

## **WITH THEM NOT IN THEM (1)**

### **The Holy Spirit in the Life of the Old Testament Believer**

#### **A. Introduction**

1. In the New Testament we are told about three distinct ministries of the Holy Spirit that all believers in the Lord Jesus experience.

These are regeneration, indwelling, and empowering.

Regeneration refers to the Holy Spirit's work of enabling humans to hear, understand, believe, and obey God's Word (Belief).

Indwelling refers to the Holy Spirit's presence in the believer which enables them to remain as Christians and live holy lives (Faithfulness).

Empowering refers to the power that the Holy Spirit gives for service (Witness).

2. Are these three distinct ministries of the Holy Spirit that all believers today experience, experienced by Old Testament believers?

The Holy Spirit regenerates all Old Testament believers.

The Holy Spirit indwells no Old Testament believers.

The Holy Spirit empowers some Old Testament believers.

#### **B. The Holy Spirit regenerates all Old Testament believers**

1. Apart from regeneration by the Holy Spirit, it is impossible for people to be saved.

"Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God – children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God." (John 1:12-13)

"In reply Jesus declared, "I tell you the truth, no-one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again." (John 3:3)

"The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life." (John 6:63)

The reason is that without regeneration, people are spiritually dead.

"As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins." (Ephesians 2:1)

"When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with Christ." (Colossians 2:13)

"Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave to sin... You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire." (John 8:34, 44)

2. If any people in the Old Testament were saved, they needed to be regenerated by the Holy Spirit.

The phrase that is used to describe this is 'circumcision of the heart'.

"The LORD your God will circumcise your hearts and the hearts of your descendants, so that you may love him with all your heart and with all your soul, and live." (Deuteronomy 30:6)

"No, a man is a Jew if he is one inwardly; and circumcision is circumcision of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the written code. Such a man's praise is not from men, but from God." (Romans 2:29)

3. We find several glimpses that people in the Old Testament had been regenerated.

Adam and Eve responded in faith to the promise of a Saviour in Genesis 3:15.

"Adam named his wife Eve, because she would become the mother of all the living." (Genesis 3:20)

"Adam lay with his wife Eve, and she became pregnant and gave birth to Cain. She said, "With the help of the LORD I have brought forth a man." (Genesis 4:1)

"Adam lay with his wife again, and she gave birth to a son and named him Seth, saying, "God has granted me another child in the place of Abel, since Cain killed him." (Genesis 4:25)

Abraham believed in the LORD.

"Abram believed the LORD, and he credited it to him as righteousness." (Genesis 15:6)

The people of Israel are called to come to God that they might live.

"Give ear and come to me; hear me, that your soul may live." (Isaiah 55:3)

4. Jesus tells His disciples that He will ask the Father to give them the Holy Spirit if they love Him and obey His commands.

"If you love me, you will obey what I command. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counsellor to be with you for ever – the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you." (John 14:15-17)

This suggests that they have the ability to love Jesus and obey His commands and that means they must have been regenerated.

5. Why does it matter that the Holy Spirit regenerates all Old Testament believers?

It means that Old Testament believers are saved the same way we are.

There is only one way by which sinners can be saved, and that is through faith in the Messiah.

But the only way they (like us) could have faith in the Messiah is if their hearts have been regenerated.

### **C. The Holy Spirit indwells no Old Testament believers**

1. The New Testament teaches that indwelling by the Holy Spirit did not begin to take place until after Jesus had completed His saving work.

"On the last and greatest day of the Feast, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him." By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified." (John 7:37-39)

God was present 'with' Old Testament believers but not 'in' Old Testament believers.

"And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counsellor to be with you for ever – the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you." (John 14:16-17)

2. If the Holy Spirit indwells no Old Testament believers, this raises a couple of questions.

How did believers before the Spirit was given, live holy lives?

What does 'with' mean in John 14:17 and how did this enable them to remain faithful?

When did believers start being indwelt by the Holy Spirit?

3. Doesn't the Old Testament speak of some who had the Holy Spirit?

Yes, it does, but they were empowered, not indwelt, by the Spirit.

#### **D. The Holy Spirit empowers some Old Testament believers**

1. The Holy Spirit empowered some not all Old Testament believers.

This empowering was to mark certain people out.

This empowering was not permanent but was for some specific form of service.

2. Who was empowered by the Spirit?

The leaders of Israel.

"The LORD said to Moses: "Bring me seventy of Israel's elders who are known to you as leaders and officials among the people. Make them come to the Tent of Meeting that they may stand there with you. I will come down and speak with you there, and I will take of the Spirit that is on you and put the Spirit on them. They will help you carry the burden of the people so that you will not have to carry it alone." (Numbers 11:16-17)

"Then the LORD came down in the cloud and spoke with him, and he took of the Spirit was on him and put the Spirit on the seventy elders. When the Spirit rested on them, they prophesied, but they did not do so again." (Numbers 11:25)

"Now Joshua son of Nun was filled with the Spirit of wisdom because Moses had laid his hands on him. So the Israelites listened to him and did what the LORD had commanded Moses." (Deuteronomy 34:9)

"The Spirit of the LORD came upon him [Othniel], so that he became Israel's judge and went to war." (Judges 3:10)

"Then the Spirit of the LORD came upon Gideon, and he blew a trumpet, summoning the Abiezrites to follow him." (Judges 6:34)

"Then the Spirit of the LORD came upon Jephthah. He crossed Gilead and Manasseh, passed through Mizpah of Gilead, and from there he advanced against the Ammonites." (Judges 11:29)

"The woman gave birth to a boy and named him Samson. He grew and the LORD blessed him, and the Spirit of the LORD began to stir him while he was in Mahaneh Dan, between Zorah and Eshtaol." (Judges 13:24-25)

"The Spirit of the LORD came upon him in power so that he tore the lion apart with his bare hands as he might have torn a young goat. But he told neither his father nor his mother what he had done." (Judges 14:6)

"Then the Spirit of the LORD came upon him in power. He went down to Ashkelon, struck down thirty of their men, stripped them of their belongings and gave their clothes to those who had explained the riddle." (Judges 14:19)

"As he approached Lehi, the Philistines came towards him shouting. The Spirit of the LORD came upon him in power. The ropes on his arms became like charred flax, and the bindings dropped from his hands." (Judges 15:14)

"When Saul heard their words, the Spirit of God came upon him in power, and he burned with anger." (1 Samuel 11:6)

"So Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the presence of his brothers, and from that day on the Spirit of the LORD came upon David in power. Samuel then went to Ramah. Now the Spirit of the LORD had departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the LORD tormented him." (1 Samuel 16:13-14)

"Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me." (Psalm 51:11)

The prophets of Israel.

"They made their hearts as hard as flint and would not listen to the law or to the words that the LORD Almighty had sent by his Spirit through the earlier prophets." (Zechariah 7:12)

"Concerning this salvation, the prophets, who spoke of the grace that was to come to you, searched intently and with the greatest care, trying to find out the time and circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing when he predicted the suffering of Christ and the glories that would follow." (1 Peter 1:10-11)

The craftsmen who worked on the tabernacle.

"...and I have filled him with the Spirit of God, with skill, ability and knowledge in all kinds of crafts." (Exodus 31:3)

"Then Moses said to the Israelites, "See, the LORD has chosen Bezalel son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, and he has filled him with the Spirit of God, with skill, ability and knowledge in all kinds of crafts." (Exodus 35:30-31)

Shockingly an unbeliever was too!

"When Balaam looked out and saw Israel encamped tribe by tribe, the Spirit of God came upon him and he uttered his oracle: "The oracle of Balaam son of Beor, the oracle of one whose eye sees clearly, the oracle of one who hears the words of God, who sees a vision from the Almighty, who falls prostrate, and whose eyes are opened." (Numbers 24:2-4)

### 3. One day all God's people would be empowered by the Holy Spirit.

Moses wished that all God's people had the Spirit on them.

"However, two men, whose names were Eldad and Medad, had remained in the camp. They were listed among the elders, but did not go out to the Tent. Yet the Spirit also rested on them, and they prophesied in the camp. A young man ran and told Moses, "Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp." Joshua son of Nun, who had been Moses' assistant since youth, spoke up and said, "Moses, my lord, stop them!" But Moses replied, "Are you jealous for my sake? I wish that all the LORD's people were prophets and that the LORD would put his Spirit on them!" (Numbers 11:26-29)

Moses' wish became a specific prophecy as Joel promised that God would pour out His Spirit on all people.

"And afterwards, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days." (Joel 2:28-29)

John the Baptist said that someone was coming after him who would baptise with the Holy Spirit.

"And this was his message; "After me will come one more powerful than I, the thongs of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. I baptise you with water, but he will baptise you with the Holy Spirit." (Mark 1:7-8)

"Then John gave this testimony: "I saw the Spirit come down from heaven as a dove and remain on him. I would not have known him, except that the one who sent me to baptise with water told me, 'The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is he who will baptise with the Holy Spirit.' I have seen and I testify that this is the Son of God." (John 1:32-34)

After His resurrection, Jesus told His disciples (who were now indwelt by the Holy Spirit) that they needed to wait for the Holy Spirit to give them the power they needed to be His witnesses.

"On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. For John baptised with water, but in a few days you will be baptised with the Holy Spirit." (Acts 1:4-5)

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." (Acts 1:8)

#### 4. On the Day of Pentecost the promise was kept.

All of God's people received the Holy Spirit.

"When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them." (Acts 2:1-4)

This visible, audible, outpouring was to demonstrate the the Spirit had come.

"Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd: "Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say. These men are not drunk, as you suppose. It's only nine in the morning! No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: "In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people." (Acts 1:14-17)

What happened on the Day of Pentecost was and is not the normal experience of believers when they are empowered or filled by the Holy Spirit.

The dramatic nature of the empowering on the Day of Pentecost was to show that the new age when all God's people are empowered by the Spirit had begun.

When Peter and the other disciples were empowered by the Spirit again, it was not accompanied by the same visible and audible signs.

"Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them." (Acts 4:8)

"And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly." (Acts 4:31)

#### 5. What about the other Pentecost-like moments we read about in the book of Acts?

These events were evidence that all types of non-Jewish believers had received this same empowering of the Holy Spirit, and were to be accepted as equal members of the church.

Samaritan believers.

"When the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them. When they arrived, they prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit, because the Holy Spirit had not yet come upon any of them; they had simply been baptised into the name of the Lord Jesus. Then Peter and John placed their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit. When Simon saw that the Spirit was given at the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money and said, "Give me also this ability so that everyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit." (Acts 8:14-19)

God-fearing Gentile believers.

"While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message. The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles. For they heard them speaking in tongues and praising God. Then Peter said, "Can anyone keep these people from being baptised with water? They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have." (Acts 10:44-47)

Gentile believers.

“Paul said, “John’s baptism was a baptism of repentance. He told the people to believe in the one coming after him, that is, Jesus.” On hearing this, they were baptised into the name of the Lord Jesus. When Paul placed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied.” (Acts 19:4-6)

## **E. Conclusion**

### 1. The Holy Spirit regenerates all Old Testament believers

If this were not true, there would be no Old Testament saints in heaven, and the disciples of Jesus were not saved until after His resurrection.

### 2. The Holy Spirit indwells no Old Testament believers

God was present with His people but not present in His people and this enabled them to remain faithful to Him.

### 3. The Holy Spirit empowers some Old Testament believers

Certain Old Testament believers were filled with the Spirit in order to serve in a specific way.

A time was coming when all believers would be empowered by the Spirit.

This new age began on the Day of Pentecost, and now believers are filled (repeatedly) by the Holy Spirit for ministry.