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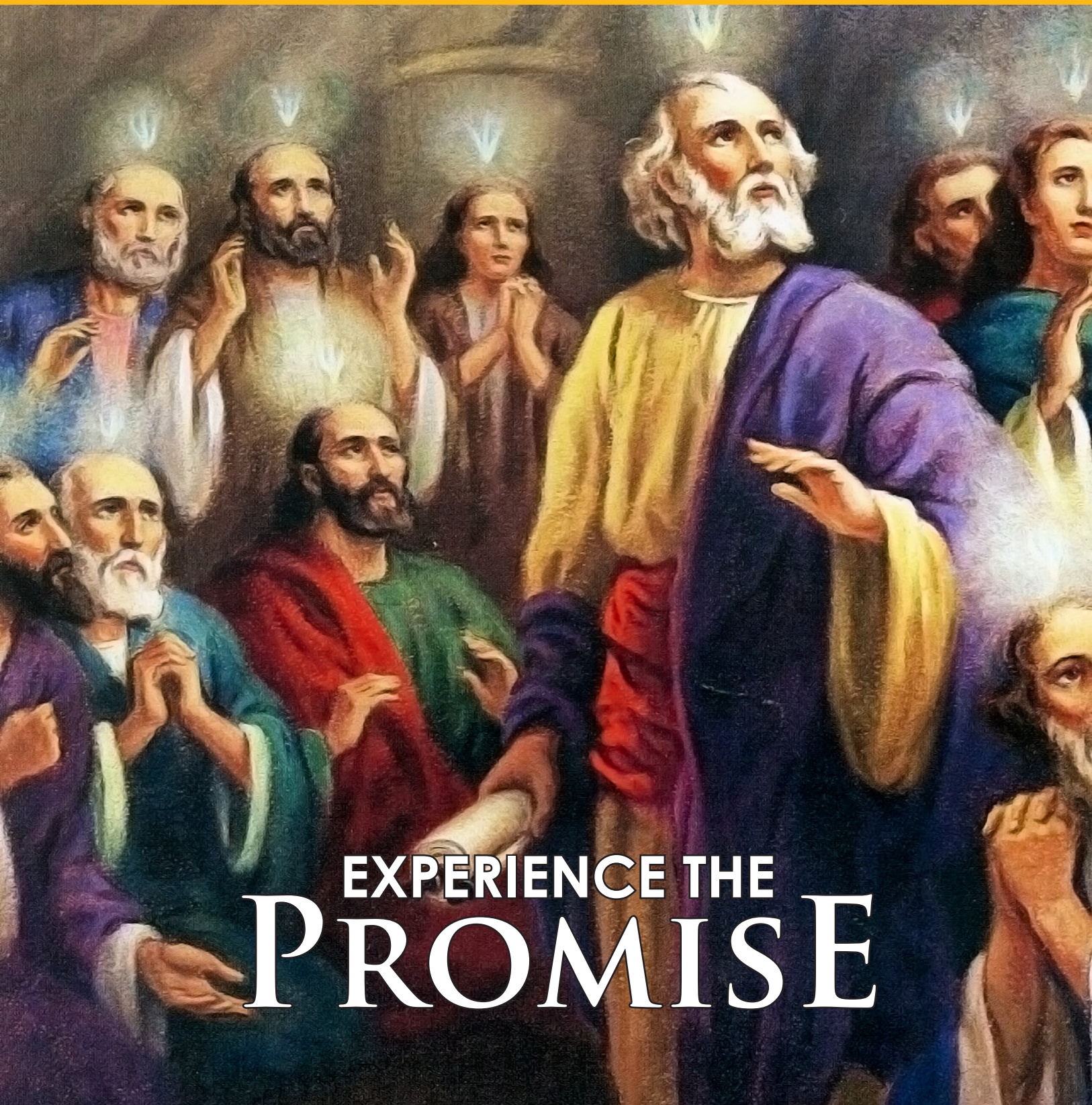

EXPERIENCE THE PROMISE

JUST ONE MINUTE

Pastor Dr. T. Valson Abraham
Founder/President
India Gospel Outreach

President
India Bible College and Seminary

FROM SPIRITUAL DEATH TO LIFE

Go into a mortuary and try to carry on a conversation with a dead person lying in a casket. No matter how charming, charismatic or logical your words and personality, you will get nowhere. That dead person cannot respond.

A spiritually dead person cannot respond to the things of God. God is a stranger and riddle to him. He cannot perceive God in the world or people around him. A life with God is meaningless and without value to him. He has no longing for God. He gives his life only to those things perceived in the five senses because they are the only things he knows.

Most people see imperfections in themselves and in others, but those who are spiritually dead tend to blame them on forces in our past, other people, our present circumstances or on the bad karma of past lives. They put blame upon something wrong in the environment. A spiritually dead person may attempt to "clean up his act" and overcome his faults through moral and mental discipline and religious practices. Just try a little harder, they believe, and they will eventually get there.

All of this thinking is like putting band-aids on cancers. Morality and religion do not deal with the root problem. That root problem is sin. Sin is another word for spiritual death. We sin because we are sinners. We sin because we are spiritually dead, absent from the life of God.

Just as a dead man cannot respond to the world around him, a spiritually dead person cannot respond to the things of God without a radical intervention. Logic and eloquence are of no use. Only the Holy Spirit can provide that needed intervention.

In John 16, Jesus tells His disciples that He will soon leave them, but He will give them the presence and power of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit will convict the world of sin, righteousness and judgment.

In other words, the Holy Spirit, the creator of life, is the only one who can bring life out of spiritual death. Only the Holy Spirit can awaken a spiritually dead person to God.

Only the Holy Spirit can awaken that person to his sin. Only the Holy Spirit can awaken a spiritually dead person to the righteousness of God greater than his sin. Only the Holy Spirit can awaken a spiritually dead person to the Good News that Jesus has judged his sin at the cross and makes him righteous before a good and righteous God.

This is why Jesus told His disciples to wait for the coming of the Holy Spirit in their midst and upon each of them. Only then would they have the power to speak with authority that would awaken people from spiritual death.

When the disciples spoke under the power of the Holy Spirit, spiritually dead people came alive by the thousands. In the Book of Acts, the church added and then multiplied the number of people who were being saved.

Such is not the case in most of our churches today. Too many churches have forgotten about the Holy Spirit. Churches rely more on gimmicks rather than the power of the Holy Spirit.

As a result, few people are convicted of sin. They do not see the righteousness of God to which they fall disastrously short. They do not conceive the power of Jesus at the cross and in the resurrection to judge the devil who has darkened their minds. As a result, our churches have become powerless, and our society has remained a mess.

The solution to our basic problem is both simple and profound: re-discover the Holy Spirit and His power to convict of sin, righteousness and judgment. Then we will see a big turnaround in society at every level. Problems that have lasted for years and even centuries and millennia will be transformed in ways that will surprise everybody.

We will also see the gospel reach into every corner of the world, including those parts of the world that most of us have forgotten. I can tell you from experience, millions of people in India are groaning for the Desire of the Nations. Only the Holy Spirit can convince them that His name is Jesus Christ.

* * * * * * *

Father God, thank you for the ministry of the Holy Spirit, bringing me from spiritual death to life. Thank you for enabling me to live in fellowship with you. I pray for the power of your Holy Spirit to awaken hundreds of millions of spiritually dead people in the days ahead, in India and in every part of this world. In Jesus' Name. Amen.

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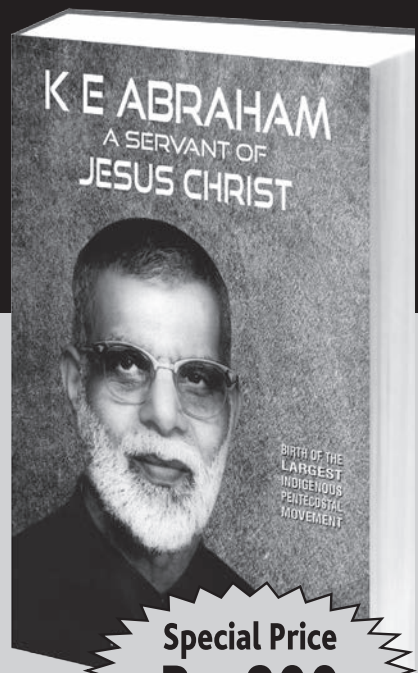
FIRST TIME IN ENGLISH
Autobiography of
Pastor K. E. Abraham



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EDITORIAL

THE JOY OF THE LORD

Pastor Dr. John K. Mathew

When we think of the functioning of the Holy Spirit in the creation of the world, we think of omnipotence. The Holy Spirit was omnipotent, or all-powerful.

Out of the chaos that existed in the beginning, He brought cosmos. God spoke, and His Word had to be obeyed. The Spirit of God moved upon the desolation, and there came forth that which was beautiful for God and the man. We read this function of the Holy Spirit in the very first verses of the Bible." In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth, Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters" (Gen.1:1,2)

> **In the incarnation, God revealed himself as Saviour and Lord. After that God revealed himself as the Holy Spirit who has come to take possession of lives that opened to the Saviour". Those who are possessed by the Holy Spirit will produce the fruit of the Spirit.**

Kuruvilla Chandy writes, that 'the revelation of God to humans has been largely in phases: First, God revealed himself as Creator and Sustainer and Preserver. In the incarnation, God revealed himself as Saviour and Lord. After that God revealed himself as the Holy Spirit who has come to take possession of lives that opened to the Saviour."

Those who are possessed by the Holy Spirit will produce the fruit of the Spirit. One among them is Joy. Apostle Paul writes, "For the Kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit" (Rom. 14:!7).

Apostle Paul spoke of himself as 'sorrowful, yet always rejoicing'. As he concluded his life and ministry, he anticipated the joy that would be his at the end. In his book 'Life Beyond Amazing' David Jeremiah writes, "the Holy Spirit is the purveyor of joy. When you become a Christian, the Holy Spirit comes to live within you. He becomes ever-present in your life. This is part of the gift of salvation– the dwelling of the Holy Spirit.

Throughout your life, you get to decide whether to turn your life over to His guidance. When you decide to give Him control of your life, He will bring His joy to you.

Here, is a story he shares about a headmaster at a boarding school in London. One of his students remarked that he thought the headmaster went to heaven every night because every morning he saw him, he had such a wonderful smile on his face. That student figured the only place you could get that kind of joy was by checking to heaven at the end of every day. One day the headmaster was asked why he was so filled with joy, and his response was really an amazing statement: "Joy is the flag that is flown from the castle of your heart when the King is in residence". Let God Almighty be the president of your life and the Holy Spirit be a resident. The joy of the Lord will be our strength. Amen. ●

HOLY SPIRIT AND THE KINGDOM OF GOD

REV. THOMAS CHERIAN

Introduction

The Bible is filled with numerous promises. Herbert Lockyer in his book *All Promises of the Bible* points out that there are 3573 promises throughout the entire Bible. The King James Version of the Bible contains the term "promise" more than 50 times in total. The Bible uses words with a similar meaning throughout, such as bless and covenant. The promise of the Holy Spirit and the Kingdom of God are two of the most notable, which will be covered in this article.

I. Promise of the Kingdom of God

God clearly made the theocratic monarchy on earth, which would last forever, a promise during David's time (2 Sam 7:16). When Jesus was performing his earthly ministry, He instructed His disciples to pray, "Your Kingdom come!" (Matt 6:9-13). There are numerous connotations associated with it. The most desired meaning—one that is also essential to Christianity—is the return of Jesus. Jesus promises to send the Holy Spirit before ascending into heaven, who would lead and guide his followers into all Truth (Jn 14:16;16:13-15). The disciples therefore will be able to experience the Kingdom of God and its new realms. The Holy Spirit and the Kingdom of God will be precisely defined since they are interrelated concepts.

1. The Holy Spirit

The Hebrew term Qadoshis translated as "Holy" in the English Bible and appears 119 times in 108 verses of the WLC Hebrew Bible. The word Qadosh literally means "to be set apart for a special purpose." The root word Qodesh

essentially means "to consecrate," dedicate, set apart, to be different or distinct. The Spirit of God is known as the Holy Spirit in the Bible in several places. Due to the distinctiveness and uniqueness of the Holy Spirit, the Kingdom of God he establishes will likewise be distinctive in many ways.

The Holy Spirit is a person who has existed since the beginning, who participated in the act of creation before the Church Age (Gen 1:2; Job 33:4; Ps 104:30). He spoke through prophets, guiding and guarding Israel (Isa63:10–14), and this resulted in the creation of the Scripture (1 Pet 1:11: 2 Pet1:20-21). He expressly gave each person in the Old Testament (OT) the ability to perform a certain work by selectively and briefly indwelling each of them (Joseph, Gen 41:38; Joshua, Num 27:18; Saul, 1 Sam 10:9,10; and David, 1 Sam 16:13). To lead the Kingdom of God during the OT era, they were chosen and led by the Spirit of God.

The concept of a Kingdom of God is not primarily one of space, territory, or politics, as in a national kingdom, but instead, one of kingly rule, reign, and sovereign control. The Kingdom of God is the realm where God reigns supreme, and Jesus Christ is King.

2. The Kingdom of God

The concept of a Kingdom of God is not primarily one of space, territory, or politics, as in a national kingdom, but instead, one of kingly rule, reign, and sovereign control. The Kingdom of God is the realm where God reigns supreme, and Jesus Christ is King. In this kingdom, God's authority is recognized, and His will is fulfilled.

According to the OT, God is the King over all of creation and is King over Israel in a unique fashion (Ps 10:16; 2 Chr 20:6; cf. I Sam 12). As is the case with many other teachings, the perception of the kingdom presented in the New Testament (NT) builds upon concepts that were already made apparent in the OT. In his teaching, Jesus refers to the wisdom of

the OT (Ps 145:11, 13; 103:19; Isa 45:23; Dan 4:3; Zech 14:9) and Hebrew apocalyptic literature that employs a similar mode of reasoning. The Kaddish, a common synagogue prayer in pre-Christian times, for instance, begins, "May He let His Kingdom rule... speedily and soon."(France,1964). This indicates that the Jewish people were anxiously anticipating the complete manifestation of the kingdom of God.

The Kingdom of God was the main focus of Jesus Christ's sermons. The following questions will be addressed during the conversation. What does the expression "kingdom of God" mean? How many times does that phrase appear in the Bible? Is the kingdom of God an actual place or just a spiritual reality that is happening now? Who are the people qualified to live in this kingdom? How does the Kingdom of God actually operate?

The Kingdom of God was the main focus of Jesus Christ's sermons. The following questions will be addressed during the conversation. What does the expression "kingdom of God" mean? How many times does that phrase appear in the Bible?

3. The Occurrences

The exact phrase "kingdom of God" does not show up in the OT although the phrase "kingdom of the Lord" does appear (2 Chr 13:8; cf Dan 6:26). In spite of this, the idea of God's monarchy is prevalent throughout the OT and is essential if we are to understand what Jesus said when he preached about the kingdom of God.

The Bible contains numerous references to "king, kingdom" (both human and heavenly). The OT has explicit references to numerous topics in 36 of its 39 books, with the exception of Leviticus, Ruth, and Joel. In 21 of its 27 books, the NT specifically addresses the issue, with the exception of Philippians, Titus, Philemon, 1, 2, and 3 John. The kingdom concept is present

in 57 of the 66 books of the Bible, or 86% of the total. Almost 3,000 times in the OT and 160 times in the NT are the words "king,""kingdom,""rule," and "throne" used respectively. In the OT, Gen 10:10 is the first and Mal 1:14 is the last reference, while in the NT, Matt 2:2 contains the first occurrence, while Rev 22:5 contains the final occurrence.

II. The Characteristics of the Kingdom of God

Jesus expanded upon and refuted the notions that were previously held within Judaism regarding the Kingdom, demonstrating that it had both a present and a future aspect in His teaching. The Kingdom of God exhibits the qualities listed below.

1. The literal and the spiritual Kingdom

Theologians have different levels of comprehension when it comes to the kingdom of God, particularly when it comes to the question of Jesus' thousand-year rule. A millennial interpreters insist that the kingdom has a spiritual aspect while Premillennial interpreters contend that there is going to be just one literal kingdom on earth.

2. Kingdom of God as a Spiritual Entity

Among all the groups one thing that is common is the leadership of the Holy Spirit, whether it is OT, NT, or the futuristic period. The unseen spiritual presence is one of the unique qualities of the Kingdom of God. As many have pointed out, the NT emphasizes this spiritual character of the kingdom without contradicting its political and earthly character. In addition, it has been identified with the church as the very present kingdom of God, and in this vein of thought, God has replaced Israel with the church.

3. The Identity of the Kingdom

According to Lk 17:20–21, the Holy Spirit's constant presence is a sign of the kingdom of God. The Pharisees wanted to see visible signs, but Jesus told them that the Kingdom was already among them, that is, it was manifest in His person and work. Members of the Kingdom of God are guaranteed the Lord's presence till the end of time (Matt 28:20).

4. The Hidden Rule of God

The Holy Spirit's Temple is the heart of a believer, which has been described as the kingdom of God. This is the place from where God rules secretly (I Cor 3:16). A child of God is empowered by the Holy Spirit to take the initiative in addressing ethical issues in social life, such as the eradication of poverty and the establishment of justice. (Nichols, 2012).

5. The Eschatological salvation

The salvation of humanity in the eschaton is the ultimate aim of the Kingdom of God. This also entails the elimination of sin and its causes. The Kingdom feast or the great banquet mentioned in Lk 14:23–24 contains a future component as well, providing a glimpse into what will happen in the eschatological Kingdom. Jesus' listeners would have been familiar with this idea (Isa 25:6f; 64:3; 65:13f; Ezek 39:17-20). The word "feast" is used in this context as a typical Hebrew metaphor for eschatological deliverance (O'Toole,1988).

6. The Inclusive nature of the Kingdom of God

Eschatological salvation was universal in scope. The practical part of the feast's meaning in the kingdom of God was what

Jesus was attempting to apply. When Jesus invited gentiles, tax collectors, and other sinners, to eat with him, the Pharisees were greatly outraged (Matt 9:9-13; Mk 2:15-17; Lk 5:27-32). In other words, the Kingdom's final membership will not be limited to a single nation but will also include Gentiles (cf. Isa 45:6; 49:12). Only the Holy Spirit has the power to transform gentiles.

7. The Resistance towards the Kingdom

Jesus foretells that members of the Kingdom can anticipate opposition (Carson,1984). The phrase "Kingdom of God" refers to a multi-ordinate concept that encompasses every component of Jesus' public ministry, including the cross, which the Gospels do not explicitly state is necessary for the establishment of the Kingdom in some form. Now it suffers violence, is resisted, and requires total commitment to enter it; yet its growth is not the work of man, but of the Holy Spirit(I Jn 5:4). (Ladd, 1986).

8. Secrets of the Kingdom of God

The parables Jesus told illuminated truth about the Kingdom of God: "And he answered them, 'To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given'" (Mtt 13:11). The members can only be illuminated by the Holy Spirit to comprehend the mysteries of the Kingdom. In other words, the Holy Spirit is the only source of knowledge (Jn 16:13-15; 1 Cor 2:12¬).

9. The stages of the Kingdom

In the NT, the Kingdom of God is described as having essentially two phases. The stages are described using the words Realized and Futuristic Kingdom. Matthew refers to it as having both a present-day and an eschatological form (Mtt 13). The phrase"at hand" used by Mark in (Mk 1:14–15) alludes to the coming of the kingdom foretold in the OT in a spiritual form (Mk 4:12). According to John, having a new birth experience makes it possible to enter God's kingdom (Jn 3:3-5). Only with the assistance of the Holy Spirit is such a birth possible (Acts 10:44–48, 11:15–17).

10. The style of living in the Kingdom of God

Apostle Paul points out that the Kingdom is part of our present spiritual life: "For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking but of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit." (Rom 14:17).This shows that the Holy Spirit influences the culture of the kingdom of God, making it unique.One cannot function in God's kingdom without the fruit and gifts of the Holy Spirit. Similar to this, the present "power" of God's kingdom is described in 1 Cor 4:20.

III. The Role of the Holy Spirit in the Kingdom of God

1. Makes us more like Christ our King

The Holy Spirit's work is to make us more like Jesus. It's a process known as sanctification, where the Holy Spirit helps us strip away our sinful habits and brings us into the holy character of the citizen of the kingdom of God (Col 2:11).

2. Gives us power to witness about our King

The Holy Spirit enables believers to effectively witness Jesus Christ (Acts 1:8). To put it another way, this kind of witnessing draws people to the King and the Kingdom of God.

3. Enlightening the constitution (Scriptures) of the kingdom

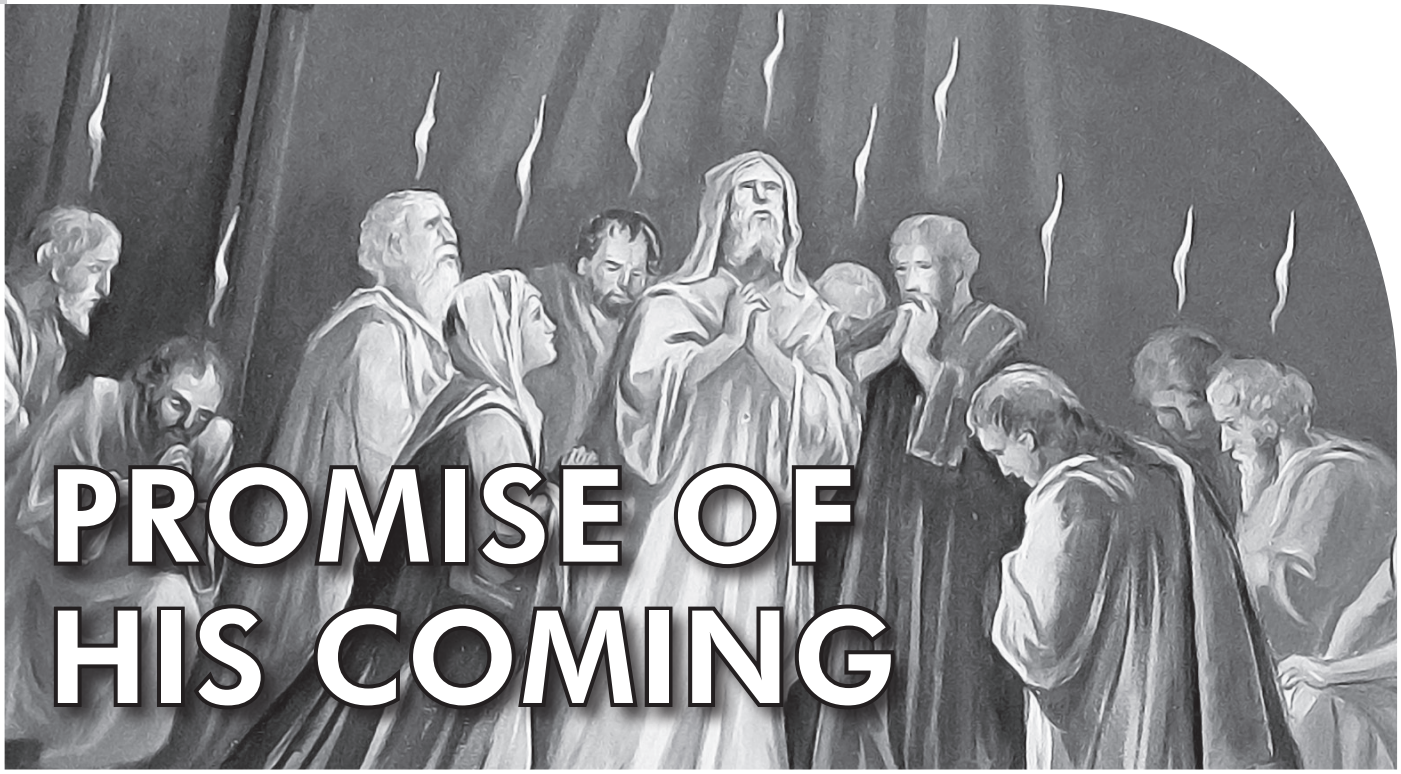
Members are taught by the Holy Spirit, who does so in Jesus' place by revealing to them the meaning of the Word. "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you" (Jn 14:26).

4. Uniting the citizens in the Kingdom

The Holy Spirit destroys all barriers to unity based on gender, ethnicity, color, or creed in order to bring all persons who are subjects or citizens of the kingdom together (Acts 4:32).

Conclusion

Even though there are many facets of the kingdom of God to discuss, the study just touches on a few of them. This covers the outline and traits of the kingdom of God. The detailed discussion of the Holy Spirit's involvement in establishing the kingdom of God also distinguishes it from other kingdoms of this world. As a result, the kingdom of God may also be referred to as the Holy Kingdom. To honor the name of the King of the Unique kingdom, one should be genuinely committed to yielding to the Holy Spirit and following the rules laid out in the Bible. This is what it means to be a faithful disciple of Jesus Christ. As a member of this kingdom, one must be prepared to suffer for the sake of the kingdom, exhibit the fruit of the spirit, exercise the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and be willing to share the love of Jesus with people of all races and tongues.This kingdom, which is spiritual in essence, will soon see its full embodiment. Everywhere you look, you can see the beginnings of this kingdom. Thus, it is vital that Christians who believe in and follow Christ get ready for the coming of God's kingdom in its comprehensive form. ●



PROMISE OF HIS COMING

PASTOR P.J. DANIEL

Faculty,
India Bible College
and Seminary, Kumbanad

The Promise of the return of Christ is a vital part of God's redemptive plan for humanity. That is why the event was foretold by prophets, proclaimed by angels, and taught by Jesus and the apostles. In fact, more Old Testament passages are devoted to Christ's Second Coming than the first.

In the New Testament, the Lord mentions His return more frequently than His death.Why does the Lord purpose the promise of his coming? Because the Father wants us to be excited and hopeful about Jesus' return, recognizing it as the culmination of His plan for the world. To keep our hope alive, Scripture tells us what to expect, though we don't know the exact timing.

The promise of the return of the Lord is the only hope of the World, the only hope of the Nations, the only hope of the gentiles, the only hope of Israelites, and the only hope of the Church. We are confronted with so many problems of life, persecutions from the fanatics, religious crises, political uncertainty, and economic recessions, and are pressed from every side. Our Lord vehemently encourages us in John 14: 1-3 *"Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also."* Our Lord is preparing a mansion for us. When he finishes it, He will come again to receive us to Himself. Yes, it produces hope and enthusiasm in Christian lives, which enable us to strive through all these miserable hitches.

When Christianity passed through many centuries, the scoffers also increased and questioned the certainty of His coming. This had commenced even in the first century, in the very time of Apostle Peter. (2 Peter 3: 3-4) That is why Peter clarifies the reason why our Lord tarries. There are two vibrant reasons why he is slow in His return. The first one is related to the people yet to repent (2 Peter 3:9) "The

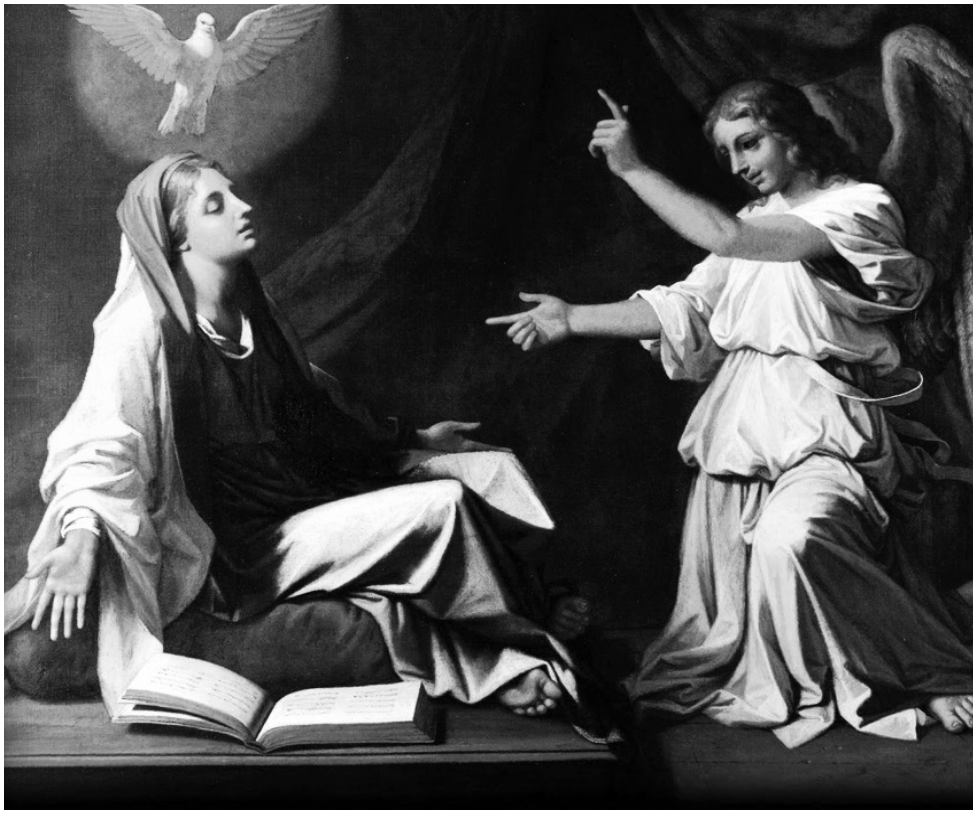
Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead, he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance". The second reason is related to the believers. (2 Peter 3: 14)"Therefore, beloved, since you are waiting for these, be diligent to be found by him without spot or blemish, and at peace."

Hundreds of promises are found in the Scripture regarding the second coming of Jesus Christ, both in the Old Testament, New Testament, and Christian writings.

A reference to the second coming of Christ is found in the Nicene and Apostolic creeds. "He (Jesus) shall come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and His Kingdom shall have no end. The second coming defeats Satan's earthly reign and establishes Christ's kingdom of peace and righteousness in its place. Saints from all ages will be gathered to reign with the Lord."

He (Jesus) shall come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and His Kingdom shall have no end. The second coming defeats Satan's earthly reign and establishes Christ's kingdom of peace and righteousness in its place.

Angel Gabriel corroborates the promise of Jesus' eternal Kingdom in the dialogue with the virgin Mary. (Luke 1: 31-33) "You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Highest. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end." There are seven promises contained in this statement. Out of these seven promises only four of them were fulfilled. (1) You will conceive and give birth to a son. (2) His name will be called Jesus. (3) He will become great. (4) He will be called the Son of the Highest. These four promises are fulfilled in Jesus Christ. The proceeding three promises are yet to be fulfilled. (1) The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David. (2) He will



reign over Jacob's descendants forever. (3) His Kingdom will never end. If these final promises must be fulfilled, it is mandatory for His second coming.

The first and foremost promise of His coming is found in Genesis 3:15. "You will strike his heel" refers to His first coming, fulfilled at Calvary where our Lord Jesus was crucified for us. "He will crush your head" refers to the second coming and our Lord's final overthrow of Satan (2 Thessalonians 2:8 and Revelation 20:1-3).

Historical books and wisdom literature broadly elucidate a future kingdom. Job in his excitement shouted, "For I know that my Redeemer lives, and He shall stand at last on the earth; and after my skin is destroyed, this I know, that in my flesh I shall see God, whom I shall see for myself, And my eyes shall behold, and not another." The Psalmist also was anticipating the glorious days of the Messianic Kingdom. "I believe that I shall see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living" (Psalms 27: 13)

The prophecies of Isaiah to Malachi consistof enormous promises of His coming. They were not fulfilled at His first coming, but await fulfillment. In the Book of Daniel chapters two and seven, narrate the prophecy of the future kingdoms of the World. It is portrayed in a sequent order of Five Kingdoms. It begins with Monarchy, leads to Democracy, and culminated in Theocracy. If the four world kingdoms (Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome) were literal, then the fifth Messianic kingdom will be literal too.

The Old Testament concludes with the prophecy of Malachi, in which the culmination of Christ's coming is portrayed as the following. "who fear My name, The Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in His wings; And you shall go out and grow fat like stall-fed calves". What a blessed promise it is!!

Then in the Gospels, we have the inspired and authoritative records of the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and repeatedly He spoke of His Second Coming.Many of the clear statements made by our Saviour, and in some of His parables, we have the promise of His coming. Moreover, the Gospel of Mathew chapter 24 is a vibrant picture of His coming and adjunct events.

The Promise of His Coming is found in the Acts of the Apostles. Acts 1:9-11 is a very significant passage, where two men guarantee His coming. The Promise of His Coming is found in the Letters of Paul, James, Peter, John, and Jude. The Promise of His Coming is also found in the Apocalypse. The Book of Revelation does not make sense if we take from it the promise of His return. The whole message of the Book is summed up in Revelation 1:7 and 22:7, 12, and 20. The Lord's Supper is a significant symbol, which prospects the return of the Lord. (1 Corinthians 11:26)

Are you eagerly anticipating Christ's return or seldom thinking about it? Apostle John warns us not to love the world or the things it contains because they are passing away (John2: 15-17). Instead, we are to long for our Savior's return and rejoice in His coming Kingdom.

The Promise of His Coming is found in the heart of every true believer.What is the testimony of Jesus which we, as believers, have within us? It is the promise of His coming again. The Holy Spirit places in our hearts the assurance and expectation of His near return, which causes us to cry out, "Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!" (Revelation 22:20). ●

THE PURPOSE OF THE GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

PASTOR P. T. THOMAS
Bible Teacher and Pastor
Kerala

'A certain evil spirit came out of a man on its own, seeking rest, but finds none. Then it went back to its former abode to find it swept clean, but empty. Then it took along seven more evil spirits and started dwelling there.' (Matt. 12:43–45) Our Lord Jesus Himself has narrated this anecdote. It gives us an idea about the way evil spirits act. At the same time, it contrasts the way the Holy Spirit ministers. The evil spirit sought a dwelling place for its own good. It was roaming about looking for a victim, seeking rest for itself. But the Holy Spirit comes into our lives to give us rest. He indwells us for our good and with specific purpose.

Ministry in the World

The way the Holy Spirit ministers in the New Testament era is different from His ministry in the former days. "In the last days, God says, I will pour out my spirit on all people." Acts. 2:17.

Today, the ministry of the Holy Spirit is not limited to the chosen saints. He ministers in the world at large. The active presence of the Holy Spirit is a strong restraint on 'the lawless one'. Though the whole world remains under the evil one, the sense of righteousness and the rule of law prevails in human society. The whole world enjoys this blessing effected by the active, restraining presence of the Holy Spirit.

Another aspect of the ministry of the Holy Spirit at large is that He convicts the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgement (John 16:8). Man has an innate nature to find excuses and justify himself. It is because of the convicting ministry of the Holy Spirit that one could confess that he is a lost sinner. He convinces people of righteousness and judgement to come.

Consequent to the convicting ministry, the Holy Spirit bears witness about Jesus Christ and the way of salvation prepared for everyone, by the sacrifice on the cross at calvary. The Holy Spirt does these ministries in the world at large and their blessings are open for anyone and everyone to enjoy.

The Gift of the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit won't force Himself an anyone. He honors our personality and free will. Whoever yields to the convicting ministry and confesses their sinfulness and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ will be accepted into the family of God. Those who sincerely open their hearts to receive Jesus Christ with perfect faith will be privileged with the indwelling of the Triune God. The three personalities in the Holy God are independent in ministry and dependent in existence. So, when one receives Jesus Christ into his heart, the Triune God starts indwelling him. His body becomes the temple of the Holy Spirit (Cor. 6:19).

> **Those who sincerely open their hearts to receive Jesus Christ with perfect faith will be privileged with the indwelling of the triune God. The three personalities in the Holy God are independent in ministry and dependent in existence.**

1. To be the seal of ownership and the guarantee of redemption (Eph. 1:13; 4:30)

The Holy Spirit testifies with our spirit that we are God's children (Rom. 8:16). He indwells us as the seal and guarantee of our perfect redemption. Our redemption gets consummated when our physical bodies get glorified. Now that the Holy Spirit has made our bodies His dwelling place, it becomes doubly sure that the redemption of even our weak bodies is guaranteed.

2. To Guide us into all the truth (John 16:13)

The Holy Spirit is the ever-present guide to lead us into all the truth. He is the

counselor, helper and guide. As God honors free will, no one would be dragged along the way of truth. The promptings and the guidance of the Holy Spirit should be heeded to and complied with. The Word of God is described as the truth (John 17:17). Guiding into all the truth is prompting and enabling one to obey the teachings of the Word of God.

3. To win over our sinful nature (Rom. 8:17)

An innate sinful nature lurks in everyone. With re-birth, a new spiritual nature germinates in a child of God. Yet the old sin-nature does not get eliminated. It would continue its endeavor to assert itself and pull the person back into the old practices. All the while, the new spiritual nature would encourage him to live the new life God expects from him. This causes an internal struggle in the believer. This actually is the chief battle field in spiritual warfare. In this struggle, the old sin-nature or 'the flesh'' is supported by the evil one through the world. By 'the world' we mean the corrupt worldly system prevailing in the human society. It is not easy to resist and overcome this antagonist. Here, the Holy Spirit enables one to win over the evil one.

> **The Holy Spirit believers the new born spiritual man and he grows in strength nourished by the Word of God, prayer and fellowship of the caring saints. No one can resist and overcome the onslaught of the evil one without the enabling of the Holy Spirit.**

The scriptures describe the sinful nature as 'the old man', and the spiritual nature as 'the new man.' We are exhorted to 'put off our old self which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires and to put on the new self, created to be Christ-like in true righteousness and holiness' (Eph. 4:22–24). It is hard to put aside the beaten tracks of life and the accustomed life-style. The Holy Spirit enlivens the new born spiritual man and he grows in strength nourished by the Word of God, prayer and fellowship of the caring saints. No one can resist and overcome the onslaught of the evil one without the enabling of the Holy Spirit.

4. To be the Resident Intercessor (Rom. 8:26–27)

Jesus Christ intercedes for us before the Father (Heb. 7:25) together with Him, we have an intercessor residing in us to help us in our weakness. Though everyone prays, the prayers of even a seasoned saint may not be always perfect and in accordance with the will of God. At times, we find ourselves at our wit's and without knowing what to pray for. In such helpless predicaments, the Holy Spirt is present right in us to plead on our behalf.

5. To strengthens us in crises (Matt. 10:17–19; Acts 4:31; 7:88)

Christian life is not a bed of roses. It is the hard way of the cross. Our Lord has trodden it before us and we are called to tread it behind Him. One

may be forced to choose believer his very life and Jesus Christ. In such dire predicaments, the Holy Spirit will enable one to embrace Jesus Christ and eternal life even at the cross of his life. Getting arrested, dragged to courts of law, and before men in authority is no new thing now. In such difficult situations, the Holy Spirit will illumine our understanding to witness to the gentiles.

6. To teach us and remind us of the Lord's teachings (John 14:26)

Jesus Christ is the greatest teacher the world has ever seen. Now in the Holy Spirit we have an ever present teacher who reminds us of all that the Lord has taught. He is the omniscient cunselor to guide us in the path of righteousness.

7. To enable us to bear the fruit of the Spirit

In Galatians 5:22, we have a list of nine virtues presented as the fruit of the Spirit. Singular noun is used to refer to the nine virtues. It is like an orange with nine petals. There may be virtuous people in whom several of these virtues may be found. But all the nine virtues can be found only in one enabled by the Holy Spirit.

8. To endow the gifts of the Spirit (1 Cor. 12:4–11)

The above noted ministries of the Holy Spirit are those He does in a believer. But exercising the gifts of the Spirit is a ministry the Holy Spirit does through a believer. The ministry the Holy Spirit does in a believer in more important than those He does through a believer. Exercising the gifts of the Spirit may be very ostentatiousand applauded. But it does not qualify one as the bride of Jesus Christ.

9. To pour out God's love into our hearts (Rom. 5:50)

The first and foremost thing God desires from us is that we love Him and radiate divine love to our brothers. But unfortunately, we are unable to even love our brother we see. Then how can we love the unseen God? The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of love and He pours out love for the Lord in our hearts. When we love the Lord, it gets radiated to those around us.

God has given us the gift of the Holy Spirit to be our counselor, helper and guide. As a master craftsman cuts, chisels and polishes a crude stone into a shining jewel, the Holy Spirit refines and reforms us, the sinful, crude, cursed, worldly people into the glorious Bride of Jesus Christ. ●

HOLY SPIRIT AND LEADERSHIP OF THE CHURCH

KRIS A. JACKSON ThD

There are so many Bible passages that deal with the Holy Spirit's role in the supervision and leadership of the church, but one of the key statements is easily overlooked – "For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us…" (Acts 15:28) After sufficient deliberation, the Jerusalem Council, officiated by James, laid out a series of policies regarding abstinence and holiness for the early church and the growing number of disciples in Gentile lands. It was the first actual "ruling" set by a body of elders designed to govern the whole body of Christ. I am impressed with the humility exhibited. They did not say, this was an executive official ruling, rather they confessed that it "seemed good to us" or was the best plan available under their particular cultural circumstances.

But James added that it "seemed good to the Holy Ghost" and us. What blessed unity, "the Holy Ghost, and us!" The elders held a united conviction that they were moving in the right direction. And they felt an assurance that they had found the will of the Holy Spirit. True leadership is little more than that, finding the will of the Spirit, communicating it, and putting it into action. God has called us to cooperate with the Holy Spirit. It would be ideal if we were 100% yielded to the Spirit but such leaders are few and far between. You would be blessed to meet one or two in a lifetime. Most leadership operates in the realm of "seeming" – "It seemed good to us…" Walking in the Spirit and being humbly yielded to the Spirit, we greatly increase the likelihood that what seems good to us is also what seems good to the Holy Spirit. I am writing about the reality of leadership and not a lofty ideal. Many times I have had to move forward with a plan or action trusting that what seemed good to me is what I believed to be the Spirit's wish. But I must also confess that what seems good at the moment is not always what proves good after the passing of time.

What does it mean to cooperate with the Spirit regarding leadership?

1. Jesus is Lord of the Body,but the Holy Spirit is His Administrator

Listen to Him. Follow His guidance. The Holy Spirit is like the nervous system of the body. Just as my own head sends impulses to the farthest appendages of my fingers and toes, a good leader sends the same signal to the church body that he receives from the Administrator. When I prepare a sermon or counsel a church member or pray over an issue, I only move forward if I sense that it "seems good to the Holy Ghost" and to me. A leader must be Spirit-led. Christ's sheep hear His voice and follow Him. We must watch for both red and green lights. At times we need to stop and wait. Other times we proceed with caution. Pushing your own will through is almost always embarrassing, if not disastrous. Waiting on the Lord and cooperating with His voice leads to success.

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2. Biblical leadershipis not likerunning a business, Christ's church functions in the supernatural

Anyone with a brain or a business degree can sit behind a desk and give orders. If you can drive a car on a busy Indian highway without a collision, you've proven fitness for leadership. But spiritual leadership is much more than driving a car, or standing at a pulpit. The Holy Spirit operates in the realm of the supernatural. We war against supernatural spirit beings. The Holy Spirit sees and knows things that we know not. Natural leaders and supernatural leaders differ because of one thing, the anointing. Judas was a natural leader and was given charge of the money bag. Peter would have been sent back to his fishing boat by most hiring agencies. But Peter ended up as

leader of the early church, while Judas hung from a tree. Tall, handsome Saul was elected to leadership by the people, but David was in training out in the pasture for supernatural service by the Spirit. What "seems" good to the natural eye is seen differently through the Spirit's eyes. The Jerusalem Council felt they had supernatural guidance on church matters.

3. The Holy Spirit gives the apostolic/pastoral leaderthe blueprint for his church or ministry

Moses was instructed to build the Tabernacle exactly as it was revealed to him on the Mount (Exodus 25:40, 26:30). David saw the pattern of the Temple by the Spirit (1 Chronicles 28:12). I am not speaking about a blueprint for a physical structure but rather a strategy for building the kingdom of God. The Spirit reveals the big picture. John was "in the Spirit" on the Lord's Day and a panoramic view of the ages and the last days unfolded before his eyes. "Surely the Lord GOD will do nothing, but he reveals his secret unto his servants the prophets" (Amos 3:6). Divine purposes cannot be fulfilled without human or earthly instruments. Our cooperation with the Spirit is essential to the birthing and implementation of His will. We are laborers together with God.

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4. He then brings individuals qualified to accomplish the work

Bezaleel was skilled in all manner of craftsmanship – "And I have filled him with the spirit of God, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship" (Exodus 31:3). Where God guides God provides. The Spirit had been preparing Moses' associate long before the Tabernacle was ready to be built. God's plan to prepare a habitation among His people. Moses saw it in the Spirit and Bezaleel created it by the Spirit.

5. When the Holy Spirit is in charge everyone speaks with one voice

When a purpose or vision seems "good to the Holy Ghost, and to us", everyone joins together in harmony and peace. Oh, there will always be a few fleshly people who demand things to go their way, but when the majority reads from the same page or walks to the beat of one drum, a sweet rhythm is established. As at the Tower of Babel, because the people had one mind and

one language "nothing they set out to do will be impossible for them!" (Genesis 11:8) Paul urged the churches to "be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment" (1 Corinthians 1:10). When leaders know the plans of the Holy Spirit and rightly communicate them, the people are able to understand the vision and do their particular parts in God's plan.

6. With prophetic guidance the work is established and prospers

"Believe in the LORD your God, so shall ye be established; believehisprophets, so shall ye prosper" (2 Chronicles 20:20). "And the elders of the Jews builded, and they prospered through the prophesying of Haggai the prophet and Zechariah the son of Iddo…" (Ezra 6:14) I am not speaking so much about "thus saith the Lord" prophecy here as simple prophetic and visionary guidance by leadership. The leader can see into the future. He gets a picture of where God is taking the church. As the pastor or leader communicates vision, sheep find great safety and comfort in his words. Being futuristic, what is prophesied must be received with faith. And it must be prayed into existence. If a pastor says we are believing for 200 in attendance by a certain date, or 2,000, his words carry weight in the spirit realm. When a congregation joins with one voice in faith, the entire group begins to prosper.

7. The Holy Spirit is Manager, we need not micromanage

When Eldad and Medad prophesied in the camp, Joshua ran to Moses wanting him to forbid them. Normally Moses was a micromanager. He attempted to solve the problems of two-million people by himself, which wasn't wise. But in this case, he said, "Would to God that all the LORD'S people were prophets, andthat the LORD would put his spirit upon them!" (Numbers 11:29) If something seems "good to the Holy Ghost, and to us" I must remember that church is an "us" arrangement. Yes, there may be abuses. Yes, immature people may operate from a fleshly mind. But the Holy Spirit and a patient, loving pastoral staff can help the discipleship process along. We must trust people enough to give them freedom to step out in faith and do what God is calling them to do. If a pastor micromanages everything his church will soon be micro in size.

8. Everything is conducted in the spirit of love

While emphasizing spiritual gifts we are not to forget spiritual fruit. On the fringe of the high priest's robe was a bell and a pomegranate. The nine gifts must be balanced by the nine fruits. Romans 15:30 speaks of the "love of the Spirit". If it seems "good to the Holy Ghost, and to us" it will please the Holy Spirit and edify the people. It is said that where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty, but also be advised that where the Spirit of the Lord is there is love. If the vision is pressed forward at the expense of love, the vision may be on target but attitudes are wrong. We are to endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Ephesians 4:3).

9. The Holy Spirit is the expressed Wisdom of God

The function of leadership is to walk in and communicatedivine wisdom. Wisdom is the principal thing, according to Solomon. The leader's job is to reveal wisdom. A follower's job is to walk in it.Consider this verse – "Therefore also said the wisdomofGod, I will send them prophets and apostles, and someof them they shall slay and persecute" (Luke 11:49). The word of wisdom is the highest of the charismatic gifts. What the Jerusalem Council grasped in declaring what "seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us" was a spark of the wisdom of God. Leaders need the Holy Spirit because He guides into all truth, brings things to our remembrance, and reveals the path to the best outcome.

10. A Spirit-led leader knows the way, goes the way, and shows the way

People will follow a leader if they know he is full of the Holy Ghost. There will always be hesitance when they perceive weakness, carnality, and an unresolved mind, and rightly so. We talk about practicing what we preach but I wonder what kind of message would go forth if we preached what we practice? The leader must know the way then go the way. He is the first partaker of the fruits. He leads the way for others to receive miracles by walking in the miraculous himself. And I do not mean to use only male pronouns. If the leader wants others to worship, he must become the lead worshiper, even when someone else is singing. He provokes others in giving through his own generosity and benevolence. The pastor is the Janitor in Chief. It is not necessarily his duty to empty trash cans but if he doesn't demonstrate cleanliness, no one will follow.

That a plan of action seems "good to the Holy Ghost, and to us" suggests that we are not leaving results all to the Holy Ghost, nor do we dare to attempt something without Him. We walk with Him; He walks with us. Another word is "the communion of the Holy Spirit" (2 Corinthians 13:14). The pertinent question, "Can two walk together except they be agreed?" (Amos 3:3) He will not follow our selfish ways, but as the divine Paraclete, He will walk step by step and side by side with those who cooperate with His will. I for one intend to lead with His help. To quote Brother Cho, "Come on Holy Spirit, let's go bless the people!"

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