The Work of the Holy Spirit Then

1. Revealing the Word
   1. As we begin our study of the Holy Spirit’s work in the early church, let’s focus on His work in revealing the will of Christ.
   2. In His “Upper Room Discourse,” Jesus promised to send the Holy Spirit to His apostles for the purpose of revealing ALL truth (John 14:15-18, 26; 15:26; 16:7-12).
      1. Many wrongly assume that these promises (of the Holy Spirit’s guidance) were being made to all believers.
      2. However, Jesus was speaking to “the twelve” (Matt. 26:20).
      3. This is further seen in Acts 1:1-8.
      4. Regarding what is said in John 14-16:
         1. The Holy Spirit would be sent to them from the Father.
         2. He would remind them of all that Jesus taught while on earth.
         3. He would then guide them into ALL truth.
   3. The Spirit revealed the will of Christ to the apostles and prophets (Eph. 3:1-5).
   4. NOTE: the Holy Spirit has always worked this way (2 Peter 1:20-21).
2. Confirming the Word by Miracles
   1. We all know about Jesus. We all have multiple copies of the Bible. But imagine living in the first century when Christianity was new on the scene…and relatively unknown and unproven to most people. The Holy Spirit inspired the apostles and prophets to reveal the will of Christ, but the people weren’t going to just believe it.
   2. Read Mark 16:19-20; Acts 14:3; Romans 15:17-19; Hebrews 2:1-4.
      1. These miraculous gifts “confirmed” (stabilize, establish) the word.
      2. Practically, we can understand why this was so important. Miraculous gifts proved that what the apostles/prophets said was from God (Jn. 3:1-2).
3. Miraculous Gifts – the “Gifts of the Spirit”
   1. We’ve established a generic truth – the Holy Spirit enabled the early Christians to perform miracles for the purpose of confirming the word. But…
      1. How did they receive these miraculous gifts?
      2. What kinds of miracles did they perform?
      3. What is meant by the expression “gift/gifts of the Holy Spirit?”
   2. How did they receive these miraculous gifts?
      1. Many wrongly assume that miraculous gifts were imparted via *Holy Spirit baptism*. We proved the fallacy of this position in our last session.
      2. In reality, miraculous gifts were imparted by the apostles to the Christians through the laying on of hands (Acts 8:14-18; 19:5-6; Rom. 1:11; 2 Tim. 1:6).
   3. What kinds of miracles did they perform?
      1. An exhaustive list can be found in 1 Corinthians 12:4-11.
         1. Wisdom, knowledge and faith were all miraculous *here*.
         2. Prophecies, by definition were predictions.
         3. Tongues were languages (Acts 2:6-12; 1 Cor. 14:10-11).
   4. What is meant by the expression “gift/gifts of the Holy Spirit?”
      1. I believe that this phrase may have multiple meanings.
         1. May refer to miraculous gifts given by the Holy Spirit:
            1. Miraculous gifts are called “gifts” in 1 Cor. 12:4 and Heb. 2:4.
            2. I believe this is the sense in Acts 8.
         2. May refer to salvation given by the Holy Spirit:
            1. Salvation is a gift according to Eph. 2:8; Heb. 6:4.
            2. I believe this is the sense in Acts 2:38. Three reasons:

In context, the Spirit promised the gift of salvation to those who believed (vs. 21).

Those who were baptized didn’t have miraculous gifts when they were baptized (vs. 43).

The Spirit plays a critical role in our conversion; He ‘carries’ us into salvation (1 Cor. 12:12-13).

* 1. So the Holy Spirit worked in the first century by distributing the gift of salvation to folks when they were converted (which He still does today) and by distributing miraculous gifts for the purpose of confirming the word (which He doesn’t do today). *And this is the final point of this session…*
  2. NOTE: I only want to add that the Holy Spirit did much more than reveal the word and empower the early saints to perform miracles. We’ll discuss His other works and activities more in our next session. In this session, we’ve been focusing on His work that was unique in the first century.

1. A Transition in the Spirit’s Work
   1. Many religious people today – especially those in the Charismatic movement (Pentecostals, Church of God, etc.) – believe that the Holy Spirit works today just as He did in the first century:
      1. He still reveals God’s will directly to believers.
      2. He still enables believers to work miracles.
   2. However, we learn that there would be a transition in the Spirit’s work (1 Cor. 13).
      1. They took great pride in their miraculous gifts (context of ch. 12-14).
      2. But Paul emphasizes love *over* miraculous gifts (vs. 1-8a).
      3. Beginning in verse 8, Paul deals specifically with the transition that would take place in the Spirit’s work:
         1. Miraculous gifts would fail, cease and vanish away.
         2. The turning point: when the “perfect” came.
         3. To identify the turning point, we must identify the *perfect*:
            1. Miraculous gifts said to be “in part.”
            2. The word “perfect” is the Greek word *teleios*; means “complete.”
            3. Compare to pie – part relates to the whole (perfect/complete).
            4. What was purpose of miracles? To confirm the word.
            5. Read John 16:12; Acts 20:27; 2 Pet. 1:3; Jude 3.
            6. Relate 1 Cor. 13:11-12 to Ephesians 4:11-14.
   3. We will consider the Holy Spirit’s work *today* in our final session.