(1) Studies on the Holy Spirit

Does the Holy Spirit Work in Believers Today?

**Answering Common Objections To the Present-Day**

**Work of the Holy Spirit**

1. 1 Cor. 13:8-13 (“The Perfect” has come, meaning The Complete Canon

of Scripture, and there is no longer any need for these gifts).

**1 Cor. 13:8-13**

**8**Love never fails; but if *there are gifts of* prophecy, they will be done away; if *there are* tongues, they will cease; if *there is* knowledge, it will be done away. **9**For we know in part and we prophesy in part; **10 but when the perfect comes, the partial will be done away**. **11**When I was a child, I used to speak like a child, think like a child, reason like a child; when I became a man, I did away with childish things. **12**For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I will know fully just as I also have been fully known. **13**But now faith, hope, love, abide these three; but the greatest of these is love.

* **“Now” and “Then” Statements Describing When *The Perfect* Has Come**

**NOW** **THEN**

“see in a mirror dimly” “face to face”

“I know in part” “know fully just as also I am fully known”

“now faith, hope, love, abide” implied survival of “love”

The implications are that when the “**Perfect”** comes, there will be no more need for the spiritual gifts of prophecy, tongues, or supernatural knowledge – because we will see “face to face” and “will know fully just as also I am fully known” – in other words – we will know God as He fully knows us. It also follows that the “Now” of faith, hope, and love will be done away (except for love – vs 13 – which is the very essence of God) because faith and hope have no place when our fullness with God has been realized **(Hebrews 11:1; Romans 8:24).**

So the real question is, has the completion and the final compilation of the written word accomplished a life for us where we see God “face to face” and “know (Him) fully, just as we have been fully known (by Him)? Is there no longer a place for faith and hope in our lives? **We all know that our lives have not been affected in this way by the written word.**

* **The Error of Legalism**

When we suggest that the Perfect is the written word, and that the coming of that written compiled word eliminates the need of the Spirit’s miraculous power and spiritual gifts since all truth is now available – we are suggesting a very **works-based, legalistic concept.**

Let me explain: We are assuming that all man needs is the complete instructions/law/truth from God to live a righteous life and overcome sin. **The problem with that concept is that the entire history of God’s people throughout Scripture (and our own experience as well) show’s man trying to be right with God based on his own ability to follow God’s clearly revealed instructions/law/truth as an utter failure and impossibility.**

**Romans 8:1-4**

Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. **2**For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death. **3**For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God *did*: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and *as an offering* for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh, 4 so that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

**Galatians 2:16, 20-21**

**16**nevertheless **knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law** but through faith in Christ Jesus, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, so that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the Law; **since by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified… 20**I have been crucified with Christ; **and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me;** and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me. **21**I do not nullify the grace of God, for **if righteousness *comes* through the Law, then Christ died needlessly.”**

It is very clear from these passages and literally hundreds of others, that man – even if he has complete, compiled, *Perfect*, truth – still needs the power of God within him (the Holy Spirit indwelling) through faith in Christ to accomplish righteousness before God.

So to suggest that the Spirit’s miraculous power and spiritual gifts was no longer needed because the full and complete truth arrived **is missing the point of what we need to be righteous before God.** God’s people have always had God’s truth and instruction – it was not until God poured out his Spirit on all mankind which Christ enabled by His Sacrifice (Joel 2 & Acts 2) that man could finally not only be reunited with God – **but STAY in a state of union with Him by the Sanctification of the Holy Spirit’s work** (Hebrews 10:14). This is the message of the Gospel. This is why it is “Good News”. God accomplishes what we cannot for ourselves:

**1) Jesus’ blood pays for our sins; and**

**2) His Spirit sustains our righteousness through the work of sanctification so that we can REMAIN in communion with Him. It wasn’t enough for Jesus to be “with” us – He had to be “in” us.**

* **The Greek Work for *Perfect* (Teleios and Teleioo)**

*“having reached it’s end, finished, complete, perfect; primarily of physical development, and then with ethical import, fully grown or mature.” “To bring to an end by completing or perfecting. Is used of accomplishing, of bringing to completion.”*

-- W. E. VINE Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words

**The Word Perfect refers to a maturing process, or becoming complete. It continues the same thought that Paul began in 1 Cor. 13:11 describing our spiritual development:**

*When I was a child, I used to speak like a child, think like a child, reason like a child; when I became a man, I did away with childish things.*

**Paul’s other writings confirm this same use of the word:**

**Ephesians 4:13**

**13**until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, **to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.**

**Colossians 1:28**

**28**We proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, so that we **may present every man complete in Christ.**

**Philippians 1:6**

**6***For I am* confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you **will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.**

**Philippians 3:12-15**

**12 Not that I have already obtained *it* or have already become perfect**, but I press on so that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus. **13 Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of *it* yet**; but one thing *I do*: forgetting what *lies* behind and reaching forward to what *lies* ahead, **14 I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.** **15 Let** **us therefore, as many as are perfect**, have this attitude; and if in anything you have a different attitude, God will reveal that also to you…

So both the context and the meaning of the word *Perfect* show clearly that **we are talking about the completion or maturing of our inner-man to final sanctification (perfection) before God – not the complete compilation of the written word.**

It also follows that once we have been totally sanctified by the Spirit at the end of our lives “until the day of Jesus Christ” – then it makes sense that spiritual gifts along with hope and faith no longer have any purpose.

2. The Apostles were the only ones who could impart the ability of

miraculous gifts, and so when they all died, the ability to practice and/or

pass on these gifts died with them.

Some have argued that the ONLY way spiritual gifts and the baptism of the Holy Spirit were imparted were through the hands of the Apostles. They argue this from Acts 8:14-19

**Acts 8:14-19**

**14**Now when the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent them Peter and John, **15**who came down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit. **16**For He had not yet fallen upon any of them; they had simply been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. **17**Then they *began* laying their hands on them, and they were receiving the Holy Spirit. **18 Now when Simon saw that the Spirit was bestowed through the laying on of the apostles’ hands,** he offered them money, **19**saying, “Give this authority to me as well, so that everyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit.”

**But the Scriptures show that there are several other examples of both the baptism of the Spirit and spiritual gifts being bestowed through others and by other means:**

The Transfer of Spiritual Gifts and Holy Spirit Baptism in the Scripture

* **Ananias (Acts 9:10-19)**
  + 17So Ananias departed and entered the house, and **after laying his hands** on him said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road by which you were coming**, has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit."**
* **The Eldership over Timothy (1 Timothy 4:13-15)**
  + 14Do not neglect the spiritual gift within you, **which was bestowed on you through prophetic utterance with the laying on of hands by the presbytery.**
* **The Holy Spirit falling on the Gentiles (Acts 10:44-48)**
  + 44While Peter was still speaking these words, **the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who were listening to the message. 45All the circumcised believers who came with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also.**
* **Gentiles Received the “Same Way” as the Apostles Had (Acts 11:15-18)**
  + 15"And as I began to speak, **the Holy Spirit fell upon them just as He did upon us at the beginning.** 16"And I remembered the word of the Lord, how He used to say, John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.' 17**"Therefore if God gave to them the same gift as He gave to us also after believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could stand in God's way?"**
* **Laying on of Hands was Considered and Elementary Practice of First Century Christians (Heb. 6:1-3)**

It is clear that the Holy Spirit and His gifts came in many ways through different people besides the apostles. It is also clear that these gifts, and even the imparting of them on others, were considered basic to the Christian life**. It is important to note that Peter describes what happened to the Gentiles as the Holy Spirit being “poured out” which is an obvious reference to the prophetic promise in Joel 2 fulfilled in Acts 2 – and that it was the same as what the apostles themselves experienced in Acts 2.**

So to suggest that ONLY the apostles could use or impart the gift, and when they died, the Holy Spirit and His gifts could no longer be imparted is simply not Biblical.

3. A Lack of Experience in the Body of Christ Today.

Based on the above study, the Holy Spirit and His gifts are in operation today. There are, however, reasons why many Christians do not experience either:

* **Doubting God’s Power Hinders the Spirit’s Work** (Mark 6:1-6; James 1:5-8)
* **The Work of the Spirit is Foolish and Undistinguished to the Proud or Fearful** (1 Cor. 1:20-31)

**Two Eternally Important Conclusions:**

**1. The Gifts of the Holy Spirit Are Meant to Edify and Nurture the Common Good of the Church**

**1 Cor. 12:7**

But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good…

**2. The Holy Spirit, His Power, and Gifts to Us are Proof that We Belong to God Until Jesus Comes Again:**

**Ephesians 1:14-15**

In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, **you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of *God’s own* possession**, to the praise of His glory.