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Kingdom Living, Part 4

The Spirit's Work in our Lives

When a person becomes a Christian the Spirit of God takes up residence in their lives.

1 Corinthians 6:19, "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?"

Truly the Spirit of God indwells the believer. And that raises the question of, Why? Why has God deigned to take up residence in us?

Paul gave the answer in Ephesians 1. Here Paul says why the Holy Spirit was given.

Ephesians 1:14, "Which is the earnest [or down payment] of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory."

The Spirit is the first installment of our so great salvation with the promise that much more is yet to come!

Now this alone is fantastic! And yet the Spirit's presence in our life involves far more than a "down-payment." His indwelling results in positive blessing in the life of the believer in the here and now. For example, according to Scripture the Holy Spirit:

- Empowers believers to boldness, love, and self-discipline, Acts 4:29; 2 Timothy 1:7.
- Sanctifies us, 1 Corinthians 6:11; Romans 15:16; Galatians 5:16-18.
- Produces holy fruit in our lives, Galatians 5:22-23.
- Raises believers to glory from the dead, Romans 8:11.
- Guides, John. 16:13.
- Teaches, Luke 12:12; John 14:26.
- Warns, 1 Timothy 4:1.
- Comforts, counsels, and helps, John 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7.
- Encourages, Acts 9:31.

What a wonderful “Helper” we received when we came to Christ!

As we continue in our analysis of Kingdom Living, we learn that a third sign was given by Samuel which both testified to the veracity of Saul's anointing, AND served the purpose of comforting and encouraging the newly selected servant of God. This third sign-, the most impressive and important of the three, relates to a working of the Spirit of God in Saul's life.

This is where it gets good. For as we have seen this passage is far more than simply the details of the ascension of the first king of Israel it is a description of the ministry to which all in Christ have been called! And thus what we learn when it comes to the Spirit's work in Saul's life can be said to be true of His work in ours!

Our Earthly Service

In light of this, let's consider this third sign as it related to our earthly service.

1 Samuel 10:5, “**After that thou shalt come to the hill of God, where is the garrison of the Philistines:** and it shall come to pass, when thou art come thither to the city, that thou shalt meet a company of prophets coming down from the high place with a psaltery, and a tabret, and a pipe, and a harp, before them; and they shall prophesy:”

This is a significant location and will factor into the calling that God placed on Saul's life (as we'll see in verse 7). However for now, as Saul made his way home-, fter passing through Ephrath and Bethel he would come to the “hill of God” (Gibeat-ha-Elohim)¹. This was a high place which heretofore was closely associated with the worship of God.

This “hill of God” was so important that a small city named Gibeath sprung up here. Furthermore as a holy place it served as the home for an order of prophets. Yet unfortunately at this time, this sacred place was under the control of the Philistines on account of the “garrison” stationed there.

The Hebrew root behind the word for *garrison*² literally refers to the hilt of a sword. In the different Hebrew themes in which this word appears it carries the idea of “to set, station, erect, fix, or establish.” As such the word was used to refer to an established fighting unit under the command of a prefect or governor.

¹ The ESV renders the *hill of God* *Gibeat-ha-Elohim*

² גִּבְעָה n@tsiyb nets-eeb

I hope you see that this is a significant statement as it details what life in Israel once again had become. Israel obviously no longer was free to serve and worship God as in the early days of Samuel's prophetic ministry.³ Once again they were suffering under the Philistines who had the audacity, like the Romans in the days of Christ, to place a garrison on one of the high and holy places of Israel.

And herein we see the mind of God in instituting the monarchy at this time. It was God's plan that Saul would take out this and every Philistine garrison in Israel. Recall the prophecy that God gave to Samuel:

1 Samuel 9:16, "To morrow about this time I will send thee a man out of the land of Benjamin, and thou shalt anoint him to be captain over my people Israel, that he may save my people out of the hand of the Philistines: for I have looked upon my people, because their cry is come unto me."

So Saul approached this holy mountain where this Philistine garrison had been stationed., a garrison which God no doubt intended Saul to take out.

1 Samuel 10:5, "After that thou shalt come to the hill of God, where is the garrison of the Philistines: **and it shall come to pass, when thou art come thither to the city, that thou shalt meet a company of prophets coming down from the high place with a psaltery, and a tabret, and a pipe, and a harp, before them; and they shall prophesy.**"

The mentioning of this "group of prophets" is but the tip of a rather large ice-berg at this time. For you see, prophesying had become an organized "trade" in Israel such that an individual could join one of the many sects of prophets which were scattered throughout the land. Here they would be trained, educated, and disciplined in the prophetic order. Ronald Youngblood described the institution in this way:

"The beginnings of the Israelite monarchy witnessed the emergence of a prophetic movement known as the 'sons of the prophets' (cf. 1 Kings 20:35). 'Sons' is used here in the sense of 'members of a group'... The bands or companies... were often large in number (50... 100...). They were frequently associated with time-honored places, often at or near shrines, such as Ramah (19:18-20), Bethel (2 Kings 2:3), Jericho (2:5), and Gilgal (4:38)."

"Members of prophetic bands were often young (2 Kings 5:22; 9:40); they frequently lived together (2 Kings 6:1-2), ate together (2 Kings 4:38), and were supported by the generosity of their fellow Israelites (2 Kings 4:42-43). Such characteristics led the church father Jerome to refer to them as the 'monks of the Old Testament'..."⁴

Now these prophetic orders were so common at this time that we are not surprised to discover that Samuel himself was the head of one of these "orders." When we find David fleeing from Saul, we read more of this:

1 Samuel 19:18-20, "So David fled, and escaped, and came to Samuel to Ramah, and told him all that Saul had done to him. And he and Samuel went and dwelt in Naioth. And it was told Saul, saying, Behold, David is at Naioth in Ramah. And Saul sent messengers to take David: and when they saw the company of the prophets prophesying, and **Samuel standing as appointed over**

³ Compare 1 Samuel 9:13

⁴ Ronald Youngblood, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary (Volume 3) - Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 & 2 Samuel*, Zondervan (July 5, 1992), page 624, 626, ISBN-10: 0310364507

them, the Spirit of God was upon the messengers of Saul, and they also prophesied.”

Forget the details where the messengers sent by Saul began to prophesy. The point I want you to see is that this particular “prophetic order” was overseen by Samuel, as he “stood and presided over them.”

Well at Gibeah-ha-Elohim a prophetic order had taken up residence. Thus when Saul approached this city on his way home from Samuel, it was predicted that a group from this order would descend from the city engaged in a holy moment of prophesying! And that is when it would happen.

1 Samuel 10:6, “And the Spirit of the LORD will come upon thee, and thou shalt prophesy with them, and shalt be turned into another man.”

Now brothers and sisters it is important that we NOT confuse the “Spirit of the Lord... coming upon [a man]” with salvation/regeneration. For example, it is very clear that Balaam was an ungodly, pagan man who made money by cursing God's people.⁵ And yet, Scripture nevertheless describes the Spirit of God “descending upon him” and enabling him to prophecy.⁶

From this we note that it was possible for the Spirit of God to come upon a man, engift him, and yet leave the individual without saving him.⁷ Accordingly we do not conclude here that God at this moment regenerated Saul, in fact the evidence which we'll see later would suggest otherwise.⁸ What this text does indicate is that without any formal training, or an obvious piety, or a propensity toward prophesying, Saul here received an enabling from the Spirit of God whereby he participated in a prophetic moment.

Now notice the result of this special endowment of the Spirit of God is that Saul would “be changed [literally 'overturned'] into another man.” Again most commentaries agree that this is not referencing the transformation that occurs in regeneration,⁹ but a change which corresponds to the enabling granted by the Spirit. Let me give you an example of this in Saul's own life.

Saul in his most natural state was a bashful individual who thought it frightening to stand before a large group of people. When it came time to anoint Saul publicly, the future king disappeared. So the people inquired of the Lord as to where Saul was.

1 Samuel 10:22, “Therefore they enquired of the LORD further, if the man should yet come thither. And the LORD answered, Behold, he hath hid himself among the stuff.”

Well, so much for Saul being a man of valor! And yet, when the time came for Saul to act in his office, look what the Spirit of God did to him- He “changed Saul into another man...”

1 Samuel 11:6-7, “And the Spirit of God came upon Saul when he heard those tidings, and his anger was kindled greatly. And he took a yoke of oxen, and hewed them in pieces, and sent them throughout all the coasts of Israel by the hands of messengers, saying, Whosoever cometh not

⁵ Compare 2 Peter 2:15-16 and Numbers 22:7

⁶ Compare Numbers 22:9-14; 24:2

⁷ Compare 1 Samuel 19:18-24

⁸ Compare 1 Samuel 16:14

⁹ Compare Keil, C. F., and F. Delitzsch. *Biblical Commentary on the Books of Samuel*. Translated by James Martin. Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament, by C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1956. (Available in various reprint editions) page 100.

forth after Saul and after Samuel, so shall it be done unto his oxen. And the fear of the LORD fell on the people, and they came out with one consent.”

I hope you see that through the enabling grace of the Spirit of God, Saul indeed would become another man time and time again. When the situation required Saul to be bold, God would make him bold. And this would last until God deigned to retract this enabling grace which actually did occur in 1 Samuel 16:14.

With that we are brought to the interpretation of this third sign from God. What is it that God is saying here to this future king of Israel? When the Spirit of God descended upon Saul, what should he have concluded?

Again as with the previous two signs, the answer here is twofold. First this sign would have validated the anointing which Saul had just received- at this moment in Saul's life there could be no doubt that God had claimed him as a vessel to be used at God's disposal! And toward that end this last sign was the most important! See, it is possible to question the first two signs for Samuel could have arranged them before hand.

Think about it! Outside of Samuel's prediction, there was nothing miraculous about two men informing Saul that his father's donkeys had been found or three men going up to a city and handing Saul two loaves of bread. Again Samuel could easily have arranged for these signs the day before (as he did the meal in 1 Samuel 9:23-24).

That's why this third sign is so important. See of the three signs one could not fabricate this one. Either the Spirit of God would come upon Saul or He would not. There would be no way of faking this. So the first message here is the validation of Saul's anointing!

Yet secondly this sign would have brought with it a message of comfort and encouragement as this future king embarked upon the difficult calling of the prince! Now our focus the last two weeks has been this second message since we, like Saul, have been anointed by the Spirit of God.¹⁰ We have been called to serve in God's kingdom as His vessel unto the maturation of the body of Christ.¹¹ And we have become the property of God and so a tool in His hand to be used according to His good pleasure!

So the questions are these:

- How would a Jew reading this passage have understood this final sign?
- What encouragement would Saul have derived from this miracle?
- What promise is there for us in this text as we embark upon Kingdom Living?!

Simply stated, with the calling to minister in the Kingdom of God comes the enabling of the Spirit of God. We see this principle throughout God's word.

The Spirits Enabling Work

Most all know the story of Gideon! This man was able to conquer a nation with only 300 men.

¹⁰ Compare 1 John 2:20, 27

¹¹ Compare Ephesians 4:11-16

Judges 6:34, “**But the Spirit of the LORD came upon Gideon**, and he blew a trumpet; and Abiezer was gathered after him.”

Then there's Jephthah. This son of a prostitute was used by God to deliver Israel from the oppression of the Ammonites. We read how this outcast was able to do this:

Judges 11:29, “**Then the Spirit of the LORD came upon Jephthah**, and he passed over Gilead, and Manasseh, and passed over Mizpeh of Gilead, and from Mizpeh of Gilead he passed over unto the children of Ammon.”

Judges 11:32, “So Jephthah passed over unto the children of Ammon to fight against them; **and the LORD delivered them into his hands.**”

Or how about Bezalel? He was called by God under Moses to make the articles which would be used for the worship of God.

Exodus 35:31-33, “**And he hath filled him with the spirit of God**, in wisdom, in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship; And to devise curious works, to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass, And in the cutting of stones, to set them, and in carving of wood, to make any manner of cunning work.”

Then there are the seventy elders appointed by God at the time of Moses to help him shepherd the body of Christ.

Numbers 11:17, “And I will come down and talk with thee there: **and I will take of the spirit which is upon thee, and will put it upon them; and they shall bear the burden of the people with thee, that thou bear it not thyself alone.**”

I love the account of Zerubbabel. This man had the difficult calling of rebuilding the temple when the people of God returned to Judah in 537 BC. Because this was not a popular idea among the Gentile nations surrounding Israel,¹² God's people AND ESPECIALLY Zerubbabel were confronted with no small amount of opposition. So how was Zerubbabel to proceed with so many aligning themselves against him?

Zechariah 4:6, “Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This is the word of the LORD unto Zerubbabel, saying, **Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts.**”

Family of God! Time would fail us to speak of others:

- Othniel, Judges 3:10.
- Samson, Judges 13:25; 14:6.
- David, 1 Samuel 16:13.
- Elijah, 1 Kings 18:12.
- Amasia, 1 Chronicles 12:18.
- Azariah, 2 Chronicles 15:1.
- Jahaziel, 2 Chronicles 20:14.

¹² Compare Ezra 5:3

- Zechariah, 2 Chronicles 24:20.
- Isaiah, Isaiah 59:21.
- Ezekiel, Ezekiel 11:5.
- Micah, Micah 3:8.
- The Disciples, Acts 1:8
- And others- all of whom were given an enabling by the Spirit of God to perform the work which the Lord had called them to do!

Such is the working of the Spirit of God in the life of EVERY individual whom God has claimed for Himself. Thus when Saul received this third and final sign which was given to verify his anointing from the Lord, how could he not be encouraged in his service?!

God not only was intimately involved in His life, and would provide for his earthly needs, BUT according to 1 Samuel 10:5-6, the Lord would give him an endowment of the Spirit of God by which he would be enabled to fulfill the calling which rested upon his life! This is a most incredible passage!

Oh Christian, don't miss the application! Heretofore I have argued that the calling of Saul rests upon every individual in the body of Christ. as Saul was called to be a prince whose responsibility was the well-being of the people of God, so also have we.¹³ As such, we cannot, WE DARE NOT, shirk our responsibility for this body and in the name of humility take solace in the knowledge that "that's what the elders are for."

Indeed! We have been anointed by God for kingdom ministry and so ARE EXPECTED to be about "the work of service unto the building up of the body of Christ" (Ephesians 4:11-16). We dare NOT hid,- as did Saul, behind "the baggage" which can be found in our life!

And yet believe me, I know the feelings of inadequacy which the knowledge of this calling brings. I can well identify with Saul here!

My Moment of Fright

I'll never forget when I was entering my senior year of seminary, that's when I wanted to run from God as did Jonah. I was in a worship service and James 3:1 was open before me.

I thought, "So Greg, it is your calling to preach the word of God, rightly divide the word of truth. Now you and I both know you're an idiot. How could you possibly begin to fulfill this calling?"

And then I read again the passage, "be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation" (James 3:1).

It was for about one week that I walked around campus knowing that following my time in seminary, I was going to do anything but preach God's word, for in my estimation it wasn't fair! I hadn't volunteered to be a preacher. I was going into the ministry because I believed GOD had called me to stand behind this holy desk and preach His word!

As I read James 3:1 I remember thinking, "What a pickle! I am being called to do that which I really don't want to do. And yet God is going to hold me to a higher standard?! Talk about inadequacy!"

¹³ Compare James 1:27

And yet I realize that this series may have aroused similar feelings in you! In this series I have demonstrated to you that along with Saul you have been anointed by God to serve His body. That's your purpose to which you better be faithful!

And I know that there are some who are saying, "It's not fair!?" When I became a Christian I didn't put in for this!"¹⁴

And yet before you and I start putting on our track shoes in order to run away from this ministry, don't miss it! You have not been left alone in your calling! Listen to God's word. After issuing forth heavy judgment, God consoled Israel with this message:

Isaiah 44:3, "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."

Brothers and sisters, whether you realize it or not, WE are the fulfillment of this verse! At the advent of the Messianic reign and rule of Christ, the Spirit of God was poured out upon all His people.¹⁵ Thus, in the New Covenant era, which is the New Testament, we read this incredible truth:

1 Corinthians 12:7, "But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal."

Upon your salvation, you were given the gift of the Spirit of God who, unlike with Saul, will never leave you! And one of His primary workings is gifting us to do the work which we have been called to do.

And thus with Saul, though we have been given an incredible calling which goes beyond any sense of adequacy on our part; nevertheless we also have been given the Spirit of God Who enables us to fulfill the calling which has been placed on our lives!

Turn with me to Romans 8. This passage contains a "Greater to Lesser" argument that is most encouraging.

Christian! Where are we most weak when it comes to the Kingdom of God?

When we as finite, temporal, and changing beings approach our infinite, eternal, and unchanging God. We are no weaker than when we approach God in prayer! And yet listen to the promise of the Lord:

Romans 8:26, "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered."

Truly if the Spirit of God will help us at our weakest point, don't you suppose He will "change us into another person" when the ministry calls for it?

This ought to transform the way we think about our lives and the work to which we have been called! I

¹⁴ If you are with me here you will take comfort in knowing Paul felt the same way. After detailing our calling as Christians to be a witness to the lost and a servant in the body of Christ, Paul said, "...And who is adequate for these things" (2 Corinthians 2:16b)? The implied answer is, "NO ONE!"

¹⁵ Compare Acts 2:17

may not feel adequate. Yet, as the sky-diver jumps out of the plane trusting his parachute to enable him to land safely so the child of God can jump into ministry knowing that where we are weak, we are strong. God will never bring us to a place which He Himself will not provide the resources in order for us to serve unto His will.

In and through all things the Spirit of God is there

- Helping.
- Comforting.
- Enabling.

I love how Paul put it.

2 Corinthians 3:4-6, “And such trust have we through Christ to God-ward: Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God; Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.”

Do you see it?

When it comes to fulfilling the call placed on our lives, Paul said that our adequacy is rooted and grounded in the Spirit of God! In light of this truth so fundamental to the covenant into which were brought at salvation, Thomas Brooks wrote these words;

“[In the covenant of grace] God engages that He will be our God; that is, as if He said, 'You shall have an interest in all My attributes for your good: My grace shall be yours to pardon you; My power shall be yours to protect you; My wisdom shall be yours to direct you; My goodness shall be yours to relieve you; My mercy shall be yours to supply you; [and] My glory shall be yours to crown you.’”¹⁶

May God grant us the grace to boldly walk forth into the ministry He has placed before us, by grace we have become His children. By the Spirit's enabling we can trust that we will fulfill our calling.

¹⁶Brooks, Thomas, *Paradise Opened, or the Secrets, Mysteries, and Rarities of Divine Love, of Infinite Wisdom, and of Wonderful Counsel—Laid Open to Public View* London, 1675 <http://www.gracegems.org/Brooks2/paradise.htm>

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Feel free to visit Bethel Presbyterian Church when in Broomfield, Colorado. Bethel Presbyterian Church meets at Broomfield High School, Eagle (10th Street) and Main, Broomfield, Colorado. The telephone number of the church is 303-469-6912. The worship services are at 9:30 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. each Sunday. Bethel Presbyterian Church is a member of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

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About the Preacher

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