

BFF402 Receive the Spirit

Scott Moore: Welcome to the "Building Faith Families" podcast with Steve Demme. I'm your host, Scott Moore. Thanks for joining us today. Good morning, Steve. How are you today?

Steve: I am OK. How are you?

Scott: I'm good, except I woke up in a meat locker, it felt like. You ever had those little marital spats about the temperature? I think my wife and I are about to have one today.

Steve: Tell us more.

Scott: It was just stuffy in here yesterday. I was like, "You know, hon, you can turn the air conditioner on if you want." Well, she turned it on, man. She cranked it down to like 67 last night, and then in our house, that would have got me shot. Many years in our marriage, but apparently this time it's OK for her to do that. I woke up with my feet darn near numb. Anyway, I probably shouldn't be sharing this, but anyway, there's a little peek behind the curtain.

Steve: That's OK. I don't think she listens to our podcasts. I think you're safe. We finished the series on the Passover, and we focused on the blood of Jesus. Hopefully, this will come out right around the Easter time. I'm not sure we have the dates lined up just correctly. Then according to the Christian calendar, we are now entering the season of Pentecost. I'll read from Deuteronomy 16.

"Observe the month of Abib and celebrate the Passover of YHWH your God, because in the month of Abib He brought you out of Egypt by night. Now, count off seven weeks from the time you begin to put the sickle to the standing grain, then celebrate the Feast of Weeks."

7 times 7 is 49 plus 1 is 50. Pente means 50. Pentecost or the Feast of Weeks is 50 days after Passover. For the next several weeks, we're going to be talking about the coming in a new way of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

Acts 1:1-10, "In the first book O Theophilus, I have dealt with all that Jesus began to do and teach until the day when He was taken up after He had given commands through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom He had chosen. He presented Himself alive to them after His suffering by many proofs, appearing to them during 40 days and speaking about the kingdom of God.

"While staying with them, He ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which He said, 'You heard from Me. For John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.'

"So when they had come together, they asked him, 'Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?' He said to them, 'It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father Has fixed by His own authority, but you will receive power when the

Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth.'

"And when He had said these things as they were looking on, He was lifted up, and a cloud took Him out of their sight. And while they were gazing into heaven as He went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes."

I have to confess, I had this wrong for decades. During these 50 days, I knew that this was an amazing time, because Jesus kept appearing to them for 40 days and speaking about the kingdom of God, but there's something different that I learned just in the last few years, and we're going to study that today.

Let's pray. Father, thank You for Your Word. Thank You for the fullness and completeness of Your Word. Thank You for the inspiration and how it's alive and it's living. Thank You for what we've been studying about the blood of Jesus.

Now help us as we turn our attention towards the Spirit of Jesus. Help us to learn, give us ears to hear what Your Spirit is teaching us, and help us to have spiritual insights as we contemplate this subject with the help of God. In Jesus' name, amen.

Scott: Amen. Hey, can I jump in for a second?

Steve: Sure.

Scott: That verse, Acts 1:8, is one of the standard ones a lot of people memorize at some point, but I confess that I haven't read it in context in a while. It just struck me much more real when you were reading that. They're asking about when Jesus is going to restore the kingdom. They're excited and eager and this is going to happen. He says, first of all, He says, "You don't get to know that." Then He says, "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you," and He's gone. I can't imagine not being a little confused if I was one of those guys. I'm awestruck, certainly. That wasn't what I asked. Does that make sense?

Steve: Yes. What goes through my mind as soon as you say that is those amazing verses where Jesus tells them, "It's better for you if I go, because when I go, you're going to have the Holy Spirit in a whole new, I'm going to say, dimension."

Scott: I wonder if they even knew what He was talking about.

Steve: Put yourself back in the disciples' shoes. If you heard Him say that, what would you be thinking?

Scott: They have heard about the Holy Spirit, so it's not like this was a new thing to hear about. I've just taken that verse out of context so much that I almost think it's about something else than what I thought.

Steve: Which is an excellent point. I'm finding myself reading longer passages of scripture lately, because if you don't have the context, you really miss what's being said. What I just noticed are the guys in the white robes, I'm assuming angels, who

said, "Hey, men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus who was taken from you into heaven will come in the same way as you saw Him go into heaven." Notice that He was taken up in a cloud. How's He returning? In a cloud.

Scott: Yep.

Steve: It's pretty cool. We're always learning and seeing things. My reason for studying this is because I want to take the time to look at the importance of what is happening here. I'm fascinated with the book of John, because it doesn't seem like it was written chronologically, like the other books.

John wrote differently, but he was also led by the Spirit. In the book of John, there's a whole bunch about the Holy Spirit. I'll start right in the beginning. His baptism, back John 1:32, "I saw the Spirit descend from heaven like a dove, and it remained on Him." Then in the 33rd verse, "I myself did not know Him, but He who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this is He who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.' And I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God."

The Holy Spirit coming upon Jesus, which is also in the first three Gospels, is the dove comes upon Him. Then God speaks out of the cloud, but this time, there's more going on here. John is having a little interaction with God Himself, and God is saying, "Look, if you see the Spirit coming, you'll know Who this is."

I find that a little bit curious, because John was His cousin, and when Jesus was announced through Mary, as Mary went to visit Elizabeth, John in her womb leapt because the Spirit came upon him.

I would think his mom had told him, "Your cousin is something special, because when He first came here in the womb and you were in the womb, this is what happened."

Then in John 3, we have this amazing interaction between Jesus and Nicodemus.

Jesus had just told him, "Unless you're born again, you can't see the kingdom."

Nicodemus says, "How do I do that?" Jesus answered in the fifth verse, third chapter, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh. That which is born of the Spirit is Spirit.

"Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born from above.' The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes, so it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit."

Scott: That's one of those other ones that I'm like, "Jesus, could you just give me a straight answer?" He starts talking about the wind and like, "What?" I'd be so lost. I just confess, if I was one of the disciples, I would be really not clued in to what's going on, man.

Steve: There's reasons. I'll make sure you know the reasons.

Scott: I know. Yes, I hear you. Go ahead.

Steve: I think I'm going to change your name to Nicoscott, so Nicoscottemus.

Steve: This is John teaching us by the Spirit about the Spirit. I like the phrase, "Born from above," better than "Born again," because I think you could render it either way. Born again seems earthy to me, but born from above, where the wind is from, where the Spirit is from, where God is from, it's really God that comes upon us. I like born from above a lot better.

I'm going to jump down now to what I think is a very significant passage in our study. John 7, and I'm skipping some verses in the sixth chapter where he talks about the Spirit.

In the seventh chapter, "On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, 'If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. Whoever believes in Me, as the scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.'

"Now this He said about the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive, for as yet the Spirit had not been given because Jesus was not yet glorified."

This is a pivotal passage for a couple reasons. Obviously, these disciples had the Spirit working in them and through them, I don't know how else to put it, because you can't say, "Jesus is Lord," except by the Spirit.

You can't be convicted, except by the Spirit. You can't go casting out demons, except by the Spirit. They were operating with the Spirit, but something is going to change when Jesus is glorified. Does that make sense, Nicoscottemus?

Scott: Yes.

Steve: I used to puzzle over this verse, because it was obvious that the Spirit of God was working, and yet He says, "Something is going to change when I'm glorified." I'm going to jump down now to some of the most significant chapters, I think, in the Bible for me are John 13, 14, 15, 16.

It's right before He's crucified. He's pouring out truth. He's washing their feet. He gives them the Lord's Supper. He teaches them the new commandment. There's a lot that happens in John 13 through 15, and He also talks a lot about the Spirit.

John 14:15, "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments, and I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him. You know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you."

You see that same thing there? That verse kind of captures what I have been saying. He dwells with you, but something's going to change, and He's going to be in you. Then in the 18th verse, "I will not leave you as orphans. I will come to you."

Then, He says in John 14:25, "These things I have spoken to you while I am still with you, 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 have said to you."

John 15:26, "When the Helper comes, Who I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, He will bear witness about Me." This is what He's going to do. He's going to point to Me.

Then in the 16th chapter, "When the Spirit of truth comes, He will guide you into all the truth, for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears, He will speak, and He will declare to you the things that are to come. He will glorify Me, for He will take what is Mine and declare it you."

The key verse is in the seventh verse of the 16th chapter. "Nevertheless, I tell you the truth, it is expedient, it's to your advantage for you that I go away, for if I don't go away, the Comforter will not come unto you, but if I go, I will send Him unto you."

Now that's the verse that used to just stick in most Christians. It would just say, "Well, what do You mean if You go, it's going to be better for us?" If Jesus said it, there's a part of us that says, "Well, we know He's Jesus, we know He knows all these things, but that's a hard one to swallow."

What I assumed for a long time was that Jesus was in the tomb for 3 days, then for the next 40 days, He is teaching and appearing to them, then they wait for a week in Jerusalem, tarrying, and it all adds up to 50 days, for Pentecost to happen.

These poor disciples, the last thing they hear from Jesus is, "It's good that I'm going to go away, because then the Comforter will come." I thought that for 50 days, they were waiting for the Holy Spirit to come upon them. Would you say Amen to that or what do you think?

Scott: Yeah, I don't know if I ever put it together all that well. I'm not as inquisitive as you are.

Steve: The thing is, is that we could talk a lot about the fact that Jesus died exactly when He was supposed to die, when the Passover was being offered up in the temple, the Passover, the Passover, the Lamb of God was being slain for the world.

God is so careful. He's watching over His Word to fulfill it to the letter. He's also arranging things so these people should be able to see it, because while they're in the temple offering the sacrificial Lamb, the sky is darkening and there's thundering, the earth is rent, and they know something is happening.

Then when He dies, and the veil is torn. It's amazing to me. They're all gathered in Jerusalem watching these things take place. Then they go home and come back 50 days later for the next feast, the Feast of Weeks. While they're all together, the tongues of fire come upon the disciples and Peter stands up. This is Pentecost.

God has chosen to stick to the plan. He's chosen to stay the course and He has already established the three feasts. I always assumed that when the tongues of fire came, that's when the Holy Spirit came upon these disciples.

I'm going to read now from John 20. "On the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb early, while it was still dark. She ran and told Peter. Peter and John went running back.

"They found the tomb. Mary stood outside weeping." In the 11th verse, Jesus is there and He says, "Why are you weeping?" She says, "Rabboni." He says, "Do not cling to Me. I have not yet ascended to the Father, but go to My brothers and say to them, 'I am ascending to My Father and your Father, to My God and your God.'"

That's the 17th verse and then 18th verse, Mary goes and tells the disciples, "I've seen Him." Then here we come to the 19th verse. "On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, 'Peace be with you.'

"When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. And Jesus said to them again, 'Peace be unto you, as the Father has sent Me. Even so, I am sending you.'"

I'm going to have to put a little pause here. In all four Gospels, there's a commissioning. The Great Commission is Matthew 28, "Go therefore into all the world, make disciples, etc.," It's also in Luke 24, and at the end of Mark, "Go, preach the Gospel, make disciples."

Many people think, right there, John 20:21, that's Jesus giving His commission afresh, but in the Gospel of John, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent Me. Even so, I am sending you."

Now we're down to the 22nd verse. "And when He had said this, He breathed on them and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them. If you withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld.'"

I had missed this for decades. It was pointed out to me. I looked at it and I read the whole context. I said, "That is absolutely correct." Because it's as if Mary had kind of interrupted Jesus as He was trying to ascend to the Father.

Mary Magdalene is right there. The other Mary was weeping at the tomb and He said, "No, no, no, don't touch Me yet. I have not completed this. I have not ascended to the Father, but go tell the brothers this is happening." She went, she told them. Then on evening of that day, later that night, after all these things that happened in the morning, Jesus appears to them.

He is now glorified. He has ascended. The first thing He does, at least it looks to me chronologically, He says, "My disciples, I told them it's going to be good for them if I will leave because then they get the Spirit. I don't want them to go another minute,

another hour without my followers receiving the Spirit." He descends again and He says, "Hey, here I am. See, touch my hands, touch my feet. Now, receive the Holy Spirit," and He breathed on them.

Now He was glorified, which is what we read way back in John 7. He said, "The Spirit is with you, but He shall be in you." Everything changed after He had ascended. He was glorified and then He breathed on them. He is now not only with us, He is in us. How's that resonate?

Scott: My head's swimming through a whole bunch of things at the moment. I just noticed that Thomas wasn't there, so did he not get the Holy Spirit until later?

Steve: I don't know about poor Thomas. You're right.

Scott: When did he get the Holy Spirit? The other thought I had, and this may be a total tangent, so forgive me if I'm going off.

Steve: That's OK.

Scott: A, that's amazing. I've felt that recently, too. I don't know if you mentioned that earlier to me privately or what, but I'd been telling my family that whole deal, too. I'm like, trying to sound really smart, "Did you know the Holy Spirit actually came before Pentecost?"

I just earlier when you read that the Holy Spirit descended like a dove on Jesus. First of all, I just can't imagine what that must have actually looked like. Second of all, the Holy Spirit seems to be coming in different ways, and Jesus seems to be anointing them with the Spirit in different ways.

Or the Spirit's presence coming upon someone is different at different times and yet, how do I say this without offending anyone? We have certain sects of Christianity that like to say that you have to have these certain manifestations

Steve: You're tiptoeing nicely.

Scott: You have to have these certain manifestations of the Spirit to prove that you actually have the Spirit. It's almost like Jesus is just going out of His way to say, "Actually, the Spirit moves as He wills." He says it like the whole wind thing.

Like, you don't get to nail down the Holy Spirit and tell us how He's going to manifest Himself from believer to believer and then condemn certain believers because they don't have it the same way you do. Does that make sense?

Steve: Yeah. You said several things there. No, this is good because the Spirit is wind. The Spirit came as a result of Jesus breathing. The Spirit is sometimes referred to as oil, right?

Scott: Yeah, and fire.

Steve: That's why we have a lot to study in the ensuing weeks.

Scott: There's the tongues of fire, and then they speak in tongues, and then, by the way here Jesus says "If you forgive people their sins, then they're forgiven." I'm like, "Mm-hmm. I don't know that's really a sign of the Holy Spirit necessarily."

It's just funny how we like to take one thing and just make a whole big deal out of it. It's like, "No, there's no formula to this. This is the Holy Spirit. He works as He wills, and you don't get to nail Him down."

Steve: I couldn't have said it better myself. You have the podcast. Let me add, I think you are absolutely right. I'm not going to try to pin Him down, but I just want to study Him because the Holy Spirit is so important. He's vital. Jesus teaches about Him. Paul speaks of Him. I think that the Book of Acts, should be changed to the Acts of the Spirit coming upon the apostles because the focus should be on the Holy Spirit in that book, not Peter and Paul, who were the two main characters. Peter and Paul are just Peter and Paul until the Holy Spirit fills them, empowers them, leads them, talks to them, guides them, anoints them.

I think that's what God is trying to get to all of us is that this same Spirit that was given to these apostles is available to us, and we need to magnify Him. We need to understand Him. We need to honor Him because He's God.

The only time, I think, that Jesus really gets His back up is when people start saying, "That's just the devil working in You." He looked at them, and I bet you there was a chill as he said, "Look, you can mess with Me, you can say anything you want against Me, but do not mess with the Spirit or I will take you out." That's Steve International version. You mentioned this a couple of weeks ago, Scott, that that's in your mind, that was the unpardonable sin is where, you remember, we're supposed to forgive others?

Scott: Yes.

Steve: That we'll be forgiven?

Scott: Yeah. He mentions that as like, we worried about blaspheming the Holy Spirit, which people get, "What do I do? Have I blasphemed the Holy Spirit? I don't know. Have I?" Jesus says flat out, "If you don't forgive other people their sins, you won't be forgiven." That's a whole lot easier for me to wrap my head around.

Steve: Which is an oft overlooked part of the Lord's Prayer.

Scott: Yes.

Steve: We want Him to forgive us our sins as we've forgiven You. We have to remember that we have to forgive others their sins, which is harder. Amen. There's a lot here. We just tapped into the surface, but I wanted to jump, you might say, to the, put it in context with Passover, and then we have Pentecost, and now we have the breathing, the coming upon us of the Spirit.

Father, we are anxious and hungry, and we want You to teach us more about the Spirit. If we have little idols that need to be smashed up, then I pray that You'll smash them up. If we have misconceptions of the Spirit, or we put the Spirit in little boxes so that we're comfortable, and He's not blowing whether He will.

I pray that You'll blow those away and help us to embrace the Spirit in a whole new way, and understand Him, receive Him, have fellowship with Him, and walk in the power of the Spirit. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Scott: Amen. That's our show for this week, folks. Thanks for joining us for the Building Faith Families podcast with Steve Demme. If you have a question for the show, email Steve at spdemme@gmail.com. If you have a question for me, you can reach me at scott@unsocializedmedia.com. Thanks for joining us. Have a great week.