

## TODAY!

### What Would Jesus Be Doing *If He Were You?*

*“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit”* (Romans 15:13).

#### Insight 10. Becoming A Follower Of Our Lord Jesus (Part 3)

Insights 8 and 9 presented two of the three distinct biblical requirements you need in order to effectively and powerfully follow and serve Jesus as your beloved Lord. This Insight discusses this:

### 3. You must be baptized with the Holy Spirit.



The celebration of Pentecost in Jerusalem was one of three feasts commanded by God for the Jewish people to come together at the temple sanctuary. For hundreds of years devout Hebrews had obediently gathered 50 days after Passover not only to celebrate the faithfulness of God for the *firstfruits* of the grain harvest. They also commemorated this time as when *God revealed Himself* on Mt Sinai *with power through fire, smoke and the sound* of the shofar blowing as He gave the *Torah* to Moses for the people (see Exodus 19:18,19).

Multitudes of Jewish people were already present in Jerusalem 50 days after the resurrection of Jesus! Do you see the parallels here?

- Jesus Himself is called the “firstfruits” in 1Corinthians 15:20,23, as are His followers, His “harvest” in James 1:18.

- God gave Moses the *Torah*, which literally means *teaching* — and since the Source of *Torah* is God, those who heard this teaching knew they were expected to obey it! The Holy Spirit is given to those who are in union with Christ through their new birth. They therefore have receptive and empowered hearts and spirits to obey their Lord’s commands.

- God spoke to Moses through flames and shofar blasts, a truly supernatural phenomenon for both Moses as well as the Israelites waiting below. The roar of the wind and the tongues of fire in the upper room reflected the image of God’s glory at Mt Sinai as each eager disciple received the flame individually from that one fire Source. Their being filled with the Holy Spirit fulfilled Jesus’s promise to them in Acts 1:8 as well as Moses’s expressed desire for God’s people millennia earlier that the *Lord would put His Spirit upon all His people* (Numbers 11:29).

The manifestation of the Spirit’s coming upon followers of Jesus with fire was no surprise to them. Even as John the Baptizer was immersing the repentant in water, he told them of *another baptism* they would need—an immersion into the Spirit through Jesus:

*“I baptize you with water. But One more powerful than I will come, the thongs of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire”* (Luke 3:16).

The imagery of wind being associated with the Holy Spirit was used by Jesus as He explained to Nicodemus the nature of someone who is born again:

*“The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone **born of the Spirit**”* (John 3:8).

The hopeful expectation of a Spirit baptism encompassed the hearts of the disciples after our Lord’s resurrection because He had promised them, *“For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit”* (Acts 1:5). And when the crowd listening to Peter were convicted by his resounding message on Pentecost, three thousand were stung to the heart as they responded to his passionate call: *“Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit”* (Acts 2:38).

Interestingly, three different accounts reveal that the *baptism of repentance* and the *baptism of the Holy Spirit* may not always occur at the same time or in the same order:

•*“While Peter was still speaking these words [to devout non-Jews gathered in the home of the Roman centurion Cornelius], the **Holy Spirit came on all** who heard the message. The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astonished that the **gift of the Holy Spirit** had been poured out even on the Gentiles. For they heard them speaking in tongues and praising God. Then Peter said, ‘Can anyone keep these people from being **baptized with water**? They have received the **Holy Spirit** just as we have’”* Acts 10:44-47).

•*“When [Peter and John] arrived [in*

*Samaria], they prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit, because the **Holy Spirit had not yet come** upon any of them; they had simply been **baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus**. Then Peter and John placed their hands on them, and they received the **Holy Spirit**”* (Acts 8:15-17).

•*“Paul took the road through the interior and arrived at Ephesus. There he found some disciples and asked them, ‘Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you trusted?’ They answered, ‘No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit.’ So Paul asked, ‘Then what baptism did you receive?’ ‘John’s baptism,’ they replied. Paul said, ‘**John’s baptism was a baptism of repentance**. He told the people to believe in the One coming after him, that is, in Jesus.’ On hearing this, they were **baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus**. When Paul placed his hands on them, the **Holy Spirit came on them**, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied”* (Acts 19:1-6).

*“Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the **Spirit of God** was hovering over the waters”* (Genesis 1:2).

From the very beginning of the Bible to the phrase *“The Spirit and the bride say, **Come!**”* in Revelation 22:17, God’s Word is filled with the work of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is so vital to Father’s will being carried out on earth that He tells the prophet Zechariah, *“Not by might nor by power, **but by My Spirit,**”* says the LORD Almighty” (4:6).

Our Father relies on the Holy Spirit to do His will through those who have been born again. Receiving His Spirit is not a complicated matter. For instance, the Newer Testament records that He is given through laying on of hands as by Peter and John in Samaria, and by Paul with Timothy:

“For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the **gift of God**, which is in you through the laying on of my hands” (2Timothy 1:6; see also 1Timothy 4:14).

Our Lord is even more direct: “How much more will your Father in heaven **give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!**” (Luke 11:13). Trust our Lord’s promise if you have not yet been baptized with the Spirit: *Ask the Father* to give you His Spirit.

**“But whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven; he is guilty of an eternal sin.”** (Mark 3:29).

The most specific way many blaspheme the Holy Spirit is to nullify certain aspects of His ministry. Failing to receive His baptism blasphemes Him by keeping Him from empowering “Christians” so they may fulfill the Father’s will through them. But consider this: **Professional clergy** for centuries have blasphemed the Holy Spirit by preventing or hindering His empowerment of self-identified Christians by putting themselves as intermediaries between a person and God.

The root of this kind of blasphemy can be traced back to Plato’s concept of **Cosmic Dualism**, and to **Nicolaitanism** which led to the demonic rise of a clergy class like that on which pagans relied.

One of the most destructive teachings that religious leaders adapted from the Hellenist “Church Fathers” was *cosmic dualism*. This worldview compartmentalizes life into the “good” spiritual realm and the “evil” physical world.

As a result of cosmic dualist thinking, “clergy” set themselves apart for higher “spiritual” sacred pursuit while “laity” work in the “evil” realm of the mundane and the profane. Through the influence of cosmic dualism, certain buildings began to be identified as “the church” or

“the house of God” rather than the *collective followers of Jesus as the “called-out ones,”* which is the definition of the Greek word for church. (See Acts 17:24.)

Keep in mind that the Hebraic view regards the spiritual and physical worlds in continuity. One is no higher than the other because *God has a part and a purpose in both.* The Hebraic perspective recognizes God as the Creator Who declared the world He formed to be good. Even though sin resides in the nature of man, He doesn’t consider to be evil the universe He spoke into being.

Do you wonder why spiritual power isn’t more manifest throughout Christianity? Perhaps because the sister of cosmic dualism is *Nicolaitanism* (see Revelation 2:6,15). Many professional clergy consider themselves in a higher position of spiritual calling which sets them above lay people in their labor for God.

This insidious separation caused by Nicolaitanism can be identified by its very definition. The Greek word *nicolaitane* means **“conquering the people.”** The first part of the word refers to *nikos*, to conquer or have victory over. The middle of the word comes from *laos*, “the people.” The commonly used term “laity” is derived from it.

The Nicolaitan system subjugates the people by making “laity” out of them through raising up others who lord it over them. The spiritual predominance of a priestly (or ministerial) system is maintained by the Nicolaitan spirit. People with the most personal charisma or the greatest natural abilities are elevated to leadership.

The “laity” learn to depend on these individuals for guidance and faith practice rather than on a vibrant personal relationship with the Lord. Their dependence on a single person lessens the sense of personal responsibility for being baptized with the Holy Spirit and being guided and empowered by Him.

Scripture doesn't ever call followers of Jesus to exalt themselves according to their spiritual gifting. In fact, our Lord warns people against seeking domination and self-importance:

*"But you are not to be like that. Instead, the greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves"* (Luke 22:26; see also Mark 12:38-40; Luke 18:10-14).

**Most seminaries teach their students that they're the ones who are responsible "to make everything happen." Some even refer to clergy as "the Set Man," or "THE Man of God."**

But the Hebraic faith of Bible times didn't function as a religion with paid, professionally trained outsiders. A rabbi had no more special duties or offices during collective worship than a thirteen-year-old boy. There was no hierarchical structure to which he had to report. A rabbi held no priestly office nor was he a synagogue functionary, but a learned consultant on religious matters—a fellow learner along with his students studying and applying God's Word.

**A rabbi worked to provide for the needs of his family and devoted time to scriptural study after that. The Hebraic culture valued the worth of manual trade. Even before the Fall, Adam and Eve worked in the Garden. Rabbis were expected to participate in a profession: Jesus was a carpenter; Paul, Aquila, and Priscilla were tentmakers; noted Jewish teachers Hillel and Shammai were a wood-cutter and a carpenter, respectively.**

In summary, if you identify yourself as a Christian, then make sure that you:

- 1. Have been born again.**
- 2. Have received a baptism of repentance.**
- 3. Have been baptized with the Holy Spirit.**

As we've discussed, each of these points is a scriptural mandate. If one or more of these is missing in your life, that may be why you lack intimacy with Jesus as your Lord and lack the power to do our Father's will by His grace. Their lack may also raise doubt that our LORD Jesus knows you as one of His own. There's an inseparable connection here between His sacrifice on the cross so that you could be born again, His LORDship in your life, and His indwelling Spirit. As we are so bluntly reminded: *"If anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ"* (Romans 8:9).

[For further study concerning spiritual power, see our series of Lifebytes: 66 thru 69, **The Hebraic Restoration: Our Father's Plan to Restore the Spiritual Power of the Early Church.**]

Please prayerfully ask yourself:

- **Are all of the three biblical mandates we discuss in Insights 8,9, and 10 part of your faith experience?**
- **Do those who know you well in the faith describe you as resolutely obedient with the Lord Jesus in command of your life?**
- **Do they see the Spirit of our Lord at work in and through you as you walk in His love?**
- **Do you possess a supernatural gift which you didn't have before you became a follower of Jesus? The Spirit's giftings aren't personality traits or talents, but rather a divine empowerment of grace given to those who've been baptized by the Spirit.**

[In a later Insight we'll discuss spiritual gifts and their importance in the Kingdom of God which is at war with the dominion of Satan. But if you've spent years in Christianity lacking the power of the Holy Spirit, we encourage you to use our short booklet, *God's Instruments For War—Discovering and Coordinating Spiritual Gifts As Weapons Of Warfare*, free at our website.]