as they viewed yet another example of the almost universal ignorance concerning the ministry of the blessed third Person in the Trinity. This statement by these Ephesian disciples, perhaps as no other in the Bible, illustrates the sorry and shameful treatment often given him. His very existence has been ignored and his ministry misunderstood. May the prayer of song writer Andrew Reed be our prayer as we approach our study of the Holy Spirit:

"Holy Ghost, with light divine, Shine upon this heart of mine; Chase the shades of night away, Turn my darkness into day."

I. THE PERSONALITY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

The Holy Spirit of God is a Person, as much as the Father and Son are Persons, and therefore experiences all the sinless elements involved within a divine personality.

A. He has a mind.

Rom. 8:27: *Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God.*

The first "He" in this verse is a reference to the Son of God, as seen in verse 34 of Romans 8, while the second "he" refers to the Holy Spirit himself. What a fantastic truth is seen here, for the believer enjoys the intercessory ministry of both the Son and Holy Spirit.

B. He searches out the mind of God.

1 Cor. 2:10: *But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God.*

In the verse just prior to this (2:9) Paul paraphrases from Isaiah 64:4 and writes: *"For since the beginning of the world Men have not heard nor perceived by the ear, Nor has the eye seen any God besides You, Who acts for the one who waits for Him."*

Because of this, some have erroneously concluded that it is impossible for even the redeemed to know anything concerning heaven. But here in 2:10 we are told that the Holy Spirit reveals such things to us.

C. He has a will.

1 Cor. 12:11: *But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually just as He wills.*

This is a reference to the various spiritual gifts which the Holy Spirit imparts to believers as he determines.

D. He forbids.

Acts 16:6, 7: *Now when they had gone through Phrygia and the region of Galatia, they were forbidden by the Holy Spirit to preach the word in Asia. After they had come to Mysia, they tried to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit did not permit them.*

Paul, Silas, and Timothy were prohibited from going to 2 possible mission fields by the Spirit.

E. He permits.

Acts 16:10: *Now after he had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go to Macedonia, concluding that the Lord had called us to preach the gospel to them.*

This explains the reason for the previous prohibition.

F. He speaks. Note to whom he speaks:

1. To Philip in a desert.

Acts 8:29: *Then the Spirit said to Philip, "Go near and overtake this chariot."*

2. To Peter on a housetop.

Acts 10:19: *While Peter thought about the vision, the Spirit said to him, "Behold, three men are seeking you."*

3. To some elders in Antioch.

Acts 13:2: *As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, "Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them."*

4. To seven churches in Asia Minor

Rev. 2:7: *He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; See Rev. 2-3*

On no less than seven occasions (one to each church) we read the above words: (Rev. 2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22).

G. He loves.

Rom. 15:30: *Now I beg you, brethren, through the Lord Jesus Christ, and through the love of the Spirit, that you strive together with me in prayers to God for me,*

It is wonderful to know that each believer is loved by the Father (Jn. 14:21; 16:27; 2 Cor. 9:7; Eph. 2:4; 2 Thess. 2:16; Heb. 12:6), and the Son (Gal. 2:20; Eph. 3:19; Rev. 1:5; 3:19), and the Holy Spirit.

H. He grieves.

Eph. 4:30: *And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.*

The command here is, literally, "stop grieving the Holy Spirit of God." They were already doing this. (For further details concerning the nature of this grievance, see Rev. 2:4.) This grieving attribute of the Holy Spirit is really an extension of his love, for while one may be angered by his enemies, he can only be grieved by those he loves.

I. He prays.

Rom. 8:26: *Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.*

In the difficult moments of our lives, how comforting it is to know we are being prayed for, perhaps by family members or some godly pastor, but how much more blessed to realize that the Holy Spirit of God offers up fervent and effective prayer for us.

In the New Testament alone there are some 261 passages which refer to the Holy Spirit. He is mentioned fifty-six times in the Gospels, fifty-seven times in the book of Acts, 112 times in the Pauline epistles, and thirty-six times in the remaining New Testament.

II. THE DEITY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

A. He is omnipresent.

Ps. 139:7: Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence?

In this Psalm, David concludes it was impossible for him to escape God's Spirit. This was true even if he ascended to the heights, descended into the depths, traveled across the sea, or surrounded himself with darkness.

B. He is omniscient.

1 Cor. 2:10, 11: But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God.

C. He is omnipotent.

Gen. 1:2: The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.

D. He is eternal.

Heb. 9:14: ...how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

E. He is called God.

Acts 5:3, 4: But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and keep back part of the price of the land for yourself "While it remained, was it not your own? And after it was sold, was it not in your own control? Why have you conceived this thing in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God."

F. He is made equal with the Father and the Son.

While the Holy Spirit does indeed occupy a place of submission in the Trinity, he is nevertheless not one whit behind the Father or Son in all their divine attributes. His perfect equality with the Father and Son is demonstrated through the following New Testament examples:

1. As seen in the baptismal experience of Christ.

Mt. 3:16, 17: *"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. "Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill.*

2. As seen in the temptation of Christ.

"Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward ahungered. (Mt. 4:1-2).

3. As declared by Jesus in the upper room.

Jn. 14:16, 17a: *"And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever – the Spirit of truth*

Jn 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.*

Jn. 15:26: *But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me.*

4. As declared by Paul.

Eph. 2:18: *For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father.*

2 Cor. 13:14: *The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen.*

Rom. 8:2, 3: *Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body.*

5. As declared by Peter.

1 Pet. 1:2: *...elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace be multiplied.*

1 Pet. 4:14: *If you are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are you, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. {NU-Text omits the rest of this verse. } On their part He is blasphemed, but on your part He is glorified.*

6. As declared in the book of Acts.

Acts 2:33: *"Therefore being exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out this which you now see and hear.*

7. As declared by Jesus on the Mount of Olives.

Matt. 28:19,20: *Go therefore {M-Text omits therefore. } and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, "teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen.*

III. THE NAMES AND TITLES OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

Often in the Scripture one may learn much about someone simply by studying the names and titles given to that person. So it is with the Holy Spirit. The thirteen titles ascribed to him provide much insight into his true nature. He is called:

A. The Spirit of God.

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

B. The Spirit of Christ.

Rom. 8:9: *But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His.*

C. The Eternal Spirit.

Heb. 9:14: *...how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?*

D. The Spirit of truth.

Jn. 16:13: *"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.*

E. The Spirit of grace.

Heb. 10:29: *Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, count-*

ed the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace?

Obstacles to Understanding the Ministry of the Spirit

For those of you who have taken church history, you realize that the church has gone through a history of wrestling with doctrine. In the day of the apostles after the Lord Jesus Christ rose and went to heaven, at Pentecost God gave birth to the church. As the apostles gathered daily with the people, there were questions regarding theology. Many of the people who were in the early church had actually seen Jesus Christ. Perhaps many heard Him preach on the sermon on the mount, were believers and were part of the church. And because they had physically seen Jesus Christ who looked just like an ordinary man, He ate and He slept and He worked just a regular man.

I remind my students that pictures we see of Jesus are not accurate because He did not have a halo to show He is God. The problem they had was: Could He have really been fully God? The apostles affirmed, He was the Son of God. Yet, as time passed and there were fewer people living who had seen Jesus Christ, they continued to study the Word of God, especially the prophets who declared the Messiah was God. For example, In Isaiah we are told His name is Wonderful, Counsellor, Almighty God, and Everlasting Father. The people who studied the Scriptures to declare that the Messiah was God and did not see Him physically, had another problem: Could He really have been a man?

What the church began to do under the apostles leadership was to write out their doctrinal issues. These doctrinal writings are called Creeds. They were short statements to summarize the truth of the Scripture regarding what God revealed to man. We stand on the shoulders of these Church Fathers in terms of summarizing doctrine. Two thousand years of church history these Creeds have gone through many more areas that were defined: What was the emptying of Him? Was his death substitutional or just example?

Through church history, more of these doctrines have been developed to give us the essentials of Bible truth. You and I live in the time of the church where there is transition, but we deal with the essentiality of the doctrines of the Spirit of God. This came out of the necessity to define what the Bible says, because there is so much false teaching regarding the ministry of the Spirit of God today. Within the last 50 years there have been more writing about the Spirit of God than ever before.

The doctrines have been defined and in many cases, it is the position of the church regarding the doctrine that will determine what the denomination or what the church believes. We are passing from this phase of defining the doctrine of the Spirit, to defining the doctrine of Hermeneutics and Interpretation. As you continue as church leaders, you will have to wrestle with these issues yourself.

I. The importance of understanding the ministry of the Holy Spirit

A. Because of confusion with respect to the Spirit of God

We have these Bible terms that are used and misused among God's people. The Bible talks about the Baptism of the Spirit, the Filling of the Spirit, the Sealing of the Spirit, the Indwelling of the Spirit, the Gifts of the Spirit, etcetera. The Bible does not speak of the slaying of the Spirit. Charismatics speak of being slain in the spirit. Some churches say the baptism of the Spirit is this, and others say, no-no, it is this. In Cameroon, you have a very strong charismatic movement among the churches. So strong that some would say that if you do not speak in tongues, you are not a believer. Who is right? There is much confusion. How do you determine the truth?

The man who has the most education has the truth! Is this true? The world thinks this. How do we know truth, where do we find it? There is only one source of absolute truth—the Bible. To study the Scriptures in the proper way, will give us the answer.

B. Because of commands with respect to Spirit of God

There is also the problem concerning the commands of the Spirit. Christians are commanded to '*be filled with the Spirit of God*'. We are commanded to '*walk in the Spirit*', to '*not to grieve the Spirit*', '*not to quench the Spirit*'. All texts use the imperative mood of command, yet objections, confusion and misrepresentation persist.

Think of all of these terms related to the Holy Spirit: filling, walking with, grieving, quenching. Do you think you could write out a proper definition of these terms now? Some of you could because you have been under good teaching. However, if you went to your church people and asked them to define these terms, you would find out how much confusion there is. If you are going to help our church people, you must know the doctrines and the details of the ministry of the Spirit of God, especially when there is so much confusion.

II. The keys to understanding the ministry of the Holy Spirit

Like all Bible doctrines, there are foundational truths that all the other doctrines stand on. When it comes to theology, it is important for you as church leaders to understand. If the foundation is not true, then doctrine will not be true. It is so important to teach the truth, not our opinions.

Prof. Question: *What are some cults that call themselves Christian in Cameroon?*

Student Response: *“The Way”, “Jehovah’s Witness” “Mormons”*

When you study these groups, you find they take their roots back to error in teaching that started the whole movement away from the truth of God. We have to understand in the ministry of the Holy Spirit what the true foundation is. This calls for an understanding of the trinity of God.

A. The Trinity of God

1. The Shema

Deut. 6:4: *“Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one!”*

When you look at the history of how we got the Scriptures, we see God spent 4000 years emphasizing that God is one God. This is something that even today Israel holds strongly to the Shema. Every true Jewish person knows this verse, *“Hear O Israel, the Lord your God is one Lord”*. In the history of Israel that is what made Israel unique among other nations. They believed that God is one. No other nation in the era of the Israelites in the O.T. believed this.

When we enter into N.T. teaching, we have to remember this is the foundation. We have more information regarding Christ because He came. We have more information regarding the promise of Christ that He would send the Comforter. We have more information about the Holy Spirit, as He led the writing of the N.T. Unfortunately, this extra information has separate the truth that God is one God. Even in the local church talk about the Father and the Son and Spirit divides the Trinity up in our thinking. Rarely does the church declare: *“Remember, God is One God”*

We have to discipline ourselves to state things properly. When we talk about the Trinity we must make people understand it is not three gods sharing the trinity, it is One God in three persons who is the Trini-

ty. It is proper grammar to say: “God are One”. It does not sound right, but it is true. We have to try in our minds to step back into the shoes of the Israelites, even in the N.T. and remember that God is One God. This was certainly in the mind of Christ and in the teaching of Christ.

Prof. Question: What did He say in John 14 when the disciples said “Show us the Father”? What was His answer?

Student Response: If you have seen Me, you have seen the Father.

2. The Danger

There is a danger to emphasize the distinction and forget the foundation. In theology, we have terms that help us grasp these truths, to help us understand what the trinity is. We say that God is One in essence. We call this Ontological Trinity – ‘as He Exists’. You will never really understand this, no one can, because it is beyond human capacity to understand this. It is unique to God. By nature, God is one, yet He exists in three in persons. We call this the Economic Trinity- as He functions. As our one God functions, He functions in three persons. There is nothing in nature that illustrates this. Do not try!

A Sunday School teacher used an egg to try to help me understand; the egg has the shell, the yolk, and the clear gel part. This is like God. No, it is not!. When you separate the three, they are individual things. The shell does not equal the yolk; none of the parts of an egg are the same. Others say God is like water; it can be liquid, it can be gas, it can be solid ice. This is like God. No, it is not! The molecules of water cannot be all three at one time. The only real example is man. Man is body, soul, and spirit, but that is just as hard to understand as the Trinity because all we can see is the body. So, we accept the Word of God by faith. We see the function clearly in Scripture of the Trinity; we see salvation planned by the Father, provided by the Son and appropriated by the Spirit.

The problem is trying to explain God. I am as guilty as others are. I do not think children are condemned to hell because I misled them, but there comes a time for people to realize that God not given us the wisdom to understand some things. It is good for people to accept this. There is a man who wrote a book entitled: “*Your God is Too Small.*” He tried to show people that when we reduce God down to human understanding, we make God too small. There are things about God that we

just need to believe. That is truly, what makes Christianity distinct: the faith that we have **IN THE RECORD THAT GOD HAS GIVEN.**

We have a living faith and so our salvation is based not on what we do, but on what we believe. So do not beat yourselves for using these illustrations. You know your people and you are trying to help children to understand, it is your choice. However, sometime in the maturing of your people, you need to explain there are some things we just cannot understand. I am sure you realized that the egg is not a good example. You have come to understand this.

3. The point

In our teaching we forget to emphasize that God spend 4000 years emphasizing this. Do not stop teaching the Trinity, but be sure to emphasize is that God is One. The point is **the Holy Spirit is God.** This is what I want you to focus on in your papers: **Support the truth that all that defines God, His attributes, His perfections, His wonder is true of the Holy Spirit.**

When you write your papers this statement should be your guide as you choose the content. Some topical texts would include: Gen 1:2, *“the Spirit of God moved over creation”*; Psm.139:7, The Spirit of God is omnipresent; Is 11:2, the Spirit of God is omnipresent; Acts 5:4, the story of Ananias and Sapphira where Peter said, *“You have not lied to men, but to God. How is it that you have agreed together to test the Spirit of the Lord?”*; Matt. 28:19, 20, the great commission, where Jesus said, *“baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit.”*

Can you see why, in the book of Acts, when Paul asked the Corinthian disciples *“Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?”* They responded with *“We have not so much as heard whether there is a Holy Spirit.”* (Acts 19:1-2). These disciples were primarily Jewish people. All their lives they had been taught “Hear, O Israel, the Lord your God is one Lord” and for their minds to hear Jesus say, “I and the Father are One”.

These words stretched their brains. And now, hearing of the Spirit as well? This was much new truth to absorb in one lifetime! That is why the doctrines had to be nailed down with creeds and exposition. Nevertheless, the Bible evidence of the Trinity is extensive. Here are some examples:

Matt. 3: 16, 17: *When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He*

saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

At the baptism of Jesus, you see the Son standing, the Father speaking, the Spirit descending. We have the doxology that Paul used in 2 Corinthians:

2 Cor. 13:13: *The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen.*

Do you use this committal prayer at the closing of your services? The N.T. speaks of the three persons of our One God. They are equal, yet they are distinct. The whole of Scripture truth, O.T. and N.T., indicates the names, the works, the ministries, of God are contributed to the Holy Spirit, as well as the Father and the Son. This is impossible unless the Spirit of God is equally God.

The first foundational consideration for the truth of the Spirit is the Trinity of God. The second consideration is the very character of revelation itself.

Prof. Question: *Before we look at our notes, let's talk about revelation. Give me your understanding of what the revelation of God is.*

Student Response: *-Knowledge*

Prof. Response: *Okay, my grandson who is 2 years old has some knowledge, is that the revelation of God?*

Let's expand the definition.

Student Response: *-To discover.*

Prof. Response: *I have a dog that discovers dropped food and eats it. Is that the revelation of God?*

Student Response: *The unveiling of what is hidden.*

Prof. Question: *Okay, that is good. My dog buried a bone and another dog found it. Is that the revelation of God?*

Student Response: *-The revelation of God is when God tells His nature, what He is. - The revelation of God is illumination to help us understand what He does.*

Prof. Response: *You have given much information and it is accurate. But, for our purposes I want to simplify it more, but make it thorough and accurate.*

When we speak of revelation, we speak of understanding or unveiling of information directly from God, Your early definitions were good, but

you failed to say “directly from God”.

B. The Character of Revelation

Let us talk about what kinds of revelation or direct unveiling from God there are. This is a review of foundation of Bibliology.

John 14:9: *Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, 'Show us the Father'?"*

John 1:14, 18:*And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth... No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him.*

Jesus expressed the very nature of God although He was in the flesh. Under the kinds of revelation, that is special revelation. The other kind is “general revelation”. *The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiwork* (Psm. 19:1). Creation demonstrates that there is a God. So creation itself is a form of direct revelation from God. Within humanity there is conscience and conscientiousness, two different things—self-awareness and the provoking of our inner self in terms of doing wrong.

These are general revelations to express the fact that man is not alone. Conscientiousness of man determines there is a God. Conscience demonstrates itself in human guilt. We feel guilty when we do wrong. All of general revelation has been marred, twisted because of sin. Some aspects of creation were not made by God, but were the result of sin. Romans tells us, *“The wages of sin is death.”* Everywhere in creation, you see death. That was not part of God’s original creation. Death has no part of God. It is the consequences of sin and the judgement of God.

Our conscientiousness of God can be manipulated to the point of virtual non-existence through “modern” education. Have you ever met someone who says, “I do not believe there is a God”? Was that an individual realization or not? As I observed people, I concluded that only educated man claims to be atheistic. Corrupted human reason has taught ‘there is no God’ and many believe it. The conscience within man is hardened by sin as society tolerates wickedness, therefore, the conscience ceases to impact man.

I give you this perfect example: in Canada, abortion was made legal years ago. We are talking about the destroying of unborn children. Eve-

ry year there is someone in Canada who kills his or her own child by abortion, and there is no remorse. The courts of Canada addressed a woman who drowned her two young children. When she stood before the court she had no remorse, she said it was justifiable because they were a burden to my life. Our country looks at this woman and says “shame”, but our country does the same thing with regard to abortion. So, the guilt level has lowered; the lady could claim not guilty killing her children if the country does the same thing!

We have general revelation and then we have specific revelation: God speaking through the prophets. They repeated the message in human language to the people.

Prof. Question: What forms of special revelation are there to communicate to people from God?

Student Response: -Language, God spoke to Moses, God spoke to Abraham.

Prof. Question: What other forms of special revelation from God are there to communicate to people?

Student Response: -Dreams and visions –History’s lessons -The written Word -Human language.

Prof. Question: Hebrews says, in times past God revealed himself in various ways; dreams, visions, the spoken word. Were all of these special revelations recorded for man?

Student Response: -Yes -No.

Prof. Response: For those who say ‘yes’, I have a question for you: What right did God have when he judged Cain for improper sacrifice, but did not judge Abel?

In holding Cain and Abel responsible Abel’s sacrifice was accepted, Cain’s was not. Where in Scripture record was the information given to them to hold them accountable for the sacrifice?

The answer is ‘nowhere’. We do not have the information that God gave to Adam and Eve and their children regarding sacrifices. But, God told us in Romans we are judged by the Word. Therefore, either He revealed something to Adam’s family regarding sacrifice and held them accountable, or He judged them unjustly.

Heb. 1:1: *God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets,*

This passage addresses the time of the prophets, specific revelation given through them. Because the text is talking about the prophets, it refers to the spoken and written revelation; nevertheless, as you indicated in your answers, there were various ways, through time, in which God revealed Himself. But, there is a difference between God's revelation and God's written revelation.

This is what we need to understand as we look at the ministry of the Spirit of God. We want to focus on the revelation that *is written down*. God chose to give man a written revelation of information He wanted preserved. In the passage in Hebrews, we realize revelation has ceased. In the context of the Character of Revelation, there is a development of revelation in general.

1. Development of Revelation in General

i) The giving of truth by God is progressive.

The progressive nature of God's truth does not refer to comprehension but to information. For example in Genesis 3, we see the significance of the gospel being in its infancy in this passage.

Gen 3:15: *And I will put enmity between you and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel.*

We see in here this reverence of the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent. We see an allusion to some struggle between the two. The seed of woman is bruised in the heel; the seed of the serpent is bruised in the head. That is all the information that is given here. I have no idea how much Adam understood when given this information.

Prof. Question: *What this text is about, what is your answer?*

Student Response: *"Christ, the seed of the woman"*

Prof. Question: *What is the bruising of the head and the heel?*

Student Response: *Why Satan was condemned by Christ on the cross.*

Prof. Response: *Is there mention of blood there?*

Student Response: *No.*

Genesis 3:15 is the first 'seed' of the gospel. No details are given regarding the 'seed', other than the woman will have a 'seed'. We know it is Christ because we have the prophecy of the 'seed' all through the O.T. At that point, all it is revealed is the seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman battle. The seed of the woman is wounded, but not

permanently; there is life, there is hope. The seed of the serpent is fatally wounded with no hope of survival. How much more Adam & Eve understood, I do not know, but I believe he was the most intelligent person in the world. This seed of the gospel was his eschatology. The issue for Adam was restoring Eden who lost the perfect paradise, but God promised to restore it. From this text, we have the progression of the seed of the woman; which became the seed promised to Abraham, the seed promised to David, the seed bringing the New Covenant through Jeremiah. We see there is progression in the revelation of the seed. Not all the information is given in the first reference.

In any doctrine you will see this; Scripture is progressive, God does not give us all the information immediately. We will see the same thing is true about the Spirit of God. We are told in Genesis that when God created the world the Spirit of God moved over the face of the earth. That is the first reference, but it does not give much information about the ministry of the Spirit of God.

As we progress through Scripture we get a bigger picture about the ministry of the Spirit of God. Progressive revelation indicates that more is added to something previously assumed. When the apostles were baptizing in the name of the Spirit, there should not have been a surprise. Who is the Spirit?, was not a legitimate question. The Spirit is referred to in the O.T. but His ministry is hidden, is incognito. The very fact that the Spirit of God was mentioned in Genesis 1, should presume the Spirit to be active all through Scripture. We see the greater revelation in the N.T.

ii) The giving of truth by God is distinct

In the O.T. the truth focusses on the law being presented as the Appearance of the external evidence of God's people distinct from other nations ("thou shalt not...", circumcision, special feasts). The giving of the law was a revelation of God in a unique and special way. When we see the law in the Pentateuch, we see its application as people live it out in their lives. *Thou shalt not kill* is obvious. Those who disobeyed were duly punished.

In the N.T. the truth is internalized through Christ, the law is 'written in the hearts' of all believers. When we come to Christ sharing truth, He said, 'The law says thou shalt not kill, but I say if you hate in your heart, you broke the law.' He extended the law to internalize it as Paul indicated in 2 Corinthians: *You are our epistle written in our hearts,*

known and read by all men; clearly you are an epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink but by the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of flesh, that is, of the heart (2 Cor. 3:2-3). These two points help us understand that revelation is progressive and distinct.

CLASS 2

We are examining the ministry of the Holy Spirit. The keys to understanding the ministry of the Holy Spirit are first, the truth regarding the Trinity: In all of the work of God, all the trinity is involved. The second key is the character of revelation: revelation is a progressive work of God. In the O.T. though we do not see the details of the ministry of the Holy Spirit we can assume the work continues even though the revelation is not ours. The third key we now examine is the parallels in Scripture.

C. The Parallels in Scripture

1. Holy Spirit in Old Testament

We see in the O.T. that there was the coming upon by the Holy Spirit for empowerment. For example, when the temple was built under the leadership of Solomon, the Word indicated that the workers were empowered by God. We see that in the O.T. regarding the prophets and even the kings that were anointed, as a symbol of their empowerment. Definitely, the ministry of the Holy Spirit was evident in the O.T. by coming upon God's people to empower them for whatever task they needed. We also see this in the O.T. in the miracles performed by the prophets. When Elijah was taken up, Elisha was promised a double portion of 'the Spirit.' Therefore, the miracles of Elijah and Elisha; the raising of the dead, the ax that came up out of the water, etc., were by the Holy Spirit's empowerment.

Then, when you look at the character of God's people in the O.T., even though the fruit of the Spirit is not mentioned until the N.T., you see evidence of it. You see the life of Abraham, Joseph, Moses and David, God building His character in their lives. For example, Moses was a man of great meekness. In the N.T. meekness is part of the fruit of the Spirit. In the O.T. we see God's empowerment to complete His purpose through miracles, proving the message of prophets is true.

2. Holy Spirit in New Testament

In the N.T. this is given great attention. When Jesus began his ministry, we see the Holy Spirit come upon Him. It was significant enough that God allowed the people to see a dove come down. Remember that in the Scriptures we have the regular forms of language. When the N.T. says the Spirit came down as a dove, it was not literally a dove coming down. In some way God allowed the actual Spirit of God to be visible as it descended on Jesus and it is described as a dove.

In Acts 2 we see the same thing regarding the church:

Acts 2:3: *Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them.*

Here the Spirit descended as *tongues of fire*. So part of God's progressive revelation is to give evidence of the Spirit of God in the N.T. coming down whereas it was just mentioned in the O.T. We know that when Christ performed miracles, he attributed this to the ministry of the Holy Spirit in His life. The miracles of Jesus are no different from those in the O.T., the dead were raised, water made drinkable, the sick were raised to health. In the N.T. the blind were given sight, the lame were healed, the dead were raised, the water was turned to wine. These are all the same kind of miracles with one exception: Jesus gave up His own spirit and Jesus rose from the dead.

We see the parallels of the Spirit's work among O.T. believers in Galatians where we are told of the fruit of the Spirit:

Gal 5:22-23: *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such, there is no law.*

This is not an assigned memory verse, but I encourage you to memorize it. I believe the evidence of Christ in our lives is the fruit of the Spirit. In our keys to understanding the ministry, we have the concept of the trinity so that everything that God the Father does and God the Son does, the Spirit is active in doing. The principle of progressive revelation is evident in these texts. Recognizing the ministry of the Spirit in the O.T., even though details are not given until the N.T., is plain to see. This is evident as we look at the parallels in both O.T. and N.T. 'coming upon,' and miracles, and the evidence of the fruit of the Spirit.

Student Question: *Why did Elijah ask for the double portion of the Spirit? Could not the Spirit do the work?*

Prof. Response: *You will have to ask Elijah when you get to heaven. I*

think he was referring to the opportunities to prove the power of God, not a double portion of power.

The point is God was willing, which tell us much about praying in faith.

Student Question: *Is there a parallel between Isaiah 11:1-2, and Galatians 5 the fruit of the Spirit?*

Prof. Response: *I see this as just a prophecy of the ministry of the Spirit of God for the Messiah, and potentially for His people. The fulfillment of this came when Christ came. The text indicates that wisdom, understanding and might of the Messiah exceeds all other. We can see all of these in David's life, but nothing in comparison to Christ, for He was God.*

Student Question: *Was the descending dove an actual bird?*

Prof. Response: *You need to review the grammatical principles of Hermeneutics. The Spirit descended 'as' a dove! When Scripture says Jesus is the door to the sheep pen, He was actually a physical door?*

Student Question: *What was the aspect of the Holy Spirit when He came upon Christ?*

Prof. Response: *All I can say is what the Scripture's say. The visible evidence was described by the apostolic writer as descending in the same manner that a dove lands upon a branch. If I say: Look at that student playing football, he runs like a gazelle! Does that mean he became a gazelle? Certainly you have seen a dove or pigeon land, it slowly and gently settles down rather than a hawk or eagle that descends for attack. Consider this; this was a real dove, what happened to it? Did it enter into Jesus or vanish?*

We must be careful when we get a mental picture from the Word of Scripture not to violate grammatical principles when we teach the meaning.

III. The Problems in understanding the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

I listed four problems of understanding the Ministry of the Spirit of God.

A. The Problem of Our Terms

There are terms that often are misinterpreted in the church today. For example, the Scriptures say 'be filled with the Spirit of God.' The idea of filling suggests there may be a possibility to be half-full. The text says 'do not be drunk with wine but be filled with the Spirit of God.' The text defines what filling is. A man that is drunk with wine is

not half drunk or a quarter drunk. Intoxication means he is under the control of the wine. Do not be controlled by alcohol but by the Spirit of God. To be filled with the Spirit is to be controlled by the Spirit of God, either God controls or He does not control, there is no half way between. When driving an auto, you either have control or do not, there is no halfway between. We will look at other terms that confuse later.

B. The Problem of Our Emphasis

The example I give in the text in the N.T., where God began the church through the Spirit's outpouring at Pentecost is a good example. Sometimes the emphasis we give may impress people that this is the first time the Spirit was working in people's lives. We saw the work of the Spirit of God in the O.T. The uniqueness of Acts 2 is that it was a 'corporate' coming upon involving the whole church. Nevertheless, in the O.T. individuals experienced the new birth as in the N.T. where a whole group of people experienced it. Otherwise, Jesus would not have expected the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, to be aware of new birth (John 3:10). The Spirit of God is equal to the Father and the Son. Has always been involved in all God's works even as He is omnipresent and has always been omnipresent.

C. The Problem of Our Concepts

I used the term 'spirit' itself as an example. We can talk about spirit as a sense of enthusiasm or commitment that someone has. A man has a 'spirit of grace' or a 'spirit of mercy,' which means his life is characterized by mercy or grace. In that sense, the idea of 'spirit' is not a living being, but a sense or direction in a person's life. Yet the spirits created by God were called angels. In this sense, we use the term spirit as living beings, which are not material, they are immaterial, they are spirits. God created these beings, called angels; those that followed the 'chief angel' Lucifer became evil spirits. In the Scriptures they are called demons or devils, they are spirit, but confirmed in their evil and their rebellion. Those that chose not to follow are angels, messengers of God. With this meaning, we have the sense of a spirit coming upon a person that could be either evil or good.

There was within the Christian church years ago a saying:: "Let go and let God take over." This was the Keswick movement motto originating from Britain. It suggested, "Do not have a will of your own, let God control. The movement brought great problems because the Spirit of God does not work outside the will of man. Demons do work within

man when man gives up his will. In the times of Scripture writing, drugs were used to render the will of a person suppressed so demons could take over. Great confusion resulted. People do not let go of their will so the Spirit of God will control their life. The Spirit of God works in our life through the will as we surrender in obedience to Him. These examples show that our concept of the word 'spirit' are often not correct.

D. The Problem of Our Excuse

Gal 5:16, 17: *I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish.*

In this passage, Paul is challenging the believer to “walk in the Spirit.” Christians use this text as an excuse for sin, “Oh, I’m only human, I cannot help myself.” As a pastor, I have heard those words from people who are disobedient to God. A person commits adultery and says, “I’m only human, the temptation was too great”. A Christian is controlled by alcohol, “I am without power” he says. Even in the church, there has been this excuse, “Didn’t Paul say salvation is by grace, not works.” Nevertheless, the Bible makes no room for such “Christian” excuses:

Rom. 6:6: *knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin.*

Rom. 6:12: *Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts.*

Gal. 5:24: *And those who are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.*

In Christ, the flesh is crucified! These texts are just a sample of the 21 plus Bible references of the Christian’s call and choice to obey God rather than make excuses for sin.

1 Cor. 10:13: *No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.* Here God promises there is always a way of escape for the believer.

The above points address some of the problems of understanding the ministry of the Spirit of God. We looked at the importance of understanding the ministry, the keys to understanding, and four problems of understanding the ministry.

Student Question: *If you say that sin is a choice, how do you explain Romans 7 where Paul says he cannot do what he wants to do, but does what he does not want to do.*

Prof. Response: *In the Romans context Paul is not saying the Christian will always fail or never fail. I believe he admits his failures in the flesh but declares the answer clearly: O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? I thank God — through Jesus Christ our Lord! (7:24-25)*

With this declaration, Paul summarizes the ineptness of the law to bring victor, and introduces His thoughts on sanctification with these words: That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit (8:4).

Student Question: *Can you explain the text in Galatians 5 regarding ‘do not be drunk with wine.’ Some use this text to prove abstinence from alcohol.*

Prof. Response: *Paul is using a common situation in the culture of that day, to demonstrate control. In that culture, as today, alcoholism, drunkenness was very common. Everyone in the church would have seen the evidence of this, many who were saved, would have fallen to this before salvation. Paul is not saying, “You have two choices, either be drunk or be filled with the Spirit.” He is simply saying ‘in way alcohol can control a person who yields’, the Spirit of God should be controlling the believer who yields. Roman’s goes on to explain that this control comes through obedience to the Word of God as we walk in the Spirit.*

The Holy Spirit throughout History

Introduction

We now will look at the General Work of the Holy Spirit in Humanity. There is a saying “Love makes the world go around.” It is not true. God makes the world go around. Therefore, God’s love not man’s love continues human existence. In Jonathan Edwards’s sermon “Sinners in the hand of an angry God,” he demonstrated that all of humanity is on a thin thread, like a spider’s thread. Because of the rebellion of humanity, all humanity is susceptible to the judgement and justifiable destruction of God. There is no reason other than the grace and love of God that any sinner should breathe.

Yet, man does live, he does breathe, every good gift comes down from the Father above. If God sustains the world even in its rebellion, that work is not only a work of the Father and the Son, but also the Holy Spirit because they are One. We talked about the trinity, in all the works of God, revelation, creation, salvation, all the trinity are involved.

I. The Holy Spirit and All Men

When we say, “Jesus saves” we must understand, ‘The Father and the Spirit saves.’ When we say God created, we must understand, ‘God the Son and God the Spirit created.’ In all God’s works we must understand, what theologians call the Economic Trinity is involved. In our small human minds, we make it simple by saying, ‘the Father plans, the Son provides, the Spirit applies.’ Although an over-simplification, this helps us understand how the Trinity functions. Now, focusing on the ministry of the Holy Spirit, Scriptures indicate there are 3 ways in which the Spirit of God ministers to all humanity.

A. The Spirit is present in all as to life

We see clearly that at creation, the Spirit of God brooded or roamed over creation. He was present in creation. What does that mean? Scripture explains this:

Heb. 1:3: *He upholds all things....”*

Col. 1:17: *“by him all things exist”.*

Acts 17:28: *“for in Him we live and move and have our being,”*

God sustains all life, even physical life itself. If God ever turned His back on the world all life would immediately perish. The very components of life are dependent on God Himself. The plant life that requires the sun to provide photosynthesis depends on God’s present power. Metaphorically, God ‘heart beat’ is the power, which sustains all creation. Because God is one, this is part of the ministry of the Holy Spirit as well. The essence of life itself is dependent on God.

Student Question: Is there a difference between the Holy Spirit of God and the Spirit of God in me?

Prof. Response: Man possesses spirit as part of man’s design. God created man with body, soul and spirit. You cannot separate any aspect of man and still have man. The spirit that is a part of our creation is just as real as our flesh. Even the unsaved man has spirit. This is what makes man distinct from animal. It is not soul—intellect and will and emotion—animals have these.

But, man was created with spirit exactly the moment God breathed into Adam the breath of life. The Hebrew word for breath is spirit. It is the spirit of life. The essence of that life was fellowship with God. Adam had body and soul like the animals, although the soul of man, his intellect, his emotion, and his will was uniquely different from animals. But Adam also had spirit and that spirit within him was in fellowship with God Himself.

The spirit part of man had communion with God, who is spirit. When Adam sinned, this fellowship was broken. That does not mean that man was left without spirit. Man is eternal; therefore, the spirit, the body, and the soul are all eternal. What was lost was fellowship with God; life in God, as man's spirits united with God. At salvation, the Spirit of God indwells the believer; gives new life by restoring the fellowship of the believer's spirit with God. When we think of death, we think of man as a complete being. The Biblical synonym or definition of death is separation.

When people die, their soul/spirit (the immaterial) is separated from their body (the material). Will that always be the condition of people? No, separation is a temporary state because people are eternal. All people, saved or unsaved, will be raised from the dead (or raptured if believers). Physical death for all humanity, defined as separation of body from soul/spirit, is a temporary thing. Nevertheless, spiritual death will continue for many. Spiritual death is not the spirit of man departing from the body, which is physical death as defined above. Nevertheless, because of humankind's sin nature, Spiritual death is man's spirit separated from God from birth (Psm. 51:5).

Because of Adam's sin, every human is born spiritually dead. The very term "spiritual death" means man has a spirit, but it implies a condition of separation from God's Spirit. New life is our spirit united with God again. It is rebirth spiritually, at salvation. If a man never accepts God as Saviour, he will experience death. He is born into spiritual death, separated from God, he will experience physical death and at the end when judgement comes, his body and spirit will be raised and will be cast into the lake of fire which is eternal death.

For the believer, who is united with the Spirit of God for eternity, there is no longer spiritually death. We may experience physical death,

but even in that state, our soul/spirit is in the presence of God, never to be separated again. When we are raised, our body, soul and spirit is in a glorified state of sinless perfection, and we will be in that eternal state forever (1 Jn. 3:2).

Job 34:14,15: *If He should set His heart on it, If He should gather to Himself His Spirit and His breath, All flesh would perish together, And man would return to dust.*

Job, considered the earliest writer of Scripture, says that if God removed his Spirit, all flesh would die. Is this spiritual death or physical death? It is both! This tells us even physical life is dependent upon God. In N.T. Christ is credited with holding all life together:

Col. 1:17: *And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist.*

Did the Bible make a mistake? Is it Christ or the Holy Spirit that sustains all life? It is each because ‘God **are** one!’ Even as God sustains all creation, all men are sustained by God, even if only by a spider’s threat as Johnathan Edwards preached.

Student Question: *Does the Holy Spirit have proportional influence in people’s lives depending on whether you are a believer or not a believer?*

Prof. Response: *That is something we will be looking at later in class. Nevertheless, the idea of sustaining life is not spiritual influence but simply God’s power that keeps life going in the universe. Remember the book: “Your God is too small,” it emphasized that, according to the Bible, everything about our life is grace; common grace, saving grace, as taught by Brethren groups. The sermon by Jonathan Edwards brought thousands to faith. He reminded people that every person is suspended on a thin spider’s thread, which could snap at any moment. That thread is the grace of God. Your next breath is the grace of God. Do not turn your back on His word. The next beat of your heart is the grace of God. Edwards’ message was true. God will say ‘enough’ at some time.*

B. The Holy Spirit is present as restrainer

2 Thess. 2:7: *For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only He who now restrains will do so until He is taken out of the way.*

There is much in this text to understand the significance of “restrainer”. Paul is talking about the coming day of the Lord, which begins with the

tribulation period. It is within the tribulation period of seven years that the evil one, the lawless one, will be revealed. This is the anti-Christ. Paul, in 1 Thessalonians, told the people that the church will be taken away prior to this event.

In this context of 2 Thessalonians, Paul mentions in verse 5 that he has explained these things to them. In verse 6 he says they are aware of the one who is restraining now. He says there will come a time when this restraining will be removed, and the Anti-Christ will be revealed. There are many interpretations regarding this text. I am convinced Paul is talking about the ministry of the Spirit of God in the world today. It is evident that wickedness in the tribulation will go beyond where it is now.

Some would say the restrainer is the Spirit of God working through the church and when the church is gone, so is the restraining of God through the church is gone. When Jesus promised the Spirit would come, He said it would convince the world of sin and judgement. The point is that in history, until tribulation comes, the Spirit of God is holding back the wickedness of man. Someone said the way the world is now suggests it is hell. But remember, wickedness is in check. As much as there is suffering now, hell has no comparison.

God is sovereign; He set the boundaries of sea and the boundaries of sin. This is a part of the ministry of the Spirit of God. Whether through the church and the Word of God, or through a personal restraining for each individual, I do not know. All that we can say is, if we have people like Hitler who performed atrocities with the restrainer working, then seven years without the restrainer will be the worst wickedness the world has seen. I have seen photos of the holocaust and the bodies piled up like garbage. I cannot dismiss those images in my mind; humans piled like peelings off a mango.

If this is the extent of corruption that humanity has gone with the restrainer, I cannot imagine what the world will be like in the 7 years the restrainer is removed. Nevertheless, I know the judgement of God will come and only 20% of the population will be left. If this happened today, with 8 billion people on our planet, there would be less than 1 billion left in 7 years. This is impossible for me to imagine. The restrainer is active today, restraining all, thanks be to God!

C. The Holy Spirit gives Gifts or Talents to all men

Jam. 1:17: *Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.*

Ecc. 3:13: *every man should eat and drink and enjoy the good of all his labor — it is the gift of God.*

Ecc. 5:19: *As for every man to whom God has given riches and wealth, and given him power to eat of it, to receive his heritage and rejoice in his labor — this is the gift of God.*

Every good gift comes from above (Jam. 1:7). We do not have time for a word study of ‘gifts’ in N.T. but we are told in Ecclesiastes even ‘eating and drinking’, strength and wealth, are God’s gifts. God gives an endowment to humankind: the ability to do what needs to be done: to eat, to work, to attain wealth, and the strength to enjoy it all.

I personally like to make the distinction between gifts and talents to men. The Spirit of God gives the **ability** for humanity to exist together, to function with every individual doing his or her part. We have these individuals in the world that can take wood and make doors and tables and beautiful things. We have those who have a capacity to understand the human body and help those as visionaries. All these things help make our world function. God contributes all these abilities as gifts to man.

My father was a farm boy and when he went to WW2, he trained as a mechanic. He had mechanical aptitude. I also have this mechanical aptitude. I took things apart and put them back together even when I was very young. However, I have no talent for art, you have seen my chalkboard stick man drawings. That is the best I can do! Yet, my father was a good artist as well. His drawings of birds and animals are remarkable. My daughter is a phenomenal artist, even earning money by that talent.

God has given us these gifts. Whether these talents are given through genetics, or developed through time, I do not know. Some families have great musical ability and make music together fantastically. You could give them any musical instrument and within a week, they would know how to play it. You yourselves know you have gifted abilities that others do not have. It is clear, these are part of God’s gifted talents to people so we can function in society. That is what I mean when I say the Spirit gives talents to all men.

A spiritual gift is different; this is obtained at salvation, and is only for believers, to function within the church. A “Talent” is a general gift to humankind. There are parallels to these gifts to be discussed later in our Pneumatology II study. Spiritual gifts, mentioned only in N.T., are attributed to the Father, the Son, the Spirit. I believe too much is made by separating the gifts to only the Holy Spirit. Remember: God is ONE God. However, whatever name you use; talent, gift, ability, aptitude, or another term, there is a difference between what God gives as gifts to humanity in general and what He gives as gifts to the church.

Student Question: Am I following you by saying talents are something natural and gifts are from God?

Prof. Response: No, what I am saying is, everything man can do and accomplish is from God. Our abilities, even our next breath, are from God. Ecclesiastics says labour is a gift. James says every good gift comes from God. My point is that everything man is able to do is because God gave (gifted) humanity with the ability, the talents, to do so. When God began the church as a unique entity, He bestowed a second wave of gifts especially for Christians, to function within the church body.

CLASS 3

We began our Pneumatology class by looking at some of the obstacles that face us when understanding the ministry of the Spirit of God. After looking, we looked at the Spirit of God throughout history in the general way. Regarding the Holy Spirit in all men, the Holy Spirit is present to provide all life. We also saw that the Holy Spirit to all men is a restrainer, holder back of sin. The Holy Spirit was instrumental in giving gifts or talents to the benefit of society.

I remind you that we see that GOD is ONE. Therefore, the ministry of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are one cooperative work of the Triune God. We call this the Economic Trinity and define this as: the Father planning, the Son providing, and the Spirit applying the work. This is a human simplification just to help us in our minds put together the ministry of a triune God.

II. The Holy Spirit and the Conviction of Men

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. "And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:

There is a ministry of the Holy Spirit in terms of the conviction of men. When Jesus promised the coming of the Spirit, He gave us an idea of this ministry in John 16. There are those who say this text belongs to only the time after Christ because He is sending the Spirit. I suggest that the ministry of the Spirit of God has always been in this fashion in the world. I think the Lord is saying in verse 8 that He leaves there will be more fullness to this ministry of conviction because He will send the Holy Spirit to work within people.

In vs 9 He says they do not believe Me, the Spirit will convict the world because I go to my Father and because the ruler of this world is judged. We have seen that Christ completed this on the cross. We will see that as the result of Pentecost, there is a deeper and fuller ministry of the Spirit of God. But, from the perspective of progressive revelation there was salvation for man since Adam, there was also the ministry of the Spirit since Adam. I included in your notes an area that belongs to the study of soteriology but at least it helps us see the broadness of the conviction of the Spirit of God to man.

A. The General Calling of Men

Psm. 19:1: *the heavens declare the glory of God, the earth shows forth His handiwork.* This text shouts the evidence of the existence of God, which calls all people to seek Him. Paul's epistle to Romans expands this:

Rom 1:19-20: *... because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse,*

Here in verse 20 we see through creation there is evidence of God Himself even in a deep way regarding His power and headship. Creation calls men to understand there is a God; this is a call to search out God. We see in this that there is no excuse for any man. All men are 'called' to seek God by virtue of the evidence of creation. Then we have 'witnessing call'.

B. The Witnessing Call

Rom 10:14: *How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not*

believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?

As pastors, we know this passage well.

Prof. Question: *Did witnessing regarding salvation begin in the church?*

Student Response: *No.*

Prof. Question: *Where did it begin?*

Student Response: *We know that Noah preached a call to repentance because of the coming judgement. Is that where it began?*

Student Response: *Adam*

Prof. Response: *Yes, in some way there was some promise given to Adam regarding a renewal that was possible. Adam responded by faith evidenced in his name for his wife “eve”. Obviously, Cain and Abel had some understanding of proper sacrifice and faith.*

It was the responsibility of those who knew God, to share this knowledge with those who did not know God. It began in the family network and as the population grew, God chose a nation to carry on this responsibility. We see in the O.T. Israel was to be a light to the gentile nations. They did very poorly.

We have the general call of creation to all men, the witnessing call to many men, and then conviction’s call. We have already looked at John 16:7-11, but there are other texts pointing to conviction’s call to men: **1 Thess. 1:5:** *because our gospel came to you not simply with words but also with power, with the Holy Spirit and deep conviction. You know how we lived among you for your sake (NIV).*

Rom. 14:22: *Do you have faith? Have it to yourself before God. Happy is he who does not condemn himself in what he approves.*

Heb. 4:12: *For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.*

An example of this is the story of Simon in Acts 8 where there was belief, an appearance of acceptance, but not necessarily salvation. His heart was not right (vs. 21). We see in Hebrews, there are those who taste of the grace but seem not to come to salvation. They deny the

Lord. There is a conviction through the Word of God that not necessarily brings salvation.

I experience this in the church I pastored. There were times when someone would express conviction and regret about their sin; they would even make a prayer of salvation. However, within a month they were gone, returning to the old paths of life. Is this your experience as well: seeing conviction, but not conversion; hearing a prayer to escape, but not a prayer of true belief?

Student Question: We saw in John 16 that the Holy Spirit convicts men of sin, righteousness and judgement,. But is it that He chooses people, because in John 6 :65 we are told no one comes to God but by the Father.

Prof. Response: We are getting into the topic of soteriology and we could spend much time there. The simple answer is yes, God has elected those to be saved.

For many, election opens up problems in their understanding. I can only say the election of God to salvation is not a double election. It is not electing others to damnation. Calvin was wrong in this point. God did not have to elect man to damnation because man did that himself. The real question is why should God elect any to salvation? Only grace did this.

Student Question: I agree, why did God choose me?

Prof. Response: I will give you Paul's answer: Does the clay say to the potter: Why me?

When men stand before God, they will not say: You never chose me, nor say: Why choose me. The unsaved will know they get exactly what they deserved and will tremble before the holiness of God. The saved will know they were saved by grace and will worship before the holiness of God. All God's purposes will be completed!

Student Question: How can the Holy Spirit convict someone yet they do not come to Christ?

Prof. Response: In Hebrews 6, How can those who 'taste of the goodness of God' deny the Lord that can save them. I do not know, but it is true! The Bible evidences the various calls to men; to all men, to some men, to few men. "Many are called but few are chosen! (Matt. 20:16; 22:14). We, the born again, are the chosen, the elect, but it is clear that not all individuals who are convicted, have faith for salvation.

It is my experience to see men with conviction, who want an escape from guilt, have no appreciation for the God, who paid for their sins. To me it is the same as when I came to Africa and found people to have many religions, when they heard of Christianity they just added that that 'religion' to their list, just in case the Christians were right. That is not salvation!

Student Question: *What about Judas Iscariot, which call did Judas receive?*

Prof. Response: *Unless we know his heart, it is impossible to say. He had information, but he was never a believer in the sense of being born again. Yet, we know he had God's general call in creation, all men have that. Did he hear the message? Yes, therefore he had opportunity for conviction's call. However, did he have guilt? His suicide seems to support this.*

We could say there may have been conviction's call, but we do not really know what the source of his guilt was. There is guilt from a person's true understanding of sin before Holy God and the weight of His judgment. Nevertheless, there is also a selfish guilt: I cannot believe I did this. I have let myself down. I thought I was a better man than that! That is self-centered guilt, which is not rooted in the shame of displeasing or rebelling against God.

My point in this section is this; the Spirit of God brings conviction to men. What is conviction? It is not repentance; conviction is the acceptance of something. In the general, the acceptance that there is a God, in witnessing the acceptance is the message of God for deliverance. Conviction's call is an acceptance of the judgment call of God on my life. None of these guarantees repentance. True repentance comes with the effectual call is the change of mind that turns from a person from self to God. The point is: It is the Spirit of God that opens eyes and brings men to conversion but the necessity for a personal response is still there.

Student Question: *How can the Holy Spirit convict people but cannot save people.*

Prof. Response: *You are mistaking conviction with the necessity for repentance. Convincing someone of the facts of salvation does not bring personal salvation. For example, if you have cancer and I say to you: In*

this bottle there is special medicine invented by a brilliant scientist, that can heal your cancer,” you may be convinced of this and say, Oh that is wonderful! But as convincing as it is, has that information healed you? Student Response: No, I must take the medicine.

Prof. Response: Yes, that is the difference between conviction or convincing, and the repentance that leads to salvation as Paul taught: “For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death” (2Cor. 7:10).

Student Response: What then do you think about a person who repents, is converted, then abandons the church.

Prof. Response: I personally believe that you cannot lose your salvation. Theological Positions differ on this. If you are struggling with this, think of parable of sower. Only one soil produced. The other soils received the seed, but had different responses to it. That parable reflects the impact of God’s Word on the world. Only in a small portion of the soil does it produce. The Spirit of God brings conviction to all men and God saves the elect.

Now we want to examine what the ministry of the Spirit of God was to all believers in all ages.

III. The Holy Spirit and Believers in All Ages

Your notes indicate that the Holy Spirit worked in believer’s lives in every age in the following four ways:

A. The Spirit of God produces Regeneration in all believers

For believers of all ages, the Spirit of God brought regeneration. To be born again implies new life. This was necessary and the expectation of all ages. When Nicodemus came to Jesus by night, Jesus spoke of new birth. Jesus said, “You are a teacher and you do not know this?” Jesus expected him to know this. New birth is not a N.T. reality. Spiritual rebirth was the salvation available to all men since Adam. For example, in O.T. Samuel as a boy did not know the Lord until God reached out to him:

1 Sam. 3:7: *Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD, nor was the word of the LORD yet revealed to him.*

1 Sam. 3:19: *So Samuel grew, and the LORD was with him and let none of his words fall to the ground.*

God revealed Himself to Samuel, called the boy to serve Him, and Samuel chose to follow and obey. God was ‘with Samuel’ from that

time onward. Samuel's salvation involved a point of decision whereby God was with him.

This event was a turning point in history. Up to now, God had not spoken to the people in frequent or wide-spread ("open") visions (v. 1); but now everyone knew that Samuel was God's prophet and that the Lord was with him. The Lord was now able to appear once again because there was a servant whom He could trust.¹

1 Sam. 10:6: *Then the Spirit of the LORD will come upon you, and you will prophesy with them and be turned into another man.*

God 'turned Saul into another man. What better description of salvation's 'new birth' is there? Saul became a believer, a born again man, even though he did not continue to walk with the Lord and lost the kingdom as a result. Do not miss points in the O.T. which help us discover the failures of God's people. Study the life of Saul and determine his downfall was.

The Psalms are filled with references to new birth, examples are:

Psm. 51:6, 10: *Behold, You desire truth in the inward parts, And in the hidden part You will make me to know wisdom... Create in me a clean heart, O God, And renew a steadfast spirit within me.*

Psm. 36:10: *Oh, continue Your lovingkindness to those who know You, And Your righteousness to the upright in heart.*

Psm. 73:1: *Truly God is good to Israel, To such as are pure in heart.*

Regeneration, new birth, has always been the ministry of the Spirit of God. I explained regeneration as the reuniting of the Spirit of God with the spirit of man, in the state in which Adam was created. However, it is spiritual rebirth because Adam had life in God at the beginning but lost it for all humankind. Nicodemus should have understood this. How could he teach the O.T. and not understand the necessity for new life?

B. The Spirit of God indwells all believers

The Spirit of God sustains 'spiritual' life, just as 'all' life is sustained by God. We have looked at Genesis 1, where the Spirit of God moved on the face of the earth. Remember, this was before the fall, so at this point there is no distinction between spiritual life and physical life. Adam was created with both as his true being. In his sin, he lost fellowship with

¹ Wiersbe, W. W. (1993). *Wiersbe's Expository Outlines on the Old Testament* (1 Sa 3). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

God. This is called spiritual death. The evidence of the re-indwelling was a new man, a created man, salvation itself.

The O.T. speaks uniquely:

Ge. 41:38: *And Pharaoh said to his servants, "Can we find such a one as this, a man in whom is the Spirit of God?"*

Job 33:4: *The Spirit of God has made me, And the breath of the Almighty gives me life.*

Psm. 104:30 *You send forth Your Spirit, they are created; And You renew the face of the earth.*

A form of Hebrew poetry uses parallel statements of the same truth with different words. This could be the situation here in Job 33:4; *the Spirit of God made me*, paralleled with *has given me life*. Hebrew poetry also has a form in which the second line adds to the first line. In this situation it can translated; *God has given me physical life*, and *the breath of God gave me spiritual life*. Each interpretation is legitimate. In addition, in Palm 104, "you renew the earth" could be a reference to the final renewal of the heaven and the earth. There is in all of these O.T. verses the connotation of the indwelling of the Spirit of God, a man in whom the Spirit of God is.

Student Question:

In Job 33:4, is the 'breathe' the Holy Spirit or the air from God's mouth.

Prof. Response: *It is definitely the Holy 'Spirit. The word 'Spirit' in Hebrew, is the same word as breath. You are suggesting that God breathed air into Adam as one might resuscitate a drowning victim. I have never considered that before, but in this situation Adam was not resuscitated, he was given life.*

Student Question: *What gives physical life to unbelievers? Is it the breath or air, or the Holy Spirit?*

Prof. Response: *The answer is God. To reduce life to 'the air man breaths' is an inaccurate simplification. Life is more than the respiratory function of his lungs. Even unsaved man has body, soul and spirit. Furthermore, breathing only sustains the body in part, it also dependent upon the circulatory system, the nervous system, and nine other organ systems.*

My brother and I were walking along lake in Canada. We came upon a sad situation; a little girl had been taken out of the water unconscious. She had drowned. We tried to revive this little girl. My brother breathed into her lungs, I pumped her heart and rubbed her body to restore circulation, but we could not revive her. She was dead. Life is more than breath going into lungs. I believe all of these passages speaking of the Breath of God refer to the Spirit of God that brings life to all things. All life, physical and spiritual, is in God because God is life. We have the Spirit of God regenerating and indwelling all believers in all time.

C. The Spirit of God Produces Holiness in all believers.

We have also the Spirit of God producing holiness. This has always been the work of the Spirit of God in a believer's life, to make the believer more like God. We mentioned this before in terms of O.T. believers. A list of the virtues of the O.T. saints is in your notes. In Moses, we see meekness, power under control in his life. Noah was long-suffering; he preached 100 years while he built the ark. Abraham was called the Father of Faith. Daniel thrown into the lion's den had peace. In the N.T., Joseph accepted his betrothed. Mary faithfully consented to bearing God's Son. This was a true demonstration of her love for God and God's love for her.

All of these people exhibited God's holiness before the church began, before Paul mentioned the fruit of the spirit. This work in the N.T. is produced in all believers as one FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT. Therefore, the character of N.T. relationship is glimpsed in the O.T., and evidenced in a fuller way in the N.T. The Spirit of God has always produces holiness, or makes believers more like God Himself.

D. The Spirit of God brings illumination to all believers.

The Spirit gives understanding of the truth of God's Word. There are many texts in your notes, which show us that the Spirit of God gives wisdom, counsel, and understanding. These designated ministries of illumination always with respect to the revelation of God. Here are a few examples:

Ex. 35:31: *And he hath filled him with the spirit of God, in wisdom, in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship;*

Det. 34:9: *And Joshua the son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom; for Moses had laid his hands upon him: and the children of Israel hearkened unto him, and did as the LORD commanded Moses.*

Job 32:8: *But there is a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding*

Isa 11:2: *And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD;*

1 John 2:27: *But the anointing which you have received from Him abides in you, and you do not need that anyone teach you; but as the same anointing teaches you concerning all things, and is true, and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you will abide in Him.*

I know this is a new challenged; to view the ministry of the Spirit of God in the O.T. the same as in the N.T. Many of us were taught the Spirit of God really began the work at Pentecost. However, to say the Spirit of God began the work of conviction, regeneration, indwelling and illumination only at Pentecost, means that salvation was different in the Old Testament. For those in the Romans class we will discover Paul's argument is that salvation has always been the same; by faith in God's revealed provision at the time.

This must mean that regeneration has to be the same; indwelling has to be the same; illumination has to be the same; holiness has to be the same. We see this 'salvation' ministry of the Spirit of God after Christ as defined by newness. I will suggest to you that the idea of newness is not the sense of different but fullness. That was because of the necessity for Christ to complete salvation, which means the Messiah had to come to die for all humankind. Nevertheless, salvation's accomplishments were not limited before the cross because the only requirement was faith in God's provision. The O.T. believers looked to the divine promised sacrifice by faith, N.T. believers look to the divine record of sacrifice by faith.

E. The Spirit of God gives gifts to all believers.

The Spirit's ministry of equipping believers for special service is evident in all ages

Ex. 35:30-33: *And Moses said to the children of Israel, "See, the LORD has called by name Bezalel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah; "and He has filled him with the Spirit of God, in wisdom and understanding, in knowledge and all manner of workmanship, "to design artistic works, to work in gold and silver and bronze, "in cutting jewels for setting, in carving wood, and to work in all manner of artistic workmanship.*

1 Cor. 12:7-8: *But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all: for to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit,*

1 Pet. 4:11: *If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, let him do it as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.*

In the O.T. there were prophets appointed by the nation and anointed as such. Some of them were false prophets; God chose others. Some of these, but not all, Israel acknowledged and appointed prophets for the nation. I believe the idea of the gift of prophecy was present in the O.T. because it is the giving of revelation by God.

There were also specific gifts given in other ways. There is among God's people, both O.T. and N.T., special abilities given by the Spirit of God for service. These are different from the gifts given to all men, which I call talents. The function of these talents was for man's society. When we look now in conclusion, the Scripture views history in two themes: glorification of God, salvation of man. We see that the Spirit of God was active throughout all history to achieve these things. Even though we have progressive revelation, the economic trinity functioned completely the same in O.T. and N.T. times.

So for all men of all ages, there is physical life, there is spiritual death, there is a measure of restraint to the degree of sin they will follow, there is a call to seek God in nature, and there are talents given to sustain humanity. For some men of all ages, there is conviction by the applied revelation. For believers for all ages there is new birth, new life, and new character. That gives us a picture of the work of the Spirit of God in history and narrows it down to the special work of God for believers of all time.

The Work of the Holy Spirit in Christ

Introduction

Before we examine the newness begun at Pentecost, we have to understand that the point of reference for the Christian. The N.T. church, in terms of the ministry of the Spirit of God did not begin at Pentecost. It began with Christ. Christ exemplifies all that the ministry of the Spirit of God is to the N.T. believer where the church began at Pentecost. What I'm saying is this newness of the Spirit of God does come at Pen-

tecost. The marvel of this newness is in the person and ministry of Christ.

I wrestled with understanding this myself. I wrestle with the concept of Jesus being fully God and yet being 'dependent' on the Spirit of God. I had to resolve my dilemma's in one answer: This dependence was the choice of Jesus. He was fully God but He did not choose His natural attributes as God for His operational function as a man. According to Philippians 2:7, His ministry was wrapped in humility. Yet, He could not deny His deity. We see the Scriptures saying, "*He knew all men.*" He knew Andrew before He met him. His omniscience was apparent. His omnipotence over storms, disease, and demons was apparent. Yet He was dependent on the Spirit.

I will try to explain to you the ministry of the Spirit of God in Christ according to the Scriptures. I think it will help us to understand that Jesus was the Messiah: the Christ. When the church began it was called 'The Way'. They were the people of the way of Jesus. Later they were given another name; Christian. That means 'little Christs.' Do not understand this the way cults take it by saying "we will become God." In essence, what we see in the N.T. is the Spirit of God develops believer to be little Christs, not in the sense of His perfect nature, but in a sense of His growing holiness, and in a sense of His ministry.

Therefore, to see the Spirit of God working in the life of Christ is to understand how the Spirit of God works in our lives. There are five in respect to Christ in the incarnation and in His humanity. I suggest each one of these ministries pictures a reality in a believer's life. The more we understand the pictures, the more we will understand the Spirit of God's working in our own lives.

I. Conception

Luke 1:35: *And the angel answered and said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be will be called the Son of God.*

By the Spirit of God Mary conceived and bore the Son of God. We have this unique conception. I have said before in this school the miracle was not the birth but the virgin conception, the birth was an ordinary birth. I was in a taxi with a Muslim while on the way to the airport heading to the Cameroon Seminary. This man was born in Canada but was Pakistan in his heredity. As I was sharing Christ with him, he came

to the point of the stumbling block: he could not believe that somehow God could unite with man. That would be a miracle! I said; Yes that is exactly what it was.

Here is a phenomenal thing to think about. We celebrate Christmas with the Child in the manger and the birth of Jesus Christ and it is a great celebration. Yet, in truth, the miracle was not the birth. Although, if you see your children born, you realize all births are miracles. I witnessed all three of our children born. I witnessed the labour of my wife in delivering these children. All I can say is ‘Thank you God that I am a man and not a woman!’ Nevertheless, the issue of Christ’s conception is the phenomenal miracle of God: God uniting with the seed of a woman as promised in Genesis 3. What a wonder! This is a picture of conversion, God uniting with man to create New Birth.

Student Response: For me the birth was still a miracle because it is unbelievable to know she had no sex but delivered a child.

Prof. Response: Yes, you are saying the same thing; a child born without natural conception.

Prof. Response: The birth of a child is truly a miracle, but a common miracle with every one of us. I call that a natural miracle, but the conception is an absolute work of God, equal to creation itself.

Now think of this, the Spirit of God somehow united with the seed of woman. That was ‘Spirit uniting with flesh’ in a miraculous way. Remember what I said: This is a picture of salvation’s new birth; it is the Spirit of God uniting with the spirit of man. In essence, it is God’s Spirit uniting with man’s spirit, but you can see how the conception of Christ is a picture of that New Birth in that God unites with man. I truly say: Salvation is a miracle. The ministry of the spirit in Christ is a picture of new birth when it comes to conception.

II. Indwelling and Filling

John 3:33-34: *He who has received His testimony has certified that God is true. For He whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for God does not give the Spirit by measure.*

Here John the Baptist is talking about the testimony of Jesus, He is giving testimony to the Christ John says: “*He must increase but I must decrease*” (vs. 30). He testifies that Jesus (who God has sent) speaks the

words of God by the Spirit without measure. John attributes the work of Christ to the Holy Spirit in this passage.

Remember, John himself who was full of the Holy Ghost from birth. We see that both in the case of John and Christ there is a ministry within their lives to bring about the uniqueness of their message. I suggest that in the life of Jesus Christ the ministry of the Spirit of God worked as He would in any new believer. The Holy Spirit's indwelling and filling was to lead Jesus Christ in His ministry, and to work through Him throughout His ministry.

This is where I wrestle with understanding that Jesus Christ, being fully God, never ceasing to be God, never ceasing to have all the fullness of God, still grew in wisdom and stature and in favour with God and man (Luke 2:52). My conclusion is that Christ, in humanity, grew normally as a child, while the ministry of the Spirit of God led Him to understand who he was and what his ministry was. You see him at the age of 12 inquiring at the temple, asking among questions among the teachers that they could not answer. Therefore, to grow in wisdom (even though He was the God of all wisdom), had to be His the willful decision. To depend on the Spirit of God rather than on his deity was His choice.

In this, we see also a picture of the Christian. In a spiritual way we are called to grow in the grace and the knowledge of Jesus Christ. We are called upon to have favour with God and man, to the extent it is possible. I believe, humanly speaking, that Jesus 'the boy' grew into the knowledge of who he was: The Christ; The Messiah of Israel, the Saviour of the world. This is a picture of Christians growing in the knowledge of who they are, and what their ministry is.

You can see how he was dependent on the Spirit of God because the spirit led him into the wilderness to fast 40 days to become physically weak, so much so that Satan himself saw an opportunity in his human weakness of that state to tempt Jesus. I see all of this as the work of the Spirit of God's indwelling or filling, leading Jesus as He grew up, and continuing throughout his life. It is a picture of the Spirit's indwelling and filling in our lives.

III. Anointing

Matt. 3:13, 16-17: *Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him... When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to*

Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

In the baptism of Christ and we see the unique way the Spirit of God descended upon Christ. This clearly is a parallel to the O.T. anointing of the prophets, the priests and the kings. All the prophets, the priests, and the kings of Israel, were anointed with oil. The anointing of oil was a symbol of the appointing of God; calling that individual to that ministry and empowering them to do so. Jesus Christ fulfilled all three of these positions, prophet, priest, king. The role of the prophet was to meet the need of truth. God's truth is the foundation for our life. Yet we realize from history that no one tells the truth all the time. We see the false prophets, although anointed with oil, they were not anointed by God. We see Belial paid to give false reports. The power of God came upon him and he could no longer lie, he had to tell the truth.

This portrayed the ministry of Christ, whereby God's Word was given through the Spirit. Jesus fulfilled the role of bringing the truth. He was the living truth. He was the Word:

John 1:1: *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*

John 1:14: *And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.*

John 14:6: *Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life:"*

Jesus also fulfilled the office of priest, meeting the need for access of man to God. The role of the priests in the O.T. was to offer the sacrifices individuals brought before God. In essence, they were making access for the common man to God.

Heb. 9:11, 14-15: *But Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation ...how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? And for this reason He is the Mediator of the New Covenant,*

Christ fulfilled this role not only as the priest to offer the sacrifice, but He was the sacrifice. Hebrews chapter 7 through 10 unfolds the unique ministry of the priesthood of Jesus.

Prof. Question: *In terms of Christ's offices, How is this related to the Christian life? I'm not talking about the gift of prophecy, but the function of a prophet to deliver truth. Is it the responsibility of Christians to deliver the truth of the Word?*

Student Response: *Yes*

Prof. Response: *The Scripture say the church is the pillar and the support of the truth, so in that sense we are 'little Christs.' "*
How about the role of priests? The priest offers sacrifices, is there such a thing as Christian sacrifice today?

Student Response: *Yes.*

Prof. Response: *Yes, Scripture affirms Christian sacrifices.*

Notice the following Christian sacrifices:

Rom 12:1: *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.*

Heb. 13:15-16: *Therefore, by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name. But do not forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.*

Believers today have the privilege to offer the sacrifice our person, possessions and our praise. Christians are a nation of priests according to Peter:

1Pe. 2:9: *But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;*

The purpose of a king is to meet the need of government among men, to prevent anarchy. To exercise this office properly a king required a leadership characterized by justice, peace, security and unity, as outlined in the O.T. The tests listed below indicate the credentials to identify the Messiah. Only a few of the many are listed here:

Messiah would be from the tribe of Judah: Gen. 49:10

Messiah would be a descendant of King David: 2 Sam. 7:12-16

Messiah was to be born at Bethlehem: Mic. 5:1-2

Messiah would arrive before the destruction of the Second Temple: Dan. 9:24-27

Messiah would present himself by riding on a donkey: Zech. 9:9

Messiah would be tortured to death: Psm. 22:1-31

Messiah's life would match a particular description, including suffering, silence at his arrest and trial, death and burial in a rich man's tomb, and resurrection: Isa. 52:13-53:12

In regard to lineage, birthplace, time, and lifestyle, Jesus matched the Messianic expectations of the Hebrew Scriptures.²

Jesus fulfills the role of King. He is the Christ, The Messiah of Israel. Jesus is truly the Messiah, although His formal reign does not begin until the 1000 year reign, He truly is the Messiah now.

Prof. Question: How does Christ's office of King relate to Christian life today? Do we go around saying, Jesus made me a king so obey me!

Student Response: No. It is His promise to reign with Him.

Prof. Response: Yes, you are thinking Biblically!

We see Jesus anointed as prophet, priest and king is a picture of the Spirit of God anointing believers to fulfill those similar functions. Do you see how the ministry of the Spirit of God in Christ is a point of reference for the church today? Conception is a picture of our new birth. Indwelling and filling is a picture of our indwelling and filling, being led by the Spirit of God. Anointing is a picture of our call to be 'small Christs' in being prophets, priests and future reigning with Christ.

Student Question: Can we say our office of King is fulfilled by believers today, or do we have to wait until Christ established His kingdom on earth?

Prof. Response: I like the idea of allowing Christ to reign in our life so we can enjoy His victory over the world, the flesh and the Devil. But, I explained that our experience is parallel to Christ's experience in this way as well. Christ's first coming was one of humility, He was the King but no one recognized Him. So His first coming was one of humility, and that really is the experience of God's people now.

When Christ returns it will be one of exultation, the whole world will acknowledge him as reigning king, and we will join him in reigning and will enjoy the exaltation. We can say, in Christ's first coming He was incognito. We who will reign with Him are also incognito now.

Student Question: You also said that the role of King is to prevent an-

² <https://jewsforjesus.org/answers/what-proof-do-you-have-that-jesus-is-the-messiah>

archy. In once sense we as believer have that influence, as Christ did.
Student Response: *Yes, I accept that. However, the actual influence is not our 'incognito kingship' but our King's Power through His Word as Hebrews 4:12 tells us.*

CLASS 4

We were examining yesterday the ministry of the Holy Spirit and Christ. We see that there is a specific and unique ministry by the Spirit in the life of Jesus. And we also see that this pictures what Pentecost would be with the new element of the church.

Prof. Question: *Someone name one of those ministry offices and how it pictures the church and the Spirit. Name one and tell us the parallel.*

Student Response: *-Jesus had the ministry of the priest; and the church today is the pillar of the truth. - The miraculous conception of Christ; this is the picture of the New Birth of Salvation whereby God's Spirit unites with man. -Jesus had the ministry of the king, this pictures the victory of the believer over sin.*

Prof. Response: *Yes, this also pictures our future reign with Christ. Good answers, you have caught the pictures of Christ's offices well.*

IV. Leading

We see the conception, indwelling or filling, and anointing. Also we see in Luke 4:1 the clear leading of the Spirit of God in the life of Jesus.

Luke 4:1: *Then Jesus, being filled with the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into wilderness,*

It says here: 'Jesus, filled with the Holy Spirit, was led into the wilderness' The context here deals with the temptations of Jesus, but we can see in this context the terms that are used—he was filled with the Spirit, He was led by the Spirit. He was tempted, and He was sustained. The tests of obedience of truth were performed and we see complete obedience by Christ. However, it is unique that, in His obedience to the Father, He operated from the point of his humanity by quoting the Word of God, using its authority, rather than His own. Yet, He truly could have dismissed Satan because He was God.

I see in this passage a demonstration of the way in which Christ operated on this earth by focusing on his humanity rather than the privi-

leges of His deity. Christ's victory in holding to the authority of the Word of God is the same way God's children have victory over Satan. It expresses a dependence on the Word of God through the Spirit of God. It is a perfect picture how God's people operate.

V. Empowerment:

Yet, we see the evidence of Christ's empowerment as well.

Matt. 7:29: *for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.*

Jesus preached with authority. I think it is interesting that the people recognized the difference between Jesus and others who were preaching the Word such as John the Baptist. They were amazed that Jesus preached with such authority. Their point of comparison was the manner they were taught in the synagogues. Nevertheless, their impression of the teaching of Jesus was erroneously credited to Satan's power:

Matt 12:28: *But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you.*

Jesus performed miracles by the spirit. We mentioned that Jesus performed no miracles that were different from the kinds in the O.T. miracles by the prophets. It is unique that although Jesus was fully God, these miracles are accredited to the Spirit of God in Him. Even the work of His sacrifice on the cross, endured by Him, was achieved through the Spirit of God:

Heb. 12:2: *looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.*

Heb. 9:14: *how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?*

Jesus, in offering Himself, did this by the Holy Spirit. Not only did He offer Himself by the power of the Spirit of God, He rose from the dead through the Spirit:

Romans 1:4: *and declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.*

Once again, we see a picture of human empowerment by the Spirit even though He was fully God. We have a unique declaration in the Scripture of the ministry of the Spirit in Jesus Christ. I suggest that these ministries are a foretaste, or a foreshadowing of what Pentecost would be like. For the believer, we can expect the anointing, empower-

ing, and leading, that Jesus had. This implies that the church, which Christ determined to build, would have more of a fullness of the work of the Spirit due to salvation's completion.

In some respects, you can compare this to the very small difference between salvation in the O.T. and salvation in the NT. Salvation has always been by faith in the provision of God to provide sacrifice and forgive sins. That has never changed. But, in the O.T. we understand that until Christ came, the sacrifice was only a covering for sin. It did not change the quality of salvation, it did not change the requirement of faith, in the provision, but it was a covering only. In the N.T. the fullness of salvation came in Christ; not as a covering for sin, but a complete removal of sin.

In a sense, we can say in the coming of Christ there is a fullness, a completeness, of His sacrificial work. I believe this idea of fullness or completeness is also true in terms of the Spirit's ministry in terms of O.T. and NT, but there is a greater fullness in it having Christ already complete the full work of salvation. This leads us to Pentecost and the New Covenant.

Student Question: I understand the fullness of the work of salvation by Jesus Christ, but I do not understand the fullness of the Holy Spirit compared to the O.T.

Prof. Response: I trust, as we look at Pentecost and the New Covenant you will see the significance of this Holy Spirit fullness.

Pentecost and the New Covenant

Introduction

Pentecost represents the birthday of the church. I have said before that it is sad we do not celebrate this. We celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ, that is significant. We celebrate the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, that is significant. Local churches also have celebrations for anniversaries, memorial days for soldiers, and when people die. But, we never celebrate the birth of the church. Yet this is a truly unique and significant event even in human history. To understand the significance of Pentecost we have to go back and look at the promise of the seed and the uniqueness of some of those O.T. covenants that were made.

God promised to Adam a seed; the seed of the woman. Adam believed God and therefore named his wife appropriately. In the context of

this promised seed, we see the continuation and progressive development of that promise. We see the Abrahamic covenant in Gen 12 and 15: the promise of the land, the nation, blessings to the nation and all the world; all through the seed of Abraham. It was an unconditional promise. God will do this regardless of the failings of man.

We see the development of that Abrahamic promise in the Palestinian Covenant, the Davidic Covenant, and in Jeremiah, the New Covenant. All of these are unconditional promises. They all relate to the seed; the Messiah that was promised in Gen. 3. Scripture's progressive revelation follows the seed from the woman to from a nation, from the nation to from a tribe, from the tribe to a family; traced from David to Jesus.

In contrast to the unconditional promises, there is the conditional promise of Mt. Sinai. It truly was promise that spoke clearly of Israel in the Promised Land and the blessings that God bring but at the same time it was conditional because it was dependent upon Israel in their relationship to the law. The result of course is that Israel failed miserably. And as much as there are many purposes in Scripture for the law, especially in revealing sin, Mt. Sinai law also demonstrated the inability for man to keep any promises.

This assures people of the importance of the unconditional promises being accepted. Mt. Sinai's law says man cannot keep any promises. Although Israel promised they would keep the law when they received it, not even one generation kept it! The very same generation that promised, failed. This actually points back to the promise of the seed as so significant it was all of God. At the end of the O.T. revelation, in the development of the seed theology, we have the new promise or New Covenant. Let's look at this promise:

I. Promise of the New Covenant

Jer. 31:31-34: *"Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a New Covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah — "not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them, {Following Masoretic Text, Targum, and Vulgate; Septuagint and Syriac read and I turned away from them. } says the LORD. "But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their*

hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. "No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more."

This is the promise of the New Covenant, declared not to be like the Sinai covenant, for this New Covenant is unconditional. This is a promise that God would put the law in their hearts. In other words, God would complete their part of obedience in their life. He says all Israel will know me. The significance of knowing Him is that they would all be believers. In Isaiah, we have many texts that speak of Israel, at the time, being only a remnant. Paul takes a similar idea regarding Christians in Romans, to remind them the true Jew is not one outwardly by circumcised, or by legal birth, but one inwardly by faith (Rom. 2:28-29).

The term we use today is 'born again', the O.T equivalent of 'knowing the Lord'. Remember the passage dealing with Samuel. At first, he did not know the Lord. O.T. synonyms for "know the Lord" are "having a new heart", "having a clean heart." All these phrases reflect salvation by faith. So, in Jeremiah we have this New Covenant that says all Israel will be believers. You can see why this is a new concept in God's covenant with Israel.

To Israel, it was the joy and hope and anticipation of the Abrahamic promise coming into fulfillment. In the minds of the Jewish people listening to Jeremiah, they would have seen this promise as a fulfillment of the land and the blessing for them. For Israel in their thinking in the time of Jeremiah, it was the final promise of the fullness of the promise of the seed. This was the final teaching of this theme of the seed in the O.T. This was the hope of Israel in the 400 years of silence between the end of the O.T. and the time when Christ came.

II. Provision of The New Covenant

Matt. 26:26-29: *And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, "Take, eat; this is My body." Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. "For this is My blood of the New Covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. "But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom."*

I want you to put yourself in the sandals of the apostles or the disciples. In your lifetime, some of you are fishermen, and perhaps there's a doctor among you like Luke. You are Israelites, you are Jewish men, you have been seeking the Messiah along with your whole the nation. Then John, this strange prophet, comes along and says Messiah is coming and you must prepare for Him. You believe John and anticipate the coming of Christ by your own repentance before God. You are a believer.

Then John directs your attention, not to himself, but to the one he baptizes and says: this is the Messiah. Therefore, you leave the ministry of John behind and follow Jesus. He teaches you and you are amazed by this man. In your mind, you know this is Him, this is the Messiah. Then He tells you He is going to die. There is confusion. He gathers you together for the Passover supper. At the conclusion of the Passover supper, He declares this provision of the New Covenant. All of these things are in your mind, and at the conclusion of the meal Jesus says: *"this is my blood of the New Covenant that I shed for you"*

In the breaking of the bread and the taking of the cup is the picture of the means that God would use to complete the New Covenant. In essence, He is saying to you: "What you have been waiting for the past 500 years of more, I have come to deliver." Messiah has come, the New Covenant is to be established.

Imagine the joy, the wonder and the great anticipation you would have. Matthew's record of the breaking of bread and then the institution of the Lord's Supper pictures the provision of the New Covenant.

Heb. 10:11-16a: *And every priest stands ministering daily and offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God, from that time waiting till His enemies are made His footstool. For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified. But the Holy Spirit also witnesses to us; for after He had said before, "This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days,*

In this passage here, we see how Jesus Christ established the New Covenant. Matthew declared the weakness of Mt. Sinai repeated sacrifices (vs. 11). We saw how Israel did not keep it. In Hebrews the writer is saying we are reminded of the weaknesses of man in the Mt. Sinai covenant, the sacrifices never perfected anyone. That is why the sacri-

fices had to be continually repeated, because the sin was continually repeated.

However, the Covenant that Messiah was established through God's prepared a body of sacrifice for Him. In the context of the New Covenant, the old Sinai covenant had to be fulfilled. Man could not do it, but Jesus who is God, did do it because He was perfect man. So, his perfect life was above the Mt. Sinai promise. Therefore, Jesus kept the standard of holiness that the law demanded, and in that perfection He became the only sacrifice that could remove sin. Therefore, that His sacrifice was never repeated.

His sacrifice was not a covering for sins, but remission of sins. This is how Jesus establishes the New Covenant in the apostles minds. With His sacrifice, with His provision, with faith in His work, individuals become part of the New Covenant. We are told in *Peter that the people who believe in Christ as the final sacrifice for sin* become a royal priesthood, because Christ was made, through this sacrifice, the eternal priest.

What Christ said when He was breaking bread: "This cup is the blood of the New Covenant," Hebrews explains by going back to Jeremiah, back to the significance of Mt. Sinai. Hebrews points to Christ's perfection and final sacrifice in order to write the law in people's hearts. We have the promise of the New Covenant, and we have the provision of the New Covenant in the work of Christ, pictured in the communion table but explained thoroughly in Hebrews but we also need to realize that in the mind of God this is a significant event.

III. Presentation of The New Covenant

So significant was this event that the presentation of the New Covenant was actually celebrated in the O.T. feasts. You know of the six feasts of the O.T. Passover, first fruits, Pentecost, trumpets, atonement, and the feast of tabernacles. These feasts that were significant for Israel actually pictured progressively the fulfillment of the promises of God.

A. Pictures in Old Testament Feasts

Passover, the first feast, was initiated in Egypt as you recall. It was the meal and the placing of the blood of the sacrifice around the door. It initiated salvation for the nation Israel from Egypt. You tell me, what does the Passover picture in the ministry of Christ? Remember the significance is the blood on the doors. Crucifixion, the cross, this great event of God taking upon Himself the sins of the world and His blood

being shed. For 2000 years, Israel continues to celebrate Passover. In so doing they are celebrating God's picture of the cross of Jesus Christ, but they have no concept of what they are doing.

The second feast was the feast of Unleavened Bread. This was a time of fellowship, a time of removing yeast (leaven, which pictured sin and evil) from the household. This feast pictures the fact that once saved, the believer should put away sin and ungodly ways. The third feast was the Feast of Firstfruits. It was a celebration of the produce and the blessings of God when they season of harvest came. It was truly a celebration of life as God had provided the life to bring forth their cattle to bring forth their crops. What does that picture in Christ's ministry? The resurrection, Firstfruits, it is interesting to note that Christ is called the Firstfruit of the resurrection (1 Cor. 15:23).

By way of review we have mentioned the first feast, Passover; picturing the cross. Is that important? It is a great event in the mind of God. We mentioned the second feast; -Unleavened Bread; picturing the necessity of putting away sin. The third feast is Firstfruits, a picture of the resurrection. Is that important? Absolutely! Now we come to the fourth feast; Pentecost; a feast of covenant renewal, a remembrance of God giving them the promise of Sinai. It was a renewal of their commitment and promise to obey. Nevertheless, in Jeremiah we see the relationship between the Sinai covenant, which they could not keep, and the New Covenant that promised a Saviour. So, in the mind of God, the celebration of Pentecost points to the New Covenant where the law of Mt. Sinai is finally fulfilled by Christ.

Prof. Question: What aspect of Christ's first coming was completed by at Pentecost? This should be easy to figure out.

Student Response: The coming of the Holy Spirit

Prof. Response: Yes, it was the Pentecost Promise, of the coming Holy Spirit. It was after his ascension, as we read Acts when Jesus promises 'not many days you'll receive the blessing of the Spirit.' I guarantee you that every Jewish person who heard those words knew exactly that Jesus meant Pentecost. At the Passover supper, Jesus spoke of 'the New Covenant in my blood'. The completion of God's redemptive plan of the 'New Covenant' was fully realized when the Holy Spirit came upon the believers gathered at Pentecost.

The first four feasts of the O.T. express the absolute completion of the promise of the New Covenant. They picture the accomplishments of Christ's first coming. So, in the mind of God Pentecost is a significant redemptive event representing something *new*. Now just to help you put everything into perspective, we have the last three feasts.

The fifth feast is the Feast of Trumpets. It represents God's leading. Notice what the feast of trumpets pictures regarding Christ's second coming: "the trumpet shall sound, the dead in Christ shall rise." This points to the rapture, the prelude to the second coming of Christ. The sixth feast, the Feast of Atonement was celebrated as national renewal. However, thinking in terms of the promises of the New Covenant, what does this feast of atonement represent in the mind of God? Jeremiah gives the answer: every living Jew would be in the covenant. When will this event take place? At the conclusion of the tribulation when Christ descends to the earth and all Israel will believe He is Messiah. That is the true atonement for the Israel.

The last feast is the Feast of Tabernacles. Israel celebrated this as a reminder of entering into their land. What does the celebration of tabernacles picture in the ministry of Christ? It pictures the establishment of the kingdom, which completes the promises to Abraham and the promises to David. It completes it all because this is the establishment of the physical kingdom of God as promised in the O.T. In reality, the six feasts that Israel continues to celebrate represent the complete ministry of Christ. The first 4 feasts represent His accomplishments in his first coming, and the second three, the accomplishments in His second coming. God gave these seven feasts to identify the unique and significant events of history in the mind of God; the third one, Pentecost being the birth of the church.

Therefore, we have to accept that Pentecost is a significant redemptive event. Yes, it is the birth of the church, which established the New Covenant.

B. Explanation of the New Covenant

We noted earlier in Jeremiah 31:33-34, that the New Covenant was a promise of God to work internally in the hearts of people. Rather than reform by outward laws, God transforms by working in their hearts.

Paul explains how this very truth is realized in the church:

2 Cor. 3:7: *But if the ministry of death, written and engraved on stones,*

was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not look steadily at the face of Moses because of the glory of his countenance, which glory was passing away, how will the ministry of the Spirit not be more glorious?

2 Cor. 3:13,16-18: *unlike Moses, who put a veil over his face so that the children of Israel could not look steadily at the end of what was passing away... Nevertheless when one turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. 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.*

Again, we see the reference back to the Sinai covenant. In this context, Paul says there was a kind of glory in the covenant of Sinai. That glory was represented by Moses, as he came down from the mountain, because his face shone from being in the presence of God. Nevertheless, it was only an external glory and it faded. So that the people would not see that glory fade away, Moses put a veil over his face.

What we have with the New Covenant, in contrast to the fading glory, is an internal glory with Christ. This is a glory that does not fade, but increases. It does so by changing believers; the body of Christ, the N.T. church. This glory is the people themselves becoming more like God as they continue in their relationship. Here is what the New Covenant establishes; a righteousness that is written in our hearts, a freedom in which the old standard is done away, a new standard in Christ who abides within each believer through the Holy Spirit. God is in us.

The New Covenant brings a likeness of God within the heart to all who share the faith. It brings a glory that lasts forever, not just superficial but experienced through seeking to obey. It brings unity to all believers, where there is no Jew, no barbarian, no free. All this is accomplished through the Holy Spirit's living presence in each believer. Therefore, Pentecost is the significant of the Holy Spirit establishing a New Covenant within a new people. It is God in man, keeping man's part for him.

In this respect Paul says: *if any man be in Christ, he is a new creation* (2 Cor. 5:17). This is the term that distinguishes the N.T. from the saints of the O.T.

Prof. Question: *Were O.T. believers saved?*

Student Response: *Yes.*

Prof. Response: *Were O.T. believers indwelt?*

Student Response: *Yes.*

Prof. Question: *Yes, that is the essence of salvation for all people of all time. Did O.T. believers reflect a measure of the character of God?*

Student Response: *Yes.*

Prof. Response: *Yes, but because of the fullness of salvation through the uniqueness of the New Covenant, Christians are characterized as 'new'.*

I suggest that the word 'new' does not mean different, but defines a quality. I believe it means deeper sense of fullness due to the completion of salvation. This is the Christian privilege because we are the first people of the New Covenant.

IV. Phases of The New Covenant

I want us to see the phases of the New Covenant as pictured in the feasts.

Acts 2: 14, 18, 21: *But Peter, standing up with the eleven, raised his voice and said to them, "Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and heed my words... And on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days; And they shall prophesy... And it shall come to pass That whoever calls on the name of the LORD Shall be saved.*

This partial text is from the sermon Peter preached on the day of Pentecost. Peter says, "*this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel.*" What Joel stated appears as one event. However, when we examine it now historically in light of N.T. Scripture, it is actually two events in time. I will try to explain the text in this way:

When I go for my walk along the school road here in Cameroon, I notice there are two very high mountains. From my perspective I can truly see the two mountains, but if I were 20 kilometers away, over in Yaoundé, it would look like one mountain. The two mountains would appear merged into one. You understand what I am saying? It is the perspective that changes things. The reality; there are two mountains, but from Yaoundé's perspective, there is one.

This is exactly the perspective of Joel. He is looking at the coming of the Lord as one merged event in which Pentecost the completion of the promises. However, as we see in the NT, there is a period of time between Christ's first coming and His second coming. And, as it relates to the ministry of the Spirit of God. You can see the division in Joel:

Joel 2: 17, 18: *I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh (vs.17) and again I will pour out My Spirit in those days (vs. 18);* two separate events.

A. Phase One – The Birthday of the Church

In Acts Peter is announcing the commencement of the New Covenant established by Christ's first coming Pentecost. This is the birthday of the church. God did pour out His Spirit in a unique way here. Were there individuals who were prophesying? In Acts there is an explosion of revelation. We will talk about that later There were unique things taking place evident at Pentecost, Peter says, this is what Joel prophesied.

The first phase is the birthday of the church. It represents the first coming of Christ in humility. The believers were accused of being drunk because of their expressions by the Spirit's power. We see in the nature of the church at Pentecost there were many languages representing people from many nations. In reality, they were all either born Jews or proselytes, there for the celebrations of the Jewish faith. It is significant that Scriptures record the various nations that were there. The promise to Abraham was it would be a blessing to all nations. Yet, as they became the new 'church' there was a unity that was very evident.

B. Phase Two – The End of the Tribulation

As we continue in Joel, we see the wonders and signs mentioned, we see this as the end of the tribulation introducing the second coming of Christ in which He returns in exaltation. The characteristics of that age; involving the tribulation period and Christ's return to reign, is the church being vindicated. Even though the church is removed, God's people, with God, are vindicated. The church returns with Christ in glory and exaltation, Israel becomes a nation of believes in Christ, and all the redeemed enter into the kingdom.

Therefore, we have here Peter's sermon references to the two phases of the New Covenant. The church does not replace Israel. But, the church is the first people of the New Covenant; made of all nations and all tongues, united in Christ by the Spirit, composed of all the body of Christ. I say we need to rejoice because when God made the promise to Abraham, He had you and me in mind. I've covered much in this idea of the significance of Pentecost and the coming of the Spirit of God to establish the first covenant.

Prof. Question: *Is Israel as a nation part of the New Covenant?*

Student Response: *No.*

Prof. Response: No, because they are not regenerated, not believers. Paul explains in Romans that God has cut them off temporarily so He might graft them in the gentiles.

Does that mean that no Jewish person will be saved during this church age?

Student Response: No.

Prof. Response: Of course not, the first church was Jewish people. It is interesting how quickly the church changed from mostly Jewish and some Gentile and then, to mostly Gentile and some Jewish people. I was a pastor for 125 years in Canada, but the grace of God, the 2 churches I pastored were growing but I do not know of any Jewish person who came to know the Lord and join the church. It is true that the second church was larger and I didn't know everybody intimately. When I left the pastoral ministry the church was around 400. It may be possible 1 or 2 might be Jewish, but to my knowledge there were none. Where I live today, there are 2 or 3 Jewish families and I have shared with them but they still have the veil over their eyes. Nevertheless, the Jewish people that are saved, in this church age, become part of the church as one people; Gentiles and Jews together.

You should know that in the O.T. there is a significant phrase: "the last days". Do not be confused and think the 'last days' mentioned in Scripture refer to the end of the church. The term, 'last days' refers to the days of the seed. They begin at the birth of Christ and they carry through to the New Heaven and the New Earth. The term refers to the significant time of the days of Adam's promised seed; the days of the Messiah.

Student Question: Can you clarify the difference between conditional promises and unconditional promises?

Prof. Response: Does anyone of the students wish to answer this question to stretch your thinking?

In the giving of the Mt. Sinai covenant Moses commanded the people you will do this for a blessing, or you will do this a curse. The condition for the promised blessing was obedience. In contrast when God began the unique promises of the seed to Abraham, he made sure Abraham knew He would complete this. He said, "I will do.... I will do...." The sealing of this covenant was the sacrifice prepared by Abraham. In

the custom of the day a conditional promise would mean two people would pass between the sacrifice so they both would be bound together in the covenant. But, as you recall, God caused Abraham to sleep and only God Himself walked through the sacrificial parts. God was indicating that He was keeping both parts; His part and Abraham's part. So conditional means you get the blessing if you complete your part; unconditional means God will accomplish and bless you regardless of what you do.

The idea of conditional and unconditional promises establishes the distinction between Reform Theology and Dispensational Theology. The reform church would view Israel as failing in the Abrahamic promises and therefore the church takes its place. Dispensational Theology believes Israel will be restored by God.. Now, that is a simplification, but that is the general difference.

Student Question: When Jeremiah was talking of the New Covenant, he was talking about the tribe of Judah and the tribe of Israel, is there any O.T. verse for the promise of the New Covenant for the church?

Prof. Response: I'm not exactly certain what you mean. The fact that Pentecost was predicted as an event, to me says it was the church beginning. The idea of salvation for the Gentiles was certainly in the O.T. because Israel was to be a light for the Gentiles. Paul tells us the idea of the church was 'a mystery', suggesting it was a previously hidden truth. It was the plan of God, but it was hidden and now revealed. From the point of view of the early church the biggest obstacle was to convince the church that it was not Israel. The N.T. emphasizes there is no Jew, no Gentile, no woman, no man, no free, no slave in the church. This meant that all were as one before God, being the redeemed, the body of Christ.

That element of pride of being the people of God is still among the Jewish people today. I was reminded of this by a orthodox Jewish man on a flight to Cameroon. He said: 'You are saying that you can believe in Jesus and be saved and not become a Jew, that is against all the Torah writings.' I reminded him of the O.T. promise of all nations being blessed in Abraham without mention of them becoming Jews. I asked him if Orthodox Jewish people sought to convert Gentiles. He told me very few people are being proselytized to become Jews today.

He said as a result of Israel living among its enemies, as you geographically know, when they became a recognized nation in 1948 they

changed the way people became Jewish. They made it very difficult for anyone not born a Jew to become a Jew. I asked him: "How does that fit with a God who wants to save the world and bless the nations?" He had no answer.

CLASS 5

In our study of the ministry of the Spirit of God we looked briefly at the historical perspective of the Spirit's ministry in the world. We started at the broad ministry and we narrowed it to the ministry of the Spirit of God in all ages to believers. The very fact that to be born again was the necessity for salvation from Adam at the beginning of time necessitated the Holy Spirit's involvement. Because of this, we concluded that although the O.T. does not focus much on the ministry of the Spirit of God, the truth of progressive revelation presents an assumption that salvation was the same and the ministry of the Spirit of God's uniting with man's spirit was the same.

When we look at the life of Jesus Christ, and the work of the Spirit of God in His life, we see the example of the New Covenant deeper ministry of the Spirit of God working in a man (Php. 2:6-8). We see this in the progressive development of the promise of the seed, which ended with the promise of the New Covenant. I suggested to you, as we look at the feasts in the O.T., that in the mind of God, Pentecost was as significant of a redemptive event as the cross and the resurrection. Jesus Himself referred to His ministry, His blood, and His sacrifice, as the blood of the New Covenant.

I suggested to you that the idea of 'New' is not in the terms of 'difference' but in terms of 'quality.' History has given us, by God's grace, revelation through many, many years. Nevertheless, Jesus Himself, when he became man, gave a greater and fuller means of God's revelation. In the similar way the ministry of the Spirit of God, after Christ came, has a fuller expression of God's presence in Christians.

Pentecost And New Revelation

Paul defined from the idea of the Christian life is in newness because salvation was complete in Christ, and the Spirit of God has a greater fullness in his ministry. Therefore, when we look at the idea of newness beginning at Pentecost, we see many things that are new in quality. As we continue in our notes, one of the things 'new' is the reality of the

New Revelation. Throughout the ages, God has disclosed his spiritual truth to people. In the history of the 4000 years of giving the Scriptures, from Genesis to the lives of Christ and the apostles, there were short periods of revelation.

I say 4000 years using the chronology of the passages that talk about the genealogies, gives us about 4000 years. There are those in theology that recognize that the word ‘begat’ in these passages does not necessarily mean just one generation. So there are good men that are conservative and evangelical who would say the age of the earth is closer to 10000 years than 4000 years at the time of Christ. And they make that statement legitimately from the grammar, I personally do not accept that- I think it is literal, there are no gaps.

It does not matter what time period is accurate, I want to share that in these 4000 years or more, there were expressions of revelation. You see that in this little bit of O.T. revelation God gave us.

Prof. Question: How many books in the O.T.?

Student Response: Thirty-nine.

Prof. Response: Okay, spread thirty-nine over the many years. Most conservative scholars suggest the O.T. writings, from Moses to Malachi, took about 1400 years to complete.

Now we have the coming of Christ, and the lifetime of N.T. writers, approximately 90 years. How many books are in the NT?

Student Response: Twenty-seven.

Prof. Response: Yes! God gave us 39 O.T. books in 1400 years, and 27 N.T. books in 90 years. You can see that, with the N.T., we have an explosion of revelation. This demonstrates the new quality of God’s delivering of revelation, there is much more, and it is much deeper. We know from 2 Peter 1 that it is the Spirit of God that brings revelation to man. When we see the ministry of the Spirit of God carrying man along, guiding them to record the written Word of God, and when study Bibliology; examining related texts in detail to identify specific terms of revelation, we conclude the ministry of the Spirit of God as a qualifier of revelation has remained the same through history.

There are two facts that pertain to this New Revelation of the N.T., that were not in the O.T. The first is the quantity, in the N.T. God gave 27 books in a period of 90 years, an explosion of revelation. In terms of

quality, the N.T. was given in the more common and more precise Greek language. This was also a far more logical language, than Hebrew. A small group, in a small geographical area, used Hebrew. Much of the world used Greek at that time, thanks to the conquests of Alexander the Great in the fourth century BC. This demonstrates the idea of newness as a greater expression of revelation.

Student Question: At creation, there was only one language. Some have said it was Hebrew, God's language. What do you think?

Prof. Response: We cannot speculate. Do not go beyond what the Bible says. We know the source of multiple languages from Genesis 6, but God has kept silent about other information. It was His purpose and design to choose Hebrew (and some Aramaic) to give us the O.T. and Greek to give us the New Testament, and to choose the people and times of history to give it. Let us rejoice and be glad that He even chose to do so. Otherwise, the whole world would be in spiritual blindness.

As we look at revelation since Pentecost, we see a threefold work of the Spirit of God. First, we have the Holy Spirit as a qualifier of revelation:

I. The Holy Spirit as Qualifier of Revelation

A. Finality of New Testament Revelation

Heb. 1:1,2: *God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds;*

God spoke in different times and many ways in times past. The ultimate revelation of God was the coming of Jesus Christ himself. It is very significant that John calls Jesus, the son, the word of God, the logos, the very expression of God. We see in Christ's life as recorded in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, His manifestation, His ministry, and His message.

When Peter made his confession, "You are Christ, the son of the living God" Jesus said, "flesh and blood did not reveal that to you". It became apparent that, for the necessary of developing a foundation for the church, God called some to understand a measure of the fullness of the ministry of Christ. They were the disciples. They all accepted Him as the Messiah. At the Lord's ascension, there were 500 believers. The

true fullness of understanding did not come until Pentecost. In the sermon of Peter in Acts 2, at the coming of the Spirit of God, thousands of souls come to God in understanding. It is important to see the significance of Pentecost in relationship to the Spirit of God and revelation.

B. Ministry of the Holy Spirit

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.*

Here John writes, ‘The Spirit of God will teach you all things.’ Here we see the Spirit of God brought to remembrance the teaching of Christ.

John 15:26, 27: *But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me. And you also will bear witness, because you have been with Me from the beginning.*

In this passage, the Spirit of truth testifying of Christ. In these two passages, the Spirit of God’s specific ministry to His people is revelation. The Holy Spirit testifies to and bears witness to the teaching of Jesus Christ. I will give an example of how I see the ministry of the Spirit of God working: When Jesus was with the disciples He taught them the truth, compare this reaching to the parts of a tree. When Jesus was with the disciples he was teaching them, and they received little packages of truth here and there. It was all truth and by it they were amazed.

However, we know they did not grasp all of it. When Jesus declared he would die, Peter said ‘no, no that can’t be’. In his mind, he just could not put it in order. Yet, when the Spirit of God came, Peter preached the Gospel of Christ with confidence. By the leading of the Spirit of God, all was put in order for him.

Do you understand the Holy Spirit’s significance in terms of the teaching of Jesus? It was not that Jesus was unclear, and it was not even that He purposely left confusion; they themselves were not capable, until the Spirit came, to get it all together. The fullness of the ministry of the Spirit of God guided them to full understanding. The Holy Spirit put New Revelation in order, with power, at Pentecost. That is why I call the Holy Spirit the qualifier of revelation.

II. The Holy Spirit as Equipper for Revelation

We also see in the N.T. that the Holy Spirit is the equipper of revelation. We discussed earlier how the many ways that God revealed himself in the O.T.: through dreams and visions, and speaking directly, but

when God chose to bring this New Revelation to the point of writing. Who did He use in the O.T.? He rose up the prophets. Yet, true prophets were rare. Israel often chose prophets who taught what Israel wanted to hear, instead of God's Truth.

A. O.T. Revelation

Therefore, God proved the true prophets who preached the applications of the Word and rebuked Israel for their disobedience. We know from Deuteronomy that God also gave them another privilege; to clarify and to verify the accuracy of the Word with signs and wonders and miracles to prove their message was from God. But, they were also given the privilege of predicting the future.

God said in Deuteronomy 18 that if the prophet gives the message he will give truth about the future, an event that will happen within your lifetime. If what he predicts comes true in your lifetime you will know he is a true prophet, and what he says and writes is the very Word of God.

B. N.T. Revelation

It is importance for us to understand that in the explosion of revelation at Pentecost, God continued to use the same methodology. We see that there was a necessity for the confirmation of their message in miracles, signs, wonders, and something new: spiritual gifts. With regard to New Revelation, these were what I call speaking gifts. Full lists are found in Romans, 1 Peter, Ephesians and 1 Corinthians. We will examine these in Pneumatology II.

1 Cor. 12:8-10: *for to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another different kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills.*

In this passage, you see the reference to a word of wisdom and a word of knowledge. For our purposes under 'The Holy Spirit of God as Equipper of Revelation,' note that there are specific 'speaking gifts' given for revelation: The word of wisdom relates to the giving of revelation itself. The word of knowledge relates to the application of the Word of God. As you study these terms, you discover that the idea seems reversed sometimes; the word of wisdom is the application and the word

of knowledge that is actually the facts. Nevertheless, the point I want to make is that in the lists of the gifts of the Spirit of God there were clearly gifts to do the previous work of writing revelation by O.T. prophets.

In the six lists of the gifts of the Spirit in N.T., there are terms that refer specifically to revelation. These terms reflect the bigger responsibility of the God's 'prophets:' in writing the very Word of God; in preaching the application of the Word of God; and in making future predications. We also see that these gifts have a limited expression: **1 Cor. 13: 8-10:** *Love never fails. But whether there are prophecies, they will fail; whether there are tongues, they will cease; whether there is knowledge, it will vanish away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away.*

In this context we see that the speaking gifts or the revelation gifts will be a part of the apostolic ministry. In this passage we see two of the revelation gifts; prophecy and knowledge. With each of these gifts, the same phrase is used: '*they will be made to cease.*' We will give more attention later. Just know that the Spirit of God equipped God's people in the church to give revelation, as the prophets in the O.T. It seems that, rather than just a few 'prophets' as in the O.T., there were many in the N.T. who received these gifts, although not all were used to write the New Revelation (Acts 21:9). The Holy Spirit is the qualifier of revelation: setting it in order, and the equipper of revelation: giving specific gifts for the purpose of N.T. revelation. He is also the verifier of revelation:

III. The Holy Spirit as Verifier of Revelation

Again, we go back to what the O.T. says about the ministry of the Spirit of God. In Deuteronomy 13, Israel was warned against false prophets. It makes logical sense that if Satan is seeking to destroy the work of God, He will present people who say they are giving the word of God. I reminded the class, when we talked about Satan's ministry, he has thousands of years of experience in deception, and trying to destroy the work of God. Satan is not all knowing, but because he has been around so long, he has accumulated much knowledge. If you were alive for even 500 years, you would probably be the wisest man in the world. Satan has been around for thousands of years. One of his tactics was establishing false prophets. Therefore, to protect God's people, God gave them instructions for confirming true prophets:

Deut. 18:21-22: *And if you say in your heart, 'How shall we know the word which the LORD has not spoken?' ..."when a prophet speaks in the name of the LORD, if the thing does not happen or come to pass, that is the thing which the LORD has not spoken; the prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him.*

In this passage, we see that God will specifically raise up prophets in his name and when they speak for him, their predictions will always be 100% accurate. We do not have time to go through the O.T. to see how Israel responded to the prophets, but we know that when a prophet was speaking Israel was not content to wait for the prediction to take place. They asked for 'signs' as well. It provoked God but they still asked for signs.

Hezekiah was a perfect example. When he was sick, he asked for a sign and God was angry with him, but complied and gave him a sign. There are other examples throughout the O.T. God did give Israel signs that were miracles and wonders and these kinds of things to show their message was from God Himself. Isn't it just like depraved man when God says: 'Here's how you know', he desires more!

Even when God gave direct revelation at Mt. Sinai, and the people were in great fear because God was in their presence on the mountain, they pleaded, "Please do not speak to us personally, we can't accept this, and we are frightened." God said it is ok; I will give you a man. But, the other nations had false men claiming to give God's words as well. Therefore, God said, "Here's how you will know it is my man, when he predicts it will always be true. Yet, in all of this grace given to man, Israel later says, "We want signs." That is the reality found in O.T. revelation, spread out over many, many years.

Now we come to the N.T. and Pentecost and the explosion of revelation. Again, we see God using the same methods but an explosion in a deeper and more meaningful way. It is import to think about Pentecost and the beginning of the church. Thousands of people became believers in Peter's sermon when the Spirit came.

Prof. Question: *Who were these people? They were from many nations, but why were they in Jerusalem?*

Student Response: *They were probably there for Passover and stayed for the feast of Pentecost.*

Prof. Response: *Yes, so who were these people if they travelled there for*

Passover and Pentecost.

Student Response: Jews and proselytes.

Prof. Response: Yes, they were Jews who came to celebrate the feast according to the custom. In Jerusalem, the apostles that were there conducted a ministry primarily to the Jewish believers.

Prof. Question: Who was the apostle to the Gentiles?

Student Response: Paul.

Prof. Question: Is Paul there at Pentecost?

Student Response: No

Prof. Response: Correct, Paul is not as a believer, his name is Saul, he is a Pharisee, he may well have been in Jerusalem, but he was not a believer. He became a persecutor.

In the context of the birth of the church, it mostly comprised of Jewish people in the beginning. These people were conditioned by the O.T. to seek signs for prophecy.

1 Cor. 1:22: *For Jews request a sign, and Greeks seek after wisdom;*

2 Cor. 12:12: *Truly the signs of an apostle were accomplished among you with all perseverance, in signs and wonders and mighty deeds.*

Paul stated that Jews always sought for signs therefore the Corinthian church had no grounds for dismissing his authority as an apostle because he too was verified by “*the signs of the apostles were wrought among you in miracles and the wonders.*” The Corinthian church was mostly Jewish people as well:

Paul founded the church after his visit to Athens (Acts 18:1–7). It had its origins in the sermons Paul preached in the Jewish synagogue whose leader was among the early converts (Acts 18:8). Inevitably, the church and synagogue clashed. The Jews attempted to institute criminal proceedings against the Christians. This failed when Gallio ruled that Christianity sat under the umbrella of Judaism (Acts 18:12–17), giving Christians the same favoured status as Jews.³

Jesus even said the Jews are always looking for signs. The sign He gave them was his resurrection. There is something significant that I want to show you from Peter’s sermon:

³ *New Bible commentary: 21st century edition.* 1994 (D. A. Carson, R. T. France, J. A. Motyer & G. J. Wenham, Ed.) (4th ed.) (1161). Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press.

Acts 2:22: *Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know*

Prof. Question: *In this passage what terms were used to explain the affirmation of Jesus?*

Student Response: *'miracles, wonders, signs'*

Prof. Response: *OK we see this here, that is what confirmed Jesus. In 2 Cor. 12:12 again we have signs, wonders, mighty deeds or miracles, exactly the same words. Do you see the continuity between O.T. and N.T. verification of revelation?*

Continuing this Bible evidence of continuity n verification of revelation by the Holy Spirit, we now examine the Book of Hebrews:

Heb. 2:3-4: *how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him, God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will?*

Verse 3 refers to Jesus message confirmed by “*by those that heard Him*”: the apostles. The message was: given by the Lord, confirmed by the apostles, verified by signs, wonders, miracles and gifts. To the usual list of common proofs, there is the of gifts that were for the confirmation of the message. This will become important when we begin to examine the individual gifts.

Heb. 1:1-2a: *God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son,*

We already looked at 1 Corinthians 13 where it says prophecy and knowledge will cease. Clearly, the text of Hebrews suggests this in the finality of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. It seems in Hebrews 1:2 there is finality when the text says God spoke in many ways in time past, but now it is different. The essence of the text states: “now revelation is complete, now it is complete in Jesus Christ”. Although we will look more at this later, this idea of the Spirit of God completing revelation, suggests these methods of confirming the revelation also ceased.

The early church fathers confirmed that the miracles, wonders, and signs of the apostolic age no longer were part of the church:

B. B. Warfield cites several authors who speak of an end to supernatural gifts, two of which are Augustine (354–430) and Chrysostom (349–407). In his *Retractions*, written significantly later in life, Augustine qualifies these statements, though he still says that some gifts have disappeared, specifically mentioning tongues and some healings: The *Retractions*, 1.12.7.⁴ Warfield identifies numerous places that Chrysostom refers to the ceasing of miracles: Homily 8 on Colossians⁵, Homily 25 on John.⁶

So, we see the uniqueness of Pentecost when it comes to revelation. Peter is a perfect example of an individual who had O.T. teaching and then progressed through to become part of the church. What was Peter's profession, he was a fisherman but God by Pentecost made a prophet out of him through the gifts He gave him. And we see all through the work of the apostles in the beginning of church since Pentecost and explosion of revelation.

Peter himself was a man who experienced this, he was the preacher of the day, and he was privileged to be an apostle who stood on the mountain of transfiguration. He was a man with a sense of God's call in his life and he gave us even Scriptures. Yet in all of the experiences he had, even in terms of miracles and signs, he says something significant in his epistle:

2 Pet 1:19: *And so we also have the more sure prophetic word, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts;*

In this context Peter explains in that all the experiences the apostles had with Christ; the voice of God from heaven (vs. 17), eyewitnesses of His majesty (vs.16), the actual Word of God is a more sure testimony. We see the great explosion of revelation which brought greater understanding by the ministry of the Spirit of God and greater privilege for the people of God.

With this greater privilege and responsibility came greater revelation and greater accountability. You and I have today more of God's Word than O.T. saints. Every aspect of our life has a deeper calling because we have the privilege of greater revelation, and the privilege of the

⁴https://books.google.ca/books?id=DikZ4GEmgUIC&pg=PA55&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q&f=false

⁵<https://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf113.iv.iv.viii.html>

⁶<https://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf114.iv.xxvi.html>

deeper work of the Spirit of God in our lives. If King David looked at the Word of God as sweeter than honey and more precious than gold with only a portion of revelation, how much more should we, with all the privileges we have beyond David, respond with a greater passion for the Word of God. Paul reminds us: “*Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*” (2 Tim. 3:15).

Student Question: You shared from 1 Corinthians that miracles, wonders and sign ceased, and you said the church fathers confirmed this. Can you give us support for this?

Prof. Response: When we look at the spiritual gifts later on in our class, we will be talking more about the idea of revelation ceasing. John McArthur traced the ‘Issue of Historical Transitions’ in his book “The Charismatic.” You have this book in your library. If you are able to get some of the better Bible software, you will get resources that refer back to the church fathers.

Pentecost And a New Union

We see Pentecost in its newness, not different, but deeper. We see first of all an explosion of revelation that ceased when the apostles died. But, imagine 27 books from God in one lifetime, what a blessing! Now we also see something unique that was such a challenge to the Jewish church. We see at Pentecost through the ministry of the Spirit of God, a new union.

In the O.T. the focal point for worship of the nation of Israel and those who were proselytized was the temple. The synagogues were areas of worship but were never meant to replace the temple. Israel had the knowledge that they were the people of God. They had the message of truth. To be a man of God you had to become a child of Israel. In the process of proselytizing Gentiles to the Jewish faith they practiced the common religious practice of baptism. The origin of baptism is very difficult to define, but it seems very evident that in the time of Christ and the apostles, even the pagan religions baptized people. It was society’s way of saying: What I now believe with and join with this religious group.

The Jewish ‘religion’ even added to this by saying that baptism was a method of cleansing the ‘uncleanliness of the Gentiles.’ For Israel, it

was a turning away from paganism and a turning to the true and living God. When John the Baptist came, he had every appearance of the O.T. prophets. The Jewish people accepted him as a prophet as he preached repentance for the preparation of the Messiah to come. The symbol for Israel to accept that repentance was again a baptism. It was different from the proselytizing baptism, but it was a public baptism, identifying with John's call to repentance.

We know Israel had much to repent of. They had in the time from the O.T. to the N.T. of perverted the law, making the law the way to salvation. They had in the perversion of the law, which put a burden on the Jewish nation. They had their own 'model of a true man of God' which were the Pharisees who taught rules of the law, some of the things were bizarre. For example, they taught rules like 'on the Sabbath you can only cook 3 eggs, no more', 'you can only walk ½ km and then you must rest.' You can go to the historical records and find the exact statements of the Pharisees, but for our purposes we just want to acknowledge that their presentation of the law brought a burden on the people. It was complete falsehood, laid on Israel's back. Therefore, there was much to repent of.

When John came, he preached 'repent and be baptized.' The 'whole nation' was going out to be baptized. I would have enjoyed being one of the people who was there when the Pharisees came for baptism because John refused to baptize them. He would say 'show me your life of repentance and I will baptize you'. That must have been a shock for the people: "Oh! The Pharisees are not going to make it!

The idea of baptism itself involved the sense of being overwhelmed by a new teaching, accepting this teaching as truth and joining this teaching by a public show of identification. When we come to Pentecost and the church, God used this same method to help the people understand this as a public way of showing your allegiance to Christ and to the church. I personally believe God in his sovereignty engineered all the pagan religions to practice this so it was an understood practice when the church was formed. Because it was a public demonstration there had to be some understanding of what it meant before the church used it or it would be a meaningless thing.

Church history indicates how the lack of understanding brought people to conclusions, which were bizarre. When the Anabaptists, in early church of the dark ages, rejected mass, they were accused of eating

babies in the communion services. With the predominance of the Roman Church, there was an understanding that mass, performed by priests, was essential for salvation. Therefore, when these people rejected this, they hid themselves because they were accused of doing such terrible things. I use that as an example to show why God had laid down a foundation for the idea of baptism to make it meaningful in public for the church.

God through his N.T. revelation gave a much deeper meaning to the idea of baptism. The term 'baptism' has a 2-fold idea or meaning in the church.

I. New Testament (Believer's) Baptism - Union Secured by God

A. Baptism Securing Union of God in the Believer

Baptism by the Spirit in the N.T. church is the union of all believers secured by God.

Mark 1:8: *I indeed baptized you with water, but He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.*" (See also Luke 3:16; John 1:33).

John came baptizing, preaching a baptism of repentance (vs. 4) and says: '(Christ) will baptize you with the Holy Spirit (vs 8). John introduced a new concept: Christ will baptize with the Holy Spirit.

There are other texts in the gospels that say Christ is baptizing by the spirit. Now let's go to Acts:

Acts 1:5: *"for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."*

Now Jesus Himself is promising what John predicted. He is saying 'not many days from now'. The disciples here clearly understood this to mean Pentecost. Jesus promised: '*you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit*' Remember, the idea of baptism (in water before the public) in N.T. times, inferred 'a positional change', an embracing of concepts (beliefs) resulting in a new association, membership (identity with a particular religious group).' That was the cultural understanding, and use by most religions, of the practice of 'baptism'. Here, it is not talking about water baptism, but about the baptism of Spirit of God.

We see the fulfillment of this at Pentecost: The Holy Spirit's baptism embraced believers as members of Christ's body (the true church) with new understanding and new association. So obvious was this change of position (in Christ) that Saul, seeking permission to arrest its members, called them people of the 'Way'(Acts 9:2). The 'church's' newness was an unmistakable, undeniable reality in its members lives:

once apart from Christ, now “*in Christ*” (found 65 times in Paul’s epistles).

Do not mistake the term ‘baptism’ with ‘indwelling’. Indwelling was necessary in all ages for regeneration. But at the Pentecost’s ‘baptism’, a new relationship and a unique identity began. Do not mistake ‘baptism’ with ‘filling’. We have seen that this term used in comparison to alcohol’s controlling influence. Filling is a command. Christians are to be filled, or controlled, by the Spirit of God, as the means of keeping pure and fulfilling purpose.

This Holy Spirit baptism was for all believers, it had nothing to do with controlling. It established a new fullness of union with the Spirit of God, perhaps only available upon redemption’s completion through Jesus Christ. Jesus, in promising the baptism with the Spirit, indicated this fullness would come to the church at Pentecost. Christ promised it would take place in ‘not many days’. When it happened, because it was among Jewish people, there were signs to confirm it so that even the disciples would see the signs and believe the promise was fulfilled.

Prof. Question: What were the signs in Acts 2?

Student Response: The appearance of the spirit coming down as tongues of fire, so that was visual sign.

Prof. Question: What were other signs?

Student Response: The sound of roaring wind without wind.

Prof. Question: What else?

Student Response: Every people from different language were able to understand what the apostles shared in their own language

Prof. Response: And so, because this was prophesied, there signs as foretold in Joel. This, in Joel, was in conjunction with the days of the seed, the ministry of Christ.

Student Question: In which language did the apostle preach on the day of Pentecost?

Prof. Response: We have no idea. They heard in their own language. Is it the gift of speaking or the gift of hearing? There is no interpreter, they all heard in their own tongue. Peter and the other apostles probably spoke in their own common language, probably Koine Greek, but possibly Hebrew since the hearers were Jewish. Although most educated Jewish people in Jerusalem had been taught Hebrew, it is uncertain that the common fisherman would have been.

These unique instances of visible tongues of fire, sound of wind, and everyone hearing in their own language, were signs that Peter said was the fulfillment of Joel's prophecy regarding the coming of the Messiah. We know from the symbolism of the feasts that the completed first coming ministry was at Pentecost. Do not stop Jesus' 'first coming ministry' at His resurrection. It involved His death, His burial, His resurrection, and Pentecost. The significance of this is that the Spirit of God being poured out in a new way. The idea of newness is found in the phrase 'baptized by the Spirit of God.' It is a new and unique union with God, by which believers now are members of His family.

This is expressed in Paul's epistles with the repeated phrases 'in Christ', 'God in us' and 'Christ in us'. The baptism of the Spirit of God emphasized the uniqueness of the New Covenant relationship. This was truly a new union of the believer in Christ; the fullness of God which O.T. believers never experienced.

Were the O.T. saints indwelt? Yes, they had to be or there is no regeneration. Could the O.T. believers be empowered by the Spirit? Yes: the temple builders were empowered to fashion the elements, Goliath was empowered to defeat the Philistines, and David was empowered to rule as King. Was the character of God evident in O.T. believers? Yes, the patience of Job, the meekness of Moses indicates so.

All of this is true because all of this is a part of salvation. Nevertheless, to demonstrate the new uniqueness of the New Covenant Christians are baptized by the Holy Spirit, establishing in each believer, union with the fullness of God. Baptism's 'spiritual embracement in this union', portrayed by public water baptism, is a new ministry of the Spirit of God for the church. I suggest this is not necessarily something we experience in our lives, such as entering into blissful joy, or preaching better.

Christians believe it by the authority of God's Word. The signs and wonders, for the confirmation to the early church that Christ's promised baptism of the Spirit was fulfilled, are no longer necessary. Christians now have the completed, preserved Scriptures, endowed with the authority of God, to give guidance, strengthen, comfort and conviction, through the Holy Spirit's ministry.

B. Baptism Securing Union of the Believer in God

We have also in the N.T. the baptism securing union in God. Christ gave the promise of the believer being baptised with the spirit. So it was the promise of Jesus that God would be in them in a full way. That is the fulfillment of Jesus baptizing with the Spirit. The way we say this is 'God in us.' This is distinct from the baptism of the Spirit of God in which we are in Christ.

Do you see the difference? The one is God's fullness is in me; but now because we are little Christs, we must be in Christ. It is the point of our being in Him so the application of His work is our salvation. Jesus' substitution as my guilt bearer is mine because I am in Him. In Scriptures there is a distinction between God's fullness being in me, the fullness of the New Covenant, and me being in Christ so I am justified and his righteousness is mine and my sins are His.

This is the revelation of God to help us understand the uniqueness of our salvation. If I am not in Him, then His work is not substituting for me. If I am not in him, his death is not my death. If I am not in him, his resurrection is not my resurrection. God is showing us the thoroughness or the completeness of salvation, to help us understand. We have Christ baptizing us with the Spirit. And, we have the Spirit of God baptizing us in Christ. It all speaks of different aspects of union. We see the baptism of the Spirit of God bringing us into Christ himself. 1:47:54

Col. 2:10-12: *and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power. In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.*

We have the idea of putting off the flesh, we are in Christ through his baptism, we are complete in Christ and therefore, that comes through the baptism of the spirit. In the baptism of the spirit, the Spirit of God applies the finished work of Christ in his life. We are one in Christ in his death, is his burial, in his resurrection. Saul discovered the uniqueness of this in the point of salvation when he was seeking to persecute the church.

When Christ presented himself to Saul he asked why are you persecuting me? The reality because he was persecuting the church, he was persecuting Christ himself. There is a distinction between Christ's bap-

tism of the Spirit at Pentecost; the union of God in us, and the baptism of the Spirit in which; we are now in Christ in all his finished work. Both are part of the plan of God to bring the concept of baptism as full and complete union. The underlying emphasis of ‘baptism’ means union, union, union. We will see tomorrow how physical baptism is a picture of this.

CLASS 6

When God unfolded His redemptive plan for the world in the feasts of Israel, He indicated the Pentecost was a uniquely significant redemptive event. The last few days we examined Pentecost to discover the uniqueness of this event. This was the event of the birth of the church. This was the event of the beginning of the New Covenant. This was the manifestation of the ministry of the Spirit of God in humility, in the same sense of Christ’s first coming.

We examined the essence of the New Covenant as the Spirit of God gave birth to the church. Therefore, we are privilege to be the first people of the New Covenant. The church does not replace Israel but paves the way for the world to hear the message. We characterize this new era from Pentecost on with the word ‘newness’. We discover the idea of newness does not mean ‘different’ but ‘deeper’. We saw this in the idea of Pentecost in revelation whereby we have an explosion of revelation.

We saw also in the newness of Pentecost the idea of a new union. This was identified by the term that God used; ‘baptism’. We have been discussing the two-fold union of believers with God with this term baptism. The baptism of the spirit within the church was an event that occurred first at Pentecost. Now each person who comes to Christ as their Saviour are baptized by the Spirit of God. The key to understanding baptism is ‘a union as oneness.’

We saw that this idea of oneness from the perspective of God; as God is in us. Therefore, there is a sense of a greater fullness of God as a result of Christ’s sending the Holy Spirit. We saw also from God’s perspective that baptism means we are ‘in Christ’. This means being in Christ whereby the fullness of the ministry of Christ on the cross with his righteousness and justification is ours fully. Because we are in Christ, the Father sees us as He sees Christ; standing in Christ’s righteousness, heirs along with God’s Son.

Now we come to a third aspect of this idea of baptism by the Spirit. We are in Christ and Christ is in us, and another consequences of believers' Spirit Baptism is the union of believers with one another.

C. Baptism Securing Union of Believer with Believer 8:08

1 Cor. 12:13: *For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body — whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free — and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.*

We see here, by this one Spirit Baptism, we believers enter into one body together. The church around the world is, by virtue of God's view the body of Christ in the world, one body. We talk about the universal church and the local church as we talk about missions, or in defined terms of theology. But, we have to be careful that we do not reduce the church down to two entities. In the mind of God there is no distinction between the universal church and local churches.

Clearly, the emphasis in the Scripture is the local church. There are 114 references regarding 'the church' of which there are 9 that are not referring to the local church. Therefore, we cannot accept the idea that believers can be part of the universal church but not the local church. The universal church is composed of all true local churches around the world. The universal church does not exist without the local church.

However, we have to be consciously aware that, in the plan of God, a believer who is not part of a local church is not in the will of God. Perhaps to illustration would be to say: "Christ is fully God". That is a true statement! But, is Christ all that God is? No, because the Son is one person of the Godhead. In this same way, the local church is part of the universal church, in essence everything the universal church is. As Christ is fully God, but not everything God is, so the local church fully the universal church (in relation to God), but it is not everything the universal church is (in relation to reasonability toward believer's and unbelievers).

Today, according to Scripture, when a person accepts Christ as Saviour, he/she becomes part of the body of Christ (the universal church) immediately'. This is comprised of all true local churches, which are responsible for the care, maturity, service, and multiplication of members, who participate by the testimony of water baptism. As such, the local church stands alone. The local church is everything a church intends to be. The universal is just comprised of all these individual local churches. The universal cannot be everything the local

church is because it does not have overseeing elders, it does not have serving deacons, it does not have functioning structure, as each local church has. We must convey to people that God speaks of the body of Christ universally, but it is made up of the local churches independently. The N.T. church is local and complete in itself. However, it is also a part of the universal church

All this helps to guard against individual believers who stand alone, not a part of any local church. That is like bringing a child into the world and having no family for the child; it is not natural. A child needs a family, and if a child doesn't have a family, usually society seeks a family for the child. The principles are the same in spiritual birth. God intends for his people, who come to Him through new birth, to be part of a family called the local church.

Yet, all who come to God through new birth are united together, by the baptism of the Spirit of God, as one great family we call 'the universal church, and God calls 'the body of Christ.. The universal church is a reality in that it is the representation of Christ's body on the planet. It includes all true believers, whose membership is dependent upon new birth. Therefore, as all Christians are united. No Christian should stand outside a local church. That is unbiblical.

What is also unbiblical is one true church standing in opposition of another true church. They function individually if they are comprised of truly born again believers. Yet, Christ is the head of each individual church. An organizational structure does not rule the local church, Christ does. Although local true churches may differ in doctrines or methodology, if churches are composed of true born-again believers, there is no room for opposition, only mutual acceptance and respect. Follow me; it is unbiblical for any individual believer to be outside the true local church. No! By virtue of our union it is unbiblical for one true church to oppose to another true church. No! They stand individually accountable to God, not to man. Would it be biblical for a true believer to be a part of a false church? No!

Is rebirth/new birth the condition of all membership for all churches? No! There are many false churches, which have a membership list if you pay them the money. There are many churches and organizations in the world that call themselves Christian, that have no concept of new birth, or do not teach rebirth. If a true believer stays within that environment, to me, it is an unbiblical. This amounts to a believer putting

himself under the authority of unbelievers in spiritual matters. This is not biblical. Yet, I know people that have come to Christ as Saviour and are happy to stay within the Roman Catholic Church, or a liberal church. These examples of unbiblical behavior are common denials of the applications of universal union of all believers within the true local church.

In summary, the Baptism of Spirit of God has these different aspects. The key of these aspects is: God in us, and we in God. These express different aspects of the fullness of life in God and God in us, and the truth that all believers are united, therefore must be part of a local church. The other practice of baptism that Scripture teaches is water baptism.

II. New Testament (Water) Baptism - Union Professed by Man

A. A Confession of Union with Christ

Matt. 28:19-20: *“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Amen.*

Water baptism is the public identity of the believer’s union with Christ and with the local church. N.T. water baptism is union professed by Christians.

Student Question: How can someone be saved and be content to stay in a church such as Roman Catholic?

Prof. Response: We have to be careful how we teach our people these truths because some people feel an obligation to the unsaved within the church they belong. There is a point where we teach the Word and allow the Spirit of God to change the heart. That is not our job.

An example when I was a pastor in Canada, a member was praying that her husband would come to Christ. He indulged in smoking, drinking and all the things the world does. By the grace of God he did accept Christ as Saviour and began to attend church and grow in the Lord. Almost immediately, he stopped consuming alcohol but he did not stop smoking cigarettes. In seeking to follow the Lord he wanted to be baptized.

The deacons said: “We cannot baptize him, he still smokes.”

I responded: “Where does it say in the Bible you must be a mature believer to be baptized? Do you believe he is truly saved? If so, he is a

brother in Christ now and should be part of the local church as a member of God's family. We have no right to deny him baptism; rather, we should do all to promote God's work of sanctification in his life." That is exactly what happened. He was baptized, and eventually ceased smoking as God convicted him.

Do you see what I am saying? We can do the same thing with this idea of the true church. We must let people mature in Christ and leave the matter of sanctification and direction in God's hands. We give advice when asked, but we dare not make unwarranted demands.

Student Question: What do you think about churches having a period of teaching , one month or two months.

Prof. Response: That is a good practice. But, every local church stands accountable to Christ. The important thing is that believers need to be disciplined, not just for membership but for being taught the whole council of God all their lives. If there is no plan for discipleship, there is no plan to complete the great commission. If a local church desires to have a training program before individuals are baptized and join the membership, that is their choice. In essence these candidates are within the authority of that church by submitting to the teaching. Nevertheless, if a local church requires baptism and membership prior to teaching that is their prerogative. The important thing (which is often overlooked) is **BELIEVERS NEED TO BE DICIPLED TO GROW IN THE LORD.**

I speak as a pastor of 25 years, and now a career missionary viewing local churches all around the world, the sad reality is discipleship is not taking place. The greatest need in local churches throughout the world is regular, consistent, sound Bible teaching. But, this is not happening. The great commission of Matthew 28 is not completed with evangelism, (making disciples). Integration into a local church is completed with baptism. What is the next element of the commission? Instruction: Teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you is required to complete the great commission. That is a lifetime of learning for every believer.

I again challenge you pastors. If you do not have a plan for discipleship, you do not have a plan to complete God's Great Commission!

Student Response: I appreciate your explanation regarding letting people mature. I have a 60 year old man in my church who loves the Lord, desires to help people and attends church always. But he drinks too much.

Prof. Response: I understand. In the church I pastored for 20 years, we had an introduction class of about 1 month in which we taught new believers about our church, prior to being baptized. In this class we taught these folks the commitment each member was asked to make to one another as well as the basic doctrinal statement, leadership, and business practices etc. Candidates requesting membership gave ascent to these statements at a business meeting prior to baptism along with transferring members.

Student Question: I have a question about the organization of the universal church. Here in Cameroon we have many pastors who have had no theological training and do not have the qualifications of 1 Timothy 3. Are their churches a part of the universal church?

Prof. Response: This is not a class in ecclesiology, but let me say simply that the universal church is every born again believer on the planet. It has nothing to do with maturity or local church membership. If they are born again, they are part of the body of Christ, we theologians have called the universal church. Is it possible for a born again person to not be a part of a local church? Yes, certainly it is, and probably quite common. The Ethiopian eunuch was not a church member because there was no church in Ethiopia when he returned there. But, church history tells us that the Church of Ethiopia was instrumental in preserving much of early church writings. Perhaps the Ethiopian eunuch shared his faith and a church begun. There is no record of how it began.

There are always people in transition as born again believers. Nevertheless, the local church is the great emphasis of the N.T. It is clear that the purpose of God is to provide a spiritual family for His children. All believers should be part of a local church where possible.

Let me go back and complete our look at water baptism, the union professed by man. In the pattern of the day of Christ and the day of the apostle water baptism was practiced in Judaism and pagan religions. Water baptism was the public profession of changed association. Nevertheless, within the church it took on a more significant meaning. Water baptism for the new believer was a confession of union with Christ. When the first believers were baptized they were saying, "We are one with Christ 'in The Way.'" For the Jewish believers water baptism

meant, “We are turning away from the Jewish faith (defines and taught by Pharisees), and identifying with Jesus Christ and His way.” For the Gentiles, who followed pagan gods, baptism meant the same, “We are turning away from pagan practice to follow Christ.”

B. A Picture of Union with Christ

Baptism was a picture of union with Christ. I’m sure you teach n your church that water baptism pictures ‘death of self and life in Christ,’ as you baptize people. Water Baptism pictures to be buried with Christ when under water, (that is why water baptism was always immersion), and then coming up out of the water as you are lifted up as a picture of resurrection with Christ. This water baptism symbolized everything we are in Christ, His death, His burial, His resurrection. It follows the pattern of God giving the visible object lesson of what redemption really is.

The Scriptures use Noah and his ark delivered from the water as a picture of God’s deliverance. The Scriptures use Israel’s walking through the Red Sea, as the water stood up and allowed them to walk through, again as a picture of God’s deliverance and salvation. The word baptism in Greek means ‘immerse’. The word ‘baptizo’ was used when women were washing clothes, putting them in the water and taking them out. It was used when a man was on a ship and fell overboard, going under the water.

Historically, the reason that we have the word ‘baptize’ in the English Bible, is because when King James ordered the Scriptures to be put in the English language, his church did not practice immersion. So, the translators for the King James Bible were not allowed to use ‘immersion.’ They transliterated the word ‘baptizo’ into ‘baptize’.

C. Baptism Securing Union of Believer with Believer

Water baptism also portrays the union of new believers with the church. In the time of Christ, water baptism was the means of ‘membership’ or identification, into a religious group. Therefore, it was the historical way for people to join the true church. They were baptized into Christ, and into the local church. That is why I believe it is very important for the local church to perform the baptizing of new believers.

In Canada, we have a problem with this. We have ministries that are not local churches baptizing people. Christian camping ministry has exploded in Canada. Some para-church organizations, like the Keswick Ministry and Christian Youth Camp ministries, have Bible camps for children to experience the outdoors and be taught the Word of God.

This has proved to be a great environment for sharing the gospel and seeing people saved. The children (and adults in some camp locations) are away from home, without TV, without radio, and without internet. They are in the bush, under the stars, and for one or two weeks, they are taught the beauty of salvation in Christ. In that unique environment thousands accept Christ in Canada. That is wonderful. I myself was involved in this ministry as a child for many years, and my wife was involved with a summer youth ministry.

The problem is that some of these organizations baptize the new believers in the lake before they go home. Can you see the problem with this? They are not identifying with a local church when they are baptized at a camp. Our church would not recognize a baptism at a camp; it was the same 'kind' baptism; immersion in water, but it was not by a local church. We would explain that we appreciate the camp ministry, nevertheless you need to be identified by baptism in a local church. Most of the time it was not a problem, new believers were anxious to follow the Word of God.

Another problem is the mode of baptism used. Some churches and organizations, while teaching the true gospel, when baptizing believers, do not immerse, they practice believer's baptism by pouring water over the candidates head. Remember, Christ's first coming was one of humility. Christ, although perfect man, requested John to baptize Him in order to fully identify with man's sin. This in itself was a step of humiliation. Therefore, when individuals say they are too embarrassed to be immersed in water, or baptized by a local church, I reminded them that this is a step of humility in following Christ. I do not remember anyone refusing baptism

Student Question: Many churches accept baptism of people by other churches no matter what mode was used. Is this correct?

Prof. Response: You need to understand what baptism they use. Many are baptized in infancy, some churches teach baptism brings people into the church. Is that believers baptism?

Student Response: No.

Prof. Response: No it is not. Infants cannot make a decision to accept Christ.

Other churches baptize individuals by sprinkling or pouring water when they make a profession of faith. Although it is not immersion, is it be-

lievers' baptism? Some say it is. But, they being baptized in the mode of their denomination, not in the way Jesus was baptized.

You have sprinkling as an infant and that is not a profession of faith.

You have pouring or sprinkling which may be a profession of faith, and you also have churches that use baptism for confirmation. Confirmation is an expression of agreement with a church's doctrine to become a member of the church. This usually takes place when a child becomes a teenager. Sometimes they memorize a catechism, being a statement of faith according to what the church has set forth. When they pass the study and agree, the sprinkling is a confirmation that they agree and they become a part of the church. Is that a confession of faith in Jesus Christ?

Student Response: No.

Prof. Response: Is it possible that the catechism expressed the gospel and the child does believe? Yes, it is possible. Some catechisms are truth. The problem is the confirmation is not about receiving Christ, it is a confirmation that I agree with the church. Clearly this is not a confession of faith in Christ.

Should a true church accept infant baptism as believers' baptism?

Student Response: No.

Prof. Question: When it is a confirmation should a true church accept it as a baptism?

Student Response: No.

Prof. Response: If the pouring baptism is a true profession of faith, could the local church accept that as a legitimate baptism?

Student Response: No.

Prof. Response: We say, no, but many evangelical churches say yes.

Their attitude is, the method is not important, it is the public confession that is important. Are they a true local church? They believe that baptism is a public profession in Christ, they do not care if it is under the water or poured over because it is a public presentation of faith in Christ. These churches are true churches, preaching the gospel and therefore, they are one with us in the body of Christ. Therefore, in my opinion, we have no right to object to them.

I have said it is up to the local church. I cannot deny their members are born-again believers, do I agree with their decision regarding the mode of baptism? No.

Would I do this in my church? No, nevertheless I cannot tell these churches what they must do, because they are accountable to Christ. It is not up to me to oppose them and say they are wrong. There are not many truly evangelical churches practicing baptism by pouring or sprinkling. But, there are some; Reform Baptist, Christian Reform, are churches in Canada practicing baptism by these modes. It would be up to local churches themselves whether to accept members from these churches without baptism by immersion

I just want to conclude by stating a profound truth: The ministry of Christ is for all the ages of history. Did Christ die for the O.T. believers? Yes. It was not the blood of animal sacrifices that saved them, it was the faith in the provision of Christ (Heb. 9:13-14).

Prof. Question: *So, when O.T. people (Jews and Gentiles) became believers, did they have the Spirit of God indwelling?*

Student Response: *-Yes. –Yes for becoming 'born again'.*

Prof. Question: *Did the O.T. believers have Spirit baptism?*

Student Response: *No.*

Prof. Question: *When did Spirit Baptism begin?*

Student Response: *At Pentecost!*

Prof. Response: *Excellent, you have listened well!*

Spirit Baptism is not Spirit habitation. Regeneration is. Spirit Baptism is a new experience of fullness of a unity with God available only after Christ's work on the cross. We see that from Pentecost there is a dimension of newness to this idea of our relationship with God. Before Pentecost there was clearly salvation through indwelling that brought regeneration. They were saved, they were part of eternity, we will see them in glory. But, as a part of the New Covenant, when Jesus completed salvation's work on the cross, there is an additional expression of fullness.

This was the fulfillment of the promise of Christ that there would be a baptism of the Spirit. Scriptures helps us understand new fullness as fullness only possible after Christ completed the sacrifice, only possible when there is remission of sins not just atonement for sins. When this promise was there were signs to prove this was happening. If you follow through the book of Acts you see the baptism of Pentecost was accom-

panied by signs: tongues of fire, sound of wind, healings etc. These signs proved to the Jewish people that what Jesus promised happened now.

When the church shared the gospel in Samaria, and later to the Gentiles, the apostles reported back to Jerusalem that they received the Spirit 'just as we did', meaning with similar signs. By their testimony, the church in Jerusalem accepted the genuineness of God's salvation in Christ among non-Jewish people. It is very import to understand that the book of Acts involves a transitional period as the new Testament was being written.

Although the matter of whether signs and wonders are for today is a controversial issue, by my own studies according to early church history, the only time period in which new birth in Christ was confirmed through signs and wonders was this 'Apostolic Age' transition period. From that point on, once the church was recognized as legitimate among all peoples, there were no church records evidencing new birth in Christ being accompanied by signs. Most of the great pastors and teachers of history that I have studied believed that signs and wonders were only for the apostolic age: John Calvin, Martin Luther, John Owen, Jonathan Edwards, George Whitefield, Charles Spurgeon, Benjamin Warfield.

Having said this, I refuse to put God in a box by restricting Him in reaching the people of the world with the gospel. Too many missionaries report God doing miraculous things to bring both primitive tribes as well as sophisticated nations to repentance. The promise had been confirmed to all people. Now we accept this by faith, believing the baptism of the Spirit happens when a person accepts Christ as Saviour, and this Spirit Baptism unites every believer the body of Christ. This is not necessarily experiential, it is a matter of faith because promise this, confirmed it Biblically.

We have Pentecost and the New Covenant, we have Pentecost and the new revelation, we Pentecost and the new union by Spirit Baptism. Now we want to carry on with another expression of newness.

Pentecost And a New Empowerment

The Holy Spirit in coming at Pentecost not only baptised individuals into Christ and Christ into them, but there was also a ministry of the Spirit of God for empowerment. This is distinct form the idea of baptism. Baptism is union, it is a statement of fact. We accept it by faith. Paul says we are in Christ and Christ is in us, and we are one together.

This is not experiential it is simply believed. Nevertheless, there are also responsibilities to be exercised ‘in Christ.’ The Holy Spirit equips every believer for a three-fold job responsibility;

I. O.T. Career Pattern

If we go back to the O.T., Israel was given specific offices to achieve the work of God. Those offices were prophet, priest, and king. Each of these offices involved an anointing to establish they were called and empowered by God. Israel wandered away from God and often established their preferred ‘office’ appointments. Therefore, we are not talking about every prophet and every priest and every king in the O.T. We are focusing on God-appointed prophets, God-appointed priests, God-appointed kings.

If you are were my ‘Daniel’ class, you will know there was a time when God stopped appointing these offices. Israel came under the power of gentile nations under Nebuchadnezzar, which invoked ‘the times of the Gentiles’. The times of the Gentiles will end only when Israel will permanently gain political control of Jerusalem at the second advent of Christ⁷ Before this period began, God was seeking a nation that would allow Him to be their king. Israel was that nation, therefore, God appointed the prophets, priests, and kings. God’s judgment upon Israel’s unbelief by other nations ended suspended that privilege.

A. In the O.T. God’s work was completed by Appointed Offices:

1. Prophets

For God’s appointed prophets, we have men such as Nathan, Elijah and Jeremiah. Yet, during the time of Israel’s history, there were only two or three prophets at a time. Most of them, like Jeremiah, were rejected and killed by the nation.

2. Priests

There were appointed priests. God anointed Aaron as a priest, but the next generation of his family was false priests. His own sons offered false sacrifices therefore God consumed them with fire in judgment. The only other priest called by God was Samuel. There was only one high priest in Israel at a time. Most of these received appointment by kings, out of personal preference, rather than appointment by God.

⁷ <https://bible.org/article/times-gentiles>

3. Kings

God appointed kings starting with Saul. He was the people's choice, and a believer. The Bible says God gave him a new heart (1 Sam. 10:9). However, because he offered sacrifice in place of the priest, his reign was removed. David, Solomon Hezekiah, and Josiah were considered good kings, although Solomon had a moral problem. Now we know that because of rebellion and disobedience the nation split into two. In each of the divisions, there were kings. Most of them were evil kings.

B. O.T. Career Patterns are fulfilled in Christ

These appointments in Israel indicate the career patterns for completing God's work. Among God's people, He required anointed prophets, anointed priests, and anointed kings. Now we already studied Christ and saw that He was all of these. He was the Messiah, anointed by the Spirit and fulfilling all three offices:

Prophet: Speaking God's truth: *God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, (Heb. 1:1-2*

Priest: Offering sacrifice for sin: *By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. And every priest stands ministering daily and offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God, (Heb. 10:10-12).*

King: Ruling in righteousness and truth: *"And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name JESUS. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end." (Lu. 1:31-33).*

I believe there were those, like Simeon, through study of the Scriptures, who understood God would supply a righteous king again, and looked for him. It is only speculation, but there was unique excitement in Simeon's life when he, having been promised to see the Lord's Messiah, said: 'the Lord's Messiah,' not 'Israel's Messiah.' This suggests he understood that Christ was the Lord's answer for a prophet, priest and king, to bring salvation to Israel.

II. N.T. Career Privilege

Now we come to Pentecost. We have Christ's promise of the Spirit of God coming. 1John states that we do not need a teacher because of the anointing that every believer has. God's people in the New Covenant are called 'Christians.' We see the beauty of a greater fullness of the Spirit's empowerment because instead of one king, one prophet, and one priest, now every believer is anointed to do the work of a prophet, priest, and king. Israel would never have imagined there would be a people of God where everyone was a prophet, everyone a priest, everyone a king. Tomorrow we look at texts that show everyone as prophet, priest, king.

CLASS 7

We need to go back to where we left off yesterday, regarding Pentecost and the new empowerment. Our introduction for this point was to review the career patterns of the O.T. for the offices that completed the work of God.

Prof. Question: What were those offices?

Student Response: Prophet, priest, and king.

When we looked at the Holy Spirit and Christ, we saw that Jesus was anointed all three. In God's plan for Israel, consequentially being His planned future Messianic kingdom, there is no distinction between religion and government. That is why it seems so obvious to me that the church does not replace Israel because there is no indication at all that the church has any affairs in government.

We are to pray for our leaders in government. The nations that have formed with Christian values insist on separation of church and state. Nevertheless, in Europe, there are many countries, which do not separate church and state. For example, Britain does not. The monarch, the king or queen of England, is always the head of the Church of England. However, there is an insistence of separation of church and state, particular in the American countries.

These are newer nations. Canada celebrated 150 years in 2017. The USA, formed in 1776 is only 250 years of age. The founding fathers of these countries were more inclined to adopt N.T. theological principles

of rule rather than O.T. Therefore, any countries forming after reformation probably have adopted the separation of church and state.

It is interesting that Moses cried out for prophets: “*Oh, that all the LORD’S people were prophets and that the LORD would put His Spirit upon them!*” (Num. 11:29). This suggests that even early in the giving of the law and the establishment of the prophet, priest and king, there were already weaknesses evident, according to Moses.

As we discovered in the kingdom era, the weakness was not the plan, it was the people. The beauty of the church is that at Pentecost, with the promise of the coming of the Spirit of God, one aspects of this ministry is His anointing of all of God’s people as prophets, priests, and kings:

Prophet: Speaking God’s truth: (See Matt. 28: 19; Acts 5:42).

Priest: Offering sacrifice for sin: (See 1 Pet. 2:9; Rev. 1:6).

King: Ruling in righteousness and truth: (See 1 Pet. 2:9; Rev. 1:6, 5:10).

As in the O.T., there was God-appointed commissioning for these offices in the N.T. References that indicate a commission in these three offices are in our notes.

A. Our Commission as Prophets

Matt. 28: 19, 20: *"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen.*

In the original language, this text begins with the participle πορεύομαι (*poreuomai*). Translated literally into English the text states, ‘*having gone*’. The text begins with the assumption that believers ‘do go.’ They know it is the responsibility to go. The term ‘make disciples,’ μαθητεύω (*mathēteuō*), meaning **make followers**, make disciples, is in the imperative mood. This expresses a command to exercise the ministry of evangelism (make disciples or followers). Baptizing, βαπτίζομαι (*baptizomai*), them is bringing the new believers into the church. This points to the responsibility of carrying out the ministry of integration. Teaching, διδάσκω (*didaskō*), them all things (present tense) is committing to the ministry of education, by continuing to instruct them in all God’s Word.

All three of these inherent ministries are a responding to giving forth God’s truth. In the early church, there was the gift of prophecy given by

the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 12:4,10). The Holy Spirit anointed certain believers as prophets; people who received revelation from God. This revelation was accumulated according to God's purposes, and preserved in writing during the first generation of the church. Part of the function of a prophet was also to give understanding and application of the revelation.

B. Our Commission as Priests

1 Peter 2:5: *you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.*

The task of priests in the O.T. was to make access to God by offering sacrifices for sin, for first fruits, and for praise. In Romans 12 and Hebrews 13 there are N.T. sacrifices for God's people today:

Rom 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.* Here, our body is offered as a living sacrifice.

Heb. 13:15-16: *Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name. But do not forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.* Here Christians offer sacrifices of possessions and praise to God.

Heb. 4:16: *Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.*

Going back again to the priests in the O.T. their role was not only offering sacrifices for access to God, it was also to lead in worship and supplication. In Hebrews 4:16 Christians are called to approach the throne of grace. Worship and supplication are every Christian's responsibility as well.

The fullness of our approach to God was demonstrated in the death of Christ when the veil in the temple was torn in two. This emphasized God was making access into the Holy of Holies for all believer-priests. Does that mean that the people of Israel in O.T. who were not priest could not pray? Of course, they could. The newness is not one of difference, but one of quality, one of deeper expression.

Roman Catholicism confuses people and denies this idea that every believer is a priest. They still practice that access to God comes through the human priest. All Christians are called upon to pray, to depend upon

God, and to make supplication for others. As priests, we worship the living God. We are especially told that when 2 or 3 are together, God is in their presence in a unique way (Matt. 18:20). This is the role of the priest for believers. As prophets, now that revelation is completed, we witness to the Word of God, we share the truth. We make access to God through the message of God's Word that brings salvation.

C. Our Commission as Kings

2 Tim. 2: 11, 12: *This is a faithful saying: For if we died with Him, We shall also live with Him. If we endure, We shall also reign with Him. If we deny Him, He also will deny us.*

In essence, if we are one with Him, we will reign with Him. We see the reality of this in Revelation:

Rev. 20:6: *Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.*

This is the reality during the millennial kingdom; believers reign with Christ for 1000 years. He is speaking of the believers raised in the first resurrection. This includes the dead in Christ and raptured believers (1 Thess. 4), as well as the believers from the 7 year tribulation (Rev. 20). The Revelation text focusses on those martyred during the tribulation but the First Resurrection is not referring to time but nature. It distinguishes all believers raised in the nature of Christ's resurrection. Therefore, this would include the church as well. (See Dan. 7:27; 1 Thess. 4:17; 2 Tim. 2:12; Rev. 5:10).

With Christ, we are His princes to reign with Him. Christ does not become Messiah when He returns to reign on the earth. He is Messiah. He has come, but the first coming was Messiah in humility. He will reign when He comes again, and this will be Messiah in exultation. In this sense, believers reign with Him now in humility and will reign with Him victoriously, when He returns in the world, as indicated in Revelation 19-20.

Prof. Question: *Think of this, do God's people reign today? Think of our salvation, what evidence is there of victory and reigning in the Christian life.*

Student Response: *Victory over sin.*

Prof. Response: *Exactly, over sin. We are promised that we are a new creation in 1 Corinthians. We are a holy nation, a royal priesthood.*

God's people alone enjoy His victory over sin. That is why our chapel caution on the new philosophy of ignoring godliness is legitimate. The makes no sense because. It denies who we are. To be like the world in order to win the world denies the victory God gave us over the world.

III. Believer Career Empower

To recap, we have texts to show the N.T. believer's commission to be prophets, now in the sense of speaking God's truth. We have the commission to be priests, to be people of the N.T. sacrifices of person, praise and possessions and prayer. We have the commission to be kings, to be people reigning over sin in the present, with the promise of reigning with Christ when He returns. The question now is 'what's this have to do with Pentecost?'

A. Old Testament Prophets, priest, kings were anointed

We see in the O.T., the prophets, the priests, the kings were anointed with oil as a symbol of the empowerment of God to perform tasks. David understood this power was by the Spirit of God. In his confession after his sin, he prayed: *do not take Your Holy Spirit from me* (Psm. 51:11). He was not talking about God removing the indwelling Spirit, which is salvation itself. When a person receives rebirth or new life in God, this cannot be lost or removed.

A child that is born cannot be un-born. God calls this new life the 'Gift of Eternal Life' (Rom. 6:23). The term itself indicates it cannot be lost or withdrawn. That 'eternal' security is an O.T. and N.T. truth. David was not praying to prevent losing his salvation in Psalm 51. No one can lose the gift of God that is everlasting. Eternal life is based unconditionally on His promise, His call, and His election. In essence, David was praying '*do not remove the power to be a king from me*'. David's prayer points to a Biblical Truth; when a believer walks out of the will of God, the power of God does not continue in his or her life. Paul referred to the Spirit's indwelling power in Ephesians:

Eph. 5:18: *And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit,*

Here Paul spoke of being controlled, or being led by the Spirit. He continued the results of such controlling influence: worship and mutual edification (vs 19), thanksgiving and praise (vs. 20), mutual submission of husbands and wives (vs. 21), a wife subjecting to her husband (vs.

24), a husband loving his wife (vs. 25), children obeying parents, etcetera.

The indwelling power of the Holy Spirit is critical to a believer's proper walk with and service to God. Paul warned of grieving the Spirit (Eph. 4:30), quenching the Spirit (1 Thess. 5:19). Neither of those texts suggests the departure of the Spirit in terms of eternal life. Rather, they speak of sin minimizes the impact of the Spirit in my life. I suggest they refer to sins of commission and sins of omission respectively.

B. Jesus was anointed "Christ" by the Holy Spirit

Christ was anointed prophet, priest, and king. At His baptism, the Spirit of God came upon him. Was the Spirit with him before this? Of course, He is God the Son, one with the Father, one with the Spirit. Yet, in Acts 10 the operating power of Jesus was evident:

Luke 4:18-19: *"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor, he has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor"*

Acts 10:18: *...God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him.*

The Spirit of God visibly coming down on Jesus, as a dove at His baptism (Matt.3:16; Mk.1:10; Lu. 3:22), was a symbol of his anointing to commence the work He was called to do. In the same way, the Holy Spirit anointed the church. The coming of the Spirit of God to the disciples in Acts 2, with the tongues of fire and sound of wind, was the anointing for the birth of the church. It was the commencement of the church in which every believer was then, and is presently, equipped with the power of the Spirit of God to complete its tasks.

C. The Church was anointed at Pentecost

The coming of the Spirit of God to the disciples in Acts 2, with the tongues of fire and sound of wind, was the anointing for the birth of the church. It was the commencement of the church, in which every believer is equipped with the power of the Spirit of God to complete their God appointed tasks.

Years, and many churches later, John wrote: *"you do not need a teacher because the anointing that you have is the teacher for you"* (1 John 2:27). Think about this: We saw at Pentecost signs to indicate the fulfillment of the promise of Jesus that the Spirit would come. When the

gospel was received, by the Samaritans and by the Gentiles, the apostles that were present said they received the Spirit in the same way as in Jerusalem. This indicated that the church among the Samaritans, and the church among the Gentiles, was as legitimate as the original church in Jerusalem.

Prof. Question: Did every church, since those three events, have the same phenomenon take place when first formed?

Student Response: No, they did not have the same events,

Prof. Response: Church history verifies this. Here in John's text, he indicates that the churches understand they also were anointed by the Holy Spirit. We see that in the same way the indwelling of the Spirit happens at salvation, so the anointing happens at salvation.

I have in your notes the progression in Peter's life as an example. Before his conversion he witnessed common grace; the revelation that is in creation and self-consciousness. At conversion, he received new birth by the indwelling of the Spirit of God. It seems apparent that by leaving his labour of fishing to follow John, he was truly converted. Peter was a believer. But, when John redirected his disciples to Jesus by his declaration: *He must increase, but I must decrease* (Jn. 3:30), Peter began following Jesus.

Now Jesus was training them to be the foundation to be the church (Eh. 2:20), which he said would not fail and the gates of hell would not prevail against it (Matt. 16:18). The era of the apostles lifetime was the Acts transitional period between the birth of the church at Pentecost and the spread of the gospel to the Jews, the Samaritans, and the Gentiles. The apostles spent three and one-half years with Jesus. They saw the signs and wonders in His life, which Jesus contributed to another. He accused the Pharisees and the nation Israel for unbelief because they attributed His work to Beelzebub, that is Satan, rather than The Holy Spirit (Lu. 11:18).

John records a very significant event regarding the churches anointing:

John 20: 21-22: *So Jesus said to them again, "Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you." And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit.*

The context here is the resurrection of Jesus. In the evening of His resurrection day, Jesus appeared to the disciples. He twice challenges them, *'peace be to you'* *'peace be unto you'*. He tells them He is sending them in the same way the Father sent Him. Then John records: *He breathed on them, and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit"*.

Prof. Question: *Did Peter have the Spirit in him as indwelling?*

Student Response: *Yes, he would not have new life without this.*

Prof. Response: *Yes, but Jesus had to establish apostles, a foundation for the church. He did this by anointing them with the Holy Spirit.*

When Jesus breathed the Holy Spirit on Peter and other apostles, He inaugurated a new 'believer privilege'. I am showing that in every era, even the transitional periods, God's people were endowed with the power of God to perform their God appointed work. In the O.T., the temple builders were given wisdom in their hearts (Ex. 31:6), Solomon was given a wise and understanding heart to rule as king (1 Ki. 3:12), As I stated earlier, David essentially prayed *'do not remove the power to be a king from me'* (Psm. 51:11). God promised strength for Israel (Is. 40:31). God promised courage and strength to Joshua (Josh. 1:9). God empowered Elijah (1Ki. 5 ff.) and Elisha (to perform miracles— 2Ki. 3 ff.).

Jesus was anointed into the ministry of prophet, priest, king at baptism when the Spirit came down. His whole ministry was empowered by the Spirit, even the ministry of dying for us. In John 20:22, we see the disciples anointed by Jesus with the Spirit, as apostles, prior to the establishment of the church. Then, we see at Pentecost many new things happening during this great event in the mind of God: the new revelation, an explosion of revelation; the new union with the fullness of baptism; and a new empowerment with the Spirit descending upon the new church. The coming of the Holy at Pentecost involved many things that defined the idea of newness: deeper union, deeper empowerment, deeper fullness of God in the believers' lives.

Christians are truly empowered at salvation to do the work that God has called us to do. God answered the prayer of Moses, in Numbers 11, now all of God's people are prophets with the 'Spirit upon them.' And we see in the context of the N.T. passages that not only are they prophets, but priests and kings as well. Are you beginning to see the unique

significance of Pentecost?

Scripture indicated God’s great plan of salvation in the pictures of the Leviticus feasts. Here we glimpse the mind of God, which also viewed Pentecost as an equal event to the cross and the resurrection:

Passover — Leviticus 23:4-8

This feast remembers the last plague in Egypt, when the angel of death “passed over” the children of Israel who applied the blood of the lamb to their doors. And in the New Testament we see that Jesus is that lamb sent for us. His death allows the judgement we deserve to pass over us.

Unleavened Bread — Leviticus 23:6

This seven-day feast begins on the day following the start of Passover. During this time, Israel remembered the hardships in Egypt and how God freed them from captivity, the Jews eat nothing leavened. The unleavened bread represents Jesus’ sinless life; he is the only perfect sacrifice for our sins.

First Fruits — Leviticus 23:10

The Feast of First Fruits is one of three Jewish harvest feasts to thank and honor God for all he provided. It was celebrated the third day, the 16th of Nisan. This “third day” celebration was the same day that Jesus resurrected from the dead. In 1 Corinthians 15:20 Paul refers to Jesus as the first fruits of the dead. He represents the first of the great harvest of souls that will be resurrected to eternal life because of the new covenant in his blood (Luke 22:20).

Feast of Weeks or Pentecost — Leviticus 23:16

This feast is the second of the three harvest feasts. It occurs exactly seven weeks after the Feast of First Fruits, so it’s also called Pentecost which means “50 days.” In Acts 1:4 Jesus tells the disciples to wait in Jerusalem for the Holy Spirit. That arrival was the day the Church was born — Pentecost — and the harvest began with 3,000 souls. The message spread to both Jews and Gentiles (the two leavened loaves of bread).

Feast of Trumpets — Leviticus 23:24

This is a time of rest, when all regular work is prohibited, and men and women present a food offering to God. In Leviticus 23:24 God commands his people to gather and to commemorate the decree with trumpet blasts. The sound of a trumpet is also associated with the rapture, or the time Jesus will return for his bride (1 Corinthians 15:52). Once he returns, there will be a wedding feast of celebration (Revelation 19:9).

Day of Atonement — Leviticus 16, 23:26-32

To make “atonement” is to make restitution for wrongs committed. As a day of humility and repentance to God, it was a time for the Jews to get their hearts, consciences and lives right before him. The observance involved the sacrifice of animals as the High Priest entered the Holy of Holies. Jesus, burdened with the sins of all mankind: “He himself is the sacrifice that atones for our sins — and not only our sins but the sins of the world” (1 John 2:2, NLT).

Feast of Tabernacles or Booths — Leviticus 23:34

The Feast of Tabernacles celebrates God’s provision and protection for the people of Israel during their 40 years wandering in the wilderness; for the seven days of the feast, people live in temporary structures like they did in the wilderness. This feast also points to the promise that God will return and rally with his people — in the person of Jesus. And when he does, he has promised that there will be no more death and suffering, that he himself will wipe away every tear from our eyes (Revelation 21:4). His return is the final answer to the hope we’ve carried our entire lives. What a day that will be!⁸

Therefore, we see at Pentecost the church’s birth, established as the first people of the New Covenant. In this, the church has a new revelation, an explosion of revelation; a new baptism, establishing a new union. Scripture shows that O.T. saints were indwelt. They had to be for regeneration is. But, N.T. believers are indwelt and baptized, by the Spirit: God in me, me in God and all united as one body. The body of

⁸ <https://www.wycliffe.org/feast/7-feasts-that-point-to-christ>

Christ has a new empowerment. All members are anointed to be prophets, priests, kings, in the same fashion as Christ. We are blessed with all this, yet we are not finished with the significance of Pentecost and new things.

Pentecost and a New Relationship

We see at Pentecost a new relationship. Put yourself in the shoes of Peter for a moment. He was an O.T. believer. One of the remnant of Israel who was a true believer. When John the Baptist came and preached, Peter received John's message because he was a believer. He became a disciple of John the Baptist.

In his contact and following of John the Baptist, he saw a good preacher, a powerful prophet, John's humanity, and John's weaknesses. Would John have any weaknesses? Yes, he was not sinless. We see one weakness when he sent individuals to Jesus, suggesting there was some doubt going on in his mind; if not doubt, certainly impatience. And, perhaps even a little anger: John, then in prison, could easily have expressed: "What's going on here? Let's get going Jesus, claim your kingdom!"

Peter joins the other disciples and begins to follow Christ. Why? Because John said '*This is the Lamb of God*'... "*I must decrease, He must increase.*" Therefore, Peter follows Jesus. Now he is going to witness perfection! Nevertheless, being human, he could not understand it. For instance, when Jesus said He must die, Peter tried to correct Him. Did Peter see any spiritual weaknesses in Jesus? No! Did Jesus ever show any doubts? No! Yet, Peter did see the extreme stress within Jesus. We see His prayer to take the cup from Him due the stress of becoming mankind's sin bearer on the cross. But, that certainly is not weakness.

Prof. Question: Did Jesus ever make a mistake and say something not true?

Student Response: Impossible!

Prof. Response: Indeed, it was impossible for perfect God to err. With that in mind, imagine Peter, James, John, and all the disciples, experiencing over three years of living with a perfect man as they walked with Jesus. Their constant amazement must have regularly left them breathless!

Note the wonder expressed by John:

1 Joh. 1:1-2: *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*

Do you sense the awe of John in his experiences with Jesus? He says ‘*we were living with life itself, the source of life*’. That was the experience of the disciples with Jesus. They were in awe of Him. In their time with Him, they learned to lean on Him because He had the answer for everything. When Peter’s mother-in-law was ill, who had the solution? Jesus. When the Pharisees came and rebuked the disciples for eating grain on the Sabbath, who had the answer? Jesus. He was the answer. When they were terrified in the storm on the sea, who had the answer? Jesus.

When the disciples were accused of not paying the taxes, who had the answer? Jesus. ‘*Go catch the fish and find in its mouth the money for taxes.*’ When there was friction among themselves, arguing who would be the greatest in the kingdom, who settled the argument? Jesus did. When the four came down from the Mt. of Transfiguration, and the other disciples were frustrated because they could not exorcize the demon in a boy, who brought the deliverance? Jesus did. When John the Baptist, and Lazarus died, friends of all the disciples, who brought the comfort? Jesus did.

John, in his gospel, presents a complete picture of the Comforter of God:

John 14:12, 16-20: *12 "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father... 16 And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper [παράκλητος], 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. 18 "I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you. 19 "A little while longer and the world will see Me no more, but you will see Me. Because I live, you will live also. 20 "At that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you.*

For the 3 ½ years the disciples lived with Jesus. They discovered He always had the answer. They came to realize ‘this is the source of life

from the beginning of creation' They gladly depended on Him because they lived with Him in awe. One Greek word describes their dependence and relation to Jesus. It is the word παράκλητος (parakletos), which refers to 'one called alongside to help; one who appears in another's behalf; an advocate, defender, intercessor (1Jn. 2.1); one who gives protection, help, security, comforter, and counsel (Jn. 14.16).⁹

Consequently, when Jesus tells them that He's going to leave them, what was their response? You know the story. They were shocked, they were terrified, and they were torn. Philip said, '*Show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us.*' Thomas responded, 'How can we follow you? How do we get to where you will be?' In essence, each said: 'You are going to the Father bring us along, we can't separate from You.'

They had been with the source of Life for 3 ½ years and could not imagine life without Him. You would feel the same way if you lived with someone who had every solution for every problem you had! But, Christ, in their terror and confusion, made a unique promise, *I will send "another 'παράκλητος.'* In John 14 we see five unique truths regarding the comforter, which is the promised Spirit:

I. The Promise of the Comforter

We first see the Promise of the Comforter. Actually, there are 3 promises within this text:

A. Promise One:

He says I will go to the Father and I will give you another Comforter (vs. 16). The Greek word παράκλητος describes Jesus' relationship with them, one who goes along beside. He says, not only will I give you "another" comforter. This is the Greek word "ἄλλος" (állos) referring to another, numerically but of the same kind, another qualitatively.¹⁰ It is a very important word, it says I will give you another comforter that is exactly the same kind as you had with me. We see 2 words in Greek, both translated "another".

Jesus is saying 'I'm going to send another comforter, you will not miss out on anything.' Do not let your heart be troubled, do not' be anx-

⁹ Friberg, T., Friberg, B., & Miller, N. F. (2000). *Vol. 4: Analytical lexicon of the Greek New Testament*. Baker's Greek New Testament Library (296). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books.

¹⁰ Zodhiates, S. (2000). *The complete word study dictionary: New Testament* (electronic ed.). Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers.

ious because I'm going away. I will give you another comforter doing exactly what I've been doing.

B. Promise Two:

Jesus adds a second promise: '*He will be with you forever*' (vs. 16). He had been with them for 3 ½ years. It was not enough for them. They responded: 'We want to go wherever you go because we cannot imagine living without You.' Therefore, Jesus affirms 'This comforter, who is just like me, will be with you forever.'

The whole context here is emphasizing the oneness of God. In John 14:9 Jesus says: '*if you've seen me, you've seen the Father.*' In John 14:11 Jesus says, "Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father in Me." The unity of the Father and the Son is clear. We have in this context, Jesus emphasizing the unity of the Father and the Son. In essence, Jesus is saying 'We are one.'

He is doing the same in John 14:16-17 with regard to the Son and the Spirit. He says 'another of the same kind,' emphasizing that the Spirit and the Son are the same. Jesus further states in verse 17: '*you know him.*' This phrase is in the present tense. Jesus is implying they have had experience with this comforter. He says '*he dwells with you*' (present tense), *and will be in you*' (future tense). Christ in His emphasis of oneness with the Father, is now making emphasis of His oneness with the Spirit. He is saying in essence, 'the one that was with you for 3 ½ years is the one that will be in you forever.'

C. Promise Three:

Jesus is saying, "I have been with you" but "He will be in you" (vs. 17). He is presenting in these two terms: 'with' and 'in', an experience deeper than what they had with Jesus. With this comforter they will enjoy a unique, deeper expression of 'παράκλητος' because He won't just be sitting alongside them, He will be working inside them; working in the subconscious, working within their own self.

What we have is a promise of a continuation of a comforter; an encourager, a guide, an exhorter, everything that Jesus was, but now within them. This defines a completely new relationship, not new as in 'different', but new in the sense of 'deeper, more meaningful, more fullness. The ministry of the Spirit of God, as 'another παράκλητος,' is modeled after the ministry of Jesus Christ. The purposeful grammatical construction emphasizes this new relationship. The second truth about the Comforter is the Privilege of the Comforter.

II. The Privilege of the Comforter

Basically Jesus said, 'I've been with you as 'παράκλητος', but I am sending another 'παράκλητος', one who is my equal, we are the same and He will minister within you forever.' The newness of this relationship is not only the difference of Christ being with them and the Spirit being in them, it is new in the fact that the O.T. believers did not have this privilege because it is modeled after the incarnate Christ, so it only happens after the incarnation of the Son; in the days of the seed.

We see Pentecost brings to believers a newness that the O.T. believers did not experience. Were they saved? Yes they were. But they were never baptized by the Spirit of God. Were they indwelt? Yes, new birth necessitated such. However, they never had the privilege of this deeper relationship of παράκλητος. That could not happen until Jesus came to model the ministry.

A second privilege in verse 17 is that the world cannot receive The Spirit. Only believers can receive Him. The cults are so wrong when they talk about the Spirit of God as a 'force' in the world. He is one of the three persons of the Godhead. The Spirit is equal in all ways to God the Father and God the Son. The Spirit is personally in the believer's life; not just to give eternal life, but since Pentecost, to give a fuller sense of oneness with God, and God with us. This baptism is not just to give us responsibility, but empower us for responsibility. This Spirit's presence is to be to us, the way Jesus was with His disciples; one alongside them to answer all their problems; to counsel, guide, comfort, et-cetera. The third truth about the Comforter is the Person of the Comforter

III. The Person of the Comforter

Jesus called the new παράκλητος the Spirit of Truth: *He will give you another Helper [παράκλητος], that He may abide with you forever – the Spirit of truth*, (Jn. 14:71). Again we see the similarity to Christ:

John 1:14: *And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.*

John 14:6: *Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.*

Jesus Christ himself was the embodiment of truth. We can say, ‘He is the man of truth.’ Jesus is the way, the truth and the life. As the man of truth returned to His Father, the Spirit of truth took His place. Again the emphasis is that Jesus is God; one with the Father. Jesus verified this: ‘*You’ve seen Me, you’ve seen the Father*’. Now Jesus points out that He is one with the Spirit. He is the man of truth, the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth. The truth is clear, God the Father and God the Son and God the Holy Spirit, although three distinct persons are one God. Therefore, the new Comforter is no less than God Himself.

John 14:23: *Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home [μονή, mone] with him.*

Again we see the expression of oneness, the Father and the Son and earlier, the Son and the Spirit, and here “We” (the complete Godhead), *will come to him and make Our home with him.* Therefore, where the Spirit resides, the Father and the Son also reside. Wiersbe expresses the uniqueness of this text:

The word translated “abode” in John 14:23 means “make our home” and is related to “mansions” in John 14:2. When the sinner trusts Christ, he is born again and the Spirit immediately enters his body and bears witness that he is a child of God. The Spirit is resident and will not depart. But as the believer yields to the Father, loves the Word, prays, and obeys, there is a deeper relationship with the Father, Son, and Spirit. Salvation means we are going to heaven, but submission means that heaven comes to us!¹¹

The fourth truth regarding the comforter is the Principle of the comforter:

IV. The Principle of the Comforter

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.*

John 16:13-14: *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*

¹¹ Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *The Bible exposition commentary* (Jn 14:21–24). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

come. "He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you.

With these two verses, we see the principles of the ministry of the Spirit of God as comforter. His function is to teach what Christ had taught and to give them illumination or understanding. In addition, He is to guide them into truth and reveal what is to come. In 16:14 He glorifies the Son. We see that in the ministry of indwelling as comforter, the Spirit of God magnifies Christ.

The principle of the ministry of the Spirit's operation is not to glorify Him, but to glorify Jesus Christ. In the same way Christ came in humiliation, the Spirit enters into our lives in humiliation to glorify God the Son. When Christ came, He glorified The Father. Now, the 'new' coming of the Spirit glorifies The Son. We see this clearly in the book of Acts. In the preaching by the apostles, they are empowered by the Spirit of God and the focus of their message is on Christ. They magnify Christ because the Spirit is accomplishing His work in their lives and empowering them to glorify and magnify the Lord Jesus Christ.

Student Question: If Christ came to glorify the Father and the Spirit came to glorify Christ, is that teaching us a hierarchy or superiority in the trinity?

Prof. Response: No, they are one God. Remember when we started the class I said "Do not lose sight of the fact that God is one God." In what we call the Economic Trinity where we see that the Trinity expresses separate aspects of divine works. We see that The Father plans, the Son provides, the Spirit applies. That does not suggest a hierarchy of authority. It just expresses different tasks.

In Ephesians Paul compares God to the family. In the eyes of God, is the husband superior to the wife?

Student Response: No.

Prof. Response: Correct, none whatsoever. Are the parents superior to the children?

Student Response: No.

Prof. Response: But, in order to function properly, God designed a chain of authority. Yet, different roles within the chain does not constitute any kind of superiority. All are equal in the eyes of God, all are accountable to God. We are mistaken if we see authority as superiority. So it is with the Trinity. Within the Trinity we have a model of voluntary

acceptance of functioning authority.

This also applies to the categories in church. In the church, there is a chain of authority with the leadership of pastor and deacons and the general membership. Nevertheless, all these are equal n God's eyes. Leadership is not superior to members, pastors are not superior to deacons. Yet, to function properly there must be voluntary acceptance of authority structure.

Student Question: You mentioned categories n the church. The pastor preaches, what is the role of the elders.

Prof. Response: There is no distinction between pastor and elder, Three titles address the same office: "elder" defines the position", "bishop" defines the authority as overseer, "pastor" defines the responsibility to feed the flock of Go. These are all the same office, all the same person, but elder is the title, overseer/bishop is the task, and 'pastor' is the expression of endearment from the people. Using 'elder' all the time is more accurate. But Baptists are not in error to use 'pastor' all the time although it could lead people to think there is a difference between pastor and elder.

The N.T. uses 'elder' more than 'pastor'. Some churches distinguish 'bishop' from 'elder' and 'pastor', which is wrong. If they are true churches, if they preach the gospel and the membership is are one with each other, should we oppose them if they use 'bishop' to establish another structure for their government?

No, this is not our job! We know most denominations that use this hierarchy are not the true church. The extreme example is the Roman Catholic church that establishes a pope. But, in considering their error, I realize many Baptist pastors act like popes. So we have a saying n Canada, "When you are pointing a finger of accusation at someone, there are more fingers (in your hand) pointing back at you."

The fifth truth about the Comforter addresses His power:

V. The Power of the Comforter

John 14:12: *Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father.*

In the context of the Spirit of God coming at Pentecost as the παράκλητος, the church is said to achieve greater works than Christ. Now we need to understand this does not refer to wonders, and mira-

cles, and signs. It is a greater work in the ‘sphere’ of their ministry. Jesus served and worked for 3 ½ years in this world. Did Jesus ever get to Africa? Yes, he went to Egypt as a baby. Nevertheless, in his ministry He did not go to Africa? Did He ever go to Russia, or England? No, we know He was limited to a small geographic area of approximately 180 km x 80 km. His ministry was filled with miracles of affirmation of Messiahship before the Jewish people. Yet, Jesus said Christians, those who *believes in Me, would do* greater works. The church, obeying the Great Commission would go to all the world. In Acts, we see Jesus saying, ‘*you shall receive power... to go into all the world.*’

In summary, the church by the ministry of the Spirit of God, is authorized and empowered to go to the world. We have a privilege that even the disciples who were with Jesus did not experience until Pentecost. When Jesus was with them, He was the answer to all their needs, but He was still at ‘arm’s length.’ Now, since Pentecost, the παράκλητος lives within our lives. The reality for every Christian should be, ‘we cannot imagine living without salvation and the Spirit of God’s equipping in our lives.’ When we studied the experiences of the disciples with Jesus who solved their problems, it was always Jesus. That is exactly how the Spirit of God should be working in our lives. As the disciples relied on Jesus, we rely on the Holy Spirit.

CLASS 8

We concluded yesterday’s class with a look at Pentecost and a New Relationship, which involved five unique truths regarding the comforter, which is the promised Spirit. This new relationship was established by the ministry Christ sending the *paraclete*; our Holy Spirit Comforter. We went right to the end of the class time and had no chance for questions. Do you have any questions?

Student Question: Can you clarify what was meant when David said do not take the Holy Spirit from me?

Prof. Response: As we discovered before, all believers in all ages are indwelt with the Spirit because this constitutes regeneration; the uniting of our spirit with the Holy Spirit. David, particularly in the Psalms, reveals himself as truly a man of God. He had a deep awareness of the character of God, and good understanding of the Bible Theology avail-

able in the time he lived. As we examined earlier, in the context of his sin, which threatened the power of God working in his life as king, he pleaded with God not to remove the Spirit. We know this could not mean 'don't remove the Spirit in me', that would undo David's salvation. The request 'do not remove the Spirit' was David's appeal to continue Holy Spirit's influence or power to do the work of a king.

Student Response: We have been taught that the Spirit did not indwell O.T. believers, therefore it could be removed.

Prof. Response: I recognize that even among evangelical fundamentalists not all agree about the Spirit's indwelling of O.T. believers. I share the conclusions from my Masters degree thesis on the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Jesus spoke to Nicodemus about being born again, which the text in John clearly indicates that Nicodemus should have known this from the O.T. There will be times when you will disagree with the professor. You must arrive at your own doctrinal positions through personal Bible study.

Yesterday we dealt very quickly with John 14:12, the idea of greater works by the work of God, the power of the Comforter. I want to reaffirm the idea of the greater works done by the Spirit of God through Pentecost.

In John 14:12 Jesus said the people of the church would do greater works with the Spirit of God. The entire chapter of John 14 talks about the promise of the Spirit of God: *'the works that I do, he will do, and greater works.'* I suggested that Jesus was talking about the geographical sphere of His ministry in contrast to the commission of the church. This is evident in the Great Commission and affirmed as the Spirit's work in John 16: *'he will convict the world'* (16:8). In Acts 1:8 Jesus calls the disciples to *witness unto Him* beginning in Jerusalem and spread out from there *'to the end of the earth.'*

The church is charged to go to the whole world, a much greater geographical sphere of witness than Christ's. I emphasize this point because there is the charismatic segment of the evangelical church uses this text to justify their signs and miracles emphasis. This has resulted in a movement toward seeking these signs, miracles, and wonders as a means of outreach, as a means of evangelism. I suggest this is not what this text is about. It refers to where the church 'goes' in contrast to where Jesus 'is' with the Father.

Student Question: *You spoke yesterday of God's ministry in your life regarding your health issues. When you say miracles have ended, are you saying God will not heal people today.*

Prof. Response: *No, that is not what I am saying. We will cover this more thoroughly when we look at Spiritual gifts. What I am saying is the Spiritual gifts involved in confirming revelation are not for today, the Canon of Scripture is complete for this age. What I am saying is God's nature cannot change, for Him to heal someone is a blessing to that person, but the gift of healings was part of the sign gifts during the apostolic N.T. writing period. We will cover this more thoroughly when we get to Spiritual gifts. I do believe God performs miracles today, but He does not use Spiritual gifts to do it.*

Prof. Question: *Complete this sentence for me: "God the Father, God the Son, and God the..."*

Student Response: *'Holy Spirit'*

Prof. Response: *Yes, not just 'Spirit', but you all responded "Holy Spirit.". That is the way in the N.T. the Spirit of God is identified. It really demonstrates the new focal point of the ministry of the Spirit of God since Pentecost.*

Pentecost and a New Sanctification

Introduction:

In the O.T., producing holiness in believers was a part of the Spirit of God's work, we cannot deny this. However, it was in relationship to the Law: 'Do not eat pork,' 'Give your first fruits, 'Do not steal.' Holiness is always in respect to a point of reference. In the O.T., the point of reference for holiness was the Law. It focused on the evidence of obedience in a believer's life.

Since Christ came, He becomes the point of reference. In the N.T., because Christ came to live among men, His life replaces the Law. John defines the life of Jesus among men:

John 1:14: *And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.*

Therefore, we have a better and truer point of reference. He is the greatest revelation of living Holiness. This is the holiness of God that,

like the Law does not change, yet is a living holiness, not defined as a point of reference to rules. This revelation now reflects a moral holiness that affects us internally. This revelation reveals the essence of the Law written in our hearts.

Matt. 5:21-22: *You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder, ... But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment.*

Christ is the perfect model of Holiness. He essentially said: 'You shall not kill' that is the law, obey that law. God was helping people realize it is wrong to murder. But, Jesus went a step further in qualifying the essence of that command. He goes deeper and says 'If you hate in your heart, you have broken that commandment.'

The O.T. law was a measurement of external reference, but Christ indicated very clearly that He himself has a more personal, more meaningful reference for the moral standard of God. Jesus was not talking about the action of killing, but the attitude in your heart. Since Pentecost, by the coming of the Spirit of God within the church, there is holiness inseparable from the Holy Spirit. This is an internal reference witnessing to Jesus Christ. The fact that in the O.T. the name 'Holy Spirit' is used only 2 times in 39 books. 'Holy Spirit' or "Holy Ghost" is used in the N.T. 93.

Through Paul, God gives us a text that compares O.T. holiness and N.T. holiness:

2 Cor. 3:7-11, 17: *But if the ministry of death, written and engraved on stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not look steadily at the face of Moses because of the glory of his countenance, which glory was passing away, how will the ministry of the Spirit not be more glorious? For if the ministry of condemnation had glory, the ministry of righteousness exceeds much more in glory. For even what was made glorious had no glory in this respect, because of the glory that excels. For if what is passing away was glorious, what remains is much more glorious... Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.*

Paul is here writing about the difference between the letter (written Law) and the Spirit (indwelling Lord). Paul already made reference to being ministers of the New Covenant (2 Cor. 2:14-17), which we know began at Pentecost. In the text above, he begins to talk about the letter of the law in the Mosaic Law. He calls this the ministry of death written on

stones. Then he says, as ministers of the New Covenant, things are different now. We are not a people of holiness by the letter of the Law, we are a people of holiness by the Spirit's abiding presence.

Paul explains this in verse 7. To help us understand the significant difference between O.T. holiness and N.T. holiness, he refers to the glory that was glowing on the face of Moses when he came down from the mountain. Because of the reality of Moses' face glowing, after receiving the Law, Paul says there is glory in the letter of the law.' It had purpose, but it was a passing glory. Then he states '*How will the ministry of the Spirit not be more glorious?*' Here he is indicating that the letter had a measure of glory that faded, just like the glory in the face of Moses. But the ministry of righteousness by the Spirit is much more glorious. In verse 9, he compares this ministry of condemnation's 'small glory', with the exceeding glory of the Spirit's ministry of righteousness'.

Clearly, the ministry of condemnation is the letter of the law and the ministry of righteousness is the New Covenant's transforming power of the Spirit in believer's life. Paul talks about how, in the O.T., after Moses received the law the glow started to depart. To prevent the people from seeing the fading glory, Moses put a veil over his face.

Paul indicates the same veil is on their face when the O.T. is read. He's not talking about the veil in the temple but the veil over Moses, to prevent the people from seeing the fading glow of his face. Paul says in verse 15; even today when Moses is read, the people still have a veil over them, they have not accepted Jesus Christ. They are still looking to the law for their salvation.

Prof. Question: *Is that true today for Israel?*

Student Response: *Yes, Israel s n unbelief.*

Prof. Response: *Absolutely, they still believe the law is how to have access to God.*

Israel needs to listen to the power of verse 16; '*the veil is removed*' and verse 17; '*where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty, freedom.*' Liberty from what, Liberty from the letter of the law. From vs. 7 to 17, all that Paul is doing is explaining the difference of the letter of the law and its diminishing glory and the glory that will continue in the New Covenant with the Spirit. Then, in vs 18, he gives the theology of the

new sanctification, which implies four essentials of this the New Covenant Sanctification:

2 Cor. 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.*

I. An Objective Standard

Believers now ‘*behold as in a mirror the glory of the Lord.*’(vs. 18a). When we enter into the N.T. we see the life of Christ portrayed before us. We view an objective standard before us. We see His excellence, His perfect conduct, as John declares ‘*we beheld his glory*’ (Jn. 1:14). This is exactly what I said in chapel yesterday. As we study the word of God and the life of Jesus Christ, the Spirit of God opens our eyes what true godliness looks like.

You and I, who are in Christ, know that godliness is more than ‘*thou shalt not kill*’, ‘*thou shall honour thy father and mother*’. Those expressions of holiness are the O.T. stated standards. Now, in Christ, the standard is internalized in our lives as Peter affirms:

2 Peter 1:3-4a: *His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature,*

Here Peter made it clear about seeing Jesus Christ glorified. He had the privilege to see Jesus Christ portrayed in his absolute true nature on the Mount of Transfiguration. You might say he has more insight because he actually saw Jesus fully transformed: His clothing shone and His flesh glowed with the glory of God. Even though he had this human experience he tells us in 2 Peter there is still a more sure word of testimony and that is the word of prophecy:

2 Pet. 1:18-19: *and we ourselves heard this utterance made from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain. And so we have the prophetic word made more sure, to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts.(NAS).*

When we study of the Word of God, the Spirit of God opens our eyes to see a better glory than what Peter saw. We have the Scriptures. When we look, we see the glory of God. The O.T. gives us a moral standard, the N.T. reveals the moral standard operates in our hearts

through the indwelling Holy Spirit seeing Jesus. That is why I call it an objective standard, it is measurable, we can define in language, but it says in vs 18 ‘seeing the glory, we are being transformed from glory to glory....’

II. A Subjective Transformation

Peter goes on to indicate there is also a subjective transformation: *you may be partakers of the divine nature*, (2 Pet.1:4a). God purposes to change believers into the likeness of Jesus Christ. This concept is shared in our 2 Corinthians text: *being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord* (3:18b) Paul shares this in many of his epistles as well. Examples are:

Ro 8:29: *For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.*

Gal. 4:19: *My little children, for whom I labor in birth again until Christ is formed in you,*

Col 3:10: *and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him,*

Paul speaks of believers being predestined, conformed, renewed in Christ’s image. This involves a Subjective transformation, something unmeasurable by man, observable. Subjective transformation means it changes, going from one level to another. Paul says, ‘as we behold the glory of the Lord we are changed toward that glory.’

III. A Progressive Experience

According to 2 Corinthians 3 this sanctifying work by the Holy Spirit is also a progressive experience. The text states, we change “*from glory unto glory*.” This phrase puts the sanctification process of becoming like the Lord into the context of time. The the idea of growing form glory to glory, one level of maturity to another level, takes time. This is not time in terms of minutes and hours, but time spend in the Word with God, by which God’s Holiness is lived out in our lives as He leads us to godliness in thought, speech and conduct.

How do we find that leading? As we are in the Word of God, the Spirit of God moves us to be more like God day by day. We see this progression transformation in the passage. In Paul’s letter to the Philip-pians, he states this with confidence:

Phil. 1:6: *being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ;*

In the theology of sanctification found in 2 Corinthians 3, our ‘becoming like God,’ has an objective standard: *like a mirror reflecting the glory of God*. Yet there is a subjective transformation; we are *being changed to that image*. There is a progressive experience going *from glory to glory to glory*. Paul says God will continue this work until we are with Him. There is also a personal agent establishing this transformation.

Prof. Question: *Who is it?*

Student Response: *The Spirit of the Lord.*

Prof. Question: *When did the fullness of the work of the Spirit of God begin this work in the people of the New Covenant?*

Student Response: *At Pentecost.*

Prof. Response: *Yes, so it all goes back to that significant redemptive event called Pentecost.*

IV. A Personal Agent

This transformation of ‘godliness growing in our lives,’ has two components. Paul tells us in 2 Corinthians 3 it is the work of the Spirit of God; “*as by the Spirit of the Lord.*” This truth is repeated in Paul’s epistles: Rom. 15:16; 1 Cor. 6:1. Peter also confirmed this:

1Pet. 1:2: *Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit,*

Every Christian has the Holy Spirit as a personal agent of sanctification abiding within, transforming them to be like Jesus. Nevertheless, the Holy Spirit works that transformation through the Christian disciplines of Bible study and in prayer, our communication with God. Bible study allows God to talk to us, prayer allows us to talk to God.

2Tim. 3:16: *All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,*

1Th. 5:17: *pray without ceasing,*

1Tim. 2:8: *I will therefore that men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting.*

Phil 4:13: *I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.*

This paradigm is called ‘the human-divine cooperative.’ As with many other Christian blessings, sanctification (which was measured by conformity to the law of the O.T.), becomes the new and deeper experi-

ence of the Spirit of God producing Christ-likeness in their lives. This New Covenant reality may answer the question that we ask ourselves: If David was a man after God's own heart, how could he have so many wives?

One answer might be, with the New Covenant, the Spirit of God's ministry applies a deeper level for sanctification. Therefore, Christians have a higher ingrained standard and a higher accountability. Was it wrong for David to have multiple wives? Yes, Jesus said from the beginning God intended for one man, one woman. But, Paul preached: *In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent.*' (Ac. 17:30). God's standards do not change, but the revealing of His standards, by which He judges people, has changed. The general revelation of creation and conscience are enough to condemn all to eternal punishment, but God's special revelation through scripture took 1400 years to complete.

Student Question: *How does God say do not kill, and also send his people to wipe out other nations?*

Prof. Response: *This has been a dilemma for God's people in every era. In America, during both World Wars there were contentious objectors who would not fight. However, the commandment is actually 'thou shalt not murder,' which is distinct from killing. God's command of capital punishment executed by governing agencies was to bring justice to evil doers, and the fear of God to all. God's leading His people to war was to bring justice to evil nations, and fear of God. These were judicial killings, carried out by appointed agencies as 'God's sword. By definition, murder is 'my self-determination to take another's life.' Individuals, groups, and even nations propagate this. James clarifies their evil motives: Unholy wars come from your desires for pleasure - 4:1.*

Prof. Question: *Do you sing the song "Blessed Assurance"?*

Student Response: *Of course: "Blessed assurance Jesus is mine..."*

Prof. Response: *We have a student choir! We delight in this word 'assurance'. Give me your definition of spiritual assurance.*

Student Response: *-Security. -To be sure, to be certain. - Guarantee. - Confidence.*

Pentecost and a New Assurance

Introduction

I am going to make a Statement then support it from Scripture. The statement is: The proper way to find God's truth is to go to the Word of God first, and let him teach us His truth. That is called "Inductive Bible Study"; studying the Word of God and letting the Spirit of God lead us to truth. If we start with a statement or a 'Presumed Truth,' and then seek the Word of God to prove it, we are not starting with the Scriptures. This is called "Deductive Bible Study." It is very dangerous because we can be wrong in our 'presumptive statement.'

This is practiced by quoting one text of Scripture that seems to support it the statement. For example, 'The Bible says "There is no God". Therefore I believe and propagate that there is no God, He is gone, or dead, or never existed!' I search the Scriptures and find Psalm 14:1, "There is no God", so I preach this because it is in the Scripture. The Bible does say this, but that is not the whole text? Psalm 14:1 says, "*The fool has said in his heart, God is no God.*" This is an extreme example; nevertheless, I want to assure you that many similar heresies are propagated by Deductive reasoning which neglects relying on the thorough study of the Scriptures.

I. What is Assurance?

A. Security - The Foundation of Assurance:

This brings me to ask, "What does the Scripture teaches about security and assurance, is there is a difference between the Bible terms? Let's see what the Bible says:

John 10:27-28: *My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand.*

God says that His people, having eternal life, will never perish. That is a statement of security. I am secure in Christ. That state of being in Christ can never be taken away from me. That is a clear statement of security, a statement of my state of safety.

Now, if a new believer does not know this verse, does it mean he is not secure? No, he/she is secure because they possess eternal life. Knowing or not knowing does not change their state of security. If a child who has faith enough to accept Christ and does not know this truth, the child is still secure and cannot lose salvation. You notice that in the text there is nothing indicating the people are aware of the truth, it

is simply a statement from God. We could say from verse 27 ‘*my people hear my voice*’, *that* they will become aware of this.

B. Assurance - The Feeling of Security

2 Tim 1:12: *For this reason I also suffer these things; nevertheless I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that Day.*

Paul says he knows Jesus and is persuaded Jesus is able to keep him forever. Paul arrived at this persuasion by knowing Jesus and being taught personally by Him for three years (Gal. 1:10-18). Whether Jesus appeared to Paul to teach him or, because he was formally a student of the Bible under Gamaliel (Acts 22:3), the Spirit led his through the Scripture, Paul came to understand his security in Christ. That is the definition of ‘assurance’. Security is the fact I am in Christ and nothing changes or ever will change that fact. Assurance is ‘being persuaded’ of this; knowing this, having the confidence of this in my own being.

We need to understand there is a process in which God who has secured us, gives us the assurance of that security. I suggest the epistle of 1 John is the purpose of giving God’s people the assurance of security. If we were to go through the whole book, we would realize the repeated ‘know’ is throughout the epistle.

II. How Assurance is gained

1 John 5:13: *These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God.*

The purpose of the epistle is to know we are saved, and have fellowship with God. As you study through 1 John, God gives evidences that we are secure in Christ. John talks about the evidence of loving our brother, confessing sin, understanding the Scriptures, and being personally in the Word. The purpose expands to ‘*that you may continue to believe.*’

A. The Possibility: Secure without Assurance

In our understanding of how assurance is gained there is the possibility of being secure and not having the assurance of it. In 1 John, John is writing to teach Christians they can ‘know’ they are saved. Putting it another way, he is writing believers that they may know how to have assurance of that security. Essentially John is saying, ‘You believe, but do you *know* you are secure? I am writing so ‘you might *know* you have eternal life; that you can have a sense of assurance in Christ.

Being in Christ is to be secure, growing to knowing Christ, as Paul did, is to have that assurance. If John is writing so that God's people can know, then the possibility is that people can have security but not know it. Let me illustrate. Out of the generosity of our translator Pastor Dan's good heart, he gives this brother here a million dollars. He personally puts this money in a bank account in our brother Joseph's name. Is this brother now a millionaire? Yes, no one can deny it. The problem is, Pastor Dan forgot to tell Joseph about the gift. Is our brother a millionaire? Yes. Does Joseph know it? No! Can people be saved, possess eternal life? Yes, Praise the Lord! Will they always know they have eternal life? Will they be assured of this always? Not necessarily!

The possibility exists that people can be saved and not know they are secure. As a result, there could be some anxiety in their lives, causing a tendency to try to prove salvation by experience. They are saved but seek self-appointed assurance: 'I'm going to give money, then I'll know I'm a Christian', I will serve in the local hospital to help people, then I will know I am saved.'" Without God's Truth implanted in their hearts through growing in Christ, believers are without assurance. To find it they will seek to grasp things that supposedly give assurance. Just like Joseph, who is a millionaire but does not know it, will seek ways to get money through his own efforts.

I tell you with sorrow in my heart, there is a segment of believers who have not been taught the truth about assurance and are trying to earn their security. In the true church of God, there has been historically two lines of theology regarding assurance's security. One branch of Christianity is founded on Calvin's teaching regarding security, which holds to the position that believers cannot lose their salvation. The other branch is Arminianism. It's doctrinal positions teaches believers can lose your salvation.

Both of these branches have strengths and both have weaknesses. Nevertheless, because we are talking about eternal security, Arminianism's weakness is that people seek to find security in experience. In the Calvinist camp there is another weakness. It can lead to the assumption 'If I am called, then I will be saved, therefore it doesn't matter how I live!' I do not know which weakness is worse. Nevertheless, you can see how Arminianism is a problem with people seeking for assurance by self-effort.

B. The Potential: Secure and Assured

Now I want you to see the potential of having security and being assured of that security. We see the assurance will come from the Scriptures. The ground of assurance is the Word of God. In the 1 John 5 text, the word 'know' is very significant. A number of words in Greek are translated 'know'. In the epistle of 1 John there is a repetition of 2 words, each with a different meaning of 'knowing'. There is 'γινώσκω (ginosko)', which refers to 'know by experience'. It is to know because I have experienced something. We all learn by experience. I know how to drive an automobile, it did not learn this by reading a book, I got into an automobile and drove it, learning by experience. I know how to swim. I did not read a book about how to swim, I jumped into the lake and learned by trying.

The other word used in 1 John 5:13 is 'οἶδα (oidato)' meaning to perceive, notice, discern, discover, to know intuitively. To illustrate, in Canada we have many species of birds, such a Mallard Ducks, that go south in winter to warmer climates. This is instinctive within them. If you were to remove one of these young ducks away from mature birds in the species, even through they had no experience with the other birds, the young duck would fly south as winter approached (provided they were removed from being fed). This is to know within oneself, to know intuitively. This is the word used in 1 John 5:13.

We will know the assurance that we have by the intuitive work of the Spirit of God through the Word of God in our lives. No one can know they have 'eternal security' from the experience of eternal life, because living forever has not experienced yet. Yet, there is an objective criterion. It is the Word of God, which declares 'eternal security' confirmed in our heart by the Spirit of God. This is 'oída' knowledge. When we study the epistle of Ephesians, chapter 1 enumerates the riches we have in Christ. We have not experienced these but we know them, they are made certain in our life.

There is a process in Rom 8 in terms of comprehension and growing in knowledge. There is the ground of assurance; the Word of God, and there is the growth of assurance; the Word written in our hearts:

Rom. 8:14-16: *For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba, Fa-*

ther." The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God,

Paul here speaks of being led by the Spirit. We have talked about being led by the Spirit involving living out the Word of God's in our life. In verse 15, believers have the privilege to cry 'Abba, Father.' This is the 'knowledge' that comes from the Word of God, it is 'oida' knowledge, a confirmation that is *objective* truth ingrained into the believer's life. In verse 16 Paul goes on to say it is the Holy Spirit bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God. This becomes the *subjective* experience in which we 'know' because we talk to our Father, and He treats us as his children.

Therefore, 'assurance' when put in the context of growing, is not the job of believers, not the certainty of being right, not the remembrance of being saved on a certain day. 'Assurance' is the sense of security based on the Spirit of God's confirmation in our life, confirming we are His. This is lived-out in our life as we follow Him in the Word and He seals this hope in believers with His Spirit. Because of this 'oida' knowing by the Spirit of God through the Word of God, believers *experience the certainty* of being His forever. It is a deepening understanding and realized fullness in the Christian's life since Pentecost.

C. The Privilege: Security And Assurance = Blessing

When God's people experience the assurance of security, they gain great blessings.

1. They gain the Assurance of His Promises.

As I shared in chapel, when I had cancer I knew if I died, I would be in the presence of God. This security, because I have eternal life, also had another blessing for me. I became emotionally aware that I could trust Him to look after me *now* and forever. The stress of cancer's uncertainty was overcome with a present peace. God's promise "*all things work together for good*" (Rom. 8:28), became a living reality in my life.

2. They gain the Assurance of His Provision

By this sense of security, this assurance, God provides for every Christian who walks "*in the light, as he is in the light*" (1 Jn. 1:7), an affirmation that He will provide for all our needs. This is the product of realizing all works for good. It gives the freedom of living proper priorities because He is committed to our care forever. Even in troubled times, when things become a great difficulty, that sense of assurance that all will work for our good is with us. This

dispels all worry and grants the privilege of freely sharing our requests and finding God's peace to leave them in God's will (Php. 4:6-7).

3. They gain the Assurance of His Protection

By this sense of security, this assurance, God provides the inner certainty of His caring protection. In times of trouble, God wraps His loving arms around His children and delivers them. This deliverance can be an intervention leading to safety as with Peter's deliverance from jail (Acts 12), or Stephen's greater delivery into God's presence (Acts 7). In this assurance of God's protection the believer finds comfort and courage in following Peter's exhortation: *humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time*, (1 Pet. 5:6-7).

In conclusion, we discover that assurance is subjective. It has to do with our attitude and walk with God. Once these are in proper place, the Spirit of God works in my life without hindrance and this assurance is mine. The bottom line, low denominator of Biblical assurance is 'I trust Christ *today* to be saved.' Because it is the knowledge of experience, it has to be based on my continuing relationship with God.

That is why God's people, especially church leaders, must be careful about giving people false assurance. Knowing intuitively means the Spirit of God has no inhibitors in my life. As I am close to God through the Word and prayer, the Spirit of God confirms I am his child, it is intuitive I do Not' have to experience it. However, if in my walk I break fellowship with God, I grieve the Spirit of God, I quench the Spirit of God, He will no longer affirm my security.

Does breaking fellowship with God change my security? No, but I no longer have a sense of it, I no longer have assurance. Therefore, because of this lost assurance, peace is gone, comfort is gone, courage escapes, God can draw me back, on my knees, to my Father. The only reason God's true believers do not have a sense of security is because they are not walking in the Spirit and allowing Him to affirm assurance in their life. In one sense, the continuing assurance of my salvation is dependent on my perseverance in my walk with God.

When I was a pastor a church member said to me: "I do not sense I belong to God." I would never go to the church record book and say: "See here on this page, you were baptized on this date." Nor would I take their Bible and remind them of the date they wrote down when they accepted Christ. In reality, I do not really know if they are saved or not. Is it possible for people to pray a prayer and not be saved? Alternatively,

is it possible for people to be baptized and not be saved?

Yes, these situations are possible. We cannot give people, who say they are saved, a false sense of security. We have to go right back and talk about salvation. We must ask some challenging questions: What do you believe salvation is?

Did you believe you were saved in the past? Do you believe now? What do you think is wrong in your life that prevents the Spirit of God to confirm salvation?

Sometimes I discovered they were not really saved. They did not really understand the details of salvation. However, most of the time there was unconfessed sin or ungodly activities in their lives that they should not continue. When they repented and asked God to forgive them, they once again sensed they were a child of God.

CLASS 9

Yesterday we completed our study of the uniqueness of Pentecost. In our class we have examined, in the New Covenant; a new explosion of revelation, a new union, a new empowerment, a new relationship, a new sanctification and a new assurance. Our concluding remarks addressed regarding the new assurance dealt with the cooperative work of the Spirit and man. The Spirit of God works in the believer's life in the deep unconscious level to confirm we are the children of God forever. Nevertheless, this depends on our continued fellowship with Him.

Therefore, believers have the responsibility to walk in fellowship with God. Yet, the business of assurance is not man's work it is God's work. I concluded by cautioning us, especially as church leaders, to never give false assurance to people.

Prof. Question: Are there any questions?

Student Question: Is this assurance only internal or can others see this?

Prof. Response: You cannot separate the walk from the theology. But, are you asking if other people see assurance in us?

Student Response: Yes.

*Prof. Response: The assurance is the **knowledge** of our security; that we will never be separated from God. It is completely a personal thing. But, Scripture states: 'by their works you shall know them' and 'you shall know they are my disciples by their love.' So, the evidence of salvation is something that others can see. Salvation is having fellowship*

*with God; knowing God. That is different from the assurance of security, which is having fellowship with God and **knowing** we are 'saved forever' by sensing within that we have eternal life. The assurance of Security is not 'knowing we are saved', it is knowing we are saved forever, through the Word applied by the Holy Spirit..*

We want to proceed by looking at some terminology that is often confusing. We have an appreciation of the uniqueness of Pentecost, understanding that although all believers of all time were saved. But, since Pentecost there is an expression of newness to salvation. It is not newness in the sense of different, but newness in the sense of depth. With this now in mind to understand, we will have a better appreciation of these confusing terms.

Important terms regarding the Holy Spirit And Believers

There are three terms relating to the ministry of the Holy Spirit and believers:

I. The Filling of the Spirit

A. Common idea

We have expressed this term as freedom from hindrance allowing full control of the Holy Spirit. Paul himself said: *And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit,* (Eph. 5:18). Now, as we come to realize the significance of the church in its deeper relationships, we come to understand that this 'filling' is related to the sense of the purposes of God for our life. We have defined filling as 'controlled by the Spirit of God'. But, when we look up all the references in the N.T. for 'filling' many times it is in the context of the Word of God being shared by those who are 'filled.'

B. Biblical Meanings

In your notes, I gave references in the book of Acts of being filled by the Spirit. You will find that the majority of the texts involve witnessing; being filled by the Spirit and sharing God's Truth. Here are some examples:

Acts 2:4: *And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.*

Acts 4:8: *Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, "Rulers of the people and elders of Israel...:*

Acts 4:31: *And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness.*

Acts 11:24: *For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord.*

As much as filling is the controlling of the Spirit of God empowers people in general ways, it seems the significant emphasis in a believer's life is to be filled to share God's truth. This is what makes the church distinct from Israel. When Israel had the light, the world had to come to them. Now, the church given the light, goes to the world. We know the great commission is more than evangelism and discipleship, it is teaching the whole counsel of God (Matt. 28:19-20).

My point is, the filling of the Spirit of God relates to the specific purposes of the church. Filling should affect our lives and our lips! The control of the Spirit of God should result in the willingness to share God's Word and anticipation of teaching God's people. It should result in sharing the gospel and building up one another in the faith by declaring and teaching God's truth.

C. Biblical Method

Eph. 5:18: *And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit,*

Col. 3:16: *Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.*

Do you see the parallel in these 2 verses? The first verse says 'be filled' resulting with singing, expression of the lips. The second says 'let the word of Christ dwell in you richly', with the same results. So filling leads the believer to speak the praises of God, and in Acts, the filling led to preaching in 'boldness'. The result was empowerment. In these texts, the means of empowerment was being filled with the Spirit. In reality, this is allowing life to be governed by the Word of God through the Spirit's leading.

We see in Scripture that the lips that give the message must be supported by the life that demonstrates the message. The filling of the Spirit of God is the Word of God controlling my life, giving me power to declare the word of God. We must never make 'filling' more than what Scriptures declare it to be. According to the purpose of the Spirit to glo-

rify the Son, when we are speaking in terms of the filling of the Spirit, the focus should continue to spotlight the Son.

We have seen in the history, the danger of the church seeking ‘filling of the Spirit’ by external manifestations such as ‘speaking in tongues,’ or ‘slain in the Spirit,’ or ‘running n passion’ around a church auditorium as some promote. The Airport Vineyard Church in Toronto, Canada has many such things happening in their meetings. This church has its worship services on television, but they rarely preach the word of God. Many attendees get up and start running around and around, because they are supposedly ‘filled with the Spirit’.

There was an occasion in which the camera focused on a man kneeling beside pastor and the pastor said to him: “This is not a time to pray, ‘Laugh, laugh in the Spirit.” I am not mocking these activities, but demonstrating the extent of the error of seeking unbiblical proofs of ‘Spirit Filling.’ I’m trying to show you if we take Bible terms out of context by not examining what the Scriptures actually say, we make many errors.

I have given three statements that summarize what the Scriptures in the N.T. tell us about the ‘filling of the Spirit’: “Filling’ is knowing and proclaiming the Word of God; “Filling’ is knowing and sharing in God’s power, evident in obedience to and guidance from the Word of God; Therefore, ‘filling’ is ‘living out the Lordship of Christ.’

II. Freedom of the Spirit

A. The Sphere of Operation of the Spirit:

When we speak of the freedom of the Spirit, which is not really a Bible term, but a term we use often in our life. The freedom of the Spirit addresses the fear of the operation of the Spirit in our life. The Holy Spirit as we discovered in the New Covenant, operates below the level of the conscious life by the Spirit of God.

We see in Scripture a possibility of resisting the Spirit. Resistance prevents freedom of the Spirit. Notice I say ‘freedom of the Spirit’, not ‘freedom in the Spirit’. We are not talking about the believer’s freedom. We are talking about the Spirit’s freedom in the believer’s life. Although the term ‘freedom of the Spirit’ refers to the activity of the Holy Spirit, the opposite term of ‘resisting the Spirit’ addresses the human activity. When people resist the Spirit, they are denying the freedom of the Spirit in their life. Resisting the Spirit, according to the Scriptures, is the determination of unbelievers:

Acts 7:51: *You stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears! You always resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers did, so do you.*

Here Stephen, preaching and disputing with the Jewish people that were listening, said they “*always resist the Holy Spirit*”. The O.T. history of Israel in bears witness to their constant rejection of the Word of God, they always resisted God.

Heb. 10:29: *Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace?*

This epistle to the Hebrews speaks about people who continue in sin and trample the grace of God evident in the Son of God. This resisting is an insult to the Spirit of God.

Mark 3:28-29: *"Assuredly, I say to you, all sins will be forgiven the sons of men, and whatever blasphemies they may utter; "but he who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is subject to eternal condemnation"*

In this context, Jesus is accused of casting out demons by the power of Satan (Beelzebub). In refusing submission to Christ’s claims this also a sin against the Spirit of God. When the unbeliever resists the Spirit of God, the result is preventing Christ from being Saviour. But, there is also the possibility of resisting the Spirit among believers after salvation. For example, in Acts 5 Ananias and Sapphira lied about their gift. They lied to the Spirit of God. What happened? They died.

It is interesting that in the giving of the law, which established the method of God’s rule in Israel, the first sacrifice Aaron’s sons made was false, and they died. It is appropriate that having seen God set aside Israel for a while, the first expression of sin within the church also brought death. In both situations when God was establishing a new method of completing His purposes: when sin was evident, God took the sinners’ lives as a demonstration that He does not tolerate sin. It is a good thing God did that only with the first sinners, otherwise there would be no Israel and there would be no church.

God’s Word tells us that believers are not to ‘grieve’ the Spirit of God (Eph. 4:30). In 1 Thess. 5:19 Christians are not to ‘quench’ the Spirit of God. As mentioned before, I suggest grieving is done by sins of commission, this means we do what He does not want us to do. We

commit acts of sins that He does not want us to commit. He is leading us away from this. The law says “Do not commit adultery.” When we do, we grieve the Spirit of God by doing what the Word of God says we should not do. We commit a sin of commission, we choose to act n sin.

I suggest Quenching the Spirit of God are sins of omission; this is the sin we do not do when he calls us to do in the word of God. We are called upon to witness, and while waiting for a bus, a man is sits beside me. The Spirit of God moves my heart to share the gospel with this person. But I keep silent. I have taken a bucket of water and poured it on the Spirit of God’s leading. I dismissed His guidance in my life by not following His guidance. The fire of God’s passion for the lost is resisted, I have quenched His direction. For the unbeliever, resisting the Spirit of God is keeping Christ from being Saviour. For the believer, resisting the Spirit of God is keeping Christ from being Lord.

Some say salvation requires God to be Lord of our life. This is both a true statement and a false statement. It is the same as salvation by faith and living by faith. A person cannot be saved unless he/she acknowledges that Jesus is the Lord of glory, that He is God:

Rom. 10:9: *that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.*

Therefore, we cannot enter into salvation without acknowledging Jesus is ‘Lord’ meaning ‘God’. In that sense, the statement is true, just as we cannot be saved except by faith, we cannot be led except by faith.

Prof. Question: Nevertheless, as we enter into salvation we are called upon to live by faith, can a person know Christ as Saviour and fail to live by faith?

Student Response: -Yes. -No.

Prof. Response: You say no, are you telling me every moment of your life you have lived by faith?

Student Response: He’s giving a different definition of ‘faith’.

*Prof. Response: We are talking about **living** by faith.*

Student Response: Now I understand. I was thinking about saved by faith!

God says ‘seek first the kingdom of God and I will supply all your needs’ (Matt. 6:33). Therefore, to live by faith, we must put God

ahead in everything, and then depend upon God to provide everything we need. Many times Christians failed in believing He would provide everything: “I need a new car! I can’t wait, so I borrow money to buy a new car; I want to go on a trip with my family, so I take the trip and accumulate big bills to pay. Do I still believe in God? Yes, I have not abandoned faith, but I have not lived faith. It is the same with ‘Lordship.’ We can fail to surrender life ‘in everything’ to his rule. When I do not live by faith, I am not living his Lordship in my life. Therefore, I am resisting the Spirit.

Student Question: I have difficulty to understand how grieving the Spirit is a sin based on Psalm 103:9,10.

Prof. Response: This text does not refer to grieving the Spirit, but to sin in general and points to God’s nature to be longsuffering and merciful. What kind of sins is this talking about, omission or commission? The focus is to Israel. It says in vs. 7 ‘he made known his ways and his acts to Israel’ he gave them the law, which included things they should do and things they should not do. In all their failing in both of these areas, he is slow to anger. He says he will not always strive with us, work toward this with us, but will punish us. So, I would say this text is talking about both; the impact of Moses law which they should have followed which included omission and commission.

An exegesis of the Biblical language in both texts; Eph. 4:30 and 1 Thess. 4:19, gives deeper understanding. I simplified this to demonstrate that when we grieve or quench the Holy Spirit in relationship to His leading through the word of God, we disobey by resisting the Spirit. That is sin.

B. The Fullness of the Operation of the Spirit:

We see in this concept of freedom of the Spirit; His freedom in our life. But, it is possible for the believer to resist Him. When we do not resist the Spirit, we give Him the freedom to guide and lead in our life. Only here do we find the fullness of the operation of the Spirit. The idea of the fullness of the operation of the Spirit is giving the Spirit all freedom to lead us in our life. In the Scriptures of the N.T., it is defined by ‘walking in the Spirit’ and ‘being led by the Spirit’. When we walk by the Spirit we will not fulfill the lusts of the flesh. When the Spirit of God leads us, He confirms we are children of God.

There is also the opposite, the resisting of the Spirit. We can say it this way, 'Christ is or is not Lord of my life'. This focusses on the Son, which is a better way to say it. How is He Lord of my life? He is Lord by my walking in the Spirit; by my being led by the Spirit. Remember we talked about filling, in which we are living out the lordship of Christ. The freedom of the Spirit is what filling is every day of our lives. It is not to waiver in our walk, but to begin every day with submitting to the Word of God. Our goal for that day is to walk in His will, which is to walk in the Spirit, which is to submit to Christ.

Therefore, when we talk about 'walking in the Spirit' or 'submitting to the Word of God', we have to understand that the evidence of this in our lives can be fabricated. We can have a good testimony by pretense but not truly be right in our heart. When Christ sent out the seventy, two by two, to spread the Word, they were to preach the message and God said He would confirm the message with miracles, wonders and signs (Lu. 10:1-16). Did they go out and do this? Yes! When they returned they were very excited. They shared, 'Lord, you should have seen what we were doing, we were really doing your work' (Lu.10:17). To bring them back to the reality that *they* did not do this, but **God** did this in them, Jesus said: *I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven.* I think with this response from Jesus they humility ceased their boasting with the reality of this truth.

Prof. Question: Now the point I make is this: Did Judas go with them?

Student Response: Yes.

Prof. Response: Was Judas able to heal as the other disciples, or did he faked it? Did he pretended to do what they did? We do not know. The Bible is silent about the activity of Judas. But, they did go out in twos, to make pretending difficult. Yet, because they had no idea that Judas was a pretender, his partner probably did not scrutinize everything Judas did. I think he could have preached the message and even healed because the God caused the signs and wonders, and He confirmed the message not the men.

Whether Judas could have performed the miracles, I do not know. If he was not watched every moment, he could have said 'Oh, I healed this man who was blind', 'I touched this man that was lame.' He could have

lied about this. Remember Paul's warning, when he went to Ephesus he cautioned the church that there would be wolves in sheep's clothing among them (Matt. 7:15). Therefore, we acknowledge the probability that there are people like Judas in the church, who look like they are filled with the Spirit, but they are not, they are counterfeit Christians.

With this in mind, what is the test of falsehood? Jesus gave the answer.

Matt. 7:15-18: *"Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thorn bushes or figs from thistles? Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit.*

Jesus states that the fruit of ministry is the true test of authentic discipleship. In support of this, Paul shared the true fruit of the Spirit:

Gal. 5:22-23: *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.*

We have to understand that in this text, the fruit of the Spirit. It is a single work of the Spirit in our life. When I say it is a singleness in the idea of fruit, the Spirit of God works all at one time in our life. It is not as though when we are first saved, God is working on 'love' in our life and when He gets that done, He will work on 'joy' in our life. The Spirit of God's work is manifested in our life by God's love, joy, peace etcetera.

The test is the perseverance of the Spirit of God's fruit continuing in and growing in the Christian life. The Fruit of the Spirit is godliness, it is Christ-likeness, it is, as we examined earlier, being changed from glory to glory. Genuine fruit stands the test of time. It becomes, in a growing way, the character and pattern of our life. The murderer who comes to Christ is transformed. He could not possibly keep the same attitude, the same hate, the same viciousness, in his life because the Spirit of God is working change. The adulterous man forsaking his wife, could never continue in such sinful conduct because the Spirit of God is transforming his life.

That is what it means in such passages as 1 Cor. 6:9-11; Rev. 21:8, and a hundred other texts enumerating those who will not inherit eternal life; murderers, fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, homosexuals, sodo-

mites, in essence all the unrighteous, can be transformed by God. The pattern of their lives can change because Christ died for the whole world (1 Jn. 2:2). Nevertheless, I take us back to John's antithesis:

1 Jn. 1:6: *If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.*

Because walking in the light is a part of everything we discussed, walking in the Spirit, growing in the lord, as well as walking in the light, if we say we never sin, we are liars. Yes, it is possible for a Christian to fall into adultery and God will be working conviction in that life, drawing him/her back. This believer has no sense of assurance anymore and will by the Spirit of God, be prompted to repent. The evidence of Scripture is that the call to repentance could take time, as the Spirit of God continues to convict.

If the believer continues to resist this conviction, God says He disciplines him/her as His child. God's discipline is not punishment for sin, Jesus paid that debt, but it would circumstances that prompt restoration of fellowship. If resistance continues, it is possible God would take this believer's life rather than have the man shame his name more. Paul, in 1 Corinthians 11:27-30, warns about participating in the Lord's Table unworthily, meaning being out of fellowship with God. To take communion is pretending to have fellowship with God and with the body, but God knows it is not true in their life. Paul says for this reason some are sick with the discipline of God, and some sleep, meaning they have died, as Ananias and Sapphira.

CONCLUSION

The Pentecostal event (day of Pentecost) was a significant redemptive event in the mind of God. We saw the concept of newness, the deeper fullness, the more meaningful relationship, all because the Spirit has given birth to the church at Pentecost. Having examined all these new things, and reviewed the terms associated, we brought home the operation of the Spirit in our life: His filling for knowing and sharing the Word; His freedom in our life for daily submission to the Word; and His fruit, a lifetime of increasing holiness by the Word. There is no magic formula or shortcut for any of the Holy Spirit's ministry in the Christian's life. J.I. Packer put it this way: "The issue is not do you have the Spirit, but do you have the Son?" God intends all of this to be the norm for every person who has salvation.

Student Question: As we talked about a murderer I was reminded of what we talked about earlier. Could you comment on 1 John 3:15. In my teaching murder is an action that evidences not truly being born again. I am speaking of premeditated murder. By extension, can we not say suicides a premeditated act of murder, therefore proving the person does not have eternal life in them?

Prof. Response: 1 John 3:15 says: Whoever hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him. What you are doing is taking the verse out of context. Again, 1 John is about the evidence of possessing salvation. One evidence being in verse 10 “Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is he who does not love his brother.” He is talking about the continual practice or pattern of the new life in Christ. He speaks then of the situation between Cain and Able in which Cain murdered his brother. He did this because “Because his works were evil and his brother’s righteous.” Again, we see the evidence is the works, the contrast between the character or nature of each brother’s life. John concludes his thoughts with the love of God, now in the believer’s life, verse 14: “We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love his brother abides in death.

Another evidence of salvation is our love for our brothers and sisters in Christ. Love is the new nature or character of the Christian life, which embraces the joy of fellowship with God and His family.

John concludes the text in verse 15 by stating “whoever hates” (present participle, implying ‘is hating’) his brother “is” (present indicative implying habitually expected) a murderer, and...no murderer “has” (present indicative implying expected continued state) eternal life abiding (present participle with negative ‘no’ implying is not abiding) in him. This is the key to all these situations; it usually is the present tense with indicative mood implying a customary present, a habitual occurrence or reasonably expected occurrence.

Therefore, the context supports exactly what I have shared. If the pattern of your life is to hate, then you are like a murderer and will likely continue as such. The emphasis of transformation is in the last phrase: no murderer has “eternal life abiding in him.” Even in this context, the power of eternal life to change or transform a person is evident. This is not saying a murderer can never be saved.

Prof. Question: Was Paul, as Saul a murderer?

Student Response: Yes.

Prof. Response: Absolutely!

Student Response: And David.

Prof. Response: Yes, David as well. Although I will not mention names, however one of our students at CBS here, before salvation, had been convicted of murder. Some of you know whom I am talking about. Is he a murderer now?

Student Response: NO!

Prof. Response: I do not think I have ever seen a man with more love and joy in his heart. Even the prison staff saw a great change in this man after he was saved. He has eternal life abiding within.

Student Question: So, someone who commits suicide, does not have a chance to repent after, therefore can we say this would prove he does not have the Spirit of God abiding.

Prof. Question: You are adding to God's Word. There is no place in Scripture that says "If you do not repent, you will lose your salvation. After salvation, repentance only restores our fellowship with God. Paul made it very clear: Ro 8:1 There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus. So, I believe the saved man who is in a weakened state of despair and takes his own life, is immediately restored to fellowship with Christ in his presence with Christ. How God deals with him at the Judgement Seat of Christ, we have no idea, but it is not just that moment which is judged, it is his whole saved life.

Some of you are challenged by these comments, and that is good. It calls for your further study to arrive at your own position. I do want to clarify one truth: There is no unpardonable sin today other than the sin of unbelief, which leaves man without salvation.

This concludes Pneumatology Part 1. Tomorrow we will commence Part 2: The Gifts of the Holy Spirit.

APPENDIX A

WHAT IT MEANS TO POSSESS PERSONAL SALVATION

The terms ‘saved’ or ‘salvation’ occur 268 times in Scripture. The Hebrew word *yaw-shah*’ translated “saved” in the Old Testament and its New Testament Greek synonym *sode’-zo* can best be defined by the word deliverance. It cannot be ignored nor cast aside that man stands separated from Holy God because of sin, that sin holds man in bondage in this life, and that all mankind stands condemned as a result. Although it may go against the grain of man’s pride and self-sufficiency, Scripture presents a clear and logical answer for our helplessness. God’s answer is personal salvation and is foundational upon several truths of Scripture.

The *first* of these truths is that "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23 NIV). Adam’s fallen state of spiritual death earlier examined is the inheritance of all mankind and results in the bondage of every person to sin - wrong thinking, wrong decisions, wrong actions, and to emotional disorder. Sin is falling short of God’s perfection. Every person is on need of deliverance.

The *second* of these truths is that "the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Rom. 6:23 NIV) Whereas every person earns the penalty of sin (spiritual separation from God in the present life and eternal separation from God after this life), *salvation is a gift*. A gift is something unearned, granted out of love, and received out of gratitude.

The *third* of these truths is that "God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." (John 3:16 NIV) The gift of salvation was provided out of the unconditional love of God for every person. This gift of love was provided by the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, God’s own Son on the cross of Calvary, proved sufficient to transform man from the state of death to spiritual life in Christ by the resurrection of Jesus.

The *fourth* of these truths is that "it is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no-one can boast." (Ephesians 2:8-9 NIV) *Salvation is by grace*. Grace is something that is undeserved. When a person is caught

wilfully breaking the law that person knows some penalty or punishment is due. If the prosecuting authority in some way states that he or she will be *gracious* in judgment, the guilty person immediately recognizes the hope of escaping the deserved punishment.

Nevertheless, no true justice will excuse severe and wilful wrongdoing no matter what efforts are made by the guilty party to compensate. For example; saving a child from drowning can never compensate for premeditatedly taking the life of an adult. However, if the debt (penalty or punishment) has been paid then grace can rule and the undeserved can be acquitted. Salvation is the graciousness of God accepting the paid debt of sin by the sacrifice of God's Son and justly pardoning the guilty.

After hearing the gospel explained, people often say, "You mean there's nothing I can do to deserve it? That's too easy." It seems natural for people to object to the idea that God's unmerited favour can be given so freely to unworthy sinners. Many find it difficult to trust a God who offers salvation as a free gift.

Salvation is free to man but cost God much. His own Son actually became man's substitute. Where man is unable to change his standing before God through any self-effort, Christ died in his place: "For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly." (Rom. 5:6) It is man's responsibility to believe and receive the free gift of life. "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God has raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believes unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." (Rom. 10:9-10)

The language of Scriptures knows nothing about a "cross of example," or a "cross of martyrdom for the cause." Although Calvary was a cross of grace, a cross of goodness, a cross of courage, a cross of suffering and a cross of perseverance, it was foremost a cross of substitution. "For he (God) has made him (Jesus) to be sin for (in the place of) us, who (Jesus) knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." (2 Corinthians 5:21)

Salvation is free but not cheap, and it is anyone's for the asking 'in faith.' "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." (Rom. 10:13) Charles Spurgeon, known as "the prince of preachers," once wrote, "It will not save me to know that Christ is a Saviour; but it will save me to trust him to be my Saviour. I shall not be

delivered from the wrath to come, by believing that his atonement is sufficient; but I shall be saved by making that atonement my trust, my refuge and my all."

Believers must be reminded of these Bible verses. "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believes unto righteousness and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." (Rom. 10:9-10) It has been said of this verse that people can miss heaven by eighteen inches, the distance between the mind which hears that safety lies in Christ, and the heart which refuses to reach in faith and accept Him.

The Bible clearly states that faith in Christ alone secures salvation. "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." (Rom. 10:13) This is a faith that turns the heart in sorrow from sin (repentance) to acceptance of Christ's substitutional death (belief). Therefore, the securing of salvation is not dependent upon any works of man such as being baptized or joining a church but upon a point of decision. The epistle of John emphasises this point of decision. "He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the children of God, [even] to them that believe on his name." (John 1:11-12)

This decision to "receive" Christ as *personal saviour* restores the relationship of each individual (in the fallen state of spiritual death) to spiritual life in Christ. At the moment of this decision by faith the Spirit of God enters into the individual, quickening (or making alive) the spirit of man (Ephesians 2:5). This new state or "new birth" (John 3:3) allows the believing individual to be spiritually led by God and empowered by God and to be delivered not only from eternal punishment (John 3:16) but also from present bondage (Galatians 5).

For each individual who has heard (or read) of God's free offer of salvation by faith through the sacrificial death and glorious resurrection of Jesus, there is a window of opportunity. This is not an opportunity to prove oneself before God, sin prevents this (Romans 3), but an opportunity to accept the gift of life from God. God has secured the means of spiritual rescue from present bondage and eternal loss by dealing with the penalty and the power of sin on the Cross of Calvary.

It is now up to each individual to reach out by faith and receive that gift. It is this gift of life that is the foundation for deliverance, not only

from the eternal penalty of sin but also from the present bondage of sin and weakness. The beauty of that expression of faith is that no one will ever be disappointed; Jesus' promise is always kept. " For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." (Rom. 5:6, 10:13).



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Along with serving the Lord and enjoying his family, Earl's favourite pastime is canoeing and fishing the lakes of beautiful Muskoka, Ontario, Canada, where he and his wife Kathi reside.

