

## The Spirit Post AD 70

In order to begin a consideration of the subject of The Spirit After the Consummation of All Things at AD70, it only seems logical that we begin by consulting OC prophecies concerning the Spirit's work in relation to that consummation.

We already know that ca. 928 BC God's OC people Israel (comprising 12 tribes) had split into 2 chief factions: 10 tribes (retaining the name "Israel") became the northern kingdom, and 2 tribes (becoming known as "Judah") became the southern kingdom, the one to remain in Jerusalem (cf. 1 Kgs 12). Eventually the 10 tribes of Israel (who some call "the lost ten tribes") became "*swallowed up*" among the Gentiles (Hos. 8:8), which was of course all in the plan of God (Eze. 20:23). So...

To the prophet Ezekiel (mainly in chaps. 36-39), God promised to ultimately recombine and thus revive these tribes by drawing out the remnant of His faithful from among the nations with the Gospel, which, as He knew, would also bring out from among those nations others interested in this Messiah of Jews (cf. Mat. 13:24-30). This then of course led to the fulfillment of the prophecies concerning God's salvation as ultimately including those (the non-Israelite Gentiles) who had never previously been His people. A passage that brings this all together is Isaiah 49:6 in which God said to His Son, "*It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the preserved ones of Israel; I will also give You as a light to the Gentiles that You should be My salvation to the ends of the earth,*" a passage that no doubt Simeon had in mind when, at Jesus' circumcision-ceremony, he prophesied of Christ's destiny. Now...

More specifically from Ezekiel chapters 36—39 we can extract the following concerning the method by which God said He'd accomplish this task of breathing of new life into Israel.

36:27 has God prophesying to His people, "*I will put My Spirit within you.*"

37:14, the familiar chapter about the dry bones returning to life, has Him repeating, "*I will put My Spirit within you, and you shall live.*" Then...

39:29 has Him similarly saying to Ezekiel about His renewed people, "*I will not hide My face anymore from them when I pour out My Spirit upon*" them.

Notice a couple of very interesting points in these verses:

Firstly, as already emphasized, the Spirit (from a word also meaning "breath" as in "the breath of life" of Genesis 2) was to breathe life into God's new/true Israel, a concept that's supported in various NC Scriptures:

Galatians 6:8 and 2 Corinthians 3:6 respectively speak of the Spirit as being the provider of eternal life by means of the New Covenant.

Romans 8:10 & 11 speak of "*the Spirit of life*" that was in those first generation Christians to give them life. Most significant though is...

Romans 8:23: here Paul said to them that they possessed the Spirit for the redemption (or, per v. 11, we could even say the resurrection) of their body.

Secondly, by fulfilling this task of providing life for the NC body of Christ, God would then be able to "face" His people again. What's the significance of that? Well, giving life is equal to with reconciling (which means making friends again with) the members of that body to God, and reconciling two parties is synonymous with bringing them back together in a face-to-face relationship.

When David became angry with his son Absalom for murdering Amnon, David's words to Joab of severing his relationship with Absalom were, "*don't let him see my face,*" or as another version reads, "*he must never come into my presence*" (2 Sam. 14:24); later, when he desired forgiveness, Absalom said to Joab, "*Let me see the king's face; but if there is iniquity in me, let him execute me*" (v. 32), implying he'd rather die than remain out of fellowship with his father.

The relationship between Yahweh and Moses was spoken of in this manner: in Exodus 33:11 doesn't just say that "The Lord spoke to Moses," but that "*The Lord spoke to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend.*" Likewise...

When David desired a closer relationship with Yahweh, one that involved forgiveness, he said to Him, "*When you said, 'Seek My face,' my heart said to You, 'Your face, Lord, I will seek'*" (Psa. 27:8).

And most significant in this vein for us post AD 70 is Revelation 22:4 in which John, when writing about the consummated kingdom, spoke of the New Covenant people as seeing God's face. So...

According to Ezekiel, the Spirit's task was to provide life, which meant He would repair man's relationship to his Creator, bringing them face-to-face.

Now let's try to bring all this a little closer home by considering New Testament passages which help us understand when the Spirit fulfilled His God-appointed task.

In Acts 2:16ff we find the inspired apostle Peter echoing Joel 2:28-32 (which correlates perfectly to Ezekiel 36:27, 37:14, & 39:29): "*It shall come to pass afterward [or, as Peter said, in the last days] that ... I will pour out My Spirit in those days. And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth: blood and fire and pillars of smoke ... before the coming of the great and awesome day of the Lord....*" And what was it that Peter said in Acts 2:16 about these prophecies concerning the events of Acts 2? "*This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel,*" going on with his quote of Joel 2:28-32. So...

Between what points in time did this Peter-quoted prophecy of Joel place the beginning and ending of the Spirit's work? AD 30 to AD 70. And...

What was the purpose? To create an open invitation to anyone of any nation to call upon the name of the Lord for salvation-life (Acts 2:21). Thus...

The promised work of the Spirit (along with whatever means He utilized to fulfilled it) was to be (and as we'll see) was finished at the time of the judgmental-destruction of Jerusalem (cf. 1 Cor. 1:4-8). Now...

Notice I said "promised" Spirit. Why? Because, as Jesus said in Acts 1:4, the giving of the Spirit, as noted in Ezekiel, was a "promise of the Father"; in fact, according to Paul, the Spirit and His work were God's "pledge" that the finished work of the Spirit (i.e. redemption in the temple of reconciliation) would indeed come to fruition.

To some first-generation Christians in Ephesians 1:13-14 Paul wrote, "*you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise*" and that this Spirit was their "*guarantee*" or (as some versions say) pledge of their "*inheritance until the redemption*" or the inheritance. Let's consider a couple words in this passage.

Paul chose the preposition *eis* when he wrote that they were sealed with the Spirit "until" (*eis*) the redemption. This term refers to the action of finally attaining to a goal, i.e. coming into possession of an objective place, purpose, or position. Thayer's lexicon says it refers to an "entrance into" something, even choosing the word "limit" as part of its definition to indicate that this "something" is the aim or goal or purpose of *eis*.

Interestingly, the original term for "pledge" (*arrabohn*) is only found three times in the entire NC Scriptures, and every time it's by Paul and in connection with the Spirit (Eph. 1:14, 2 Cor. 1:22 & 5:5).

The only other place it can be found in Greek Scripture is in the LXX version of Genesis 38:17-20 in which it was used to describe something provided as a security/substitute until the actual payment was provided, at which time the pledge was returned. So...

If we merely allow the Bible to define/explain itself, then all we're left with is that the Spirit returned to God who gave Him once His work was finished.

Later, after Paul spent some time in Ephesians 2:19-22 teaching those first-generation brethren about their being built into a holy temple in the Lord by the Spirit, in 4:30 he cautioned them to "*not grieve the Holy Spirit of God by whom you were sealed for [eis again] the day of redemption.*"

In Romans 8:16 he taught some other first-generation Christians that the Spirit with whom they were sealed expressed that sealing by bearing witness to them that they were children of God. (Cf. Rev. 7:3 & 14:1.) Now...

With all of these thoughts behind us, there's an obvious implication with which we must deal, viz. that the gifts of the Spirit (by which He accomplished His work) have thus ceased at the end of that forty-year period, something which was actually prophesied in Micah 7:15: "*As in the days when you [Israel] came out of Egypt [i.e. that forty-year wilderness period], I will show them [first century peoples] wonders.*" And this corresponds perfectly with the teaching of Paul (1 Cor. 1:4-8, 13:8-10, & Eph. 4:7-13, which is ironically in the context of the Spirit's work as noted earlier).

Even with all of that said, it's important that we still speak more directly to the idea of the Spirit post AD 70; and there are some passages which are relevant to that.

The very temple that the Spirit finished building for God, Christ, and us was given its life by the Spirit, which to me means that this temple can never be devoid of that which gives it life; after all, a body without its spirit is dead. Right?

In Romans 14:17 we find Paul saying of this Spirit-built temple that "*the kingdom of God is not food and drink, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit,*" to me implying that the this kingdom could not possess its righteousness and peace and joy without its life-giver—the Spirit. Besides...

We have the following passages which would be difficult to understand if the Spirit just disappeared from the scene altogether once His creation work was accomplished.

Galatians 5:22-23a: "*The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.*"

Hebrews 3:7ff teaches that the Spirit speaks through the Word, which corresponds to the combining of Ephesians 5:18-19 with its sister-passage in Colossians 3:16. And lastly there's...

Matthew 12:32b: "*Whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him, either in this age [the OC age] or in the age to come [the NC age].*" Why would Jesus say this if the Spirit disappeared completely from the scene post AD 70? So...

What's the work of the Spirit post AD 70? Well, we might as well ask, What's the work of God post AD 70? I'm not so sure we don't answer one if we answer the other. Isn't it enough to just know that the Spirit (being the Spirit of God and the Spirit of Christ) finished His work and is essentially sitting on the throne with the Father & Son, perhaps even being pictured as the life-giving water flowing from that throne in Revelation 22:1?

[Tony E. Denton, 5/12]