

# THE MIRACULOUS OPERATION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

## Ed Dye

### I. INTRODUCTION

1. In biblical literature it may be seen that in ancient times the presence of the Spirit of God was often associated with the supernatural activity of God.
  - a. In the O.T., in creation.
  - b. In the many miracles of the wise men and prophets of old
  - c. And in the inspiration of the writers of O.T. Scripture.
2. So also in the N.T. we see the presence of the Spirit of God associated with the supernatural activity of God.
  - a. In the incarnation of Jesus the Messiah.
  - b. In the miracles of the holy men of God.
  - c. And in the inspiration of the preachers, teachers, and writers of the N.T. Scriptures.
3. And in all of this it is very important to note that the means by which the Spirit of God effected all supernatural phenomena of ancient times was the supernatural “power” of God.
4. The Holy Spirit empowered people; gave certain powers to certain people, for different reasons at different times.
5. It’s about such miraculous operation of the Holy Spirit that we are studying in this lesson.

### II. DISCUSSION

#### A. 1<sup>ST</sup> WE CONSIDER THE CONCEPT OF POWER IN THE GREEK N.T.

1. The concept of power in the Greek NT plays a very significant role in the discussion concerning the indwelling and operation of the Holy Spirit in the NT writings.
2. There are three different Greek words which are translated as “power” in the standard English translations.
  - a. *dunamis* – power in the generic as well as the absolute sense.
  - b. *exousia* – authority.
  - c. *kratos* – might, mightiness, dominion, strength.

3. The word we are most concerned with is *dunamis* which is used primarily in the NT for that supernatural force or influence of God imparted to certain individuals for the purpose of enabling them to speak or write by inspiration or perform miracles.
  - a. It is the word from which we get our English words dynamite, dynamic, dynamo, etc.

**B. NEXT, THE SUPERNATURAL POWER OF JESUS CONSIDERED.**

1. In Lk.1:35 the virgin Mary was told by a messenger of God, "...the Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the *power (dunamis)* of the Most High shall overshadow thee:..."
2. It was supernatural power that wrought the miraculous conception in the womb of Mary.
3. In Lk.1:17 it is said of John the Baptist, "...he shall go before him in the spirit and power (*dunamis*) of Elijah..."
  - a. John indeed came preaching in the spirit of the ancient prophets and spoke by inspiration (*supernatural power*) the message of God.
4. Soon afterwards came Jesus who, upon being baptized of John, was "filled with the Holy Spirit" and "led by the Spirit," Lk.4:1.
  - a. According to the context Jesus returned to Galilee "in the power (*dunamis*) of the Spirit," Lk.4:14. Cf. 4:18.
  - b. He did not need the personal indwelling of deity, he was deity. Yet it was by the power of the Holy Spirit that he performed his miracles, Lk.11:20; Mt.12:28; Ac.2:22. See Jno.10:17,18; Ac.2:24.
  - c. Why, even though he was deity, God in the flesh, did he need and use the power of the Spirit to perform miraculous works?
    - (1) Because, as Phil.2:5-8 teaches, he had "emptied" himself of his preexistent equality with God.
    - (2) He had emptied himself, not of his deity, but of his powers and prerogatives of deity.
    - (3) He became totally submissive to the total teaching of the total law of God; totally subject to the Father
5. While on earth in the flesh, he operated under the authority of the Father, and by the power of the Holy Spirit; now, reigning at the right hand of God in heaven, he still operated under

divinely delegated authority. After his resurrection from the dead, he said to his apostles, “All power is *given* unto me in heaven and in earth,” Mt.28:18. Cf. Eph.1:19-23; 1Pet.3:22.

### **C. THE SUPERNATURAL POWER OF THE APOSTLES AFFIRMED AND DEMONSTRATED.**

1. In Lk.9:1 Jesus called the 12 together and “gave them power (*dunamis*) and authority (*exousia*) over all demons, and to cure diseases.
2. In Lk.24:49, Jesus said to the twelve, “...behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power (*dunamis*) from on high.”
  - a. Ac.1:4,5 speaks of this once again identifying “the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me,” with being “baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days hence.”
  - b. Then, in Ac.1:8 he informed them that “ye shall receive power (*dunamis*), after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you...” (*i.e., manifested himself*).
  - c. It was not a personal indwelling of the Holy Spirit, or of deity, they were promised, but rather “power” from God by means of the Holy Spirit, by their being “baptized with the Holy Spirit.”
3. This power promised to and received by the apostles became a sign of the authority of the apostles of Christ.
  - a. 2Cor.12:12, “Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty (*dunamis*) deeds.”
  - b. Eph.3:7, “Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power (*dunamis*).”
  - c. Col.1:29, “Whereunto I also labor, striving according to his working in me mightily (*dunamis* – lit., in power).”
  - d. In 1Th.1:5, he reminds the church, “For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power (*dunamis*), and in the Holy Spirit...”
4. In Heb.2:3,4 the writer declares that the “great salvation ...spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that

heard him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers (manifold) miracles (powers, *dunamis*), and by gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to his will.”

5. In every case it is power that is clearly evidenced as present in the activity of the apostles, not the personal indwelling presence of deity.
  - a. And this presence of power is only evidenced at the moment of the miracle, which is evoked or called forth by the faith of the miracle worker at that moment.
6. This fact is further established in the book of Acts.
  - a. In Ac.3:2 when the apostle Peter healed the lame man, he informed the people that it was not by his own power (*dunamis*) that he healed the man, but by God’s power.
    - (1) Here it is clearly evident the “power” wrought the healing.
  - b. In Ac.4:7 the Sanhedrin asked, “By what power (*dunamis*) , or by what name, have ye done this” (that is, heal this man).
  - c. In Ac.4:33 we read that “with great power (*dunamis*) gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus...”d. In Ac.19:11 we read about God working “special miracles (*dunamis*) by the hands of Paul.”
7. In 1Cor.2:4,5 Paul wrote, “...my speech and my preaching were not with enticing words of man’s wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power (*dunamis*) of God.”
8. Clearly, that which filled the apostles was the power of the Holy Spirit, not the Holy Spirit himself, by which they revealed God’s will to man and confirmed it by miracles wrought by that power.

#### **D. THE SUPERNATURAL POWER OF OTHER FIRST CENTURY CHRISTIANS ALSO CONSIDERED AND COMPARED.**

1. Not only do we read of supernatural power in the apostles, but in other 1<sup>st</sup> century Christians as well.
2. Ac.6:5 tells of Stephen being full of faith and of the Holy Spirit.

- a. Then in V.8 we learn he, “full of faith and power (*dunamis*), did great wonders and miracles among the people.”
  - (1) By this we learn it was actually power that filled Stephen, not the personal indwelling of deity.
  - (2) This power would have been imparted to him and others of the 1<sup>st</sup> century by the laying on of the hands of the apostles of Christ. See Ac.8:14-19; 19:5,6; Rom.1:11; 2Tim.1:6
- 3. Philip was another of the seven in Ac.6:1-6 said to be “full of the Holy Spirit”. In Ac.8:13 we read of him working signs and great miracles (*dunamis*).
- 4. Rom.1:11 reveals that Paul longs to see (visit) the Christians at Rome that he might “impart unto you some spiritual gift...”
  - a. Then in Rom.12:6-8 he reveals that some of them possessed spiritual gifts.
- 5. 1Cor.12:4-10 Paul enumerates the spiritual gifts given by the power of the Spirit. Included in that list is that of “miracles”, translated from the Gr. term *dunamis* (power).
  - a. All of these gifts were manifestations of power attributed to 1<sup>st</sup> century Christians by the Holy Spirit.
- 6. All of these verses evidence the indwelling of “power” in certain 1<sup>st</sup> century, power bestowed by the Holy Spirit, not the personal indwelling of deity.

**E. THE PURPOSE OF SUPERNATURAL POWER IN THE FIRST CENTURY AND IN THE INFANT CHURCH MUST NOT BE OVERLOOKED OR MISAPPLIED OR EXTENDED.**

- 1. The purpose of this indwelling power is very important to a full understanding of the place of supernatural power in NT Christianity.
- 2. The coming of the Holy Spirit and the manifestation of his power in the lives of the apostles was for the purpose of guiding them “into all truth,” and through them giving man the full, complete, perfect will of God, by which man could be saved by calling upon the name of the Lord in obedience to the gospel.
- 3. The spiritual gifts, or miraculous gifts or powers of the Spirit, bestowed upon baptized believers by the laying on the hands of the apostles were for the purpose of enabling the infant church

to carry on its work and worship under the guidance of the apostles of Christ. See Ac.2:42; 2Cor.11:27,28.

4. According to 1Cor.13:8-11 such spiritual gifts have ceased because “that which is perfect is come,” which is the complete revelation of God’s will to man.

### III. CONCLUSION

1. The conclusion to be drawn out of all this is that in the NT when one is said to be “filled with the Holy Spirit,” one of two possible interpretations may be given: either:--
  - a. He is filled with the personal indwelling presence of deity, or
  - b. He is filled with the effects or power of deity.
2. No evidence can be brought forward to establish that anyone of the first century was filled with deity, with the exception of Jesus of Nazareth, who was God incarnate.
3. On the other hand, the evidence, as has been shown, overwhelmingly establishes that certain 1<sup>st</sup> century persons were filled with supernatural power, i.e., the effects of deity.
4. Needless to say, we today do not and cannot have or get this power; for it is not available to anyone today.
5. Rather, we have that which was produced by 1<sup>st</sup> century revelations and manifestations of divine power: the NT Scriptures, the all-sufficient word of God, the gospel of Christ, and the church belonging to Christ, the Church of Christ.
6. See 2Tim.3:15-4:5; Eph.3:1-5; Gal.1:6-12; 2Tim.2:15.

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