

The Promises of God - Lesson 23

Introduction:

1. We learn from 2 Peter 1:4 that God's promises are "*exceeding great and precious.*"
2. Because God's promises are so special, they deserve our careful attention.
3. One of God's promises is revealed in Joel 2:28-32 -- He promised to send His Spirit.
4. According to the Scriptures,:
 - a. God kept His promise (Acts 2:16-21)
 - b. God has given people various measures of the Holy Spirit, including:
 - 1) the baptism of the Holy Spirit [received by the apostles (Acts 2) and the household of Cornelius (Acts 10)]
 - 2) the miraculous indwelling of the Holy Spirit, accompanied by spiritual gifts [imparted by the laying on of the apostles' hands (Acts 8:14-17; 19:5-6)]
 - 3) the non-miraculous indwelling of the Holy Spirit [received by those who obey the Gospel (Acts 2:38; 5:32)].
5. Because the indwelling of the Holy Spirit is conditional (Romans 8:9-11), we must comply with the instructions that relate to Him.
6. In this lesson we are concentrating on the instruction for Christians to "*be filled with the Spirit*" (Ephesians 5:18).
 - a. The expressions "*filled with the Holy Spirit*" and "*full of the Holy Spirit*" are found in many passages.
 - b. A careful study of these passages indicates that:
 - 1) certain individuals have been filled with the Spirit in a miraculous sense
 - 2) there is a non-miraculous sense in which Christians are to be filled with the Spirit.

Discussion:

- I. CERTAIN INDIVIDUALS HAVE BEEN FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT IN A MIRACULOUS SENSE
 - A. John (Luke 1:15), Elisabeth (Luke 1:41-42), and Zacharias (Luke 1:67) were "*filled with the Holy Spirit.*"
 1. They received a special anointing of the Holy Spirit.
 2. This occurred before Christianity was established.
 - B. Jesus was "*full of the Holy Spirit*" (Luke 4:1).
 1. The Spirit descended upon Jesus when He was baptized (Luke 3:21-22).
 2. Jesus received the Spirit without "*measure*" (John 3:34).
 - C. The apostles were "*filled with the Holy Spirit*" (Acts 2:4; 4:8, 31; 9:17; 13:9).
 - D. In the early church Christians were able to receive the Spirit when the apostles laid hands on them (Acts 8:12-17; 19:5-6).
 - E. Stephen's situation is interesting.
 1. Being "*full of the Holy Spirit*" was a requirement of the seven men who would serve the Jerusalem church (Acts 6:3).
 2. One of the men, Stephen, was full "*of the Holy Spirit*" (Acts 6:5).
 3. (Acts 6:6) The apostles laid their hands on Stephen and the other men.
 4. Stephen was then able to perform miracles (Acts 6:8).
 5. Just before Stephen was killed he was "*full of the Holy Spirit*" (Acts 7:55).
 - F. These are cases where individuals were filled with the Holy Spirit in a miraculous sense.
- II. OTHERS WERE FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT IN A NON-MIRACULOUS SENSE
 - A. Stephen was "*full of the Holy Spirit*" before the apostles laid their hands on him.
 - B. Barnabas was "*full of the Holy Spirit*" (Acts 11:22-24).
 1. This is mentioned in connection with his conduct.
 2. He was also a great encourager.
 - C. The disciples in Iconium were "*filled with the Holy Spirit*" (Acts 13:51-52).
 - D. To "*be filled with the Spirit,*" let us fulfill our responsibilities that relate to Him.