

Introduction (Gen 6:3)

Last week we covered Genesis 6. I called it a prophetic picture of the gospel through Noah. It has both historical and prophetic meanings, and we do well to pay attention to both of them. Monday morning I woke up about 12:30 and the Holy Spirit began to give me more insight about the passage that I just preached. I had already moved to Genesis 7 and had begun preparing to teach Genesis 7 this week. But the Lord gave me some revelation and understanding that I want to share with you this morning.

How many of you have been taught that the Holy Spirit worked differently in the Old Testament than He does in the New Testament? I was taught that there are two eras of the Holy Spirit: the Old Testament and the Church Age, beginning at Pentecost. That is what I was taught, and that is what I have always taught. I was taught that in the Old Testament the Holy Spirit did not rest on everyone, but only on select people in the Old Testament. But, in the New Testament, the Holy Spirit comes upon all believers. I believe the teaching about the work in the Church era is 100% correct.

According to Ephesians 1:13, we are sealed with the Holy Spirit after we have heard the gospel and have believed. Last week I mentioned Romans 8:14 which says, "as many as are led by the Spirit, these are the Sons of God." The apostles were very careful to make sure that everyone who believed was filled with the Holy Spirit. There is no question that the Holy Spirit has been given to all believers in the New Covenant. I believe the traditional teaching on the Holy Spirit in the New Testament is correct.

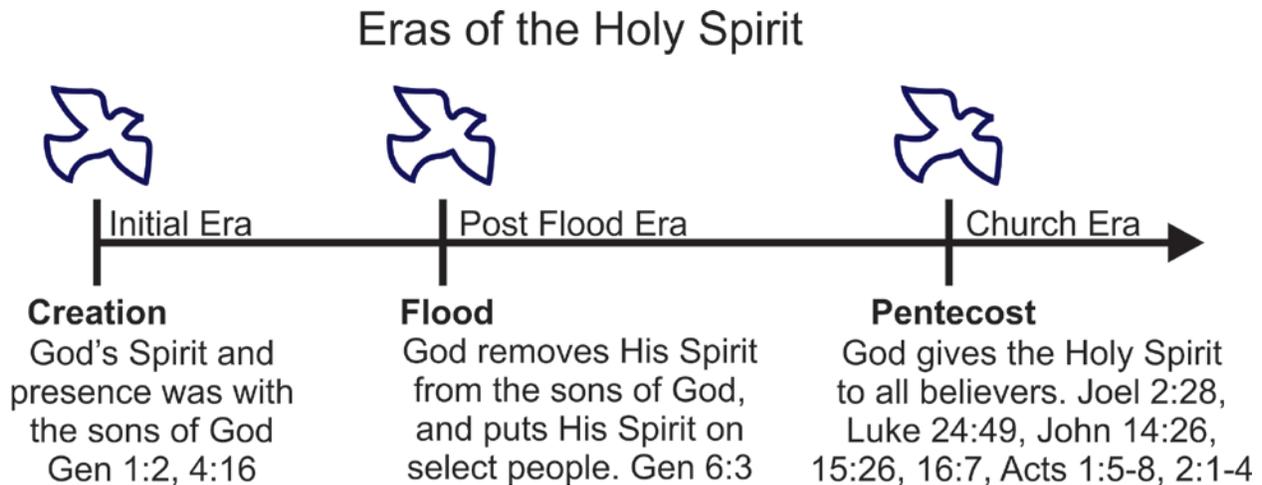
On Monday morning, the Holy Spirit told me to go back and look at Genesis 3. The NASB, which is the primary version that I use, says, "*Then the LORD said, 'My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, because he also is flesh; nevertheless his days shall be one hundred and twenty years.'*" There is a footnote that reads, "rule in; some ancient versions read abide in." I missed that footnote when I studied and preached the passage last week. The Amplified Version reads, "*Then the Lord said, My Spirit shall not forever dwell and strive with man, for he also is flesh; but his days shall yet be 120 years.*" I believe the rendering of dwell and strive with man is correct. If it is correct, it means that God's Spirit dwelt with the Sons of God from creation until the flood. Then, He made a decision not to have His Spirit dwell with men, which started a new era of the work and ministry of the Holy Spirit. This second era is actually where the teaching about the Old Testament work of the Holy Spirit begins. What I received from the Lord on Monday morning was that there were three different eras of the Holy Spirit, not two. I believe the first era of the Holy Spirit started at creation and ended with the judgment in Genesis 6:3. I believe the second era began in Genesis 3, and ended at Pentecost, which is where the third era of the Holy Spirit began.

You might ask, "does it really make any difference?" Well, not really. The first and second eras of the Holy Spirit are over, and we all agree that we are in the Church Era of the work and ministry of the Holy Spirit. On the other hand, it makes a lot of difference. If we understand that God's Spirit was with the Sons of God in the first few chapters of Genesis, then we gain a much better understanding of why God was so upset and brought judgment. And this understanding helps us understand the work of the Holy Spirit in the New Testament, since it is very similar to the work in the initial era of the Holy Spirit. These are the lessons learned and applications that we glean from a better understanding. I believe that this is why the Holy Spirit spoke to me about this on Monday morning.

So, this morning, I want to talk about the Initial Era of the Holy Spirit, the Second Era of the Holy Spirit, which is the Post Flood Era, and then the Church Era or Pentecostal Era of the Holy Spirit.

A People of God's Presence

1. The Initial Era of the Holy Spirit
2. The Second or Post Flood Era of the Holy Spirit
3. The Church Era of the Holy Spirit



1. The Initial Era of the Holy Spirit

God is Spirit and His Spirit was moving over the surface of the waters in Gen 1:2. When God said in Genesis 1:26, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness..." He was referring to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

In Genesis 2:16 God commanded Adam to eat from all the trees in the garden except the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Then, He told Adam it was not good for man to be alone. God was having conversations with Adam. God is Spirit and He was present with Adam.

In Genesis 3, after Adam and Eve had sinned by eating the forbidden fruit, God approached them about it. He asked them questions, and then gave them the consequences for their actions.

In Genesis 4, God has a long conversation with Cain about his offerings. Then, He has a second conversation with him about killing his brother Abel. Even though Cain was evil, God's Spirit and presence was with him. Then, in Genesis 4:16, "*Cain went out from the presence of the Lord, and settled in the land of Nod, east of Eden.*" God's Spirit and His presence was with the Sons of God, and the lineage of the seed of Christ. Cain's lineage was called sons of men, and they were not in the presence of the Lord. God's Spirit and presence was with the Sons of God.

In Genesis 5, we are given the lineage of the Sons of God. There is not much mentioned about God's presence except that Enoch walked with God and was not, for God took him.

Finally, we get to Genesis 6, and the wickedness of man was great on the earth. It begins with the Sons of God marrying the daughters of men. As I shared last week, I do not think this is angelic beings marrying the daughters of men. I believe that the lineage of the righteous was

intermarrying with Cain's descendants, the daughters of men. Cain had left the presence of the Lord. The presence of the Lord was on the Sons of God. The Sons of God had no respect or appreciation that God's Spirit and presence was with them. They sinned openly in the presence of the Lord. Only Noah was found to be righteous and God said that He would establish His covenant with Noah, and save him and his family from the destruction of all flesh on earth. Even though His Spirit and His presence had been with the Sons of God, they were wicked, just like the sons of men. This prompted God to say in Genesis 6:3, that His Spirit would not dwell and strive with man forever, because he also is flesh. This was an end to the first era of the Holy Spirit. God's Spirit was no longer going to be dwell and strive with fleshly men. God was going to be selective.

2. The Second or Post Flood Era of the Holy Spirit

The Second Era of the Holy Spirit began with the flood. God removed all the wicked from the earth, and established a covenant with Noah. God made a covenant with Noah, and blessed Noah and his sons. In Genesis 11, we are introduced to Abram. He was a descendant of Shem, one of Noah's sons. In Genesis 12, God tells Abram to leave his country and his father's house, and that He was going to make a great nation out of him. We know that this is the nation of Israel. God establishes His covenant with Abraham. In Genesis 15, the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision. One of the ways that the Spirit of God speaks to us is through visions. In Genesis 17, the Lord appeared to Abram and establishes His covenant with him. He changes Abram's name to Abraham, the father of a multitude of nations. God established a covenant with Isaac, and then Israel. God's hand was with Joseph and then with Moses.

God would meet with Moses in the tent of meeting. While Moses was in the tent of meeting, the people saw the pillar of cloud standing at the entrance of the tent. The cloud indicated God's presence. (See Exodus 33:7-11). God met with Moses face to face as a man meets with a friend. God was met with the future leader of Israel, young Joshua. After Moses would leave the tent of meeting, Joshua would spend time in the tent. He loved God's presence.

When Israel asked for a king, God gives them Saul for a king. When Samuel anointed Saul, he told him that when he left him that day he would come upon a group of prophets. In 1 Samuel 10:6, he said, *"Then the Spirit of the LORD will come upon you mightily, and you shall prophesy with them and be changed into another man."* When Saul sinned by being disobedient, God rejected him as king. In 1 Samuel 16:13, Samuel anoints David and the Spirit of God came mightily on David. In 1 Samuel 16:14, the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, and an evil spirit began to terrorize Saul.

The Spirit of God was upon David, and he loved to be in the presence of the Lord. In Psalm 27:4, David asked one thing from the Lord, that he could dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of his life. David experienced the presence of the Lord in God's temple. In Psalm 84:10, David said, *"For a day in Your courts is better than a thousand outside. I would rather stand at the threshold of the house of my God than dwell in the tents of wickedness."* David loved the presence of the Lord.

We see that God put His Spirit on some men, and He also removed His Spirit from men. His Spirit was not going to dwell and strive with men. He would dwell and be upon select men and women. There were some men who were mighty in Spirit. Elijah was mighty in Spirit. Elisha

was mighty in Spirit. God spoke through the prophets and judges, but it was more on a selective basis. And we see that God put His Spirit on some and God removed His Spirit at will.

3. The Church Era of the Holy Spirit

During the Second Era of the Holy Spirit, God spoke about the Church Era of the Holy Spirit. In Ezekiel 11:19-20, God said that He would take out the heart of stone and give them a heart of flesh, and put a new spirit within them so that they would walk in His statutes and ordinances. Then, they would be His people and He would be their God. In Ezekiel 36:24-27, God said that He would take them from the nations and gather them into their own land. He would sprinkle clean water on them, give them a new heart and put a new spirit within them. He specifically says, *"I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances."* In the Church Era, God's Spirit was not just on someone, He would put His Spirit within us.

Joel also prophesied about the Lord sending His Spirit upon men. In Joel 2:28, he prophesied, *"It will come about after this that I will pour out My Spirit on all mankind; and your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions."*

Jesus spoke of the coming of the Holy Spirit. In John 14:16-17, He said, *"I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; {17} that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you."* Notice that the Holy Spirit will be with us forever. Notice that it is only for believers. The world cannot receive the Holy Spirit. Notice that the Holy Spirit will abide or dwell in us.

After Jesus had been raised from the dead, He met with the disciples. He told them in Luke 24:49, *"I am sending forth the promise of My Father upon you; but you are to stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high."* The disciples were to wait in Jerusalem until the Holy Spirit came down and clothed them with power. Luke, who wrote the gospel of Luke and Acts, picks up in Acts 1:4-6 where Jesus commanded the disciples not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for what the Father had promised. *"John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."*

In Acts 2:1-4, *"When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. {2} And suddenly there came from heaven a noise like a violent rushing wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. {3} And there appeared to them tongues as of fire distributing themselves, and they rested on each one of them. {4} And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit was giving them utterance."*

At Pentecost, Peter preached a message and in it he said that what had just happened was a fulfillment of Joel's prophecy that God would pour out His Spirit on all mankind. (See Acts 2:14-17.)

Conclusion and Applications

God's plan from the very beginning was to dwell and abide with us. God is Spirit and He desired His Spirit to dwell and abide in us. Because of sin and corruption, God removed His Spirit from men until a permanent solution to sin was in place. Animal sacrifices were a covering but they

did not take the payment for our sins. It was Jesus' death as a sacrificial Lamb that took away the sins of the world. God was not going to pour out His Spirit on man until the hearts of stone had been removed. Just as we were all born in the flesh, we had to be born of the Spirit to enter the Kingdom of God. When we receive Christ, we are born of the Spirit. We are sealed with the Spirit. His Spirit is not going to be taken away from us, but will abide with us forever. This was God's plan from the very beginning. He wanted His Spirit to dwell and abide in us. When God said that His Spirit would not abide and strive with men forever, He removed His Spirit until the day of Pentecost, when He would pour out His Spirit on man again, and would never remove it.

When God created us, He created us to be a dwelling place for His Spirit. In the Old Testament, they had the ark of the covenant, where God's presence would dwell. The ark was in the holy of holies and the high priest could enter it once per year, and there were many sacrifices that had to be made prior to entering. When Jesus died, the veil to the holy of holies was rent from top to bottom, signifying that God had rent it. God had declared that the sins had been dealt with and His people could come into His presence again. But, they had to be born of the Spirit.

I want us now to look at some applications from this.

1. **We the temple of the Holy Spirit.**

God's plan was not to have His Spirit fill some building. His plan from the very beginning was for His Spirit to dwell or abide in us. We are the temple of the Holy Spirit. We are the place that God intended His Spirit to dwell. In 1 Corinthians 3:16 Paul asks, "Do you not know that you are a temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwell in you?" Then, in 1 Corinthians 6:19, Paul asks again, "Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own?" We are the temple of the Holy Spirit and God wants His temple to be full of His Spirit.

(1 Cor 3:16-17) "Do you not know that you are a temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? {17} If any man destroys the temple of God, God will destroy him, for the temple of God is holy, and that is what you are."

(1 Cor 6:18-20) "Flee immorality. Every other sin that a man commits is outside the body, but the immoral man sins against his own body. {19} Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? {20} For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body."

2. **God's Spirit is Holy.**

God did not pour out His Spirit on man until our sins had been dealt with. God's Spirit is bothered by sin. God's Spirit is vexed by sin. God's Spirit is grieved by sin. In James 4:1-5, he addresses the quarrels and conflicts that they are having. He mentions lust and envy. He talks about wrong and selfish motives. He talks about adultery with the world. James finishes by asking the question, "Or do you think that the Scripture speaks to no purpose: 'He jealously desires the Spirit which He has made to dwell in us'?" The ESV translates this as "He yearns jealously over the Spirit that He has made to dwell in us." God jealously and passionately wants His Spirit to dwell in us, but sin interferes with the work of His Spirit in our lives. We have the Holy Spirit and He will not take it away, but His presence may not be full in our lives.

I want to go back to 1 Corinthians 3 and 6. The church in Corinth was full of division, jealousy and strife. (See 1 Corinthians 3:3-4.) When Paul asks them do they not know that they are temples of the Holy Spirit and that says that the Holy Spirit dwells in them, it is in the backdrop of the division, jealousy and strife. God wants His Spirit to fill our temples and sin interferes with the filling of our temples. In 1 Corinthians 5 and 6, Paul addresses immorality in the church. Look at what he tells them in 1 Corinthians 6:18-20 before reminding them that they are temples of the Holy Spirit. *“Flee immorality. Every other sin that a man commits is outside the body, but the immoral man sins against his own body. Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.”* God was not going to remove His Spirit. He has told them that the Holy Spirit is in them. But, the strife, division, immorality and other sins provoke God's Spirit.

In Genesis 6:3, God's Spirit was with the Sons of God and His Spirit was being provoked by all the sin and wickedness. The thoughts were continually evil and God was sorry that He made men. God wants His temple to be full of His Spirit and His presence.

In Ephesians 5:3-5, Paul has a similar message to what he shared with the Corinthians. He says, *“But immorality or any impurity must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints; and there must be no filthiness and silly talk, or coarse jesting, which are not proper, but rather giving of thanks. For this you know with certainty, that no immoral or impure person or covetous man, who is an idolater, has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.”* God's Spirit is holy and He wants His people, who have the Holy Spirit to be holy. The Sons of God in Noah's age had the Holy Spirit, but they were not living holy and righteous lives. So, God removed His Spirit from man until the sin was dealt with.

3. Be Continually Filled With The Holy Spirit

Look at Ephesians 5:17-20 and how Paul concludes that section, “So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord; always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father;” If we want to be a temple that is filled with the Holy Spirit and the presence of God, we need to put away sin because God is a Holy Spirit. Then, we must be continually filled with Spirit by speaking to one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with our hearts to the Lord, always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. While sin drives away the presence of the Spirit, worship ushers in the presence of God. Our lives need to be characterized by thanksgiving and praises to God.

I have heard many people speak about the importance of worshipping God before the message. They say that worship prepares the heart to hear the word of God. I believe that God's Spirit and His presence does do that. But, the will of God is for His temple to be full of His Spirit, and one of the primary ways for the temple, that is you and I, to be filled with His Spirit is through worship. We worship to honor and glorify God, and when we do that, we are filled with His Spirit. Worship is a time to drink from the Spirit of God and to be filled with His presence.