

How Did The Holy Spirit Work In The Early Church?

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Kevin Cauley

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SUBJECT: Godhead

TITLE: How did the Holy Spirit work in the Early Church

PROPOSITION: In this lesson we will study the work of the Holy Spirit in the early church. This is a work that was promised by Jesus. This is a work that was performed by the Holy Spirit. This is a work that was propagated by the apostles. This is a work that was perfected and completed during the first century.

OBJECTIVES: Each listener should be able to understand the work of the Holy Spirit in the early church as it was promised, performed, propagated, and perfected.

AIM: To help everyone understand that the work of the Holy Spirit in the early church was for a limited time only and that the Holy Spirit works only through His word today.

INTRODUCTION:

1. Read: John 14:26 “But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.”
2. About the Text:
 - 1) Jesus was about to leave the disciples and be crucified.
 - 2) However, he was going to send one to “comfort” them.
 - 3) The comforter was going to come in Jesus name—by His authority.
 - 4) The comforter was going to be sent by the Father.
 - 5) The comforter would teach all things to the apostles.
 - 6) The comforter would bring to remembrance all the words that Jesus spoke.
 - 7) This comforter was the Holy Spirit and would work in the establishing of the early church.

3. Ref. to S, T, P, O, and A.

DISCUSSION: The work of the Holy Spirit in the early church is a work that was . . .

I. PROMISED BY JESUS—WHAT DID JESUS SAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WOULD DO?

1. Jesus promise prophesied by John the Baptizer –

1) Matthew 3:11 “I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire:”

2) Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; John 1:33.

3) All of these verses teach that JESUS would baptize with the Holy Spirit.

2. Jesus promised inspiration –

1) Matthew 10:19-20 “But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you.”

2) Mark 13:11; Luke 12:11-12; John 14:26

3) All of these verses teach that the apostles would receive special speaking abilities.

3. Jesus promised companionship –

1) John 14:16; “And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.”

2) John 14:26; John 15:26; John 16:7.

3) All of these verses teach that the Holy Spirit was going to comfort the disciples and be with them just as Jesus had been with them.

4. Jesus promised the baptism of the Holy Spirit – Acts 1:5-8

5. Let it be VERY clear that ONLY Jesus and the Father could administer baptism of the Holy Spirit.
6. In other words, the apostles, prophets, and early Christians had no ability to administer the Baptism of the Holy Spirit.

II. PERFORMED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT—WHAT DID THE HOLY SPIRIT DO?

1. Mark 16:20 – Confirming the word.
2. Acts 2:4 – Performing the miracles.
3. Acts 4:8, 31 – Inspiring the apostles and brethren to speak God's word.
4. Acts 8:29 – Moving the brethren to preach the word (through words).
5. Acts 9:31 – Comforting the brethren.
6. Acts 13:2-4 – Calling specific brethren to a specific work.
7. Acts 15:28; Acts 16:6-7 – Making decisions.
8. Acts 19:6 – Speaking in tongues and prophesying.
9. Things the Holy Spirit did for the brethren:
 - 1) Provided early encouragement, guidance, and support directly from God and Christ (Acts 9:31 “Then had the churches rest throughout all Judaea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied.”).
 - 2) Inspired the apostles and prophets to speak the words of God so that the early church would know God's will (Acts 4:31 “And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness.”).
 - 3) Confirmed the words that were spoken through miracles (Hebrews 2:3-4 “How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; God also bearing them

witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?”).

10. Notice that the Holy Spirit did not work through “feelings” or “intuition” or “emotions” or some type of “subjective” experience.
11. The Holy Spirit is always shown to be working OBJECTIVELY through the early church. I.E.
 - 1) They KNEW it was the Holy Spirit speaking to them.
 - 2) The Holy Spirit spoke through words which they could understand.
 - 3) The Holy Spirit acted upon them in an objective and observable way.
12. Even in the age of miracles, NOT ONCE did the Holy Spirit Himself work directly upon a human heart to convert a person to God. Every single account of conversion was ALWAYS done through the spoken word of God.
13. For those who believe otherwise, we ask that you give one single example where the Holy Spirit worked independently of the word of God in conversion—there are NONE.

III. PROPAGATED BY THE APOSTLES—HOW DID PEOPLE RECEIVE THE HOLY SPIRIT?

1. The miraculous measure of the Holy Spirit was received only in two ways.
2. Through the baptism of the Holy Spirit.
 - 1) This occurred only on the authority of Jesus and the Father and was administered only by them in special circumstances.
 - 2) Apostles, Prophets, Elders, Deacons, Evangelists, etc. had NO authority to administer baptism of the Holy Spirit.
 - 3) This only occurred in the New Testament twice.
 - a. Acts 2 (two baptisms here).
 - b. Acts 10, 11 (two baptisms here).

- 4) By the time of the writing of Ephesians 4:4-5 there was only ONE baptism.
3. Through the laying on of the apostles hands.
 - 1) Acts 8:14-20
 - a. why didn't God just administer the baptism of the Holy Spirit?
 - b. why didn't Philip do this?
 - c. why did the apostles have to be called to do this?
 - 2) Acts 19:1-7
 - a. why didn't they receive it at baptism?
 - b. why didn't God just administer the baptism of the Holy Spirit?
 - c. why did Paul have to lay his hands on them?
 - 3) Romans 1:11 "For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established;"
 - a. why couldn't God just give them a spiritual gift?
 - b. why didn't they get this when they were baptized?
 - c. why did Paul LONG to go and be with them?
 - d. Paul had to BE THERE to impart the miraculous gifts.
 - 4) 2 Timothy 1:6 "wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands."
 - a. why didn't Timothy just get these spiritual gifts directly from God?
 - b. why didn't Timothy get these at baptism?
 - c. Paul had to "lay his hands" on Timothy to impart the gift.

IV. PERFECTED DURING THE EARLY CHURCH—WHAT HAPPENED TO THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT?

1. The "gifts" of the Holy spirit were only supposed to last a short time (Ephesians 4). CHART

2. Prophecy, tongues, and knowledge would be done away, but faith, hope, and love would remain (1 Corinthians 13). CHART
3. The purpose of these gifts was to confirm the word (Mark 16:20; Hebrews 2:3-4).
4. After the word was confirmed, there would be no more need for these gifts.
5. The revealed written word of God took the place of the need for the miraculous.
 - 1) Jesus promised that His words would NEVER depart (Matthew 24:35 “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.”)
 - 2) The apostles taught that God’s word would abide forever. (1 Peter 1:23, 25 “Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. . . . But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.”).
 - 3) The word now provides encouragement, support, and guidance (Acts 20:32 “And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.”)
 - 4) The Bible now provides the words of God so that the church can know God’s will (2 Timothy 3:16-17 “All scripture?”).
 - 5) The word now provides the historical record of the miraculous that confirms the truth of the gospel (John 20:30-31).
 - 6) The word now does all of the things that the Holy Spirit did in the early church and therefore there is no more need of the miraculous measure of the Holy Spirit.

CONCLUSION:

1. We have studied the miraculous work of the Holy Spirit in the early church.
 - 1) It was PROMISED by Jesus.

- 2) It was PERFORMED by the Holy Spirit.
- 3) It was PROPAGATED by the Apostles.
- 4) It was PERFECTED and COMPLETED in the coming of the complete written word of God.

2. Invitation

- 1) If you are a Christian but have fallen away
- 2) If you are not a Christian this morning heed the plan that it has for man's salvation today!
 - a. Hear the word; Romans 10:17 "Faith comes by hearing..."
 - b. Believe with all your heart; Hebrews 11:6 "For without faith it is impossible"
 - c. Repent of your sins (Acts 17:30).
 - d. Confess Jesus as the Son of God (Matthew 16:16).
 - e. Be baptized for the remission of your sins (Mark 16:15-16).