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Lecture 1: Biblical Data

Today we begin a new section in Defenders class. Before we do so, let’s step back and reconnoiter so that we see the big picture.

For the last year or so we’ve been studying the doctrine of God – the existence and nature of God. The first subject that we looked at under this general heading was the attributes of God. We looked at such properties as omniscience, omnipotence, aseity, eternity, holiness, love, and so on. Then we did an excursus on natural theology looking at arguments for God’s existence such as the cosmological argument, the moral argument, the teleological argument, and then we looked at arguments against God’s existence as well. Finally, most recently, we just finished a subsection on the doctrine of the Trinity.

Today we want to start with a new subsection of the doctrine of God – the Holy Spirit. Theologians often refer to this area as the area of pneumatology. That comes from the Greek word *pneuma* which means “spirit” or “wind.” Obviously this is the word from which we get our word “pneumatic” as in a pneumatic drill or pneumatic hammer. We are going to be studying now pneumatology or the doctrine of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit has rightly been called the forgotten person of the Trinity. When you look at the early post-apostolic fathers it seems that they were virtually binitarians rather than trinitarians. They believed in God the Father and his Word or *Logos* who proceeded from the Father. But there was almost nothing said about the person of the Holy Spirit. The trinitarian and Christological controversies that dominated the early church for centuries precluded any in-depth discussion of the person of the Holy Spirit. So, for example, in the Apostles’ Creed, all you find with regard to the Holy Spirit is the statement, “I believe in the Holy Spirit” which begs the question – what do you believe about the Holy Spirit? In the Nicene Creed it is even briefer. After saying I believe in the Father and the Son and those persons are explained it says, “and in the Holy Spirit.” He is sort of thrown in there at the end for good measure.

Even today I find that the Holy Spirit seems to be neglected by many Christians. For example, in my own seminary education one of the courses that we took as part of our core curriculum in the Master of Divinity program was a systematic theology course entitled, “God, Man, and Christ.” When you think about it, that is very odd. Is that a new sort of unholy Trinity of God, man, and Christ? What happened to the Holy Spirit? He was sort of left out I’m afraid.

So we want to spend a little time talking about the person and work of the Holy Spirit.

Who is the Holy Spirit? The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity. As such, he is co-equal with God the Father and with God the Son. The Holy Spirit is God. We’ve
already looked at some of the verses on the deity of the Spirit but let’s look at Acts 5:3-4 once again. There Peter says to Ananias who has attempted to keep some of the proceeds of the land that he sold,

But Peter said, “Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back part of the proceeds of the land? While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not at your disposal? How is it that you have contrived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God.”

So in verse 3 he says, “Satan has filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit” and then in verse 5 he says, “You have lied to God himself.” So the Holy Spirit is God.¹

The Holy Spirit is not the ghost of Jesus as might be suggested by the unfortunate archaic translation “the Holy Ghost.” The Holy Spirit is not Jesus’ ghost who somehow still is roaming the Earth after Jesus has departed to heaven. Rather the Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity. As such, the Holy Spirit is a person – a self-conscious, rational individual. The Holy Spirit is not an “it”; we should never refer to the Holy Spirit as “it” because he is not an impersonal force. The Holy Spirit is a “who” not a “which.”

Look, for example, at Acts 13:2, “While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, ‘Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.’” Here the Holy Spirit speaks and uses first person pronouns in reference to himself. “Me” and “I” which only a person can do. Look also in the Gospel of John – John 14:15-17. Here Jesus says,

If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he will give you another Counselor, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him; you know him, for he dwells with you, and will be in you.

Here Jesus promises the advent of the Counselor – the Holy Spirit – who will come in his place and will indwell believers. As I explained when we looked at the doctrine of the Trinity, John actually violates Greek grammar in this verse in using a masculine pronoun for the Holy Spirit. The word “spirit” in the Greek is neuter, and yet John uses a masculine pronoun “he” with respect to the Holy Spirit.

Reading further in John 14:25-26,

These things I have spoken to you, while I am still with you. But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.

¹ 5:24
Here we have the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit which obviously again shows that he is a person since he is going to be teaching Jesus’ followers the teaching that Jesus has given them.

Then in John 16:7-15 Jesus expands on this. He says,

> Nevertheless I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. And when he comes, he will convince the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment: concerning sin, because they do not believe in me; concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you will see me no more; concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged. I have yet many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you. All that the Father has is mine; therefore I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you.

Here, Jesus again describes the ministry of the Holy Spirit to the church after Jesus is ascended to the Father.² He makes this very remarkable statement that it is actually to our advantage that Jesus depart and the Holy Spirit come in his place. What could be more profitable (you would think) than having the personal presence of Jesus himself with us? But Jesus says, no, it is actually better for you – it is to your advantage – that the Holy Spirit will come, and he will declare to you the truth about me and will convict the world of sin and righteousness and judgment. It shows the importance and personal nature of the Holy Spirit.

Also, take a look at Romans 8:26-27. Here we have described the intercessory prayer ministry of the Holy Spirit on behalf of believers. Paul says,

> Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with sighs too deep for words. And he who searches the hearts of men knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

Here the Holy Spirit is clearly a person because he intercedes for the saints according to God’s will. It refers to the mind of the Spirit – God the Father knows what is in the mind of the Spirit and the Spirit intercedes for us according to God’s will.

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² 10:16
Once again I think it is very clear that we are not dealing here with some kind of impersonal force or energy or power. This is a person. It is God himself. It is the third person of the Trinity.

Finally, this person is distinct from the Father and the Son. This is not the Father or the Son in a different guise or different role. This is a different person. Matthew 28:19 lists all three of the persons together – one of the great trinitarian verses in the New Testament. This is part of the Great Commission. Jesus says, “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” All three of the persons are named in this baptismal formula – the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Similarly, in 2 Corinthians 13:14 we have all three of the persons mentioned in the same verse. The last benediction of this letter says, “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.” Here as is typical God refers to God the Father, the Lord refers to Jesus Christ, and then the Holy Spirit is mentioned. These are three distinct persons of the Trinity equally divine and equally personal.

**START DISCUSSION**

*Student:* In terms of the Holy Spirit being God, actually one of my favorite verses to go to is Hebrews 10:15-17. It says, “And the Holy Spirit also bears witness to us; for after saying,” and then it gives a quote from the Old Testament, I think it is Jeremiah, where it says, “This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my laws on their hearts, and write them on their minds,’ then he adds, ‘I will remember their sins and their lawless deeds no more.’” I find it interesting that it says the Holy Spirit says this, and then it gives a quote from the Old Testament that is specifically talking about Yahweh.³ In fact where it says “Lord” in the Old Testament it uses the tetragrammaton right there. It seems pretty clear to me what it is specifically saying – it is identifying the Holy Spirit as Yahweh which is also why I like to use this verse when talking to Jehovah’s Witnesses as well. I find it very effective.

*Dr. Craig:* Yeah, good! OK, thank you.

*Student:* Like you said, our predecessors classified or named it like the Holy Ghost, and I think this probably is because of John 16:7 which says *he has been with us but then if I go he can come in us.* So there is more to the Trinity than we know right now.

*Dr. Craig:* John 16:7 says, “If I go I will send him to you.” As we read he says he is with you but he will be in you. I take it that the difference there is not in the Holy Spirit himself but rather in the fact that in the old covenant people were not indwelt with the Holy Spirit on a sort of ongoing basis. We will talk about this more later on – the role of

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³ 15:09
the Holy Spirit in the old covenant. It would seem the Holy Spirit would come upon people, like the judges, like Samson or Gideon, to do some great act, some great feat. But then he would leave them. So David can pray in the psalms, *Lord take not thy Holy Spirit from me*. I don’t think any Christian could pray that prayer in the new covenant because the Holy Spirit now indwells us. That’s the change that happened at Pentecost. So the Holy Spirit himself doesn’t change but I think his relationship to the believer undergoes a fundamental change at Pentecost in that he now becomes the permanent indwelling presence within the life of the believer that wasn’t true before.

*Student*: I agree with all that. What I am pointing out is that it says he can’t come in us until Christ leaves.

*Dr. Craig*: OK.

*Student*: The two words that were used for God is *kyrios* and *theos*. What would be the Holy Spirit for Greek?

*Dr. Craig*: “Spirit” is *pneuma ἁγιόν*. The Holy Spirit. *Theos* is God. *Kyrios* is Lord. *Ta pneuma ἁγιόν* is the Holy Spirit.

*Student*: Another great trinitarian verse in Hebrews is Hebrews 9:14, “How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleansing our consciences from acts that lead us to death so that we might serve the living God.” You have a trinitarian formula in that verse as well.

*Dr. Craig*: Yes, I see. The blood of Christ through the eternal Spirit offered himself to God. So you have the trinitarian formula there, too. Yes, good. (Actually this should be *hagion* because it is neuter not masculine.)

**END DISCUSSION**

Let’s talk about some of the attributes that the Holy Spirit possesses.

1. Keep your finger right there on Hebrews 9:14 that we just read because I want to highlight the Holy Spirit’s attribute of *eternity*. To read the verse again, “How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify your conscience from dead works.” Here the attribute of being eternal is referred to with respect to the Holy Spirit.

2. *Omnipresence* is described in Psalm 139:7-8. The Spirit is all-present. “Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? Or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend to heaven, thou art there! If I make my bed in Sheol, thou art there!” Here he cannot escape the presence of the Spirit. No matter where he goes God, the Holy Spirit, is present there.4

4 20:05
3. **Omniscience** is attributed to the Holy Spirit. 1 Corinthians 2:10-11. Here he says,

> God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. For what person knows a man’s thoughts except the spirit of the man which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God.

This is a remarkable verse where Paul says that the Spirit searches even the depths of God and that the Spirit comprehends, encompasses, takes in, understands the thoughts of God himself. This would indicate that we are dealing here with someone who is omniscient.

4. **Holiness** is an attribute of the Spirit. That is obvious just in the name itself – the Holy Spirit. But we have this referred to specifically, for example, in Romans 1:4. It speaks of how Christ is “designated Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead.” Here the Holy Spirit is referred to as the Spirit of holiness.

5. The Holy Spirit is ascribed the attribute of love in Romans 5:5. Paul says, “Hope does not disappoint us because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit which has been given to us.” So the Holy Spirit is not simply the source of power or guidance or strength; he is also the source of love. It is through the Holy Spirit that God’s love is poured into our hearts.

I think you can see that the attributes of deity are ascribed to the Holy Spirit – attributes like eternity, omnipresence, omniscience, holiness, and love. Thereby underlining the deity of the Holy Spirit.

What we’ll do next time is begin to look at the relationship of the third person of the Trinity (the Holy Spirit) to the second person of the Trinity (Christ) and then examine the work of the Holy Spirit. If you’ve not been through this material before I think you are going to be very surprised to see how vitally involved the person of the Holy Spirit is in our Christian lives that we live today.⁵
Lecture 2: Relation Between the Holy Spirit and Jesus Christ / The Ministries of the Holy Spirit

We’ve been talking about the ministry and the person of the Holy Spirit. Today we want to talk about the relation between the Holy Spirit and Christ, the second person of the Trinity. What you find is that the ministry of Jesus was empowered and permeated by the presence of the Holy Spirit.

For example, the Holy Spirit is responsible for the virginal conception of Jesus. Look at Luke 1:35. Here Gabriel the Angel says to Mary, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you and the power of the most high will overshadow you. Therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God.” So the Holy Spirit is responsible for the virginal conception of Christ right at the very beginning.

Also in the beginning of Jesus’ earthly ministry we find the Holy Spirit present and active. Turn over to Luke 3:21-22. This is the public baptism of Jesus at which he begins his public ministry. We read, “Now when all the people were baptized and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heaven was opened and the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form as a dove, and a voice came from heaven, ‘Thou art my beloved Son, with thee I am well pleased.’” Here all three of the persons are present at the baptism of Jesus: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit who descends upon the Son at his baptism to empower him for the public ministry to which God had called him.

The miracles and the exorcisms that Jesus performed during his earthly ministry were done through the power of the Holy Spirit. Look at Acts 10:38. This is Peter’s sermon to Cornelius and his household. Peter speaks of “how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. How he went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed by the devil for God was with him.” Here it is through the power and anointing of the Holy Spirit that Jesus is able to carry out his miraculous healing ministry.

As for the exorcisms, turn over to Matthew 12:28. There Jesus says, “If it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons then the kingdom of God has come upon you.” So his power as an exorcist came through the anointing of the Holy Spirit that was upon him.

Not only his miraculous activity was empowered and anointed by the Holy Spirit but also Jesus’ preaching. Let’s go back to the Gospel of Luke 4:14-21:

And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee, and a report concerning him went out through all the surrounding country. And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified by all.

And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up; and he went to the synagogue, as his custom was, on the sabbath day. And he stood up to read; and
there was given to him the book of the prophet Isaiah. He opened the book and found the place where it was written,

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.”

And he closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant, and sat down; and the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. And he began to say to them, “Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.”

Wow! Here Jesus says that the prophecy of Isaiah – the Spirit of the Lord resting upon him to preach the good news – is manifested in his ministry. So his preaching and teaching about the kingdom of God was also empowered and driven by the Holy Spirit.

Finally, the continuance of Jesus’ ministry after his resurrection and ascension to heaven is carried on by the Holy Spirit. John 16:7, 13-15:

Nevertheless I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you.

. . .

When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you. All that the Father has is mine; therefore I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you.

So after Jesus is risen and ascended into heaven during his absence in this space-time universe it is the Holy Spirit during the church age who carries on and extends the ministry of Jesus until he comes again.

So I think you can see in the person and the work of Jesus the Holy Spirit is very actively involved. Certainly if Jesus himself needed the anointing and the power of the Holy Spirit to carry out the ministry which God had called him to do, how much more do we fallen and sinful people need the anointing power of the Holy Spirit to carry out the work that God has given us to do?
START DISCUSSION

Student: I don’t know if this has to do with the relationship between the Holy Spirit and Jesus but could you speak a little more to this scene where Jesus is baptized and the Holy Spirit descended on him “in bodily form?” I don’t remember hearing about a bodily form of the Holy Spirit.

Dr. Craig: It’s not in all of the Gospels. In some of the other Gospels, Jesus looks up and he sees a sort of vision. It’s not clear whether or not this is something that onlookers would have seen, or was this a kind of private revelation to Jesus? Was this a vision (in which he sees the heavens opened and the Holy Spirit descending like a dove and resting on him) that only Jesus saw? Or is this something that the people around him would have seen like a literal bird coming down out of heaven and landing on his shoulder? I don’t know the answer to that question. In the other Gospels it would seem that it was more visionary. It all depends on the force of this word “bodily” by Luke. Does he mean literally like a pigeon or a dove – flesh and blood – or does he just mean it was in the form of such a thing? I don’t know the answer to that.7

Student: Why does Jesus say that if he doesn’t leave the Holy Spirit won’t come? That has always kind of puzzled me a bit. What do you think about that?

Dr. Craig: I think Pentecost provides the key here, and I’ll say something more about that in our future lessons. It seems that there’s a great difference between the church age and the old Covenant (up to the time and through the time of Jesus). In the old covenant it seems that the Holy Spirit was only temporarily present with judges or others called by God to do great and mighty works. He would come upon them temporarily to do something, but then he would leave again. Whereas in the post-Pentecostal church age it seems that the Holy Spirit now is the permanent possession of every believer; that we are indwelt by the Holy Spirit in a very special way that wasn’t true up until then. So in God’s economy he has chosen to empower the church in a way that people were not empowered and anointed up unto that point. It is in that sense it is to our advantage that Jesus go away and the Holy Spirit now continue his ministry.

One might also think, too, that simply in virtue of Jesus’ geographical limitations it is to the church’s advantage that the Holy Spirit would carry on his ministry because now it becomes worldwide simultaneously and not geographically confined to where Jesus’ physical body was. So one can think of a number of ways in which it’s to our advantage that Jesus be physically absent but his Holy Spirit carry on his work throughout the world.
Student: In regards to the comment on the dove descending – isn’t this a parallel to Noah and the dove coming? Wouldn’t this have had significance to the people?

Dr. Craig: That might well be. You are thinking of where Noah finds a dove after the flood which indicates that there’s land. But it is the identification of this with the person of the Holy Spirit that’s peculiar in the baptism of Jesus. It seems to function differently here than it does in the case of Noah finding this dove flying about.

Student: You mentioned the Holy Spirit dwelling in us permanently and it being the sign that we are saved as believers. My question is: given that the Holy Spirit is indwelling all believers permanently, is it possible for someone to be a believer, at some point have the Holy Spirit indwelling them, and then go off track and then not be saved?

Dr. Craig: This is the huge question. Can a genuinely regenerate Christian who’s been born again and indwelt by the Holy Spirit lose his salvation? We’ll talk about that later when we get to the doctrine of justification. I don’t want to opine on that at this point because I would need to justify my opinion and that would lead us into a long discussion. If you can’t wait until we get to that, go online to Defender Series 2 and there you will find the lessons on doctrine of justification and the section on perseverance of the saints. You can get that material online in the Defenders 2 class. 8

Student: I am just wondering, dealing with Jesus’ relationship with the Holy Spirit, has there ever been a theological claim that perhaps the way that Jesus was fully God and fully man was that he had the fullness of the Holy Spirit in him as a fully human being? Has anybody ever put that forward?

Dr. Craig: I imagine there must have been because that sounds very much like adoptionism, which was an early heresy where God adopted the man Jesus to be his special Son. One could imagine that this would be through indwelling him and empowering him with the Holy Spirit. But I couldn’t give you a name for sure of someone who believed that. In early trinitarian debates and debates on the incarnation, people like Apollinaris emphasized very strongly the difference between an incarnation and an indwelling. 9 An indwelling is simply the presence of God’s Spirit in an ordinary human being, but an incarnation involves a deeper unity than a mere indwelling. People can be indwelt by God’s Spirit or by demons but they are not thereby that demon or that God incarnate. The distinction between an incarnation and an indwelling becomes very important in these early debates about the incarnation. But I can’t give you the name of an early heretic who felt that in virtue of being indwelt by God’s Spirit Jesus was somehow divine.

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9 15:05
Student: In light of Hebrews 8 and 9, talking about the first covenant and the second covenant (the old covenant vs. the new covenant), that kind of explains why Jesus has to go away in order for the Holy Spirit to come. It’s almost like for us to enter into the new covenant where Hebrews 8:11 says, And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more. It was saying about the new law in us. I picked out the wrong verse. In my simplistic understanding, it is like Jesus relates to God the Father with the full measure of the Holy Spirit. He is trying to give us that way – that channel – into receiving the full measure of the Holy Spirit through his redemption/sacrifice. And so I think Hebrews 8 and 9 explains this. That’s why the old covenant has to be abolished and the new covenant established upon his body and the release of the Holy Spirit.

Dr. Craig: OK! This is far from simplistic! This is very good insight. What she points out is that according to the book of Hebrews (chapters 8 and 9) Jesus has now entered into heaven to carry out his high priestly ministry of intercession on our behalf. Look at Hebrews 9:11 and following,

But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation) he entered once for all into the Holy Place, taking not the blood of goats and calves but his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption. For if the sprinkling of defiled persons with the blood of goats and bulls and with the ashes of a heifer sanctifies for the purification of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify your conscience from dead works to serve the living God.

What he’s talking about there is the heavenly intercessory ministry of Christ on our behalf as the high priest. That is a very good point in terms of why did Jesus leave this world. He did so in order to enter into heaven and there carry out his high priestly intercessory ministry on our behalf. That’s very good.

END DISCUSSION

Let’s turn now to an examination of some of the prominent ministries of the Holy Spirit. I think what we will find is a rather startling long list of ministries that the Holy Spirit has.

1. The creation of the universe. Genesis 1:2-3, “The Earth was without form and void, and darkness was on the face of the deep; and the Spirit of God was moving over the face of the waters. And God said, ‘Let there be light’; and there was light.” So right at the
beginning of creation the Spirit of God is involved. He’s involved in the work of creation.

2. The Holy Spirit is involved in divine revelation. 1 Corinthians 2:9-10, 12-13. Paul says,

But, as it is written,

“What no eye has seen, nor ear heard,  
nor the heart of man conceived,  
what God has prepared for those who love him,”

God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God.

Verse 12:

Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is from God, that we might understand the gifts bestowed on us by God. And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who possess the Spirit.

Here God, through the Holy Spirit, is revealing to us divine truths and enabling us to understand them.

3. The Holy Spirit is responsible for the inspiration of the Scriptures. 2 Peter 1:20-21, “First of all you must understand this, that no prophecy of scripture is a matter of one’s own interpretation, because no prophecy ever came by the impulse of man, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.” Here it describes the sustaining and moving power of the Holy Spirit in the inspiration of Scripture. If you’re interested in looking at that in more depth, I refer you back to the earlier lessons in Defenders when we talked about the doctrine of inspiration in our section on the doctrine of revelation.


And the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. . . . And Mary said to the angel, “How shall this be, since I have no husband?” And the angel said to her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God.”

So the Holy Spirit is involved in the virginal conception of Christ.
5. The Holy Spirit is responsible for the regeneration of believers, that is to say, for the new spiritual rebirth of believers that we experience. John 3:5-7,

Jesus answered, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, ‘You must be born anew.’”

Here Jesus describes the rebirth or the new birth – and the theological term for this is regeneration. The Holy Spirit is that which makes a person spiritually alive where before there was simply spiritual death. So it’s through the Holy Spirit that we are regenerated and thereby made fit for the kingdom of God. Apart from that regenerating work of the Holy Spirit Jesus says no one can enter God’s Kingdom.

6. Indwelling and baptizing of the believer. Romans 8:9. Here Paul describes the indwelling of the Holy Spirit that every believer enjoys. He says, “But you are not in the flesh, you are in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Any one who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him.” What Paul says is that it is the Holy Spirit within you that makes the decisive difference whether one is truly a Christian or not. Anyone who does not have the indwelling Holy Spirit is not a Christian. He is unregenerate. But anyone who has the Holy Spirit dwelling within him is a regenerate believer and therefore belongs to Christ.

1 Corinthians 12:13 makes the same point. It says, “For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit.” Paul here says that it is through being baptized in the Holy Spirit that we are placed into the body of Christ. The reason that we are members of the body of Christ is because of this baptism of the Holy Spirit which has identified us with Christ as one of his members. Through the baptism and indwelling of the Holy Spirit we believers belong to Christ and are part of his body.

7. The Holy Spirit gives us assurance of salvation. Romans 8:14-16. Paul says,

For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the spirit of sonship. When we cry, “Abba! Father!” it is the Spirit himself bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God . . .

So how do you have assurance of your salvation? How do you know that you’re a child of God, born again? It is because of the witness of the Holy Spirit with your spirit. This is the source of your assurance that you are a regenerate and redeemed Christian.
8. The Holy Spirit gives enablement for spiritual living. Galatians 5:16-18, 25. Here Paul says,

But I say, walk by the Spirit, and do not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh; for these are opposed to each other, to prevent you from doing what you would. But if you are led by the Spirit you are not under the law. . . . If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit.

So it is through daily walking in the Spirit – walking in the power of the Holy Spirit – that we can combat and live above the desires of the flesh which would pull us down and mire us in sin and stain our lives with unholy living. It is through the power of the Holy Spirit that we are enabled to live the Christian life. The Christian life cannot be successfully lived in the power of the flesh. That’s why Christians who are not walking in the power of the Holy Spirit are so miserable and so defeated in their Christian walk because in the power of the flesh you cannot successfully live the Christian life. You need the power of the Holy Spirit.

Those are just some of the ministries of the Holy Spirit. Next time we will continue to look at further ways in which the Holy Spirit is ministering to us in our lives. Then we will take any questions that we might have about that.

We closed last time by talking about the prominent ministries of the Holy Spirit. We saw that the Holy Spirit was involved in the creation of a habitable planet on the Earth, that he was involved in divine revelation and the inspiration of the Scriptures, that he was responsible for the virginal conception of Jesus, and that in our lives it’s through the Holy Spirit that we experience the new birth – regeneration – to spiritual life. We are indwelt by the Holy Spirit when we become a Christian and baptized by the Holy Spirit into the body of Christ.

Continuing on.

7. The Holy Spirit gives us the assurance of our salvation. Look at Romans 8:14-16. Paul says,

   For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the spirit of sonship. When we cry, “Abba! Father!” it is the Spirit himself bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ . . .

So it is through the witness of the Holy Spirit in our hearts that we have confidence and assurance that we are in fact saved, that we belong to Christ and that we are children of God.

8. The Holy Spirit gives enablement for spiritual living. It is through the Holy Spirit that we are enabled to live a godly life. Galatians 5:16-18, 25. Paul says,

   But I say, walk by the Spirit, and do not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh; for these are opposed to each other, to prevent you from doing what you would. But if you are led by the Spirit you are not under the law. . . . If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit.

So as Christians we are not to be merely indwelt by the Holy Spirit but we’re to be walking daily in the power of the Holy Spirit. This will help us to overcome the sinful desires of our fallen human nature that would drag us down, pull us back, and mire us in sin. It is through the enablement of the Holy Spirit we are able to transcend our fallen human nature and to live godly lives that honor Christ.

9. The Holy Spirit is the source of spiritual gifts for building up the body of Christ. 1 Corinthians 12:4-11. Here Paul describes some of the gifts that the Holy Spirit gives. He says,
Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of working, but it is the same God who inspires them all in every one. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. All these are inspired by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills.

According to Paul, the Holy Spirit has gifted the church with all of these special spiritual abilities distributed according to his will to operate for the building up of the body of Christ. That means that you have a spiritual gift that the Holy Spirit has bestowed upon you which you are to be exercising in the context of your local Christian community.

10. The fruit of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit produces spiritual fruit in our lives. Galatians 5:22-24. After listing the works of the flesh, Paul then goes on to say in verse 22,

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such there is no law. And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

So the manifestation of the Holy Spirit is not properly speaking these spiritual gifts. Everyone is given a spiritual gift for serving the body of Christ, but the way the Holy Spirit is manifested in the life of someone who’s walking in the Spirit is the production of these character qualities, these virtues, that are produced in the person like love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, gentleness, and so forth. These are the real fruit or signs of the filling of the Holy Spirit in a person’s life.

You look at this list of prominent ministries of the Holy Spirit and I think you can’t help but ask yourself, how in the world could the Holy Spirit have ever become the forgotten person to the Trinity? He’s just there right from the beginning and is absolutely vital in every respect of the Christian life.

START DISCUSSION

Student: One other ministry for those of us that believe that you cannot lose your salvation is Ephesians 1:13,

And you also were included in Christ when you heard the Word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal,
the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God’s possession—to the praise of his glory.

*Dr. Craig:* Good, thank you! Regardless of how you interpret the perseverance of the saints, as you say, the sealing of the Holy Spirit is right here in Scripture. So every Christian is not only indwelt by the Holy Spirit, he is sealed by the Holy Spirit for the day of redemption. Good point. Thank you.

*Student:* There is a really interesting article that I saw going around on Facebook recently that says, “Survey finds most American Christians are actually heretics.” This is not like nominal Christians – different groups. This is actually evangelicals. I was trying to find the exact statistic here but a shockingly high number of people actually said . . . yeah, it says,

Everyone expected them to perform better than most Americans. No one expected them to perform worse. Seven in ten evangelicals—more than the population at large—said that Jesus was the first being God created. Fifty-six percent agreed that “the Holy Spirit is a divine force but not a personal being.” They also saw a huge increase in evangelicals (28 percent, up from 9 percent) who indicated that the Third Person of the Trinity is not equal with God the Father or Jesus, a direct contradiction of orthodox Christianity. The Holy Spirit is, of course, used to being overlooked. But sources say he seemed bummed about these results.

*Dr. Craig:* So 56% think that the Holy Spirit is an impersonal force rather than a person.

*Student:* Right, he is a divine force, not a personal being, and he is not even actually part of the Trinity. It seems they are some sort of binitarian believers. He is not even God.

*Dr. Craig:* My suspicion is that what this reflects is the kind of new mode of evangelical Christianity in this country that's focused on emotional worship experiences, entertainment, being seeker-friendly, being contemporary, but has very little instruction. Sunday School classes for adults are a rare thing these days. People are not taught Christian doctrine. They just go weekly and get their fix in the worship service and what they actually believe as Christians is allowed to slide. J. P. Moreland, my colleague at Talbot, in his book *Love Your God With All Your Mind* has warned that the church is in danger (as he puts it) of becoming its own grave digger because in another generation people raised in those kinds of churches cannot but help slip away and do all sorts of heretical and non-Christian doctrines. In seeking to swell its numbers by accommodating

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16 10:00
itself to contemporary culture the church will actually commit a kind of suicide. That’s very sobering.

**Student:** I think last week you mentioned that the Holy Spirit is a source of wisdom for believers. Maybe you put that under divine revelation in your outline.

**Dr. Craig:** It is not in my notes. Perhaps I said it.

**Student:** Just to comment on that. 1 Corinthians chapters 1 through 3, Paul lays side-by-side what he calls “the wisdom of the world” (of the Greeks) and Christian wisdom. He seems to say – and he is talking back to the Corinthians where he has been according to Acts 18 for a year and a half – that the Greeks consider spiritual wisdom that Paul is espousing to be foolishness. The Gentiles seem to be hard-headed empiricists. He says in 1 Corinthians 2:14 a natural man does not accept the things of the spirit of God, they are foolishness to him. He cannot understand them. You cannot empirically test, you can’t perceive through the five senses, the work of the Holy Spirit to produce wisdom. But Paul says that true wisdom is from God. In chapter 2 of 1 Corinthians he says that the Spirit knows the mind of God, the thoughts of God. Somehow Christians can partake in that through their relationship with Christ. It seems to me it is worth emphasizing that that is a source available to all Christians. I think in the passage on the gifts of the Spirit (1 Corinthians 12) it mentions a word of wisdom as being a gift given to some, maybe not to all. But wisdom here in 1 Corinthians 1 through 3, I think, is available to all Christians. It is something we are encouraged to take advantage of even though . . . when Paul was in Athens in Acts 17 some of the philosophers said that he was an idle babbler and was preaching strange deities. They couldn’t understand what he was talking about. It seems to me it is worth emphasizing that this is a different source of wisdom than what Paul is talking about – the wisdom of the world.

**Dr. Craig:** I think Paul probably would have thought that those Epicurean and Stoic philosophers that he met in Athens were, in God’s sight, foolish. The kind of philosophy that they had was godless philosophy that took no cognizance of God’s creation of the world and that this really did represent the foolish wisdom of the world. But doing philosophy from a Christian perspective with Christian assumptions and presuppositions, as Paul says, this is the wisdom of God even if in the eyes of the world they think that it is foolish to believe in God and Christian truth. You are right, this is a kind of wisdom that is not a gift of the Spirit in the sense of spiritual gifts, but this is to all Christians who have this kind of wisdom that is found in Christ.\(^\text{17}\)

**END DISCUSSION**
We want to turn now to a discussion of the role of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament in contrast to the role played by the Holy Spirit in the New Testament.

Prior to Pentecost, which is the sort of hinge of history with regard to the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the world, the Holy Spirit would come upon persons to indwell them to perform some special specific purpose – some appointed task that God had in mind for them. There are numerous examples of this in the Old Testament. Let’s just read about some of these.

Exodus 31:1-3 and then Exodus 35:30-35,

The LORD said to Moses, “See, I have called by name Bezalel the son of Uri, son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah: and I have filled him with the Spirit of God, with ability and intelligence, with knowledge and all craftsmanship.”

It goes on to describe how God had gifted this man in order to be the designer and constructor of the tabernacle. This is expanded on in Exodus 35:30-35:

And Moses said to the people of Israel, “See, the LORD has called by name Bezalel the son of Uri, son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah; and he has filled him with the Spirit of God, with ability, with intelligence, with knowledge, and with all craftsmanship, to devise artistic designs, to work in gold and silver and bronze, in cutting stones for setting, and in carving wood, for work in every skilled craft. And he has inspired him to teach, both him and Oholiab the son of Ahisamach of the tribe of Dan. He has filled them with ability to do every sort of work done by a craftsman or by a designer or by an embroiderer in blue and purple and scarlet stuff and fine twined linen, or by a weaver – by any sort of workman or skilled designer.”

Here in a very practical way God had filled with his Holy Spirit these men to do artistic crafts in wood and gems and stone and cloth for the equipping and decoration of the tabernacle. This would be a good example of a specific place where the Holy Spirit was put upon someone to carry out a specific job and giving him the ability to do that.

Now turn over to Numbers 11:16-17, 25. Here Moses needs help in judging the people of Israel settling their disputes:

And the LORD said to Moses, “Gather for me seventy men of the elders of Israel, whom you know to be the elders of the people and officers over them; and bring them to the tent of meeting, and let them take their stand there with you. And I will come down and talk with you there; and I will take some of the spirit which is upon you and put it upon them; and they shall bear the burden of the people with you, that you may not bear it yourself alone.” . . . Then the LORD came down in the cloud and spoke to him, and took some of the spirit that was upon
him and put it upon the seventy elders; and when the spirit rested upon them, they prophesied. But they did so no more.

Here you see how the Spirit of God comes down and anoints the seventy elders to do the same work that God had anointed Moses to do by his Holy Spirit.

During the period of the judges prior to the monarchy in Israel there was a series of judges that would arise in Israel that would serve to deliver the people from their enemies, to bring them back to the true way. These judges were typically anointed by the Holy Spirit of God to do what God had called them to do. So look, for example, at Judges 3:9-10:

But when the people of Israel cried to the LORD, the LORD raised up a deliverer for the people of Israel, who delivered them, Othni-el the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother. The Spirit of the LORD came upon him, and he judged Israel; he went out to war, and the LORD gave Cushan-rishathaim king of Mesopotamia into his hand; and his hand prevailed over Cushan-rishathaim

So here Othni-el would be one of these judges upon whom the Spirit of the Lord came so that he could prevail over the enemies threatening Israel.

Turn over to Judges 6:34 for another example. This is one of the most famous of the judges – Gideon: “But the Spirit of the LORD took possession of Gideon; and he sounded the trumpet, and the Abiezrites were called out to follow him.” Then it describes the great triumph that Gideon and his small army had over the enemies of Israel. So Gideon was also anointed by the Spirit of the Lord to do what God called him to do – to deliver Israel.

Judges 11:29. This is the case of Jephthah. “Then the Spirit of the LORD came upon Jephthah, and he passed through Gilead and Manasseh, and passed on to Mizpah of Gilead, and from Mizpah of Gilead he passed on to the Ammonites.” Jephthah also defeats the enemies of Israel.

Judges 13:24-25. This is the part of the story of Samson who was also one of the judges.

And the woman bore a son, and called his name Samson; and the boy grew, and the LORD blessed him. And the Spirit of the LORD began to stir him in Mahaneh-dan, between Zorah and Eshta-ol.

Here the Spirit of the Lord comes on Samson to do the great deeds that he was called upon to do. Some of these are described, for example, in Judges 14:5-6.
Then Samson went down with his father and mother to Timnah, and he came to the vineyards of Timnah. And behold, a young lion roared against him; and the Spirit of the LORD came mightily upon him, and he tore the lion asunder as one tears a kid; and he had nothing in his hand.

Here Sampson, barehanded, rips this lion to pieces because the Spirit of the Lord had come upon him to equip him to do that. Then in verse 19 we see again how he conquers over the enemies of Israel. Verse 19:

And the Spirit of the LORD came mightily upon him, and he went down to Ashkelon and killed thirty men of the town, and took their spoil and gave the festal garments to those who had told the riddle.

Finally in Judges 15:14-15,

When he came to Lehi, the Philistines came shouting to meet him; and the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him, and the ropes which were on his arms became as flax that has caught fire, and his bonds melted off his hands. And he found a fresh jawbone of an ass, and put out his hand and seized it, and with it he slew a thousand men.

Here’s the famous slaughter with the jawbone of an ass that Samson does because, again, the Spirit of the Lord had come mightily upon him.

This is the pattern in the Old Testament. The Holy Spirit would come upon appointed individuals for a specific task and a limited time to enable them to do that task to which God had called them.¹⁹

**START DISCUSSION**

*Student:* The Numbers quote that you used. It sounds like the Spirit came upon Moses in a mighty way and the other people in a lesser way. The idea of the Spirit being a person versus a force, you can kind of see how people might get that idea it is a force when you say it comes on in lesser degrees.

*Dr. Craig:* Very much so. Here it does sound like a force – doesn’t it? – in these passages I read. But I don’t think that is inconsistent with saying that the Holy Spirit operates more mightily in some cases than in others. In the case of someone like Moses, you could imagine that the Holy Spirit would work tremendously through him, but with the seventy elders that were his underlings it is not as though they had the same sort of powerful anointing that Moses did. I think you are right. Probably, again, no Jewish person who’s ignorant of Jesus and the teachings of the New Testament would think that we are talking here about a separate person – the Holy Spirit – reading these texts in isolation. It’s only
when you read them in retrospect through the lens of the church that you can see how the Holy Spirit is already at work in the old covenant.

*Student:* The other thing I find a little bit odd about some of those passages in Exodus is that it talks about *taking part of the Spirit which is upon you, Moses.* That seems a little bit odd language if he is a person.

*Dr. Craig:* I think that was the same point the previous questioner was making. Yes, it does sound like a power – I am going to take a portion of the Spirit that is on you and put it on these other people. But I think that is not inconsistent with saying what they means is that the Holy Spirit operates more mightily through some people than through others. Granted, if you read these in isolation from Christian revelation, I could see where one would take it that way.

*Student:* Have you read any rabbinical commentary on these passages? How do Jews view them?

*Dr. Craig:* I haven’t. That would be very interesting, but I’ve not been sufficiently motivated to read rabbinical commentaries on these passages. That would be worth doing.

*Student:* I heard that God deals with Abraham according to his faith, and he deals with the children of Israel according to the law. It is almost like Abraham has an agreeable spirit with God, so the fruit of the Holy Spirit is that you don’t need any law. Teaching is an act of imparting one’s spirit. I was wondering whether the Old Testament was the Holy Spirit dealing with people according to the law because there’s no indwelling of the Spirit. Then in the New Testament through Jesus we have an indwelt Spirit and so it is according to the faith.

*Dr. Craig:* OK. I see what you’re getting at now. At first I was a little bit resistant to what you were saying, but I think there’s truth in what you are saying. When you look at the old covenant, as I say the Spirit of God was not the permanent daily possession of the average believer. His anointing would come upon people to carry out special tasks but then it would leave them. They wouldn’t have that anointing anymore. By contrast in the New Testament, we have the permanent indwelling and anointing of the Holy Spirit to help us. One of the contrasts between the old covenant in the new covenant is spoken of very eloquently by Jeremiah where he says, *I will put my laws into their hearts and write them on their minds.* So there will be that inner sort of motivation and willingness and ability to do what God wants us to do. It is not as though the law is contradictory with the righteousness of Christ, but I do think there is an internalization that Jeremiah talks about with respect to the new covenant that would come through the indwelling of the Holy
Spirit. So you’re not just obeying an external law under your best abilities; you are being internally empowered and motivated to live as God wants you to. That’s why Jeremiah can say, *They won’t say in that day ‘Know the Lord’ for they will all know me from the least of them to the greatest.* That’s the description of the church.

**END DISCUSSION**

What we will do next time is look more closely at the contrast between the Old Testament and the New Testament. I think we will see that what corresponds to the temple in the Old Testament (where the glory of God, the power of God, dwelt most specifically) is in the new covenant the believer’s body. We are the temple of the Holy Spirit. We’ll see that contrast next time.

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20 30:11
21 Total Running Time: 31:45 (Copyright © 2016 William Lane Craig)
Lecture 4: Contrast Between the Old and New Testament

We’ve been thinking about the role of the Holy Spirit in the old covenant, and now we want to contrast that with the role of the Holy Spirit in the new covenant. This can perhaps be best done by means of a timeline. Let’s imagine a timeline on which the left side represents the Old Testament covenant and the right side is the New Testament. The division between these two would come at the cross of Christ. Jesus said at his Last Supper that he was inaugurating a new covenant in his blood. This was the covenant prophesied by the prophet Jeremiah. So the transition between the old and new covenants occurs with the death of Christ. But the effects of that transition are not immediate. There is a transitional period following the cross which is described in the book of Acts in which we have a transition from the old to the new.

The key verse here is Acts 1:8. There Jesus says, “You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and all Judea, and Samaria, and to the end of the Earth.” Here Jesus describes the bestowal of the Holy Spirit upon the New Testament church in a progressive series of events beginning first in Jerusalem and Judea, and then Samaria, and then the uttermost parts of the Earth, which would be the Gentile world.

In the book of Acts you see this progression unfolding. For example, in Acts chapter 2 you have the fulfillment of the promise to Jerusalem and to Judea where at Pentecost the Holy Spirit is bestowed upon the disciples. Then in Acts chapter 8 you have the bestowal of the Holy Spirit upon the Samaritans who were half-breeds. They were a mixture of Jewish and non-Jewish people, so hybrids in between the Jews and the Gentiles. Then finally in Acts chapter 10 and 11 and 19 you have the bestowal of the Holy Spirit on Gentiles such as Cornelius’ household, the Roman centurion, as well as on certain Ephesian disciples of John the Baptist that Paul encounters in Acts 19.

So in the book of Acts you see this fulfillment of the promise of Acts 8 progressively unfolding: first Jerusalem and Judea, then Samaria, and then finally to non-Jewish peoples – to the Gentiles.

In the old covenant the locus of the Holy Spirit was in the temple or the tabernacle, specifically in the Holy of Holies (or the most holy place; the inner sanctum of the temple). 2 Chronicles 7:1-3. describes the special presence of God in the Holy of Holies in the temple.22

When Solomon had ended his prayer, fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices, and the glory of the Lord filled the temple. And the priests could not enter the house of the Lord, because the glory of the
Lord filled the Lord’s house. When all the children of Israel saw the fire come down and the glory of the Lord upon the temple, they bowed down with their faces to the earth on the pavement, and worshiped and gave thanks to the Lord, saying, “For he is good, for his steadfast love endures for ever.”

Here at the dedication of Solomon’s temple the presence of the Lord comes down in a special manifest way to abide in the temple. Eventually when the nation of Israel was judged by God, before he brought in the Babylonian armies to conquer and destroy Israel in judgment, his Holy Spirit or presence withdrew from the temple leaving them abandoned to their enemies. We read about this in Ezekiel 9:3, “Now the glory of the God of Israel had gone up from the cherubim on which it rested to the threshold of the house.” There the glory of the Lord which rested on the cherubim inside the Holy of Holies – they were overshadowing the Ark of the Covenant that was in the Holy of Holies containing the Mosaic law – went out from the Holy of Holies from where it rested on the cherubim to the threshold of the house. God’s presence was leaving Israel. Then in Ezekiel 11:23 we read, “And the glory of the Lord went up from the midst of the city, and stood upon the mountain which is on the east side of the city.” Here now the glory of God departs from the temple to the Mount of Olives. This is the mountain on the east side of the city. Slowly God’s presence was leaving Israel and abandoning them to the judgment of their enemies as the Babylonian hoards would come in and destroy Israel.

The presence of God did not simply rest in the tabernacle or in the temple; there were special anointings of the Holy Spirit that would come upon individual people for specific tasks such as prophecy. For example, look at 1 Peter 1:10-11. Peter says,

The prophets who prophesied of the grace that was to be yours searched and inquired about this salvation; they inquired what person or time was indicated by the Spirit of Christ within them when predicting the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glory.

Here Peter says that when these prophets spoke about the coming of the Messiah it was the Spirit of Christ within them that was giving them utterance – that was giving them this knowledge, these prophecies.

So the Holy Spirit abode in the temple, in the Holy of Holies in a special way, but then would also anoint people for special acts such as prophecy.

In the New Testament, what corresponds to the temple? Since the Jewish temple was destroyed God does not abide any longer in the temple. Rather, according to the New Testament, the temple of the Holy Spirit in the New Testament is the individual believer. We are the temple of the Holy Spirit. And what makes the transition between these two is
called the baptism of the Holy Spirit. In virtue of being baptized by the Holy Spirit we now become the abiding place of the Holy Spirit, the equivalent, as it were, to the temple in the old covenant. And so we have, for example, statements like 1 Corinthians 6:19-20. Paul says, “Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God? You are not your own; you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.” There Paul indicates that our bodies are now temples of the Holy Spirit indwelt by him.

The same thing is taught in the book of Hebrews, Hebrews 3:5-6. Here the author says, “Now Moses was faithful in all God’s house as a servant, to testify to the things that were to be spoken later, but Christ was faithful over God’s house as a son. And we are his house if we hold fast our confidence and pride in our hope.” Here, just as Moses was faithful over the house of God in the Old Testament, Christ is faithful over God’s house, and we are his house. We are the house of God now as he abides in us as his temple.

For the fact that it is the baptism of the Holy Spirit that forms the transition between these two, look at verses such as Luke 3:16. This is the preaching of John the Baptist prior to the advent of Jesus.

John answered them all, “I baptize you with water; but he who is mightier than I is coming, the thong of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie; he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.

John was carrying out a baptism of water, but he predicted one who was coming after him who would baptize people with the Holy Spirit.

Turn over to Acts 1:4-5 to see the fulfillment of John the Baptist’s prophecy. Now it is Jesus who,

... charged them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, “you heard from me, for John baptized with water, but before many days you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit.”

Then we have in Pentecost the fulfillment of that in chapter 2 when the Holy Spirit comes and rests upon the disciples and they speak in other languages.

Two more references to the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Acts 11:15-16. Here Peter is describing his experience in preaching the Gospel to Cornelius’ household,

As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell on them just as on us at the beginning. And I remembered the word of the Lord, how he said, “John baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit.”
So Peter thinks of the experience of Cornelius and his household as being the same experience that he and the disciples had at Pentecost. It is the baptism of the Holy Spirit.24

Finally, 1 Corinthians 12:13, “For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body – Jews or Greeks, slaves or free – and all were made to drink of one Spirit.” According to this verse, it is by the baptism of the Holy Spirit that we are incorporated into the body of Christ, that we become part of his church, part of his body.

So the baptism of the Holy Spirit is what turns a person into a temple of God indwelt by the Holy Spirit. When you look at the unfolding of the book of Acts you see this happen progressively over time. First Jerusalem and Judea (as at Pentecost, the disciples are baptized in the Holy Spirit), then in Acts chapter 8 (Samaritan persons receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit), and then finally in Acts 10 and 11 you have Gentiles who are baptized in the Holy Spirit and also become part of the body of Christ.

**START DISCUSSION**

*Student:* What do you think about that verse (I think you said it was Ezekiel 11) for the Holy Spirit to go to the Mount of Olives and stand there. Is that kind of an anthropomorphism?

*Dr. Craig:* Let me look again. Ezekiel 11:23, “And the glory of the Lord went up from the midst of the city and stood upon the mountain.” I take it that this was some sort of visible manifestation. I would assume light – a sort of luminescence – of the glory of God. That’s what glory usually indicates – a sort of luminescence or brightness. So there would be this sort of brightness that I take it left the temple and went out to the Mount of Olives and then ascended to heaven or disappeared.

*Student:* Maybe the Hebrew word that they use for “stood” there means something like “stayed” and not “stood” meaning “on feet.”

*Dr. Craig:* I don’t think that means necessarily “stood” as on two legs. Even in English we can use the word “stand” in a wide range of meanings. So, no, I don’t think there is any suggestion that this is in the form of a human figure.

*Student:* But you think it was more visible the way the cloud or the pillar of fire had been before?

*Dr. Craig:* Right, it would still be visible, I think.

*Student:* Do you think the church was established before or after the resurrection of Christ?
Dr. Craig: I guess that is going to depend what you mean by “the church.” I don’t want to exclude Old Testament believers from being part of the church in the sense that they would be the early stages of it. They’re part of God’s community – part of the people of God. If we think of the church as the people of God, that would include Old Testament persons as well as post-Pentecostal believers, too. Widely construed, I think that it includes both peoples.

Student: It’s not worth being dogmatic about, but I’ve seen people go either way. Some people say the church was established at Pentecost, but I almost wonder if it wasn’t established before that because if you look at Peter’s confession of Christ in Matthew 16 and then Christ turns to Peter and says, *You are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church and the gates of hell will not overcome it.* Do you think the church was established then or after the Holy Spirit was actually given to all believers?

Dr. Craig: I guess I’d just repeat what I said. I think of the church in very broad terms as the people of God. The redeemed. Those who have salvation. And that certainly includes these Old Testament believers prior to the time of Christ who didn’t have the Holy Spirit as a permanent possession. Certainly the church post-Pentecost is equipped and gifted in a way that the people of God were not. But, gosh, when you think of Paul’s images of the church – like in Romans of the olive tree with wild branches being grafted into the trunk of a domesticated olive tree and how the branches could be broken off again and other branches could be grafted in. It all seems to be the same tree, the same entity. But he thinks of the Gentiles as grafted into this olive tree which represents Israel – the Old Testament people of God. I guess I see it as continuous, but just having different stages of its unfolding and development.

END DISCUSSION

What we now want to look at will be the baptism of the Holy Spirit in more detail since this is a matter of tremendous confusion in the contemporary church as a result of the Pentecostal and Charismatic movements. But I think that that will be better reserved for next time, so we will finish early today. This is a good breaking point. We will take up in more detail next time the nature of the baptism of the Holy Spirit of which we’ve spoken briefly here.25

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25 Total Running Time: 22:29 (Copyright © 2016 William Lane Craig)
Lecture 5: Baptism and Fullness of the Holy Spirit

Today we want to look at the baptism and fullness of the Holy Spirit. There’s a great deal of confusion in Protestant circles concerning the baptism of the Holy Spirit because certain Pentecostal and charismatic Christians claim that the baptism of the Holy Spirit is a second work of grace in the life of the believer which brings one into a fuller and deeper experience of the Holy Spirit. They believe that when a person becomes a Christian he is indwelt by the Spirit but he is not baptized in the Holy Spirit. In order to come into this deeper walk with God you need to have a second work of grace – a second experience of the Holy Spirit – called the baptism of the Holy Spirit often accompanied by speaking in tongues which will initiate you into this deeper walk in the Spirit.

I think this view is completely wrong. It seems to me that the Scripture is relatively clear that the baptism of the Holy Spirit is not a second work of grace, but it is an initiatory work of the Spirit by means of which we are placed into the body of Christ. It is through the baptism of the Holy Spirit that we are indwelt by the Spirit and made to be members of the body of Christ. 1 Corinthians 12:13 seems to make that clear: “For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit.” Here the baptism of the Holy Spirit is the universal experience of the church, the initiating act by means of which we are placed into the body of Christ.

Charismatics will usually appeal to the stories in the book of Acts to show that the baptism of the Holy Spirit is not an initiatory act but is a second work of grace. But, in fact, a close examination of those stories in the book of Acts reveals that in every single case it is clearly an initial experience of the Holy Spirit that is being described and not a second experience. For example, in Acts 2 you have the story of Pentecost where the gift of the Holy Spirit is given to the church in Jerusalem and Judea. This is an initial baptism in the Holy Spirit that they were to wait for. They were not to leave Jerusalem until they received this baptism in the Holy Spirit. Then in Acts 8 you have the story of how the Holy Spirit is given to the Samaritan believers. Again, a close reading of chapter 8 indicates that they did not have the Holy Spirit until they were baptized in the Holy Spirit. Then in Acts 10 and 11 you have the story of Cornelius and his household in which the Holy Spirit now is given to the Gentiles. And once again this is clearly an initial act of the Holy Spirit in the lives of Cornelius and his household. Peter says that the Holy Spirit fell upon them in the same way that he did upon us at Pentecost in the beginning. Then in Acts 19 you have this very strange story of the Ephesian disciples of John the Baptist whom Paul runs into and who says we haven't even heard that there is a Holy Spirit. Paul then baptizes them into the Holy Spirit and they likewise become Christians.
So, although the baptism of the Holy Spirit in these acts is differently related to water baptism (sometimes preceding it; sometimes actually coming after water baptism), nevertheless it is clear that in every case the persons who experience a baptism of the Holy Spirit are experiencing an initial act of the Holy Spirit and not some sort of secondary act of grace which puts them into a deeper walk with Christ.

So, it is through the baptism of the Holy Spirit that we are placed into the body of Christ, regenerated, born again to new life, and indwelt with the Holy Spirit. Every believer has the Holy Spirit dwelling within him. Romans 8:9-10:

But you are not in the flesh, you are in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Any one who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. But if Christ is in you, although your bodies are dead because of sin, your spirits are alive because of righteousness.

So it is the presence of the Holy Spirit that makes a difference whether a person is a Christian or not a Christian. It is the presence of the Holy Spirit that makes a person a member of the body of Christ and a Christian.

Also 1 Corinthians 3:16, Paul says, “Do you not know that you are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit dwells in you?” The Holy Spirit is the permanent possession of every believer. He is what makes us regenerate – what makes us Christians. Anyone who does not have the Holy Spirit does not belong to him and is not a Christian.

START DISCUSSION

Student: I'm not saying anything you said is wrong, I am just saying there is probably a little bit more to it. There are some things in my mind that are not clear, like what is the difference of your Christian and your walk as being filled? What is sanctification if it is not more than baptism? Also, remember on the other side of that is the whole nation of Israel is baptized in the Spirit when they went through the cloud coming out of Egypt. That is Christ also. Also, what about Philip? When they believed, they were saying they did not actually hope and repent, and they had to come down and baptize again. There is more to it than that. I'm saying what the Pentecostal extreme position is wrong; I’m saying we can’t be too simple – there is more to this.

Dr. Craig: That forms a nice segue to my next point which is going to be about the fullness of the Holy Spirit. Though in this peculiar case with the Samaritans, it seemed that there they needed to have the ratification of the Jerusalem apostles in order to receive the Holy Spirit, and they hadn't received him yet until they came down and lay hands on them.
Although every Christian is baptized and indwelt by the Holy Spirit, not every Christian is filled with the Holy Spirit. There is a significant difference between being indwelt with the Holy Spirit and filled with the Holy Spirit. Look at 1 Corinthians 2:14-3:3. Paul says,

The unspiritual man does not receive the gifts of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. The spiritual man judges all things, but is himself to be judged by no one. “For who has known the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?” But we have the mind of Christ.

But I, brethren, could not address you as spiritual men, but as men of the flesh, as babes in Christ. I fed you with milk, not solid food; for you were not ready for it; and even yet you are not ready, for you are still of the flesh. For while there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not of the flesh, and behaving like ordinary men?

Then also in 1 Corinthians 3:11-15. Paul says,

For no other foundation can any one lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any one builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw—each man’s work will become manifest; for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. If the work which any man has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. If any man’s work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire.

Here Paul seems to describe people who are Christians but who are still dominated by the flesh, that is to say, the fallen human nature. He calls them carnal or men of the flesh. He says that their works are not like gold and silver and precious stones that will endure testing, but they are like wood, hay, and stubble that will be burned up and destroyed though they themselves will be saved. What Paul seems to contemplate here would be three different kinds of people. There’s the natural man who is the unregenerate man. He does not have the Spirit of God. He is living in the power of the flesh – the fallen human nature. Then there is the spiritual man. This is the regenerate Christian who is living in the power of the Holy Spirit. And then there is this carnal man, or man of the flesh, who is regenerate (he has the Spirit of God) but he's still living in the power of the flesh – the fallen human nature – and so is immature and experiences futility.

Notice what the sign or evidence is of the spiritual man. It is not charismatic gifts. The church in Corinth exhibited all sorts of charismatic gifts, didn't it? Speaking in tongues,
miracles, other sorts of charismatic phenomena. Yet it is the most carnal church in the New Testament. People were getting drunk at the communion services. A man was living in an incestuous relationship with his mother. It was riven with strife and jealousy and party spirit. So even though the charismatic gifts were highly abundant and evident in Corinth, this was not a church that was under the direction and power of the Holy Spirit. So the sign of the spiritual person is not charismatic gifts. Rather, it is the fruit of the Holy Spirit which take place in a person's life in the place of the works of the flesh. That is what we saw when we looked at Galatians 5:16-25. Paul says,

But I say, walk by the Spirit, and do not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh; for these are opposed to each other, to prevent you from doing what you would. But if you are led by the Spirit you are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are plain: fornication, impurity, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, anger, selfishness, dissension, party spirit, envy, drunkenness, carousing, and the like. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such there is no law. And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit.

So the evidence of the Spirit-filled life is not charismatic gifts or speaking in tongues. The evidence of the Spirit-filled life will be the fruit of the Holy Spirit that is produced in a person's life instead of the works of the flesh.

Unfortunately, as we've seen, not all Christians experience the fullness of the Holy Spirit. What does it mean to be filled with the Holy Spirit? I think that it means to be not only indwelt by the Spirit but to be empowered and controlled by the Holy Spirit. If we say that someone is filled with rage or filled with jealousy, we mean that person is controlled and possessed by that anger or by that jealousy. In the same way, when Paul says to be filled with the Holy Spirit, he is telling us to be controlled and empowered by the Holy Spirit so that he will produce in our lives the fruit of the Holy Spirit that is described in Galatians.

When we meet next time I want to ask the question: why is it that so few Christians seem to be filled with the Holy Spirit? Why do so many Christians seem to live lives of defeat and frustration and misery, and how can we then be filled with the Holy Spirit so as to walk in the fullness of his power and control? That's what we want to look at next time.
Lecture 6: Why Are So Many Christians Not Filled With the Holy Spirit?

Last time we saw that there is a difference in the New Testament drawn between Christians who are indwelt with the Holy Spirit and Christians who are filled with the Holy Spirit. All Christians have been baptized by the Holy Spirit into the body of Christ and are therefore indwelt by the Holy Spirit. But as we saw in 1 Corinthians chapter 2 and the first part of chapter 3, Paul says that although all Christians are indwelt with the Holy Spirit some Christians still are living under the domination and influence of the flesh, that is to say the fallen human nature, and therefore do not produce the fruit of the Holy Spirit. Instead these Christians exhibit the works of the flesh that Paul talks about in Galatians chapter 5.

We saw that the signs of the Spirit-filled life are not charismatic gifts like speaking in tongues or prophetic utterance or working of healing miracles. The church in Corinth exhibited all sorts of charismatic gifts and yet was one of the most carnal churches in the New Testament. Rather, the evidence of the Spirit-filled life is the fruit of the Spirit that Paul talks about in Galatians chapter 5. Those who are walking in the Holy Spirit, who are filled with the Spirit, produce the fruit of the Holy Spirit in their lives rather than the works of the flesh.

The question that I left us with is this: why is it that so many Christians are not filled with the Holy Spirit? Why is it that so many Christians seem to fall into that category of carnal Christians – Christians who are still living under the domination and influence of the fallen human nature? Why do so few seem to enjoy the fullness of the Holy Spirit? Let me suggest two reasons as to why so many Christians are not filled with the Holy Spirit.

1. A lack of total commitment. In other words, these persons, though they are Christians, are not really sold out 100% to Christ. This lack of total commitment, I think, prevents the fullness of the Holy Spirit in their life and leaves them in the power the flesh.

Look at Jesus’ very familiar parable of the sower in Mark chapter 4. In Mark 4:3-9 Jesus gives the parable of the sower and then in verses 14 to 20 he gives its interpretation.

“Listen! A sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seed fell along the path, and the birds came and devoured it. Other seed fell on rocky ground, where it had not much soil, and immediately it sprang up, since it had no depth of soil; and when the sun rose it was scorched, and since it had no root it withered away. Other seed fell among thorns and the thorns grew up and choked it, and it yielded no grain. And other seeds fell into good soil and brought forth grain, growing up and increasing and yielding thirtyfold and sixtyfold and a hundredfold.” And he said, “He who has ears to hear, let him hear.”
Thus the parable of the sower. In verses 14 to 20 Jesus interprets this parable for us. He says

The sower sows the word. And these are the ones along the path, where the word is sown; when they hear, Satan immediately comes and takes away the word which is sown in them. And these in like manner are the ones sown upon rocky ground, who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with joy; and they have no root in themselves, but endure for a while; then, when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately they fall away. And others are the ones sown among thorns; they are those who hear the word, but the cares of the world, and the delight in riches, and the desire for other things, enter in and choke the word, and it proves unfruitful. But those that were sown upon the good soil are the ones who hear the word and accept it and bear fruit, thirtyfold and sixtyfold and a hundredfold.

I want to draw your attention to that third kind of soil – the seed that is sown among thorns. These persons receive the word but they are not fruitful. They don’t bear grain. They are living, but they are not a fruitful type of plant. What is the difference between these people and the people who are the good soil that bear fruit thirty, sixty, a hundredfold? Jesus identifies three things that choke out the word and make them unfruitful:

1. *The cares of the world* (that is to say, just the pressures and the vicissitudes of life that drag them down).

2. *The delight in riches* (the desire for monetary gain; for affluence).

3. *The desire for other things* (their heart’s desire is not for God, not for the kingdom).

These three features conspired to make these people unfruitful. The cares of the world, the delight in riches, and the desire for other things.

The contrast to this type of person, I think, is found in The Sermon on the Mount, Matthew 6:33 where Jesus says, “Seek first his Kingdom and his righteousness and all these things shall be yours as well.” Here Jesus says your focus is not to be upon worldly things, upon prosperity, upon material things. Rather we are to seek first God’s Kingdom and its righteousness. That is in contrast, I think, to those who are represented by the third type of soil who lack this kind of total commitment. Their commitment is not first and foremost to God and his righteousness and his kingdom, but they have a desire for other things – for riches – and are burdened with the cares of this world. This, I think, would explain why many Christians are not Spirit-filled, fruitful Christians.

[30 4:56]
The prescription for being that good soil— that type of person who seeks first the Kingdom of God and its righteousness—is found, I think, in Romans 12:1-2. This gives the prescription for this kind of life. Paul says,

I appeal to you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may prove what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

Here Paul describes a person who is totally committed to God, body and soul.31 His body is committed to God as a living sacrifice, and then he is transformed by the renewal of his mind. So body and soul are sold out to Christ.

The result is that you can discern what is the will of God. Notice what the will of God is. It is characterized by three adjectives: it is good, it is acceptable, and it is perfect. You don’t need to be afraid of God’s will for your life. God’s perfect will for you (if you could fully understand it) you would recognize to be good. It would be acceptable, not only acceptable to God but acceptable to you as well. And it would be perfect. That means there’s nothing you can do to improve upon it. Any efforts you could make to improve upon God’s will for your life will only damage it because it’s already perfect. So there is no reason not to be totally committed to Christ in the way that Paul describes—as a living sacrifice, body and soul, given to him and so bearing fruit through the Holy Spirit directing and controlling your life.

I think one of the reasons that many Christians are not filled with the Holy Spirit is due to a lack of total commitment on their part.

But that’s not the only reason.

2. There is a reliance upon self-effort that frustrates the attempt to lead a Spirit-filled life. Some people may indeed be totally committed to Christ. They are sold out to Christ, but they are attempting to live the Christian life on their own strength, in their own power, that is to say in the power of the flesh. And that is futile. The Christian life is impossible to lead in the power of the flesh. It cannot be done through self-effort. This is what Jesus teaches us in the parable of the vine and the branches in John 15:4-5. Jesus says,

Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in me, and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.

31 10:10
It couldn’t be clearer, could it? The branch severed from the vine is powerless to produce fruit. It only withers and dies. The secret to bearing fruit is to be abiding in the vine. As the life of the vine courses through the branches they will naturally become fruitful. So it is a matter not of self-effort but rather a matter of abiding in Christ.

Notice that after his resurrection the disciples were told to tarry in Jerusalem until they are endowed with the power of the Holy Spirit. Acts 1:4-8.

And while staying with them he charged them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, “you heard from me, for John baptized with water, but before many days you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit. . . . But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth.”

Here the Holy Spirit is the secret to the power to be effective witnesses for Christ throughout the world. To go out on your own, to try to live the Christian life without the power of the Holy Spirit, is futile and hopeless.

The secret to the fruitful Christian life is allowing Christ to live out his life through us. This is what Paul talks about in Galatians 2:20. Paul says, “I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me; and the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.” This is the same truth that is expressed in the parable of the vine and the branches. Christ is the vine; we are the branches. It is Christ living through us that enables us to have a fruitful Christian existence.

Without the filling of the Holy Spirit (which is described here by saying Christ is living in me, that is to say, the Holy Spirit of Christ living in me) the Christian life is reduced to legalism and grinding self-effort. Therefore the non-Christian will actually often be happier than the Christian who is living a defeated Christian experience in the power of the flesh.

This, I think, was described no better than in the following testimony that I want to read from a Christian minister who apostatized and walked away from Christ and became a non-Christian. He contrasts his life as a Christian with the life that he now has as an apostate. I think you will hear a description that is perfect of the carnal Christian existence lived in the power of the flesh. This is what he says.

Since I’m passionate about the things I’m interested in, I tried as best as I could to be a faithful Christian, and good minister. I accepted God’s grace, and it radically changed my life when I was a teenager. After being saved I wanted to show God
how grateful I was for his gift of salvation by committing my life over to him with all I had. Even though I knew it was by grace that I had been saved, I almost always felt guilty that I wasn’t doing enough in response to God’s love. Whether it was spending time in prayer, evangelizing, reading the Bible, tithing, forgiving someone who had done me wrong, or whether it was struggling with temptations of lust, pride, selfishness and laziness, I almost always felt guilty. . . . I never could understand how Christian people could come to church every Sunday but never get involved much in the Church’s programs, because that’s what believers should want to do, as I did.

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Today I am pretty much guilt free in the sense that I have no guilt in regards to the Christian duties mentioned above. In fact, I can’t remember when I have ever been happier than I am today. . . . I’m living life to the hilt, pretty much guilt free, primarily because my ethical standards aren’t as high. In fact, I believe the Christian ethical standards are simply impossible for anyone to measure up to. Think about it, according to Jesus I should feel guilty for not just what I do, but for what I think about, lusting, hating, coveting, etc. I’d like every person . . . to experience the freedom I have found.

That, I think, is a perfect description of the carnal Christian life lived in the power of the flesh through self-effort. It is a miserable, guilt-ridden, works-oriented type of lifestyle. A lifestyle that is less fulfilling than being a non-Christian where you don’t have to worry about these sorts of ethical duties and concerns.

I think the fundamental failure of this ex-Christian is that he did not understand that the Christian life is primarily about being, not doing. For him, the Christian life was primarily about what he did for God to show his gratitude to God. It was all about doing, all about performance, and not about being and about abiding in Christ in the life of the vine, enjoying the grace of God and the forgiveness of God that enables one to have that source of power in life. Certainly someone who is focused on being in Christ will be involved in doing. Of course he will! He’ll be involved in evangelism and giving and acts of mercy and so forth. But those acts will not be the basis of the Christian life. They will be the overflow of an abundant life that is connected to the life of the vine and so naturally produces this kind of fruit.
I want to suggest that those two reasons may be why so many Christians don’t experience the fullness of the Holy Spirit in their lives. Either there is a lack of total commitment (they are not really sold out; the desire for other things, for material gain, the pressures of life choke out the word in them and make them unfruitful) or else they are trying to live the Christian life in their own power and that results in futility, guilt, and a sort of grinding legalism.

That raises the question then: how can I be filled with the Holy Spirit? I want to suggest that it’s a very simple matter of repentance and faith. Repent and believe.

First of all, repent. We need to confess to God the known sin that is in our lives. We need to come honestly before him and acknowledge the sin that he convicts us of. 1 John 1:9 gives this promise: “If we confess our sins he is faithful and just and will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” So the first thing to do is to repent. Quit hiding from God, quit rationalizing your sin, but confess known sin to God, acknowledging it before him. That’s the negative aspect. The positive aspect is to believe. That is to say, to yield oneself to God as a living sacrifice in the way that Paul prescribes in Romans 12:1-2. Body and soul yielded to God as a sacrificial offering. This is not dependent upon emotions or feelings which come and go. This is a commitment of the will.

Then, having made that total commitment of yielding yourself to God as a living sacrifice, then we need to walk in the Spirit on a daily basis – to log time in the Spirit. We need to practice immediate confession of sin and resurrender of our lives to God. Being filled with the Holy Spirit is not a sort of permanent status that a Christian enjoys. Rather, one can, through sin, retake control of one’s life. You need in that case to practice confession again, claim 1 John 1:9, and then resurrender your life to God. This is the difference between a living sacrifice and the sacrifices in the Old Testament. In the Old Testament the animal sacrifices were slaughtered before they were presented to the Lord. They were dead! But Paul says present yourself as a living sacrifice. That is much more difficult, right? Because a living sacrifice tends to crawl off the altar! So this is a life that needs to be continually resurrendered daily to God through immediate confession of sin and re-commitment.

The Scripture indicates that as Christians we can grieve the Holy Spirit through sin. Ephesians 4:30. Paul says, “Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God in whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.” You are indwelt with the Holy Spirit. Paul says don’t grieve the Holy Spirit. The context of Ephesians 4 makes it evident that we do that through sin in our lives. By sinning we grieve the Holy Spirit and so lose his fullness.
Not only that, however, we can also quench the Holy Spirit’s work in our lives through disobedience. 1 Thessalonians 5:19. Paul says, “Do not quench the Spirit.” I think the difference between grieving the Spirit and quenching the Spirit is that grieving the Holy Spirit is done through sin whereas quenching the Holy Spirit involves not following the Holy Spirit but suppressing his activity in your life. The context of 1 Thessalonians 5 is don’t despise prophesying. Don’t try to quench the Spirit in your life. We quench the Spirit when the Holy Spirit is leading us to do something and we refuse to do it, or we feel his conviction that something needs to change and we quench it and suppress it. By doing that we will forfeit his power and direction in our lives.

We need as Christians to be continually confessing our sins and resurrendering the control of our lives to God so as to not grieve or quench the Holy Spirit through sin or disobedience.

This involves a daily commitment. Every day that you get up, before you roll out of bed and your feet hit the floor, just say a prayer, “Lord take control of the throne of my life today. Live out your life through me. Fill me with your Holy Spirit. Direct and control me today.”

Jan gives a wonderful illustration of this truth of walking in the Holy Spirit. She thinks of it as a sort of umbrella through which you walk through life’s storms. As long as you stay under God’s umbrella you’ll be safe in the storms of life. That doesn’t mean you won’t suffer, but you’ll be where God wants you to be – you’ll be in his will. But if you stray off the path or go outside the umbrella then you are apt to go into the ditch or into disaster because you no longer walking in the will of God for you. So we want to stay under that umbrella of God’s will along life’s way. That will be done by allowing the Holy Spirit to empower and direct us day by day as we go along life’s path.³⁵

START DISCUSSION

Student: About the vine and the branches, I was curious about when you were talking about Christians that do not bear fruit, do you mean nominal Christians or Christians that are saved?

Dr. Craig: I’m thinking here of Christians that are saved. Remember in 1 Corinthians 3 Paul talks about the day of judgment when we will all stand before Christ. He says that judgment day will test each man’s work to see how he has built on the foundation which is Jesus Christ. He says some people’s work will be burned up. It is like wood, hay, and stubble that they built on the foundation whereas other people’s work are like gold, silver, and precious stones. They survive the fire of judgment. Paul says he himself will be saved (this person). He is a regenerate Christian. But his works are going to be all burned

³⁵ 30:00
up and so he will not receive the sort of reward that he would have received had he been faithful.

Student: I was just mainly curious because in John 15 (which you mentioned earlier) it mentioned in verses 1 and 2, “I am the true vine and my father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit while every branch that does bear fruit in pruned so that it will even be more fruitful.”

Dr. Craig: Yes. And particularly verse 6 which I didn’t read: “If a man does not abide in me he is cast forth as a branch and withers, and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned.” Now that raises the question of apostasy. Can someone commit apostasy and be severed from the vine in such a way as to lose his salvation? To all appearances the testimony that I read this morning is of a person who has committed apostasy and may find himself in that sort of situation. I don’t think we know when a person has crossed that line or not. I think we always have to assume that it’s possible for him to repent and come back and we should pray and work for that, but there may be persons such as Jesus described here who had become so severed from the life of Christ that they are now lost. But that’s a question will take up later. My focus today is on the fullness of the Holy Spirit and not on the question of perseverance of the saints.

Student: I just wanted to give you a very interesting picture that we saw recently. We have some crape myrtle trees in the back of our house. A few months ago my wife cut some branches off those crape myrtle trees, scraped the twigs and leaves off of them, and used them to fashion a sort of a decorative arbor on the back of our deck. The interesting thing was about two or three days after that they started sprouting. They budded and they started growing leaves. Now about three months later there are still tiny little semi-shriveled-but-still-alive leaves growing on these sticks that have been cut off. If you look at that and you compare it to the trees growing right beside it, the leaves on the trees are green and lush and full and alive. These branches that have been severed have these tiny little shriveled leaves. It is just such a perfect picture of the branch trying to produce fruit on its own and how maybe it can produce a little bit but it is absolutely nothing compared to what it can do when those branches are still connected into the tree and how that's enough maybe in our own lives that maybe through our own efforts we are able to produce just the tiniest little bit of fruit and we deceive ourselves into thinking we can do it on our own and what a difference that is if we truly are abiding and what a difference there is in the fruit.

Dr. Craig: That is a very poignant illustration.

Student: I thank you for your important insights there. I think I hear a message of Bill Bright and the Spirit-filled life. It seems to me every system of human thought that tries to address comprehensibly reality says there is something wrong with human nature. I
think, if I understand correctly, the main answer Christianity offers to the deficiencies of human nature and the human condition is the work of the Holy Spirit that happens here in this life not something after death. But it seems to me that I’ve heard Christians before say, *The answer to greed, lust, violence, selfishness, and all the forms of evil is for everybody to become a Christian and walk in the Spirit.* That would be wonderful but I don’t think that’s . . . Matthew 7:13-14 – *the way is narrow that leads to life, few who be that find it.* For example, Jim Daly, the President of Focus on the Family, after that terrible shooting in Newtown, Connecticut five years ago or so when those children were killed, he said the answer is not gun control, it is for everybody to change their heart and become a believer. That would be fantastic but I don’t think that’s realistic.

*Dr. Craig:* Yes, I sympathize very much with what you are saying. I saw Franklin Graham on television this week saying much the same thing – that God is our only hope. I thought if that’s true then we are really in a hopeless situation because it is just highly, highly improbable that, as you say, everyone is going to turn to God and yield their lives to him. So we’d better find some other way of managing to live in a society that is a mixture of good and evil in such a way that evil can be restrained and controlled through a system of laws and punishment and so forth. It is just too facile to say, *We all need God.* Certainly I think that it is true that, as I’ve already explained, we do need God, the power of the Holy Spirit, in order to live a transformed life, but that’s not going to be a realistic answer to the problems that society faces which will always be a mixture of good and evil together. We’ve got to figure out ways to control and inhibit the forces of evil in society.

**END DISCUSSION**

Our Father in heaven, we thank you that though we are sinful and fallen creatures that you love us so much and that Christ died for those sins to free us from guilt and punishment and to impute to us his righteousness. Thank you that as we are clothed in his blood we stand righteous and forgiven before you. And now Lord, in the best way that we know how, we want to yield our lives to you as living sacrifices. Our bodies pure and dedicated to you. Our souls given over to renewal through the transforming power of your Holy Spirit. Lord Jesus, we pray that you would live out your life through us. Help us to abide in you as the branches abide in the vine and so to bear much fruit. Holy Spirit of God, we pray that you would take control of our lives, direct us and empower us to live lives that are full of your fruit and that are pleasing to our God and Father. Through Jesus Christ Our Lord, Amen.