

Editorial: "Did You Receive the Holy Spirit?"

A. T. Jones

AFTER the apostles had said to the multitude of the disciples that it was not reason that they should leave the word of God and attend to "business" affairs; and after the seven were chosen, among whom was Stephen, and were set over the "business," not only did the word of God greatly increase under the ministry of the apostles, but the power of God was greatly magnified in the work of the business men who were chosen.

For Stephen, "a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit," preached Christ to the council; and in resisting his words they "resisted the Holy Spirit." "But he, being full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God" (Acts 6:7; 7:55).

Then Philip, one of these seven, preached with great power in Samaria; and Peter and John went over and joined him: and the apostles "laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit" (Acts 8:17).

Then "the angel of the Lord" sent Philip down to the road that leads from Jerusalem to Gaza; and when he arrived at that road, he saw a chariot passing, in which was a man of Ethiopia; and "the Spirit said to Philip, "Go near and overtake this chariot." Philip did so, preached to him Jesus, and baptized him; "now when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught Philip away" (Acts 8:29, 39).

And Saul, "still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord," near Damascus was overtaken by the Lord, and was led blind into Damascus, where Ananias was sent to him to say, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you came, has sent me that you may receive your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit." "Then the churches throughout all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria had peace and were edified. And walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit they were multiplied" (Acts 9:1, 17, 31).

Then the Lord had Cornelius send for Peter, who came to him and preached Christ; and while Peter was speaking, "the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard the word" (Acts 10:44).

The gospel spread to Antioch "unto the Grecians," which, when it came to the ears of the church in Jerusalem, "they sent out Barnabas that to go as far as Antioch." "For he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. And a great many people were added to the Lord" (Acts 11:22, 24).

In the church that was at Antioch there were "certain prophets and teachers;" and "as they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, "Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul [Paul] for the work to which I have called them." Then, having fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent them away" (Acts 13:2, 3).

In the council of the apostles and elders that was held at Jerusalem, the conclusive proof that God would have the gospel preached to the Gentiles was that He was "giving them the Holy Spirit," even as to the apostles and elders from the Jews. And when the conclusion of the council was formulated, it read: "It seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us" (Acts 15:28).

When Paul had gone "through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches," and had come to Derbe and Lystra, and "had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia," he was "forbidden by the Holy Spirit to preach the word in Asia. And after they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit did not permit them." Then, passing by Mysia, Paul came to Troas. And now, being at the sea, as far as he could go forward by land, and forbidden by the Holy Spirit to preach the word anywhere in the region behind him, there the Spirit opened the way before him. "A vision appeared to Paul in the night: A man of Macedonia stood and pleaded with him, saying, "Come over into Macedonia, and help us" (Acts 16:1-10).

When Paul came to Ephesus, and there found certain disciples, the first question that he asked them—the first thing he said to them after the customary greeting—was, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" (Acts 19:2). They had not heard of the Holy Spirit, knowing only John's baptism. Paul explained that there was something beyond John's baptism,—that the object of John's baptism had come in the Lord Jesus, who had ascended again to heaven, and had sent the Holy Spirit to baptize all believers in Jesus, buried and risen from the dead. "When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them" (Acts 19:5, 6).

Thus in the time of the early rain, the first inquiry of disciples was, "Have you received the Holy Spirit?" and the first work of the visiting minister was to see that they had received the Holy Spirit. We are "in the time of the latter rain," which is to be more abundant than was the former. How much more abundantly, then, is it now the proper inquiry of disciples everywhere, first of all, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" and the first thing of all in the work of the ministry to see that they have received the Holy Spirit. These things were all written for us. Did you received the Holy Spirit when you believed?

"Ask, and it will be given to you." "Receive the Holy Spirit." "Be filled with the Spirit."
Recognize the Holy Spirit.

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