

The Promises of God - Lesson 20

Introduction:

1. God's promises are described in 2 Peter 1:4 as "*exceeding great and precious.*"
2. Because God's promises are so special, they deserve our careful attention.
3. We are presently studying "God's promise to send the Holy Spirit."
 - a. God made this promise through the prophet Joel (Joel 2:28-32).
 - b. Peter stated that Joel's prophecy was fulfilled on Pentecost (Acts 2:16-21).
4. The Scriptures teach that God has given people various measures of the Spirit, including:
 - a. the baptism of the Holy Spirit
 - b. the miraculous indwelling of the Holy Spirit, accompanied by spiritual gifts
 - c. the non-miraculous indwelling of the Holy Spirit.
5. In this lesson we are concentrating on "the miraculous indwelling of the Holy Spirit, accompanied by spiritual gifts."

Discussion:

- I. THE APOSTLES EXERCISED SPIRITUAL GIFTS (Hebrews 2:3-4)
 - A. Those who heard the Lord [the apostles] confirmed the great salvation that He proclaimed.
 - B. As the apostles confirmed the great salvation, God bore them witness.
 1. One way that God bore them witness was through "*gifts of the Holy Spirit.*"
 2. The gifts demonstrated the authority behind their teaching (Matthew 16:19; 18:18).
 - C. The apostles were able to exercise spiritual gifts because they received the baptism of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:1-4).
 - D. In addition to the apostles, . . .
- II. OTHER CHRISTIANS WERE ABLE TO EXERCISE SPIRITUAL GIFTS
 - A. (1 Corinthians 12:8-10) The Christians in Corinth possessed nine spiritual gifts, including:
 1. "*the word of wisdom*": a special wisdom that came from God (1 Corinthians 2:6-7)
 2. "*the word of knowledge*": the ability to understand and teach the truths revealed by the apostles (2 Corinthians 4:6-7)
 3. "*faith*"
 - a. This was not the kind of faith that we possess (Romans 10:17).
 - b. This was a miraculous faith (Matthew 17:20).
 4. "*the gifts of healing*": miraculous healing (James 5:14-15)
 5. "*the working of miracles*": the ability to perform miracles other than healing
 6. "*prophecy*": speaking a message from God under the guidance of the Holy Spirit
 7. "*discerning of spirits*": the ability to judge spirits to determine whether they were evil or from God (1 John 4:1)
 8. "*divers kinds of tongues*": the ability to proclaim messages from God in foreign languages
 9. "*the interpretation of tongues*": the ability to translate messages spoken in foreign languages.
 - B. The apostles were able to exercise their gifts because they were baptized in the Spirit; however, spiritual gifts had to be "imparted" to other Christians (Romans 1:11).
 - C. Spiritual gifts were imparted to other Christians through the "laying on of hands" by the apostles (Acts 6:5-6, 8; 8:5-7, 14-17; 19:5-6; 2 Timothy 1:6).
 - D. The apostles and other Christians exercised spiritual gifts; however, . . .
- III. SPIRITUAL GIFTS WERE TEMPORARY (1 Corinthians 13:8-10)
 - A. They would end when "*that which is perfect*" [finished, complete -- 2 Chronicles 8:16] came.
 - B. The New Testament is "*the perfect law of liberty*" (James 1:25).
 - C. When the New Testament was completed there was no longer any need for spiritual gifts, and they vanished away.

Conclusion:

1. Spiritual gifts were exercised by the apostles and by other Christians.
2. These gifts existed when the church was in its infancy -- they were not permanent.
3. Today we have something far greater -- the completed New Testament of Christ.