

Dear Friend,

December is the month we celebrate the most important birth in history, the birth of our Savior Jesus Christ. He is the King of Kings, yet He allowed Himself to be born in a manger, a place of lowest humility. His purpose was not to come and lord over mankind as a tyrant, but to be the ultimate servant. He came to give us His life in order that we could be saved from eternal death.

Mat 20:28 Just as the Son of Man came not to be waited on but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many [the price paid to set them free]. AMPLIFIED BIBLE

I try to imagine the wonder of the twelve apostles as they watched Him "serve" the people over the next several years. They watched as He changed water into wine, opened the eyes of the blind, cast out devils, healed the sick, stopped dangerous storms, walked on water, and raised the dead. Never had there been a man like this before. Surely, He was the only one who could do such things.

But then Jesus sent them out to do the same things He was doing. What? I've tried to imagine their astonishment when Jesus dispatched the twelve to preach the same gospel He was preaching, and to do it with the same demonstrations of power:

Mat 10:7-8 And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand. (8) Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give.

They were no doubt amazed when they found the same miracles happening when they preached the gospel as when Jesus Himself preached the gospel. How was this possible? How could these miraculous things be happening when they preached? Jesus gave tremendous insight when He told them,

Joh 14:16-17 And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; (17) 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.

At that time the Holy Spirit was dwelling "with" them. The Holy Spirit, the third member of the Godhead, was going with them at the command of Jesus to confirm the gospel of the kingdom that they were preaching in the name of Jesus. The miracles were happening because the Holy Spirit was "with" them to do it. But Jesus told them the day was soon coming when the Holy Spirit would not only be with them, but "in" them ... permanently ... to abide ... forever! That is why Jesus could boldly say that those who follow Him will do the same works He did, and even more works than He did because He was going to the Father,

Joh 14:12 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.

Jesus preached the kingdom of God with manifestations of power by the Holy Spirit. It has always been His intention that His disciples would preach the same gospel with the same

manifestations of power by the Holy Spirit. The last thing He told His followers before He ascended into heaven was to WAIT for the promise of the Father, the Holy Spirit, so they would be equipped with power to preach the gospel the same way He did.

Act 1:4-5 And, being assembled together with *them*, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, *saith he*, ye have heard of me. (5) For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.

Act 1:8 But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

This is the same Holy Spirit who had been "with" them ... but now He was coming to be "in" them. They were to go forth in the name of Jesus to preach the gospel in demonstration of the Spirit and in power ... the same way Jesus did.

Was it just for the eleven? Was this promise of the Holy Spirit only for the original apostles? We read in Acts chapter two that when the Holy Spirit filled them ... He filled them all ... one hundred and twenty people, both men and women. Immediately afterward, Peter preached to the multitude and made this astounding statement regarding the infilling of the Holy Spirit,

Act 2:39 For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, *even as many as the Lord our God shall call.*

That includes all of us, even to this present day. It is the plan and purpose of Jesus Christ that every single believer all down through history to be saved, healed, and filled with the Holy Spirit. He is the Comforter that has been sent to help us. This is why Jesus said that every person who believes the gospel shall lay hands on the sick and they will recover. They shall cast out devils, and so forth. [Mark 16:17-18] Jesus said "believers" would do those things, not just apostles.

The Amplified Bible describes the Holy Spirit as "Comforter, Counselor, Helper, Intercessor, Advocate, Strengtheners, Standby." The modern day church at large has greatly neglected the ministry of the Comforter, the Holy Spirit. How little is taught in most churches today about the third member of the Godhead who literally resides "in" Spirit-filled believers. We are like children who were born heirs of a fabulous kingdom, but nobody ever told us about the riches and power that is available to us. Each of us wind up spending our whole life in obscurity and without power because we were never told the truth. God forbid!

The church is beginning once more to hear the truth about this Comforter, this Holy Spirit, this third member of the Godhead that lives "in" us. If we can ever truly grasp the truth that the Holy Spirit is literally the Spirit of our Father who dwells "in" us the same way He dwelt "in" Jesus, we will say like Him ... all things are possible. The great mystery of the ages is "Christ in us, our hope of glory." When Jesus prayed in John chapter seventeen, He made it clear it was to be Christ in us, and the Father in Him.

Joh 17:21-23 That they all may be one; as thou, Father, *art* in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. (22) And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: (23) I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.

It all began with a baby born in a manger roughly two thousand years ago. Let us rejoice anew at the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ, as we enjoy this Christmas season. Truly He changed the world, and He is still changing it through us as we believe the true gospel of God.

Your friend and co-laborer,

GARY