

What Saith the Scripture?

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from the series

Keeping Covenant

The Promise of the Spirit

Part 1

"That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the Promise of the Spirit through faith"

(Galatians 3:14).

by Tom Stewart

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Thesis: The possibility that a Christian can walk in perfect love, yielding to God entire obedience, is secured to the Saints by the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Proof: Under the present New Covenant, the Covenant Keeping God has fulfilled to His people the Promise, "I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people" (2Corinthians 6:16). And, that blessed Promise was originally given through Abraham, before even the Old Covenant came to Moses on Mount Sinai. Jehovah promised Abraham, "I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the Earth be blessed" (Genesis 12:3). **The Abrahamic Covenant is the promised blessing of "all families of the Earth" (12:3), while the New Covenant represents the fulfillment of that Promise in the form of the Indwelling Spirit of God blessing us "to will and to do of His good pleasure" (Philippians 2:13).**

"That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the Promise of the Spirit through faith" (Galatians 3:14).

Notice that the promised Spirit, Who causes us to walk in sanctifying, holy obedience, is ours through faith, and that He came by means of the Abrahamic Covenant. The LORD Jesus Christ "took on Him the seed of Abraham" (Hebrews 2:16) that He might atone for the sins of mankind, and also, that He might give to His Church the Holy Spirit of Promise (Ephesians 1:13) at Pentecost. In particular, the reception of the Blessed Paraklete was through the exercise of faith-- just as Abraham trusted God to fulfill God's Word to him. "So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham" (Galatians 3:9). By faith, the apostles gathered in the upper room to receive the Holy Spirit, Who is the "Promise of the Father" (Acts 1:4). Today, if we are Christians, then "are [we] Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the Promise" (Galatians 3:29).

The terms *New Testament* and *Indwelling Holy Spirit* are much taken for granted today, insomuch that they do not convey the power of what the Almighty originally intended for them to represent. "Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls" (Jeremiah 6:16). In Charles G. Finney's August 14th 1839 lecture in "The Oberlin Evangelist" on "The Covenants", he remarked:

"I have said the promise of this covenant [the New Covenant, where *covenant* is the Hebrew word *berith*, or New Testament; and, where *testament* is the synonymous Greek word *diatheke*] became due at the day of Pentecost. The extent to which it has been fulfilled and will be fulfilled has depended and will continue to depend upon the extent to which it is understood, believed and embraced by the church. From the nature of the case, it is a covenant to be made with individuals. No one can receive it but by faith. And as the promise is now due, it is the privilege and duty of every soul to lay hold on full salvation."

Finney implied in this statement that "full salvation" was not merely the blessed assurance of a future home in Heaven, but also, the blessedness of a **present**, sanctified walk of obedience. "5 But whoso keepeth His Word, in Him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in Him. 6 He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked" (1John 2:5-6). [For further clarification of the concept of walking without sinning, please see our article, "[Must We Then Sin?](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/Must.We.Then.Sin.html)" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/Must.We.Then.Sin.html> --] The blessedness of the Spirit's indwelling is not simply to make the Saints happy, but also **that we might be enabled to walk consistently and obediently holy**. That forms new meaning to this concept of *keeping Covenant* with God. "23 And this is His Commandment, That we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as He gave us Commandment. 24 And he that keepeth His Commandments dwelleth in Him, and He in him. And **hereby we know that He abideth in us**, by the Spirit which He hath given us" (3:23-24).

Each generation of Saints must discover for itself the actual value of the Holy Spirit's New Testament blessing. "As for Me, this is My Covenant with them, saith the LORD; My Spirit that is upon thee, and My Words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the LORD, from henceforth and for ever" (Isaiah 59:21). Too often, rather than teaching the Church how the Holy Spirit's indwelling presence has been intended by God to make us to walk in loving obedience, modern teachers:

- (1) negate or minimize the necessity or possibility of entire obedience to God, i.e., "Supposing that gain is Godliness: from such withdraw thyself" (1Timothy 6:5),
- (2) neglect the Holy Spirit's indwelling with doctrinal statements that take for granted or overlook His presence, i.e., "[Paul] said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost" (Acts 19:2), or
- (3) equate an ecstatic, emotional state of happiness with the Spirit's purpose for indwelling the Saints, i.e., "2 For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy... 4 traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God" (2Timothy 3:2, 4).

The Old Testament has amassed passage upon passage that attests to the Almighty's intention of blessing His people with His Spirit. "For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour My Spirit upon thy seed, and My blessing upon thine offspring" (Isaiah 44:3). It is plain that the LORD's intention for His people has always been securing their heartfelt

obedience. "But this shall be the Covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put My Law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be My people" (Jeremiah 31:33). Not simply a temporary obedience, but an Everlasting Covenant of ongoing obedience, is the Promise of God. "And I will make an Everlasting Covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put My fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from Me" (32:40). How can the Church today **not** believe that the Holy Spirit was given to secure the obedience of the individual Believer? "And I will put My Spirit within you, and **cause you** to walk in My Statutes, and ye shall keep My Judgments, and do them" (Ezekiel 36:27).

After Pentecost, the Apostle Peter led the other apostles in answering the Jews, that God's Spirit is **given to those that obey Him**, i.e., just as Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel prophesied. "29 Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men... 32 And we are His witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, Whom God hath **given to them that obey Him**" (Acts 5:29, 32). In other words, the "obedience of faith" (Romans 16:26) begets further obedience and faith; but, the entire process of love, faith, and obedience is the product of *the working of the Spirit of God*. "And He said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto Me, except it were given unto him of My Father" (John 6:65). Even the wisdom of Solomon realized that man needed God's assistance to bend or incline him in the direction of loving obedience. "That He may incline our hearts unto Him, to walk in all His ways, and to keep His Commandments, and His Statutes, and His Judgments, which He commanded our fathers" (1Kings 8:58).

Conclusion

Under the New Covenant or Testament, it is generally understood that individual Christians possess the Holy Spirit. "But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His" (Romans 8:9). It may now be considered common knowledge that God dwells not only WITH His people, but IN His people. "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" (1Corinthians 3:16). Further, this new, indwelling relationship is the product of the New Birth. "3 Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God. 4 Nicodemus saith unto Him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? 5 Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God. 6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7 Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again" (John 3:3-7).

But, **the grand design of the Spirit's indwelling is to secure the perfect love, complete obedience, or entire sanctification that has ALWAYS been demanded by the Moral Law.** "36 Master, which is the great Commandment in the Law? 37 Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. 38 This is the first and great Commandment. 39 And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. 40 On these two Commandments hang all the Law and the prophets" (Matthew 22:36-40). This Law of Love is understood in the New Testament as the Law of Christ. "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the Law of

Christ" (Galatians 6:2). Always, it has been man's imperative to understand how to submit to this Law; and, now it is plain that a Covenant as old as Abraham has been **fulfilled** through the New Covenant's giving of the Holy Spirit-- which, **BY FAITH secures for us perfect obedience to God.** "That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the Promise of the Spirit through faith" (Galatians 3:14).

"And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our LORD Jesus Christ" (1Thessalonians 5:23).

Maranatha!

For a more complete development of the thesis of this article, read Charles G. Finney's lectures in "[The Oberlin Evangelist](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/Finney.Oberlin.Evangelist.html)" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/Finney.Oberlin.Evangelist.html> --, in particular,

- "[The Promises](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/Oberlin_1839/OE1839.The.Promises.html)" -- http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/Oberlin_1839/OE1839.The.Promises.html --,
- "[The Holy Spirit of Promise](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/Oberlin_1839/OE1839.Holy.Spirit.Promise.html)" -- http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/Oberlin_1839/OE1839.Holy.Spirit.Promise.html --, and
- "[The Covenants](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/Oberlin_1839/OE1839.The.Covenants.html)" -- http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/Oberlin_1839/OE1839.The.Covenants.html --.