

# Beyond the News

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## Gift of Holy Spirit (Part 1 of 2)

By Philip Tang

### Introduction

The Pentecostal movement is by far the largest religious movement to originate in the United States. Beginning in 1901 with only a handful of students in a Bible School in Topeka, Kansas, the number of Pentecostals increased steadily throughout the world during the Twentieth Century until by 1993 they had become the largest family of Protestants in the world. Their numbers, it is claimed, is second only to the Roman Catholics, surpassing the Orthodox churches.

Although Pentecostalism's roots goes back to the late 19th century, it was at the prayer meetings on Azusa Street, starting in April 1906, that the movement gained momentum. Led by William Joseph Seymour, the African American from Louisiana, the extended prayer sessions were attended by about 300 people, with many having to stand outside. Attendees included immigrants, prostitutes, and the poor.

The outcome of the Azusa Street Mission was best described by Seymour's constant pastoral admonition,

*"Now do not go from this meeting and talk about tongues, but try to get people saved."*

The Christ-centred and mission-mindedness of Pentecostals has been highlighted by missiologist Arthur F. Glasser:

*"Many evangelicals have been challenged by the immediacy and reality of God that Pentecostals reflect, along with their freedom and unabashed willingness to confess openly their allegiance to Christ. The achievements of their churches are equally impressive, reflecting their settled conviction that the full experience of the Holy Spirit will not only move the church closer to Jesus at its centre, but at the same time, press*

*the church to move out into the world in mission."*

### Growth of the Pentecostals and Charismatics

With over 200,000,000 members designated as denominational Pentecostals, this group surpassed the Orthodox churches as the second largest denominational family of Christians, surpassed only by the Roman Catholics. In addition to these "Classical denominational Pentecostals," there were over 200,000,000 "Charismatic" Pentecostals in the mainline denominations and independent charismatic churches, both Catholic and Protestant, which placed the number of both Pentecostals and Charismatics at well over 420,000,000 persons in 1993.

They make up a sizeable proportion of Christians in this world and some have put their figures as over 500,000,000 in 2009, approximately 20% of all Christians.

### Characteristic beliefs of Pentecostals and Charismatics

*"Although the Pentecostal movement had its beginnings in the United States, it owed much of its basic theology to earlier British perfectionism and charismatic movements. At least three of these, the Methodist/Holiness movement, the Catholic Apostolic movement of Edward Irving, and the British Keswick "Higher Life" movement prepared the way for what appeared to be a spontaneous outpouring of the Holy Spirit in America.*

*It was from Wesley that the Holiness Movement developed the theology of a "second blessing." It was Wesley's colleague, John Fletcher, however, who first called this second blessing a "baptism in the*

*Holy Spirit," an experience which brought spiritual power to the recipient as well as inner cleansing. This was explained in his major work, Checks to Antinomianism (1771). During the Nineteenth Century, thousands of Methodists claimed to receive this experience, although no one at the time saw any connection with this spirituality and speaking in tongues or any of the other charisms.*

*In the following century, Edward Irving and his friends in London suggested the possibility of a restoration of the charisms in the modern church. A popular Presbyterian pastor in London, Irving led the first attempt at "charismatic renewal" in his Regents Square Presbyterian Church in 1831. Although tongues and prophecies were experienced in his church, Irving was not successful in his quest for a restoration of New Testament Christianity. In the end, the "Catholic Apostolic Church " which was founded by his followers, attempted to restore the "five-fold ministries" (of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers) in addition to the charisms. While his movement failed in England, Irving did succeed in pointing to glossolalia as the "standing sign" of the baptism in the Holy Spirit, a major facet in the future theology of the Pentecostals.*

Irving and his group came closest to what we know of the Pentecostals in the 19<sup>th</sup> century because of their emphasis on the gifts of the Spirit. However, the group quickly died away and the movement did not catch on. It is only when we look back in history do we realize the similarity between the Catholic Apostolic Church of Irving and present day Pentecostalism.

One of the most influential books of the Holiness Movement is the one by W. E. Broadman called *'The Higher Christian Life'*. The distinctive feature of holiness theology is the "second experience, distinct from the first – sometimes years after the first – a *second conversion*, as it is often called"

It was directly from the holiness movement that Pentecostalism adopted the use of the expression 'the baptism of the Holy Spirit' for its **second Christian experience**, together with the full range of emphases that accompany subsequent-experience theology.

Another influential person that had a profound effect on Pentecostalism is the evangelist and president of the Moody Bible Institute, Dr. R A Torrey whose work on the Holy Spirit is often referred to.

Dr. Torrey wrote in his book 'The Person and Work of The Holy Spirit'

*"...it is evident that the baptism with the Holy Spirit is an operation of the Holy Spirit distinct from and additional to His regenerating work...A man may be regenerated by the Holy Spirit and still not be baptized with the Holy Spirit. In regeneration, there is the impartation of life by the Spirit's power, and the one who receives it is saved: in the baptism with the Holy Spirit, there is the impartation of power, and the one who receives it is fitted for service... every true believer has the Holy Spirit (Rom. viii. 9), but not every believer has the baptism with the Holy Spirit (though every believer may have as we have just seen)."*

Formally, the Pentecostal doctrinal position from the Assemblies of God is stated as

*The Promise of the Father:* All believers are entitled to and should ardently expect and earnestly seek the promise of the Father, the Baptism in the Holy Ghost and fire, according to the command of our Lord Jesus Christ...With it comes the enduement of power for life and service, the bestowment of the gifts and their uses in the work of the ministry. Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4,8; 1Cor. 12:1-31. This wonderful experience is distinct from and subsequent to the experience of the new birth. Acts 10:44-46; 11:14-16; 15:7-9.

*The evidence of the Baptism in the Holy Ghost:* The baptism of the believers in the Holy Ghost is witness by the initial sign of speaking with other tongues as the Spirit of God gives them utterance. Acts 2:4. The speaking in tongues in this instance is the same in essence as the gift of tongues(1 Cor. 12:4-10,28), but different in purpose and use.

The important characteristics of the Pentecostal understanding of the baptism in the Holy Spirit is thus,

i) that the event is "distinct from and subsequent to the new birth"

ii) that it is evidenced initially by the sign of speaking in other tongues.

iii) that it must be earnestly sought .

What marks the Pentecostals was described by their systematic theologian Ernest Williams:

*To be a Pentecostal is to identify oneself with the experience that came to Christ's followers on the day of Pentecost; That is, to be filled with the Holy Spirit in the same manner as those who were filled with the Holy Spirit on that occasion.*

### The Holy Spirit in the Old Testament

The work of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament is similar to that in the New Testament. His work can be generally classified into 4 categories (i) the new birth (regeneration) (ii) enabling for special tasks (iii) restraining evil (iv) indwelling in men/women. He was also responsible for a task that is never to be repeated, i.e. the creation of the world and universe.

We find in the second verse of Genesis, "the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep, And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters."

There is no doubt that whatever that God did, He ever did by the power of His Spirit, although throughout all Scripture, from one end to the other, creation is invariably referred directly to the Son of God, as being the Creator. You will find it is always the Lord Jesus, the Son, who is spoken of as the Creator (John 1:3, Col: 1:16, Heb 1:2).

### The new birth

Our Lord said to Nicodemus, "Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things? " (John 3:10). The implication here is that Nicodemus did not understand the need of being born of the Spirit even though he was a master of Israel; this doctrine is taught in the OT, "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. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again." (John 3:5-7).

Before entering the Promised Land the Moses told the Israelites, "...And the LORD thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the LORD

*thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live. (Deut. 30:6)*

Similarly the prophet Ezekiel spoke of the Spirit's giving the new birth.

*And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh. (Ezek.11:19-20)*

*A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. 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. And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God. (Ezek. 36:26-28)*

### Enabling For Special Tasks

Much like the way the spiritual gifts operate in the New Testament, the Spirit would gift certain individuals for service, for example, the building of the tabernacle.

*"See, I have called by name Bezaleel the son of Uri,...and I have filled him with the Spirit of God, with ability and intelligence, with knowledge and all craftsmanship, to devise artistic designs,..."(Exod. 31:2-4; ESV)*

### The anointing of Saul to be king of Israel

*"Then the Spirit of the LORD will rush upon you, and you will prophesy with them and be turned into another man." (1Sam. 10:6)*

This is a remarkable expression, and occurs nowhere else in the Bible. It describes the change as regards the mental power and energy which would result from the influx of the Spirit of the Lord. In the case of Samson it was a supernatural bodily strength; in the case of Saul a capacity for ruling and leading the people of which before he was destitute, and which the Spirit worked in him.

### Restraining evil

Another aspect of the Spirit's work in the Old Testament is His restraint of sin. In Genesis 6:3 God was displeased with the Israelites taking foreign wives.

*And the LORD said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years. (Gen. 6:3)*

God's will is not always to strive with man by his Spirit. The Spirit did strive by Noah's preaching (1Pet 3:19-20) and by inward checks, but it was in vain. The Holy Spirit strives with sinners, by the convictions and admonitions of their conscience to turn them from sin to God. But if the Spirit is resisted, quenched, and strived against, though He strived long, He will not strive always.

### Indwelling in people

In Numbers 11, the Israelites murmured against God and complained to Moses about being in the wilderness, they fret for want of meat. Moses, on God's instruction gathered 70 elders to help him manage the people.

*So Moses went out and told the people the words of the LORD, and he gathered the seventy men of the elders of the people and placed them around the tabernacle. Then the LORD came down in the cloud, and spoke to him, and took of the Spirit that was upon him, and placed the same upon the seventy elders; and it happened, when the Spirit rested upon them, that they prophesied, although they never did so again. (Num 11:24-25, NKJV)*

*But two men had remained in the camp: the name of one was Eldad, and the name of the other Medad. And the Spirit rested upon them. Now they were among those listed, but who had not gone out to the tabernacle; yet they prophesied in the camp. And a young man ran and told Moses, and said, "Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp." So Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' assistant, one of his choice men, answered and said, "Moses my lord, forbid them!" Then Moses said to him, "Are you zealous for my sake? Oh, that all the LORD's people were prophets and that the LORD would put His Spirit upon them!" (Num 11:25-29, NKJV)*

### Spirit coming upon the unconverted

Notice (a) that the Spirit of God was *upon* them but did not dwell in them (b) that God intended simply to give to the whole Israelite nation the visible proof that He had endowed them with His Spirit, as helpers of Moses, and had given them the authority required for the exercise of their calling (c) that they prophesied only once, i.e. this event happened only once (in the KJV Bible it is translated "and did not cease", this follows the Vulgate whereas in the Hebrew we have "and did not add", the version given in the Hebrew is correct (d) **that it was the wish of Moses that God would put His Spirit on all the Israelites.**

{Balaam}

In Numbers 24, the account is given of Balaam, a diviner who was hired to curse the Israelites (Num. 24:16, Neh 13:2). It is quite obvious that he was not a godly man but one who loved money more than anything else. He was killed by the Israelites (Num. 31:8). The Spirit of God came upon Balaam, a godless, unconverted, greedy-for-money man, and acted through him. Numbers 24:2 speaks of "...the Spirit of God came upon him".

{King Saul}

Again we read of unconverted King Saul, "And Saul was afraid of David, because the LORD was with him, and was departed from Saul." (1 Sam. 18:12). Because Saul disobeyed God and followed after his own way; his kingdom was not only taken away from him, but God departed from him.

In 1Samuel 28:6, we read "And when Saul enquired of the LORD, the LORD answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets". Feeling desperate, he called up the Samuel from the dead, "And Samuel said to Saul, Why hast thou disquieted me, to bring me up? And Saul answered, I am sore distressed; for the Philistines make war against me, and **God is departed from me**, and answereth me no more, neither by prophets, nor by dreams: therefore I have called thee, that thou mayest make known unto me what I shall do." (1 Sam 28:15)

**The idea of the Holy Spirit dwelling forever in a person is never implied in the Old Testament.** God is sovereign and He can use any person He pleases, even an unconverted person. These people had the Holy Spirit come upon them, they were God's mouth-piece, yet they missed the real message of the gospel – the love, grace and forgiveness of a just and holy God.

### Spirit coming upon the converted

In contrast, consider King David in Psalm 51 wherein he pleaded with God for forgiveness and to restore him after Nathan the prophet told him in a round-about-way of his sins of adultery and murder. "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy **Holy Spirit from me**" (Psalm 51:10-11). David must have remembered the incident when the Spirit of God departed from Saul.

There is two other occurrence of the word 'Holy Spirit' in the OT. It is found in the book of Isaiah.

*“For He said, ‘Surely they are My people, Children who will not lie.’ So He became their Savior. In all their affliction He was afflicted, And the Angel of His Presence saved them; In His love and in His pity He redeemed them; And He bore them and carried them All the days of old. But they rebelled and grieved His Holy Spirit; So He turned Himself against them as an enemy, And He fought against them. Then he remembered the days of old, Moses and his people saying: ‘Where is He who brought them up out of the sea With the shepherd of His flock? Where is He who put His Holy Spirit within them’ (Isai 63: 8-11) NKJV.*

God, who then gave his Holy Spirit, had wanted to leave them because they rebelled and grieved the Holy Spirit. The nation repented and remembered how God had formerly chosen and sanctified them, and they longed for Him to impart again to them the same Holy Spirit which gave them rest (v.14).

From the verses above, it is obvious that that the presence of the Holy Spirit among the Israelites was for the purpose of redemption, and His presence was of a transient nature.

We will only mention only briefly another task of the Holy Spirit, i.e. He was responsible for giving to mankind the Holy Scriptures.

*“Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.” (2Pet 1:20-21)*

*All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. (2Tim 3:16)*

### Conclusion

The work of the Holy Spirit during the time of the OT and the NT is essentially the same. The main difference is that the Holy Spirit dwells permanently in believers after the day of Pentecost. Pentecost is the event that divides the OT dispensation and the NT dispensation. With the coming of the Pentecost the OT came to an end and the start of the NT dispensation.

Any believer, living today (or in post-Pentecost period), in the Lord Jesus Christ will never, ever pray the prayer of David in Psalm 51 when he said, “...take not thy Holy

*Spirit from me.”* For our Lord said, “And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may **abide with you for ever...** but ye know him; **for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.”** (John 14:16-17);

In the next part we shall examine the significance of the Pentecost and the claims of the Pentecostals/Charismatics in the light of the New Testament witness.

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### Disclaimer:

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