

The Fullness of the Holy Spirit

Deuteronomy tells us in the 6th chapter and verse 23, “And he brought us out from thence, that he might bring us in, to give us the land which he swore unto our fathers.” God was telling Israel that the reason He brought them out of Egypt was for the specific reason so that He might bring them into Canaan, the land of promise. He “brought them out” that He might “bring them in.” Egypt was a picture of the world. The parting of the Red Sea and deliverance from the Egyptians is a picture of salvation. The wilderness is a place of provision, but also of discipline for disobedience. Canaan is the place God desires us to be. It is the place of ultimate blessing explained in Deuteronomy 26:8, 9: “And the LORD brought us forth out of Egypt with a mighty hand, and with an outstretched arm, and with great terribleness, and with signs, and with wonders: And he hath brought us into this place, and hath given us this land, even a land that floweth with milk and honey.” Great men of God and prolific authors such as Alan Redpath who wrote the classic commentary on the Book of Joshua, “Victorious Christian Living,” point out that the land of Canaan is a picture of the Spirit-filled Christian life.

Too many Christians view the fullness of the Holy Spirit in one’s life as optional. Others look at it as something that only servants of the Lord such as pastors, evangelists or missionaries should enjoy. Acts 2:39 tells us differently: “For the promise (the gift of the Holy Spirit) is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.” Early in my ministry I was influenced by the book, “The Holy Spirit, Who He Is and What He Does” by R. A. Torrey. I began to search out and find out for myself what the fullness of the Holy Spirit was all about. Here are just a few Bible verses that should kindle or rekindle the longing for His fullness: John 15:5; John 14:16-18; John 16:7-15; Ephesians 5:18; Luke 11:13; Luke 22:49 and Acts 5:32. I want to parallel the entry into the Promised Land as the fulfillment of obedience required to be filled with God’s Spirit. God brings us out that He might bring us in!

I. WHEN GOD MOVES, WE MOVE.

Joshua 3:3

The Ark of the Covenant was the epicenter of God’s presence in the earth. It was over this unique piece of furniture that God’s glory would hover. The phrase “go after it” is a direct, emphatic command to follow God.

God gives the power of His Spirit to those who follow Him wholly (Numbers 32:8-12; Joshua 14:9, 14).

A. Give the Lord space.
Joshua 3:3

B. Expect great things.
Joshua 3:5

William Carrey said, "Expect great things from God. Attempt great things for God."

C. God does not change.

Joshua 3:7; Joshua 4:14. As God was with Moses, so also was He with Joshua. Even today our Lord is willing to bless any of His children who are obedient to Him.

II. WHEN GOD STOPS US, WE PATIENTLY WAIT.

Joshua 3:8

Psalm 46:10a: "Be still, and know that I am God...."

Exodus 14:13: "And Moses said unto the people, Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD...."

"Good things come to those who wait" is more than a cliché. To those who follow the Lord, it is a reality! Psalm 37:23 tells us, "The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD: and he delighteth in his way." Not only are his steps ordered, but so also are his "stops." What should our attitude be when God stops us in our tracks?

A. Get as close as possible to the Lord.
Joshua 3:9b: "...Come hither...."

B. Listen attentively.

Joshua 3:9c: "...hear the words of the LORD your God."

Isaiah 50:5: "The Lord GOD hath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away back."

C. Accept no peaceful coexistence with sin.

Joshua 3:10: "And Joshua said, Hereby ye shall know that the living God is among you, and that he will without fail drive out from before you the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Hivites, and the Perizzites, and the Girgashites, and the Amorites, and the Jebusites."

John 4: 14; John 7:37-39

R. A. Torrey tells a story of a man who bought his old home place with a well that had the best water he had ever tasted. When he dropped the old oak bucket down into the well, to his dismay the well was dry. But when he removed the debris that had clogged the well, the water came gushing again as fresh and clean as it was in his boyhood. By the same token, our spiritual well will run dry if we allow sin to clog the influence of the Holy Spirit. We must remove that which offends the Lord if we are to experience His fullness. And when we do, the well turns into a river of

blessing to us and the world around us. 1Thessalonians 5:19: “Quench not the Spirit.” Ephesians 4:30: “And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.”

1. The Holy Spirit is likened to a dove. Luke 3:22: “And the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him, and a voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased.” It doesn’t take much to bring a startled dove to flight. It does not take deep sin to cause the Holy Spirit to take His flight and withhold the power in our life.

2. The Holy Spirit is likened to wind.

I Chronicles 14:15: “And it shall be, when thou shalt hear a sound of going in the tops of the mulberry trees, that then thou shalt go out to battle: for God is gone forth before thee to smite the host of the Philistines.”

John 3:8: “The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.”

Acts 2:2: “And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.”

3. The Holy Spirit is likened to fire.

Acts 2:3: “And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them.” Like fire that burns the separated chaff from the wheat (Matthew 3:12), God will purge the impurities from our lives when He fills us with His Spirit.

III. WHEN GOD CHALLENGES US, WE ACCEPT.

Joshua 3:13-16

The water of the Jordan did not move until the first step was taken. “For we walk by faith, not by sight” (II Corinthians 5:7).

CONCLUSION:

Ephesians 5:18 tells us to “be filled with the Spirit.” This is said in the imperative mood. In other words, it is not a suggestion; it is a command. It is given in the present tense. In Greek, this is continual action. We are never to stop being filled. It is in the passive voice. This means it is action upon us, not initiated by us. In the English the understanding it is a little hard to navigate, but on a closer investigation it means we cannot fill ourselves; God must fill us. When God says “be filled” it is kind of like saying “be loved.” Being loved is what someone does to us and for us. Being filled is something God does for us and in us. Therefore, what is our part in

this glorious process? Our responsibility is to be available. II Timothy 2:21: “If a man therefore purge himself from these (iniquities), he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master’s use, and prepared unto every good work.”

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Johnny Pope". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal line extending from the end of the name.