

New Testament Baptism and the Holy Spirit 2

Class 7

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In continuing the study of the Holy Spirit we now are going to explore the meaning of the terms “gift of the Holy Spirit” and “gifts of the Holy Spirit”. It is important to make a distinction there because they are two different things with two completely different meanings.

We have studied the meaning of the term “Godhead” and have shown that the Holy Spirit is just as much a member of the Godhead as the Father and the Son. We have also studied the role of the Holy Spirit in creation in relation to the Father and the Son and we have discussed the Holy Spirit and His work under all dispensations including this last dispensation which is designated as the dispensation of the Holy Spirit.

We have seen how the Spirit uses the word of God to do His work on mankind and in believers... on mankind in general to convict men of sin and to point to the plan of salvation... and on believers in order to shape them more and more daily into the image of Christ.

It is easy to understand how the Holy Spirit works on non-believers through the word... diligent studying of the word to learn the truths that God has given us regarding salvation is akin to the preaching of the word by the apostles... it produces the same result, conviction of sin and the need for change and what to do about achieving that change, but how does the Spirit work on believers... how does He do it? Well the answer is simple although there are some who would deny it. He dwells with us and in us. It is that simple.

The Gift of the Holy Spirit...

In **Acts 2:38** a simple statement is made by the apostle Peter: “**Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.**” There it is... as much as some would deny it. We are told in plain English or in their case Greek that if you repent, i.e. change from your sinful ways to God’s way and are baptized into Christ for the remission of your sins, i.e. the washing away of your sins, you will get the gift of the Holy Spirit.

When you become an obedient baptized believer the Holy Spirit takes up residence with you. Some may say well how does He do that? Well, I cannot explain that other than to say that He just does, and we are told that He does... we just need to accept that. I can tell you that you have a spirit given to you by God... it is what makes you alive and it is what makes you what you are... all the intelligence, personality, and life in your body comes from your spirit that is given by the Father. We know from **James 2:26** that “**the body without the spirit is dead.**” A dead body has no life, no movement, no personality, no intelligence... it is dead. So your spirit is indwelling your body and animating you... giving you life and the ability to live. Just so the Holy Spirit dwells

with baptized believer giving us life and the ability to live eternally with God and the Son. I cannot explain just how your spirit dwells in you, but I know that it does, in the same manner and from the same source material, i.e. God's word; I can tell you that if you follow God's commands, you receive the Holy Spirit and He dwells with you too. It is a mystery that we will not have the answer for until we pierce the veil of this life, but there is an answer... God has just not chosen to share the details of the "how" with us.

The "**gift of the Holy Spirit**" mentioned in **Acts 2:38** has been designated by scholars as the "baptismal measure" of the Holy Spirit in order to differentiate this gift from other more extraordinary gifts, for instance the gift of performing miracles, speaking in tongues, etc. which we will go into later in this lesson.

I want to stop here and make a simple point about something that everyone in the first century church understood, but that many people seem to miss in the religious world today. We have been studying the Holy Spirit, a member of the Godhead, and He is just that... holy. He is NOT going to dwell with anyone who is unclean. Follow me on this: we know that baptism cleanses us from sin and are told so in **Acts 2:38** and **Acts 22:16**... is it so hard to see the connection between baptism, which is a cleansing and the gift of the Holy Spirit? He cannot come into and dwell with anyone who is still unclean! It is impossibility. It is not in His nature... He is Holy!

Just as God will not abide in the presence of sin (see **Isaiah 6:1-7** for an illustration of this point), neither can the Holy Spirit. At least He cannot dwell in close association with sin. He works on the unclean through the agency of the word to convict them of their uncleanness, but He does not indwell them. So you cannot have the gift of the Holy Spirit without obeying the command to be baptized for the washing away of your sins... anyone who thinks otherwise is missing the meaning of the term "holy".

To be holy means to be free moral evil, to have moral and ethical wholeness or perfection. It means to be set apart and sanctified... only those who have come into contact with the blood of Christ in the waters of baptism are set apart and made holy... no one else is. Unless you have been sanctified by the blood of Christ, which is why He shed His blood in the first place, you cannot receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit only dwells with those who have been made righteous by faith in Christ and have been obedient to that faith by being baptized in order to have their sins washed away. He will not indwell the unrighteous... He cannot.

All that being said He does dwell in the believer and we are sealed by Him. We see a discussion of this in **Ephesians 1:13-14**. Paul tells the church of Christ in Ephesus that that sealing is against the day of redemption, meaning it is seal showing that you are to be redeemed and have been redeemed from destruction by the blood of Christ, which was the purchase price for your soul from bondage to sin. So the Holy Spirit indwells us to seal us. Just as the book of **Revelation** at **19:20** describes "**the mark of the beast**" for those who will be destroyed, so we as Christians have the mark of God... this is the sealing of the Holy Spirit.

We are told in **Romans 8:1-2** that those who are “**in Christ**” (see **Romans 6:3** and **Galatians 3:27** which teach us that baptism puts you “into Christ”) and walk according to the Spirit are not condemned. Later in **Romans 8:14-16** we are told that the Spirit we have received bears witness to God for us that we are His children, and towards the end of the chapter at **verse 26** we learn that the Spirit helps in our weaknesses and intercedes for us as well.

So from all of this we can conclude that the Holy Spirit dwells with us when we are obedient to the gospel commands, He seals us against the day of redemption, we walk in Him, He intercedes for us... He lives with us and as Jesus told us in **John 16:7**, He is our “**Helper**.” It is also by the Holy Spirit that God the Father and Jesus the Son representatively dwell with us as we see from **John 14:15-18, 23**. Notice from the beginning of these passages that receiving the “Helper” is contingent upon obedience to Christ’s commands... The Holy Spirit cannot dwell with the disobedient and the unclean.

Overwhelmingly we see from the scriptures that obedience to the commands of the gospel of Christ is a necessary action in order to have the gift of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. It is also necessary in order to have the representative indwelling of God and Christ through His presence with us. We need to remember too from our first lesson on the Holy Spirit last week, that as the Godhead, they are all in communion with one another and that is how this representative indwelling is accomplished. Baptism is the point at which you receive that gift and it is a necessary gift from God’s viewpoint... that is why we have the Holy Spirit.

Next week we will explore why it is necessary by discussing how the Holy Spirit makes us alive to God once again. We will also discuss the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Spirit and why they are not with us now, and we will discuss Baptism of the Holy Spirit and the special relationship that He has with the church.