

## POWER FROM HEAVEN\*

Before Jesus ascended into heaven, He met with His disciples to commission them for Kingdom work. In order for His disciples to do the works that Jesus did, they needed power from above.

*Act 1:8-11: But **you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you**; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."*

***After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight.** They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. "Men of Galilee," they said, "why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven."*

The words used to describe the Holy Spirit coming upon believers is the word for overtake or overwhelm. As an analogy, it is the same word used to describe being overrun or overpowered by an enemy. The word for pouring out the Holy Spirit is the word used for gushing as in the analogy of a fire hose bursting forth. When the disciples were gathered together in the upper room on the day of Pentecost, they heard the sound of a mighty rushing/gushing wind as the Holy Spirit was poured out upon them.

*Acts 2:2-4: Suddenly a **sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting.** They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and **began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.***

Once the Holy Spirit was poured out, the believers in Jerusalem were supernaturally empowered by God. Jesus had told them that they would do greater works than He did and now they had power from heaven to do the works of God.

*John 14:12: Very truly I tell you, **whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things** than these, because I am going to the Father.*

This whole scene was reminiscent of events which had occurred in the Old Testament. The Prophet Elijah had been taken up into heaven in a whirlwind while his successor Elisha watched. (See 2 Kings 2:11-12.) Elijah had been the world's most powerful prophet of the one true God. He did mighty works which proved his anointing from God. (See 1 Kings 18.) However, after this, Elijah found himself in a cave thinking that he was the only one who truly believed God. When Elijah left the cave, he was instructed by God to do three things, the first of which was to anoint Elisha as his successor, which Elijah did. (See 1 Kings 19.) When the time came for Elijah's dramatic departure from this world, Elisha requested a double portion of Elijah's spirit (his anointing from God) in order to be his successor and carry out his work. When Elijah was taken up into heaven his cloak, also called his mantle, fell down from above and Elisha took it as his own. Those who saw this transaction take place even noted, "Elijah's spirit now rests upon Elisha!" (See 2 Kings 2:15.) Elisha proceeded to do twice as many mighty works as Elijah in addition to fulfilling the two other portions of God's post-cave assignment to Elijah.

<b>ELIJAH – 7 MIRACLES</b> (See 1Kings 17-18, 2Kings 1-2.)	<b>ELISHA – 14 MIRACLES</b> (See 2Kings 2-6, 13.)
Commanded the weather Fed by birds Food supply during famine Raised a widow's son from the dead Fire from heaven Fire from heaven three more times Parted the waters of the Jordan River	Parted the Jordan River Purified bad water with a bowl of salt Cursed mocking boys Water pooled without rain Oil for a widow to pay her debts Raised a woman's son from the dead Purified poisonous food with flour Food multiplication: 20 loaves feed 100 Healed an incurable leper Discerned servant's lie and smote him Made a sunken ax head float in water Opened servant's eyes to see angels Blinded the enemy army Dead man raised to life on Elisha's bones

The story of Elijah and Elisha is a prophetic example of what happened when Jesus ascended to heaven and poured the Holy Spirit into believers. Christ's disciples were now empowered to carry out His purpose and to work miracles the way that He did. Like Elijah, Jesus was the Anointed One of the one true God and did great and mighty works and miracles in the earth. Then, He found Himself in a cave called the grave as the only one who truly believed God, since everyone else had deserted Him. As Jesus stepped out of the grave, He knew God's purpose for Him included anointing His successors. For the next 40 days, He commissioned His disciples and told them about their assignment to be His witnesses to the ends of the earth. Then, He ascended to heaven in the clouds. Then, Jesus sent down the Holy Spirit, which fell upon believers like Jesus' robe or mantle from God. The Spirit of Jesus would rest upon His disciples so that they could do His works, and even greater works, with power from heaven.

### WHEN THE HOLY SPIRIT COMES UPON YOU

There are a few other noteworthy Old Testament examples of the Spirit of the Lord coming upon people. First, in the days of Moses, Moses was the only one who was able to approach God to receive wisdom from Him in order to lead the people of Israel. The workload of administering justice for the people became overwhelming. Therefore, the Lord told Moses to gather seventy elders of Israel together so that He could share the Spirit of the Lord, which was on Moses, with the elders. This way, they would be able to help in bearing Moses' burden because they were empowered by the same Spirit that Moses had so that they could do the works that Moses did. When the Spirit of the Lord came upon the elders of Israel, they prophesied. Moses was so delighted at this event that he uttered words that came to pass at Pentecost, "I wish that all of the Lord's people were prophets and that the Lord would put His Spirit on them!" (See Numbers 11:16-30.)

Other Old Testament examples include Othniel, Gideon, Jephthah, and Samson from the Book of Judges each experienced the Spirit of the Lord coming upon them, rushing upon them, clothing them, or stirring them so that they were strengthened with power to do great exploits for God. They were particularly empowered for going to war against enemies in oftentimes seemingly impossible situations. (See Judges 3:10, 6:34, 11:29, 13:25, 14:6, 19, 15:14.) The Spirit of the Lord also came upon Saul, Israel's first anointed king. When this happened, Saul prophesied and even onlookers wondered aloud, "Can anyone be a prophet? Even Saul?" (See 1 Samuel 10:1-12.) In another instance, the Spirit of the Lord came upon Saul in righteous anger over the way that enemies were treating the Israelites, and he led Israel to victory in battle. (See 1 Samuel 11:6.) Lastly, the Spirit of the Lord came powerfully upon David, the next king of

Israel. This anointing made David a brave warrior and a man of war with good judgment, able to slay giants and defeat all of Israel's enemies by God's power which was with him. (See 1 Samuel 16:10, 18.) Moreover, this list does not include the experiences that the Prophets of the Old Testament had with the Spirit of the Lord, which we do not have time to get into in detail right now.

Most significantly, Jesus demonstrated this working dynamic of receiving power from Holy Spirit as power from above. After Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist, the Holy Spirit descended upon Him and rested upon Him like a dove. (See Matthew 3:16; Mark 1:10; Luke 3:22; John 1:32-33.) Following this, Jesus began His ministry with power from heaven. In His first public speech, He announced that *the Spirit of the Lord was upon Him*, anointing Him to proclaim the Kingdom of God, to heal the sick, to cast out demons, to raise the dead, and to destroy the works of the devil who is the ultimate enemy of all mankind.

*Luke 3:21-22: When all the people were being baptized, Jesus was baptized too. And as he was praying, heaven was opened and **the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form like a dove**. And a voice came from heaven: "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased."*

*Luke 4:18-19: "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to **proclaim good news to the poor**. He has sent me to proclaim **freedom for the prisoners** and recovery of **sight for the blind**, to **set the oppressed free**, to proclaim the year **of the Lord's favor**." (Quoting Isaiah 61:1-2.)*

*Acts 10:38: how **God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power**, and how he went around **doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil**, because God was with him.*

Because Jesus was born by the power of the Holy Spirit, He had the perfect nature of God within Him. This empowered Him from within for perfect conduct according to God's standard and, accordingly, He maintained right-standing with God at all times. This said, when the Holy Spirit descended upon Jesus, He received dynamite power from heaven to do the works of God. The power of God was working both within Jesus for perfect character and resting upon Jesus to enable His works against the kingdom of darkness and all the enemies of mankind.

## YOU WILL RECEIVE POWER

The word for *power* in Greek is *dynamis* from which we derive our word for *dynamite* and it certainly expresses explosive power. The word *dynamis* is technically defined as "great power or strength, power for performing miracles, and the power resting upon armies." However, the word *dynamis* can also be mean "virtue or moral power and excellence of soul." These two meanings express two different dynamics of the Holy Spirit that Jesus clearly demonstrated in action.

Along these lines, after the Holy Spirit was poured out on the day of Pentecost, throughout the Book of Acts, believers were *full of the Holy Spirit* or *filled with the Holy Spirit*. In our language, these words appear to be the same. However, in the Greek they are different, and their difference expresses the exact dynamic that Jesus demonstrated. The word for full in Greek is *pleres* which means to be complete or lacking nothing as in an empty vessel which is full of something. The word for filled in Greek is *pimplemi* which means furnished, accomplished, or fulfilled.

Being full of the Holy Spirit denotes the development and maturity of character of Christ in a believer. Fullness (*pleres*) is evidenced through the fruit of the Spirit including love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control and self-sacrificing devotion to God. (See Galatians 5:22-23.) Believers need inward power from above to behave this way because it is so completely the opposite of standard, selfish human nature. Being full of the Holy Spirit is also what gives believers supernatural strength to endure with integrity and faithfulness through life's trials and opposition to the faith.

*Acts 6:3-5: Brothers and sisters, choose seven men from among you who are known to be **full of the Spirit** and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them and will give our*

attention to prayer and the ministry of the word." This proposal pleased the whole group. They chose Stephen, a man **full of faith and of the Holy Spirit**; also Philip, Procorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas from Antioch, a convert to Judaism.

Acts 7:55: But Stephen, **full of the Holy Spirit**, looked up to heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. [while being stoned to death]

Acts 11:24a: He [Barnabas] was a good man, **full of the Holy Spirit** and faith

Being filled with the Holy Spirit indicates an immediate instance or surge for the moment or for a special task. Filling (*pimplemi*) of the Holy Spirit is evidenced by supernatural ability from God to prophesy, dream dreams, speak in other languages, proclaim the Gospel with boldness, heal the sick, cast out demons, and raise the dead. These things require power from heaven because the miraculous stands in contrast to God's created order and no one can do these things without spiritual power.

Acts 2:4: All of them were **filled with the Holy Spirit** and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.

Acts 4:8: Then Peter, **filled with the Holy Spirit**, said to them: "Rulers and elders of the people!

Acts 4:31: After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all **filled with the Holy Spirit** and spoke the word of God boldly.

Acts 9:17: Then Ananias went to the house and entered it. Placing his hands on Saul, he said, "Brother Saul, the Lord--Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you were coming here--has sent me so that you may see again and be **filled with the Holy Spirit**."

Acts 13:8-11: But Elymas the sorcerer (for that is what his name means) opposed them and tried to turn the proconsul from the faith. Then Saul, who was also called Paul, **filled [pimplemi] with the Holy Spirit**, looked straight at Elymas and said, "You are a child of the devil and an enemy of everything that is right! You are full [pleres] of all kinds of deceit and trickery. Will you never stop perverting the right ways of the Lord? Now the hand of the Lord is against you. You are going to be blind for a time, not even able to see the light of the sun." Immediately mist and darkness came over him, and he groped about, seeking someone to lead him by the hand.

Today, it is no different for us. As we follow Jesus, we become full of the Holy Spirit as the Lord permeates more and more of our lives and character. Then, as we set out to do the works of God, we are filled with the Holy Spirit to give us power from above.

Read this verse again, but this time, read it as your own anointing and assignment from God.

Luke 4:18-19: "**The Spirit of the Lord is on ME**, because he has **anointed ME** to **proclaim good news to the poor**. He has sent **ME** to proclaim **freedom for the prisoners** and **recovery of sight for the blind**, to **set the oppressed free**, to proclaim the **year of the Lord's favor**." (emphasis added)