

Did You Receive The Holy Spirit When You Believed?



Foundations (Day 145)
by Derek Prince

Going back for a moment to Acts 8:14-17 which we looked at yesterday, it is interesting to notice that we find two different forms of speech used. One speaks of "receiving the Holy Spirit"; the other speaks of "the Holy Spirit falling upon them." However, the context makes it plain that these are not two different experiences but two different aspects of one and the same experience.

When Paul came to Ephesus and met there certain people described as "disciples," the first question he asked was "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" (Acts 19:2).

It is plain that Paul had been given the impression that these people were disciples of Christ. Obviously, if they were not Christians at all, there could have been no question of their having received the Holy Spirit, since this is received only through faith in Christ. However, by further questioning Paul discovered they were not disciples of Christ at all but only of John the Baptist, and so he preached to them the full gospel of Christ.

One fact emerges clearly from this incident so far. Obviously, if people always received the Holy Spirit automatically as an immediate consequence of believing in Christ, it would be illogical and foolish for Paul to ask the question: "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" The mere fact that Paul asked this question makes it clear that he recognised the possibility of people having become disciples or believers in Christ without having received the Holy Spirit.

This is confirmed by the record of events that occurred after Paul had explained the gospel of Christ to these people.

> "When they heard this, they were baptised in the name of the Lord Jesus." (Acts 19:5)

These people had now heard and believed the gospel, and they had been baptised. As we have already shown in connection with the people of Samaria, on the authority of Christ's own words, people who have fulfilled the two conditions of believing and being baptised are thereby saved.

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Nevertheless, these people in Ephesus, just like those in Samaria, had not yet received the Holy Spirit. In Ephesus, just as in Samaria, this came as a separate and subsequent experience.

> "And when Paul had laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied." (Acts 19:6)

Here, then, is a third scriptural example which indicates it is possible for people to have been converted to Christ, but not yet to have received the Holy Spirit.

Devotional

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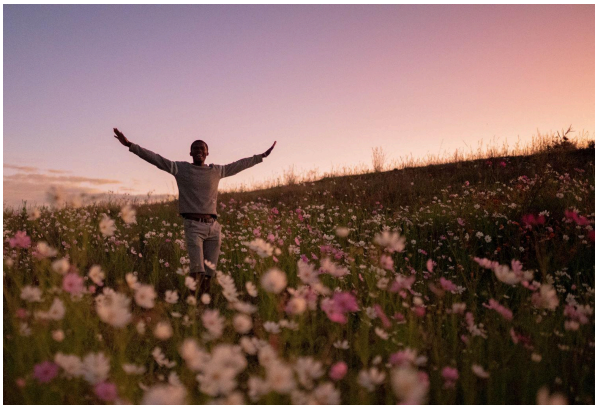

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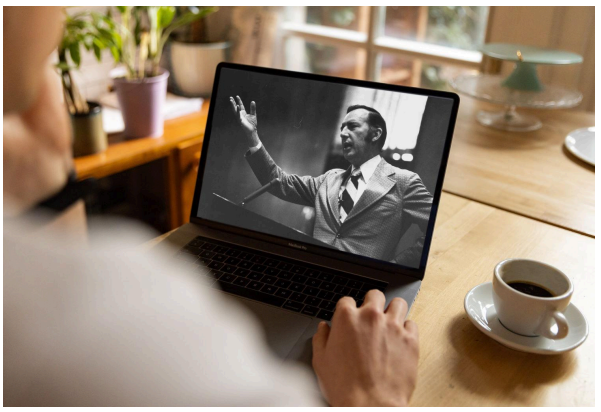

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