

# The promise of the Holy Spirit

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I don't know if you have noticed, the Holy Spirit has been moving greatly in our church during our Sunday services and we can see the joy in fellowship and freedom in worship.

In the recent Alpha course, 7 people accepted Christ during this time. Then on Thursday night during the Day of Pentecost prayer and worship session, we saw how peoples' lives were touched by the Holy Spirit. We also heard about how the Lord has blessed people in our congregation with new jobs, or moved to a better job, some people have received their long waited visas or bought their first NZ home.

Many prayer intercessors and many people have been feeling that the spirit of heaviness had been lifted like the curtain from them. I believe that we are entering into a new season and that God is moving the church forward and we must follow it. We need to submit to Him and let Him do the work He wants to do in this church. We do not want to miss this, because a church without the Holy Spirit moving in is nothing more than a club that Christians gather in a church building. We really want to see God move in our church, in our lives, like the early church in the New Testament.

Let us consider what happened on the first day when there was an amazing outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Let us have a look at this event from this morning's passage.

## **Act 2:14-21 NIV**

<sup>14</sup> Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd: "Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say.

<sup>15</sup> These men are not drunk, as you suppose. It's only nine in the morning! <sup>16</sup> No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: <sup>17</sup> " 'In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams.

<sup>18</sup> Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy. <sup>19</sup> I will show wonders in the heaven above and signs on the earth below, blood and fire and billows of smoke. <sup>20</sup> The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord. <sup>21</sup> And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.'

### **1. Baptism of Holy Spirit is a Supernatural Event v14-v15**

When the human mind is faced with something that we don't understand, two things will happen. The first is that we try to find an explanation for the situation or event. Sometimes we find the correct reason but on many occasions, we arrive at the wrong

reasons. Although we have arrived at a wrong reason we wrongly believe that these wrong reasons are right and we even try to convince others that these are the write reasons. In some situations, when others disagree with us, we might even do things to hurt those who disagree with us.

This is what happened when the people saw the disciples filled with the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost. Some of them laughed at the Christians and claimed that these Christians were drunk.

The second thing that the human mind often does is to reject what had happened altogether. Since it is impossible to explain what had happened, the brain just shuts off so as to avoid a sense of confusion and possible headaches. This is a form of escapism i.e., we just do not think about what had happened.

Take the case of a person who has no understanding of who the Holy Spirit is or what can happen when a person is filled or baptised by the Holy Spirit. For such a person, he or she may try to find reasons to explain what they have seen. However, because it is often incomprehensible to our human minds, many people will just reject what they have seen.

In verse 15, Peter explained the situation to the unbelievers. He told them that what the people had seen was not something that had a natural explanation as it was the supernatural working of the Holy Spirit. To the natural eyes, people who were baptised by the Holy Spirit looked like they were drunk because this was the only reason they could think of. But they would be wrong as these early Christians were not drunk. The power of God, the fire of the Holy Spirit had come upon them. The baptism of the Holy Spirit had dramatically changed their lives.

You might remember that Peter was afraid of losing his life when he was challenged by a girl at the fire in the courtyard of the high priest when the Lord Jesus was arrested. When we read about this we get the image of a frightened Peter who failed by denying the Lord Jesus three times. In fact Peter was very brave as he had followed the Lord Jesus to the house of the high priest, the very person who wanted to imprison all disciples, and maybe even put them to death like they did to the Lord Jesus. But when it came to the crunch, Peter failed because he did it by his flesh, his natural determination or natural will. It is very difficult to overcome temptations, weaknesses and challenges using our natural determination and will.

But after Peter was baptised with the Holy Spirit, he stood up in front of more than 3,000 people and spoke boldly. What brought about this change?

It was the power of the Holy Spirit that gave him the boldness to speak. The Holy Spirit poured on him a supernatural passion for Christ and love for the lost souls.

### **Illustration of love**

There is great power in love. People are even willing to die for others when there is great love.

Remember that God the Holy Spirit, God the Father and God the Son (Jesus) are one. When the Holy Spirit is in you, the Spirit of Jesus is in you, the Jesus who died to save you from your sins. When the Holy Spirit is in you, the Spirit of God the Father and God the Son is in you. So, the Spirit of God, "For God so love the world that he gave his only Son" is in you.

The Holy Spirit wants to fill us. He wants to deliver us and set us free from strongholds that cripple our walk in the Christian life. He wants to guide us and give us instructions when we face difficulties. He wants to empower us to accomplish His work in this world. Do not allow our natural understanding to stop that from happening. Let us accept the Holy Spirit by faith and when we do, there will be great changes in our life.

## **2. We need supernatural power to live in the last days v16-v17, v19-20**

<sup>16</sup> No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: <sup>17</sup> " 'In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams.

<sup>19</sup> I will show wonders in the heaven above and signs on the earth below, blood and fire and billows of smoke. <sup>20</sup> The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord.

This was prophesied by the prophet Joel and had been partly fulfilled in the early church. Now there are people who think that this was proclaimed 2000 years ago and 2000 years later, the world is still around. Well, we need to remember that prophecies sometimes have multiple points of fulfilment.

Why does God give dreams and vision to, or pour His Holy Spirit on His people? God knew what was going to be like for Christians in the early church. They were badly persecuted, many were killed, and for them it was like they were experiencing the last days. But the Holy Spirit encouraged them by showing them what was to come. The Holy Spirit gave them boldness and love for God so that they were willing to go through the persecution, even unto death.

Today as we look at what is happening in the world, we can see that we are in the final stage of what has been called the last days. Looking at current world events and society we know that we are in the last days, and we are the characters in the book of Revelation in the Bible.

Many disasters that the Bible has said would happen, have already come or are at the doorsteps. We can see the enemy going every which way to destroy society and cause the destruction of souls. Temptation has become much greater in every way. It is so easy to fall into the sin of lust. Just with a flick of a finger and you are on certain webpages which are full of pornography or online shopping. It has become so easy to feed our ego and pride through social media, indeed it is so easy for people to feed their pride.

Through many distractions, the enemy is trying to quench our love for God and turn us either cold or lukewarm. We just don't seem to be able to find time to spend with the Lord.

We need the power of the Holy Spirit to be on us so that we might live victorious lives. We need the Holy Fire of God to burn away what is killing us and make us holy again.

<sup>19</sup> I will show wonders in the heaven above and signs on the earth below, blood and fire and billows of smoke. <sup>20</sup> The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord.

Today there are more natural disasters than in the past. And the Bible tells us that there will be even more disasters ahead and that the scale of these disasters will actually increase.

We need the Holy Spirit to see things from God's perspective. We need to know what is happening in the world. When we see the disasters happening around us it is not to scare us but to remind us if we "Are ready or not" to meet the Lord Jesus and that time is running out for us to share the gospel.

Stocking up food is not able to sustain us long enough. We have stored some food in the church so that we can use this food as a way of sharing the gospel.

We need the power of the Holy Spirit to put us into the right focus of our mission. We are not to live for ourselves but to reach out to the lost.

#### **Acts 1:4-5**

<sup>4</sup> On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. <sup>5</sup> For John baptized (dip/sink) with water, but in a few days you will be baptized (dip/sink) with the Holy Spirit."

#### **Acts 1:6-8**

<sup>6</sup> Then they gathered around him and asked him, "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?" <sup>7</sup> He said to them: "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. <sup>8</sup> But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

The disciples were more concerned about the natural kingdom of Israel but the Lord Jesus directed them to the main issue which was that they needed to receive the power of the Holy Spirit to be witnesses for the Kingdom of God.

Dear brothers and sisters, the main purpose of baptism by the Holy Spirit is not for ourselves but to empower us to extend God's kingdom on earth, so that we can minister to one another through the Gifts of the Spirit or empower us to reach out to non-believers.

**Matthew 12:28** But if I drive out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you. (Mat 12:28 NIV)

The kingdom of God needs to be restored. People need to be set free from demonic torture; they need to be saved.

Let me give you an illustration from the second World War, where certain countries were liberated by the allies.

God is stirring His church to hunger and thirst for the things of His Kingdom and to seek His empowerment to move in the supernatural to restore this fallen world.

When the Holy Spirit moves people will just want to come to church, and many people will be healed and delivered. We will see more miracles happening in churches.

### **3. This promise is for all in the last days v17-v18**

<sup>17</sup> "In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. <sup>18</sup> Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy.

**This promise is for all ages.**

Sons and daughters, young and old.

***"Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions "***

To those who are children, who we might think are too young to understand, who we think have not been trained, who we think will not make significant contribution to the church, I have news for you. The Bible says that you will see visions. You will see what God is going to do clearly, you will see what we need to do and direct the churches.

***"Your old men will dream dreams"*** Those who are senior citizens, God has not finished with you yet. He still wants to use you in His kingdom. You might feel that you are weak and lack energy but you will dream dreams about what the Lord wants to do. Yours might be more of a supporting role to reveal what God is doing.

**All gender**

***"both men and women"*** Some people think the Bible is male dominated but we can see that the Holy Spirit will infill both men and women. We are equally important in God's eyes. In fact, one might argue that women are often more sensitive to the Holy Spirit than men are.

I pray that we will be open for the Holy Spirit to come and fill us. The Holy Spirit wants to pour on us. He wants to deliver us and set us free from strongholds that hinder our Christian walk. He wants to guide us and give us instructions when we face difficulties. He wants to strengthen us when the great tribulation comes. He wants to empower us to partake in His work, to build His kingdom on earth.

May the Holy Spirit fill you and be with you always.