



December 12, 2010

*On Our Own ?*

Those who believe they have the power of the Holy Spirit at times seem to view those who profess to be New Testament Christians as being deficient in our understanding of the scriptures. I have talked with several folks over the years who use their sense of the divine indwelling as proof that God is with them. I have heard some say that they know the Holy Spirit is dwelling in them because it is “better felt than told” meaning they don’t really have a book chapter and verse for what they think is happening to them. Most of these folks are zealous and passionate in their beliefs but lack the understanding that comes from considering what the word has to say. One reason given on occasion is that God has sent the Holy Spirit into one’s heart so that we can know that God is with us. The same folks have a tendency to point out that we believe we are on our own and God is just sitting back observing what happens. That is not the truth. We know that the miraculous aspects of the Holy Spirit were promised to the twelve disciples who later became the apostles, Judas being replaced by Matthias, and later Paul. Christ covers the reason for the coming of the Holy Spirit in John’s account in chapters fourteen through sixteen. This was a gift and meant as a tool since Christ was leaving them in a hostile world. Christ stated, ***“And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.”*** (John 14.16-17). We know that these gifts were bestowed when the apostles laid their hands on one to whom they wished to impart such a gift and the Holy Spirit then bestowed the ability God saw fitting. This is brought out clearly in Acts chapter 8 when Peter and John came to Samaria. Although Phillip preached and baptized many, the Holy Spirit did not visit them with a gift until the apostles prayed and laid their hands on them. If we don’t believe we have some miraculous manifestation of God’s power does that mean we don’t believe? I think not. The definition of faith as given in Hebrews eleven is the core of what God has left us. The writer states, ***“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.”*** (Heb 11.1). The things that we hope for are those things God has promised. We know that God has promised eternal life to those who believe and are faithful (Eph 1.4, Titus 1.2, Rev 2.10). The evidence of these things is the same word that pointing us back to God providing us with all things we need to know. Peters states that God has given us, ***“...all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue”***. (2 Pet 1.3). God has revealed that he will be with us and help us. The writer of Hebrews states, ***“Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.”*** (Heb 13.5-6 ). Paul indicates that the miraculous gifts would cease to make way for that which was better (1 Cor 13.8-10). The “perfect” which was to come is the full revelation of God’s will that will stand until the end of time. James also details the help we have from God in his letter when he states, ***“...The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.”*** (Jas 5.16). James uses the example of Elijah who prayed for the Lord to stop the rain for three years and God did so. God answers prayers and is aware of the things that we need. We can trust that he will care for and supply our needs if we are faithful and seeking to do his will. We need not think that we are on our own because we are not, but, we don’t have to experience miracles to know that the Lord is with us. His word should be good enough and our faith needs to be strong enough to trust him.

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