



The Spirit-Filled Church

What Shall We Do?

Christianity is not a teaching – it is a person. It is not merely a moral outlook that is to be applied in the realm of politics. You start with a historical person. Luke was a pure historian. He was giving an account of events and of facts.

The Lord Jesus Christ was the theme of the preaching of the early church. He is the theme of the Gospel of Luke. He is the theme of the Acts of the Apostles. This is the tragic thing that has been forgotten at the present time. “What we need,” people say, “is the application of His teaching.” But it is not. What you need is to know Him and to come into a relationship with Him. You do not start with His teaching – you start with Him. This is the message: “All that Jesus began both to do and teach.” Our Lord Himself said to his disciples, “Ye shall be witnesses unto me” (Acts 1:8). He was sending these men out to preach. He said, “You are not simply going to preach My teaching. You are going to preach about Me.”

As you read the book of Acts, you will find that our Lord’s disciples always preached “Jesus, and the resurrection” (Acts 17:18). They went to people and told them about this person. This was the whole of their teaching. You never find them starting with the political or social situations. They said, “Listen, we have something to tell you about a person whose name is Jesus.”

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The Holy Spirit

Before Jesus’ death, He promised that He and the Father would send to His disciples “another Helper” (John 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7). The Greek word translated “Helper” is *parakletos*. It means a lawyer or assistant in a legal question. In a wider context it means a person who provides encouragement, counsel, and strength. Jesus will send “another” Helper, One like Himself who will carry on after Him the teaching and testimony that He began (John 16:7–15).

The work of such a Helper is work carried out by a personal Being. The Old Testament reveals much about the Spirit’s activity in creation (Gen. 1:2; Ps. 33:6), revelation (Is. 61:1–3; Mic. 3:8), empowerment (Ex. 31:2–6; Judg. 15:14, 15; Is. 11:2), and inward renewal (Ps. 51:10–12; Ezek. 36:25–27). But it was for the New Testament to reveal clearly the Spirit as a distinct divine Person, coequal with the Father and the Son. The Spirit is said to speak (Acts 1:16; 8:29; 10:19; 13:2), teach (John 14:26), witness (John 15:26), search (1 Cor. 2:10), will (1 Cor. 12:11), and intercede (Rom. 8:26, 27). All these are the acts of an individual Person.

The divinity of the Spirit appears from the way the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are named together in benedictions (2 Cor. 13:14; Rev. 1:4–6) and in the formula of baptism (Matt. 28:19). To lie to the Spirit is to lie to God (Acts 5:3, 4). The Spirit is called “seven Spirits” in Rev. 1:4; 3:1; 4:5; 5:6 as an expression of His fullness and the diversity of His work in the church in many places, represented by the seven churches in Asia (Rev. 1:11–20). This divine perfection was foreshadowed in Zech. 3:9; 4:2, 10; the number “seven” expresses the perfection of the one Spirit. The Spirit is the third Person of the Trinity, equal to the Father and the Son in glory, and worthy with them of worship, love, and obedience.

The work of the Spirit is to glorify Jesus Christ by showing His disciples who He is (John 16:7–15) and what He means to them (Rom. 8:15–17; Gal. 4:6). The Spirit enlightens (Eph. 1:17, 18), regenerates (John 3:5–8), sanctifies (Gal. 5:16–18), and transforms (2 Cor. 3:18; Gal. 5:22, 23). He gives God’s people what they need to serve Him (1 Cor. 12:4–11).

The Spirit’s full ministry began on Pentecost, after Jesus ascended to heaven (Acts 2:1–4). John the Baptist foretold that Jesus would baptize in the Spirit (Mark 1:8; John 1:33) as the fulfillment of a promise made in the Old Testament and repeated by Jesus (Jer. 31:31–34; Joel 2:28–32; Acts 1:4, 5). Pentecost marked the opening of the last era of world history, that will end when Christ returns. At the time they are born again, believers in Jesus receive the Spirit according to the fullness of the New Testament (Acts 2:38; Rom. 8:9; 1 Cor. 12:13). All the gifts for life service that appear subsequently in a Christian’s life flow from this initial baptism in the Spirit, because in this baptism the sinner is united to the risen Christ.

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