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THE PURPOSE AND MEANING OF THE GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF THE ACTS
NUMBER 2
ACTS 1:4-8

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Adam had a soul and a spirit when he was created. There was no morality involved in the sin Adam committed in the garden. There was just one way he could sin, and that was to eat of the fruit of the forbidden tree. When Adam sinned he lost his human spirit and he acquired an old sin nature. When Jesus went to the cross he bore all the sins of the whole human race. At the cross Christ rejected human good as a way of salvation and substituted divine good. Faith is non-meritorious and comes as a free gift. When Adam became a believer his human spirit was reactivated and though he still had an old sin nature, it was once and for all defeated. Acts 1:3 tells us that Jesus used the forty days between his resurrection and ascension as a teaching period to enlighten his followers. One thing he taught them was concerning the giving of the Holy Spirit for the church age. This is to be their power. Here begins the idea that all believers are to have the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Every Christian is commanded to be filled with the Spirit.

Jesus taught them that the Holy Spirit entered a man the moment of his salvation and never left him thereafter. Every believer is therefore to go into full-time Christian service and is to be a witness. The believer enters into union with Christ by an act of the Holy Spirit, as explained in verse 8. Verse 5 informs us that we are to be filled with the Holy Spirit. The Book of The Acts was written to show us how the church operated before they had a Bible. It is the story of how the church began and operated. The church age is divided into two parts.

1. The pre-cannon period. Before there was a New Testament, God provided for their instruction and direction by miracles and certain supernatural powers.
2. The post-cannon period. This is the story of how the church operated after the coming of the New Testament.

One point that is made very clear is this - only God can choose an apostle. The early church failed in this point.

Then we see the two categories of appearances - the pre-ascension appearances and the post-ascension appearances.

Every apostle had to be a witness to the resurrection of Christ. Christ was true God and true humanity. Jesus was unique. When we say Jesus was true humanity, we mean he was minus the old sin nature. Deity cannot die for deity is eternal life. Deity is omnipresent and therefore cannot be contained in one place.

2 Corinthians 5:21 "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." This verse explains what Christ did for us on the cross. God the Father and God the Holy Spirit forsook him and he died spiritually in his humanity. During this three hour period the mission of the forgiveness of sins was accomplished. Once the period of the forgiveness of sins was accomplished Christ said, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." Now, when we talk about the resurrection of Christ we are talking about his humanity, for his deity could not and did not die. He spent forty days upon the earth in his humanity. Then his humanity ascended and that is the first time in history humanity ever entered into the third heaven.

The Old Testament saints were in Paradise when they died, the Bible speaks of this place as "Abraham's bosom". When Jesus ascended and God accepted humanity, he was made higher than the angels and he is there today. Christ had to have a different body to travel in space when he ascended than the body he had when living in Palestine. We, in our time, have become very interested in space travel. But when Christ ascended he went past the sun and Saturn, billions of light years away. We are quite familiar with the equipment our space men have when they travel in space. Jesus had to have a different body to travel in space.

He travelled billions of light years and his body was not affected by the journey. We don't know too much about the resurrection body of Christ. We know it had the nail prints and will have forever. For his ascension, Jesus didn't need a launching pad. His body was recognized as a human body and could be touched. He talked and breathed and ate. His voice was recognizable immediately. His body had flesh and bones. Apparently, the structure of his ascension body was different. He walked through closed doors. (What we think as solid is so structured atomically that there is more space than solid.) Christ could walk along the road and talk with friends, but also move quickly to some point many miles away. It was probably June, 32 A.D. when he ascended and Philippians 3:21 says that when we are raised up we will see him and know him and be like him. We are going to be launched without a launching pad and move at will through the universe. We will have a body wholly indestructible. The destruction that will sweep the physical world at the battle of Armageddon will not affect our bodies.

We read "Speaking of the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God". There are three kingdoms in the earth:

- a. The Kingdom of God
- b. National entities - including all the nations
- c. The Kingdom of Satan.

This third Kingdom is in conflict with God. The Kingdom of God includes anyone who is a believer. Verse 5 describes those who make up the Kingdom of God. During that forty day period Jesus taught all the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God.

Acts 1:4 "And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which saith he, ye have heard of me." For forty days he will do the teaching. Then he will have to appoint others to do it for him, pastors and teachers. "Command them" comes from parangello - which means to announce, or to tell. Para is a preposition of immediate source. Truth comes from doctrine and they were commanded to teach and tell from the immediate source, which was Christ himself. He was to ascend but they were to stay here. The church was to have its beginning in Jerusalem. Jerusalem was the place of the curse, but now the cursing was turned to blessing. The whole realm of Christian Doctrine was to be taught during the forty day period.

Acts 1:5 "For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence." Here we have two Baptisms, the baptism of the Spirit, and the water baptism, which was John's baptism. A ritual baptism always has water connected with it. There are three ritual baptisms found in the scriptures. In the baptism of Jesus, the water represented the plan of God for his human existence. His baptism simply said this - "I will go to the cross". Water in the baptism of Jesus was the symbol of the cross. The water in John's baptism stood for the Kingdom of God. Baptism in the church age for the believer is this - the water represents Christ.

In this connection, let us list the real baptisms we find in the scriptures.

1. The baptism of Moses - 1 Corinthians 10:2 "And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea." Moses was identified with the cloud, which was Christ.
2. The baptism of the cup - Matthew 20:22 "But Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? They say unto him, We are able!" The drinking of the cup - this signifies that Christ drank all of our sins when he died on the cross.
3. The baptism of fire - Matthew 3:11 "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire." This takes place at the end of the tribulation.
4. The baptism of the Holy Spirit - this happens the minute we are saved.

Now in verse 5 we have a verse of contrast. The contrast is between real baptism and ritual water baptism. The only ritual in John's ministry was water baptism - but (contrast) you all will be baptized with the Holy Spirit. The meaning of baptism is identification. In early Greek and in Attic Greek or in Koine Greek the word Baptism always stood for identification. The tense is future. It hadn't happened yet. But it is soon to happen. There can be no church until individuals are identified with Christ. The Church didn't begin in Adam or Abraham's tent. It began with the baptism of the Spirit at Pentecost. "Shall be baptized" is passive voice, and means we receive it. The Holy Spirit entered you into union with Christ. This Greek language is very specific. The indicative mood means the reality of this experience. In other words, the Holy Spirit baptizes you into Christ. Literally it reads, "By means of the Holy Spirit we are baptized into Christ."

1 Corinthians 12:13 "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit."

THE DOCTRINE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

1. The baptism of the Holy Spirit did not occur in the Old Testament, or in any previous dispensation.
2. The baptism of the Holy Spirit was prophesied by Jesus.
Matthew 3:11 "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire."
John 14:20 "At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you."
3. The mechanics of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit takes us and enters us into union with Christ.
4. The baptism of the Holy Spirit is the basis of the unification of believers.
Ephesians 4:3 "Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." It is not a change of personality. You retain your personality after conversion. Not a mode of dress or speech. It is not morality or a system of ethics. It is not self-righteousness.
Ephesians 4:5 "One Lord, one faith, one baptism."
ONE LORD - Every believer has the same Lord. Jesus Christ is the Lord of every believer at the moment of salvation.
ONE FAITH - Every person is saved the same way - by faith in Christ.
ONE BAPTISM - There are seven baptisms. This says one baptism and it is not referring to water baptism. Water baptism doesn't unify believers. It simply means this. The moment you are saved the Holy Spirit takes you and identifies you with Christ. REMEMBER, ONLY ONE WAY TO BE UNIFIED - AND THAT IS BY THE HOLY SPIRIT. We are not unified by what we do but by what he does. Not by man, but by the Holy Spirit.
5. The implications of the baptism of the Holy Spirit.
Galatians 3:26 "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus." Regardless of sex, race, nationality, etc., we all have the same unity in Christ.