

# Receiving the Holy Spirit

John 7:39

## I. During Jesus' earthly ministry the Holy Spirit was not yet given (6:37-39)

- A. The living water which can satisfy our deepest thirst for meaning in life & empower us to be a source of life to others was, in some sense, not available.
- B. What does John mean by saying the HS was not yet given?
  - 1. He doesn't mean that the HS was not active during this time (John 14:17)
    - a He [present-tense] abides with you & will be [future-tense] in you.
      - 1) The HS is abiding alongside (with) these disciples, but He isn't living inside (in) of them yet.
    - b John has already stated that conversion is impossible apart from the work of the HS. (John 3:3,6)
      - 1) Jesus rebuked Nicodemus, a teacher of Israel, for not understanding that rebirth by the HS was necessary for salvation
      - 2) *"Regeneration was as much a prerequisite for faith in the OT as it is in the NT" – Sproul, The mystery of the HS*
        - a) (John 6:63)
  - 2. In the OT God does not dwell in His people, but He does dwell among them (tabernacle/temple).
  - 3. The presence of the HS upon an individual in the OT was a unique occurrence.
    - a Bezalel, Moses, Joshua, Judges,
    - b Samson, Samuel, Saul, his servants, David, the prophets, etc.
  - 4. The OT prophets declared that a time would come when God would make His presence universally available.
    - a (Eze. 36:27; Joel 2:28)
- C. John the Baptist declared that Jesus would baptize in the HS (John 1:33)
  - 1. The apostle John is explaining that Jesus didn't baptize His disciples in the HS until after Jesus was glorified (6:39)
  - 2. Jesus told His disciples to not begin their new ministry until the HS has been given to them (Acts 1:4-8)

## II. The lives of Jesus' disciples were dramatically changed after they received the baptism of the HS. (Acts 2:1-4)

- A. When the HS came, He came with the purpose of filling His church & empowering them to be witnesses for Christ.
  - 1. The transformation that came made them bold & confident.
  - 2. Jesus wants your life to be so like His, that it is a witness of Him.
    - a Have you ever tried to imitate Jesus by your willpower alone?
      - 1) Blessing those who curse you; living w/ perfect self-control
      - 2) It is impossible apart from the power of the HS
- B. Prior to Pentecost the disciples were lacking in power
  - 1. All of their attempts to imitate Jesus were frustrated by their flesh
  - 2. As soon as Peter reaches a HS-inspired conclusion, he comes crashing down as he tries to stop Jesus from going to the cross.
    - a Peter couldn't even pray alongside the Lord for one hour (Matt. 26:41)
    - b At Jesus' trial, Peter is so crippled by fear that he denies even knowing Jesus.
  - 3. Paul admitted that apart from the HS he was helpless against the flesh (Rom. 7:15,24)
- C. After the outpouring of the HS Peter gives this interpretation of the event (Acts 2:15-17,33)
  - 1. Peter concludes that the gift of the HS is available to all who repent & are baptized... (Acts 2:38)
  - 2. Multiple account of HS outpourings follows in the book of Acts but how the people experience the outpouring has some variation.
    - a They all experience this baptism after having been converted.
      - 1) In Saul's conversion there was a 3-day delay (Acts 9:1-18)
    - b The initial outward evidence of baptism in the HS is speaking in tongues (except the Samaritan outpouring in Acts 8)
    - c Is the Book of Acts simply describing what happened in church history or is it prescribing for us what should happen today?
      - 1) The overwhelming testimony of church history is the gift of speaking in tongues virtually disappeared.
      - 2) *"If speaking in tongues is the outward evidence of HS baptism, & the baptism of the HS is a crucial & normative subsequent work in the lives of believers, then why have the vast majority of believers in church history failed to attain this vital dimension of Christian life? Was the original Pentecost actually a "failure" for the vast ages of Christian history until the present day?" – Sproul*
      - 3) There is even probable evidence from the NT that the practice of the sign gifts was becoming less & less

## III. How do we receive this power?

- A. The HS regenerates & indwells every believer the moment of salvation (1 Cor. 12:13; Rom. 8:9)
- B. Is there a "second blessing" of the HS after salvation?

1. *"The baptism of the HS is the initial experience of glory & the reality & love of the Father & the Son which produces a consciousness of these truths in a striking & signal manner" (MLJ)*
  2. *"[The baptism of the HS] is a sovereign, single, unrepeatable act on God's part, & is no more an experience than are its companions justification & adoption." (MacArthur)*
  3. *"I think it's needless for us to debate about when the HS becomes a part of someone's life.... We can easily fall into the trap of fixating on these questions & miss the crux of...the message" (Chan)*
- C. We are commanded to continually seek the filling of the Spirit (Eph. 5:18; Gal. 5:16; 1 Thes. 5:19)
- D. Hinderances to being filled with the HS
1. Ignorance, neglect, & fear (1 Cor. 12:1; 1 Tim. 4:14; 2 Tim. 1:6-7)
  2. Quenching
  3. Looking at our own failures & unworthiness.