

The Promise and Gift of the Spirit

I. Promise of the Spirit

- The problem of the OT is that Israel lacked the power to obey God. Even though God gave Israel the land, the law, and many other gifts, the OT ended in judgment because Israel could not repent of their sin.
- The OT shows us the power of our sin so that we would know that salvation can only come from God.
- In the OT God promises a new and powerful work of the Spirit in the new covenant:
 - The gift of the Spirit will mark the end of judgment:
 - Isa 32:15 [Desolation will continue] “until the Spirit is poured upon us from on high, and the wilderness becomes a fruitful field, and the fruitful field is deemed a forest.”
 - See also Ezek 37:14.
 - The gift of the Spirit will enable true repentance and godliness:
 - Deut 30:6 [In the return from exile,] “the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your offspring, so that you will love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live.” (cf. Rom 2:29)
 - Isa 44:3 “For I will pour water on the thirsty land, and streams on the dry ground; I will pour my Spirit upon your offspring, and my blessing on your descendants.” [Descriptions of godliness follows.]
 - Ezek 36:26–27 “And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.”
 - The Spirit will come upon all God’s people, of every class:
 - Joel 2:28–29 “And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions. Even on the male and female servants in those days I will pour out my Spirit.
 - The Spirit will never depart from the people:
 - Isa 59:21 “My Spirit that is upon you, and my words that I have put in your mouth, shall not depart out of your mouth, or out of the mouth of your offspring, or out of the mouth of your children’s offspring,’ says the LORD, ‘from this time forth and forevermore.”
 - The Spirit will come first of all on the coming king, the servant of YHWH:
 - Isa 11:2 “the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.”
 - Isa 61:1 “The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me to bring good news to the poor ...”
 - The Spirit as the fulfillment of all the promises to Abraham: Gal 3:14

II. What's new about the Spirit in the new covenant

Old covenant	New covenant
The Spirit was present, but in a temple (a building).	The Spirit is present within us (the church is the temple).
A few individuals had the Spirit in a saving way, but as a whole the nation was apostate.	The church as a whole has the Spirit: all classes and ages and genders. The unusual exception is a church member who lacks the Spirit.
The nation as a whole lacked the power to obey.	The church now can obey God from the heart (Rom 8:4; 2 Cor 3:6, 8).
The Spirit eventually left the first temple as an act of God's judgment.	God promises never to leave his church.

- If we say that believers in the OT did not have the Spirit, then they are saved in a different way from us. Our salvation is by union with Christ by faith and by the Spirit.
- OT believers were united to Christ by faith and by Spirit, and thus they participated in new covenant realities before those realities were actually inaugurated by Christ (Gen 15:6; Rom 3:25).

III. The first recipient of the Spirit: Jesus the messiah

- Jesus is the first recipient of the end-times gift of the Spirit. Abraham Kuyper: "the Church has never sufficiently confessed the influence of the Holy Spirit exerted upon the work of Christ."
- Stage 1: incarnation by the Spirit
 - Mary conceived Jesus by the Spirit (Luke 1:35).
 - Jesus grew in wisdom by the Spirit (Luke 2:52; cf. Isa 11:2).
- Stage 2: ministry and obedience by the Spirit
 - The Spirit comes upon Jesus at his baptism to equip him for his ministry (Luke 3:22); he was "anointed with the Spirit above measure" (WCF 8:3; John 3:34).
 - The Spirit led Jesus every step of his life (Matt 4:1; Luke 4:15).
 - All Jesus' miracles were by the Spirit (Matt 12:18, 28).
 - The Spirit was the source of Jesus' joy (Luke 10:21).
 - At the end, Jesus offered himself through the eternal Spirit (Heb 9:14).
- Stage 3: resurrection and reign by the Spirit
 - Jesus was declared Son of God in power by the Spirit (Rom 1:4).
 - Jesus was raised by the power of the Spirit (Eph 1:19-20; 2 Cor 3:6; 1 Tim 3:16 ["vindicated/justified by the Spirit"]).
 - Jesus became the first man to be completely filled with Spirit (Acts 2:33).
 - He has become so suffused with the Spirit that Jesus is now called "life-giving Spirit" (1 Cor 15:45; cf. 2 Cor 3:17).
- Horton: "the Spirit not only applies redemption but was a principal agent of it. He clothed the Redeemer in our humanity, led and upheld him in his ministry, and raised him from the dead as the eschatological firstfruits."