**The Promise of the Holy Spirit**

Jn. 16:5-15

Introduction:

1. This passage is set in the context of Jesus’ final week on the earth with the disciples.

2. He will soon leave them.

3. But He will not leave them alone. He will send “another Helper” (Jn. 14:16ff; 15:26-27): aka. The Paracletos, The Spirit of truth.

4. This is a prominent theme in John (and the book of Acts, that we are currently studying), but it traces back to a message from the Prophets who said that when the Messiah came the Spirit would be poured out on all flesh like the rain that gives life to the earth (Isa. 32:15).

5. In this study I would like to trace some of this activity of the Spirit. We will consider three time periods: the period of the Prophets; the period of Jesus on the earth; the period following Jesus’ ascension (especially as this relates to the inaugural period in the early church; do not intend to devote attention to the Epistles).

6. My primary objective is to set the work of the Spirit in its revelatory and historical context with emphasis on the transition period associated with the life of Jesus.

Discussion:

I. The promise of the Spirit in the Prophets.

A. That the Spirit would be poured out on all flesh to give life is particularized in Isa. 32:15;

44:3-5 and in Joel 2:28-29.

1. It would be a time of refreshing and new life (cf. Acts 3:19).

2. The Spirit throughout Scripture is associated with the giving of life (cf. Gen. 2:7)

B. In the Book of Ezekiel God promises to transform hard hearts and put a new spirit in His

people (Ezek. 11:19-20). This transformation is associated with the Messianic age.

1. Ezek. 36:25-27 says, “I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will

cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. Moreover, I will give you

a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from

your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you

to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances.”

a. Note that the transition involves God’s cleansing.

b. That the Spirit within results in “walking in My statutes and care to observe My

ordinances.”

2. Ezek. 37’s valley of the dry bones reminds of death associated with Israel’s idolatry

but when God speaks to the bones new life breathed into them. God said, “I will put

My Spirit within you and you will come to life” (v. 14).

C. Like Ezekiel Isaiah associates God’s Spirit and God’s words: “This is My covenant

with them, says the Lord: My Spirit which is upon you, and My words which I have put

in your mouth shall not depart from your mouth, nor from the mouth of your offspring,

nor from the mouth of your offspring’s offspring, says the Lord, from now and

forever” (Isa. 59:21). To have the Spirit upon you means that His words are in your

mouth and you perpetuate them forever from one generation to the next.

II. The Spirit is still being promised in the days when Jesus walked the earth.

A. It is not that the Spirit was inactive.

1. John was filled with the Spirit while in the womb (Lk. 1:15).

2. Elizabeth was filled with the Spirit (Lk. 1:41).

3. Zacharias was filled with the Spirit and prophesied (Lk. 1:67).

4. Peter said the Spirit foretold through the mouth of David things concerning Judas’

betrayal of Jesus (Acts 1:16).

5. The Spirit was active.

6. John the Baptist had said, “Jesus would baptize with the Holy Spirit and fire” (Lk.

3:16).

B. But John makes it particularly clear that while Jesus walked the earth He anticipated

“giving of the Spirit.”

1. “If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the

Scripture said, From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water. But this He

spoke of the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive; for the Spirit

was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified” (7:37-39).

2. John sees the giving of the Spirit as coming after Jesus’ glorification. In John’s

context this glorification has to do with Jesus’ crucifixion, resurrection and

ascension.

3. John had recorded Jesus’ statements to Nicodemus about being born of water and

the spirit (3:4ff).

4. In 6:63 he quoted Jesus, “It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing: the

words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life.”

5. As we have been noticing, Jesus was promising the Spirit as Helper and Comforter

during the final week of His life (Jn. 14:16ff; 15:26; 16:5ff). He was promising to

send the Spirit, but at that time had not done so.

6. There is an interesting passage in John 20:21-23 describing an incident after Jesus’

resurrection. He appeared to the disciples. “He breathed on them and said to them,

Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, their sins have been forgiven

them; if you retain the sins of any, they have been retained.”

III. The period following Jesus’ ascension.

A. Book of Acts opens with the resurrected Jesus appearing to the disciples over a period

of 40 days.

1. He told the not to leave Jerusalem.

2. He reminded them, “John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy

Spirit not many days from now” (1:5).

3. He said, “You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you

shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even

to the remotest part of the earth” (1:8).

4. Although there is an immediacy about the things He says (“not many days from

now”) there is yet an expectation of the Holy Spirit coming. Almost but not yet!

B. Jesus is ascended, Matthias is appointed, and the disciples are waiting in Jerusalem,

when Acts 2 opens (read 2-4).

1. If it is not immediately obvious to us what is happening, Peter explained.

2. He quoted Joel 2: “It shall be in the last days, God says, that I will pour forth of My

Spirit on all mankind.”

3. He said that Jesus, having been exalted to the right hand of God, having received

from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, has poured forth this which you both

see and hear (2:33).

4. Peter promises that upon repentance and baptism in the name of Jesus Christ they

will receive the forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit (2:38).

5. The idea of being “filled with the Holy Spirit” is frequent in Acts.

a. The apostles were filled with the Holy Spirit and began speaking in tongues

(2:4).

b. Peter filled with the Holy Spirit spoke to the elders and rulers in 4:8.

c. When they prayed for boldness in the face of threats they were filled with the

Holy Spirit in 4:31 and began speaking the word with boldness.

d. Those selected to care for the Hellenistic widows were to be full of the Spirit

(6:3, 5).

e. His opponents were unable to cope with the wisdom and Spirit of Stephen

(6:10).

f. Ananias told Saul he would be filled with the Holy Spirit (9:17).

g. The Holy Spirit fell on Cornelius and his household (10:44). They are described

as having received the Spirit (10:47).

h. Acts 19:2 describes a situation where some had been baptized into John’s

baptism that had not received the Spirit. After baptism into Christ the Holy

Spirit came on them and they spoke in tongues and prophesied.

6. The primary work of the Spirit was to communicate the message of the Father, to

illumine the minds of the disciples in teaching Christ (Jn. 14:26), and so to convict

the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment (Jn. 16:8-10).

a. Directed Philip (8:29, 39).

b. Enjoined the church to send Barnabas and Saul out to preach (13:2).

c. Sent Peter to Cornelius (10:19; 11:12).

d. Directed minds at Jerusalem regarding the inclusion of Gentiles (15:29).

e. Cf. also 16:6; 20:23; 21:11; 20:28.

Conclusion:

1. The Holy Spirit seems to spring on the scene in a big way in Acts 2. His activity continued throughout the book of Acts.

2. Gal. 3:14 refers to the Gentiles receiving the promise of the Spirit through faith, i.e., the blessing of Abraham.

3. Eph. 5:18 refers to being filled with the Spirit rather than drunk with wine. Manifestations of that filling: singing, giving thanks, and being subject to one another.

4. So the Spirit was promised, anticipated and received. The Spirit brings life. Various signs of life are then evidenced.

5. The primary work of the Spirit is to communicate the message of the Father and of the Son, to convict the world of sin, to illumine our minds about righteousness of God that comes by faith and warn about the coming judgment.

6. He is given as the pledge of our inheritance (Eph. 1:13-14).

7. Has his message softened your heart? Made you careful to walk in His statutes and His ordinances?