

CONTINUITY OF SCRIPTURE

JESUS, OUR GREAT HIGH PRIEST; THE HOLY SPIRIT, OUR COMFORTER

Week 19/JROC – BE FILLED with the Spirit – Pt. 2

June 2, 2024

Following Pentecost we read in Acts 6...

Acts 6:1 - *Now in those days, when the number of the disciples (the students) was multiplying, (the Church was growing) there arose a complaint against the Hebrews by the Hellenists, Since the context is the growing Church, those within these two groups were believers in Jesus and were Jewish. The Hebrews were those Jews who embraced Jewish culture. The Hellenists were also Jews – but they embraced Greek culture. What was the complaint? The Hellenists' widows were neglected in the daily distribution (thought to be the serving of food).*

Acts 6:2- *Then the twelve (the original disciples now including Matthias) summoned the multitude of the disciples (students) and said, "It is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and serve tables. The disciples looked for seven men with specific qualifications.*

Acts 6:3-4 - *Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business; ⁴ but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word.*

Observations:

Acts 6:5-6 - *And the saying pleased the whole multitude. And they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit, and Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas, a proselyte from Antioch, ⁶ whom they set before the apostles; and when they had prayed, they laid hands on them.*

Acts 6:7 - *Then the word of God spread, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, (Acts 11: **and a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith**. These are the priests from the tribe of Levi who had been serving in the temple in Jerusalem! What caused them to become obedient to the faith – to faith in Jesus the Messiah? The word "obedient" in the Gk means "to submit to the faith;" "to come under the faith."*

Acts 6:8 - *And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and signs among the people. God did great wonders and signs through Stephen as Stephen was full of faith and power (again – a gift from God!) Our God is a God of wonders. Psa. 136:3-4 - *Oh, give thanks to the Lord of lords! For His mercy endures forever: ⁴ to Him Who alone does great wonders, for His mercy endures forever;**

Miracles were a part of the ministries of Moses, Elijah and Elisha, and, of course Jesus and the apostles. Their miracles primarily served the purpose of confirming their message as being from God (Heb. 2:3-4). Jesus' miracles authenticated Him as the Messiah. The book of Acts unfolds a transitional time between the gospels Pentecost. We need to realize that great signs and wonders confirmed that God continued to be active and that He can disrupt the activities of nature to reveal His character and accomplish His purposes.

In considering miracles - the principal test of a miracle: Who receives the glory?

Stephen was cornered by men from what was called the Synagogue of the Freedmen (Acts 6:9). These men rose up and argued with Stephen.

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Acts 6:10 - *And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the Spirit by which he spoke.* These men were not able to withstand the wisdom and the Spirit! Under the dominant control of the Spirit, Stephen was not intimidated! Stephen was invincible – he could not be defeated. He overcame these men.

Acts 6:11-15 - *Then they secretly induced men to say, 'We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and God.'*¹² *And they stirred up the people, the elders, and the scribes; and they came upon him, seized him, and brought him to the council.*¹³ *They also set up false witnesses who said, 'This man does not cease to speak blasphemous words against this holy place and the law;'¹⁴ for we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and change the customs which Moses delivered to us.'*¹⁵ *And all who sat in the council, looking steadfastly at him, saw his face as the face of an angel.* Stephen's face reflected the perfect peace and confidence of one that knows and trusts his God.

Filled with the Holy Spirit, Stephen boldly preached.

Acts 7:54 - *When they heard these things they were cut to the heart (mentally sawn in two), and they gnashed (grinding of the teeth) at him with their teeth.*⁵⁵ *But he, being full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God,* (The Holy Spirit was the unseen source of Stephen's strength)⁵⁶ *and said, 'Look! I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!'* (Standing? Perhaps with nail-scarred hands outstretched Jesus was saying, "Come home, sweet Stephen. Come home, dear servant of Mine.")⁵⁷ *Then they cried out with a loud voice, stopped their ears, and ran at him with one accord;*⁵⁸ *and they cast him out of the city and stoned him. And the witnesses laid down their clothes at the feet of a young man named Saul.*⁵⁹ *And they stoned Stephen as he was calling on God and saying, 'Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.'*⁶⁰ *Then he knelt down and cried out with a loud voice, 'Lord, do not charge them with this sin.'* *And when he had said this, he fell asleep (to be quieted, to be calm, to be at peace). Is this kind of "overcoming" part of the filling of the Holy Spirit? It was almost as the Spirit provided Stephen with a special readiness for battle.*

Why are we given the Spirit? ...to comfort, to counsel, to intercede for us...to guide us into all truth...to speak of what He hears...to tell us things to come...to glorify Jesus. The Spirit of truth will reveal Jesus to us! Digging further...

I Cor. 2:9-11 - *Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him.*¹⁰ *But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God.*¹¹ *For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God.*

I Cor. 2:12-13 - *Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God.* ¹³ *These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.*

I Cor. 2:14-15 - *But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.* ¹⁵ *But he who is spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is rightly judged by no one.* Discern means "to sift." Discernment is the ability to see beyond the appearance of our circumstances, to perceive God's

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viewpoint on them, and to come to wise decisions. True discernment requires diligent study of God's Word.

The Apostle John wrote of the "anointing" from God...

I John 2:20 – *But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you all know.* When we are born again we have the Spirit of God. And, we have the anointing. We know something that cannot be taught and cannot be learned. We have a discernment, a built-in awareness. Since the Spirit searches all things, could He give us insight and on-the-spot discernment that transcend human ability, academic learning? He's God. Why couldn't He? Reread I Cor. 2:9-11. How does that look? Might it look like an underlying sense of absolute confidence and unusual courage? The anointing is a knowledge. You know and you discern. It is an inner awareness. It is a surge of strengthening assurance. We must never forget that this knowledge and discernment "filter" MUST ALWAYS exalt the Lord and give all glory to God!

REMEMBER, we need to ALWAYS stay with Scripture! AND, Scripture speaks of this anointing. Scripture speaks of the deep things of God. Our individual experiences may vary somewhat as the Lord uses each of us in unique ways. We must never stray from Scripture.

Might the Spirit giving us insight look like...

Acts 20:22-24 - *And now, behold, bound by the Spirit, I am on my way to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there,* ²³ *except that the Holy Spirit solemnly testifies to me in every city, saying that chains and afflictions await me.* ²⁴ *But I do not consider my life of any account as dear to myself, so that I may finish my course and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify solemnly of the gospel of God's grace.*

Paul's words, *I go bound by the Spirit to Jerusalem*, seem to be telling us that Paul is bound by the Holy Spirit rather than being tied up in knots within his own spirit. He was fixated on the Holy Spirit's leading. The Holy Spirit testified re: imprisonment and affliction awaiting Paul. Paul could have been seized by fear which could've sidetracked him. But it didn't. WHY? Because Paul was not all that important to Paul! Remember Paul's words in Phil. 1:21 - *For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain.* Isn't it remarkable how fear VANISHES when the Holy Spirit communicates His presence and gives us His incredible joy and peace and matchless POWER amid fiery trials?

The filling of the Spirit not only means that our lives are totally available to God, but it also includes such things as keeping short accounts with God, confessing whatever may have come between us and God...and walking in complete dependence upon Him. When we do, God works through us, speaks through us, uses us, empowers our gifts and our service for Him in ways we could never accomplish on our own.

QUESTIONS

How did God speak to you in this lesson?

What are your questions?

What can you share with others from this lesson?