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Alongside these passages we should include John 14:16, 26, John 15:26, and John 16:7 where Jesus explains that after he went away he would send the Holy Spirit and that the Spirit (Comforter) will abide with them forever. It is important to note here that Jesus is presenting a situation in which he will be physically absent from the church, but yet his presence will remain among them through the person of the Holy Spirit. As a result of the Holy Spirit's presence, Jesus' followers would be enabled to perform miraculous works (Hebrews 2:4).

According to these passages, the Holy Spirit was promised by God to Jesus' followers to remain among them until the end of the age and to enable them to perform miraculous deeds. The question for Conditional Cessationism is this: how can something which God promised to give to the church forever be lost or no longer given to the church by God?

The simple and expected answer is that the promise was given with conditions. The concept of God's promises and gifts being conditional is rooted in Old Testament precedent. In the Old Testament God gives things to his people which he promises are theirs forever. However, the Old Testament is clear that the people's reception of these things is conditional upon their obedience to God's teaching. We will now turn our attention to those things God gave and the promises God made in the Old Testament that are biblically related by New Testament authors to the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Our study will highlight two types of conditions that are present in both the Old Testament and in the New Testament regarding God's gifts and promises to His people.

We will start with God's promise to Abraham.

### *Conditional Promises in the Old Testament*

In the Old Testament, God promises to give the land of Canaan to Abraham and his seed forever (Genesis 13:15, Exodus 32:13). In the context of Genesis 12-13, when God makes this promise to Abraham no conditions are mentioned. And, in accordance with God's promise Abraham went to the land of Canaan and dwelled there along with his nephew Lot and their households. We should note that the promise that God gave to Abraham and his descendants to inherit the land was made before Isaac was ever born. In Genesis 15, Abraham considers how this inheritance could go to his descendants as God promised given the fact that he (Abraham) didn't have any sons. God explains that Abraham's seed would first

go to a land that is not theirs and be servants for 400 years. After the 400 years Abraham's descendants would return to Canaan Land to receive the land that God had promised. These passages demonstrate that sometimes we must wait to receive what God has promised to us. Sometimes we must wait to receive a promise from God even when our predecessors already received and experienced that promise but which intervening generations did not possess.

Four hundred years after Isaac's birth, Moses led the descendants of Abraham out of servitude and bondage in Egypt back to the Promised Land. At that time, God explained that he would dwell among his people and that after they inherited the land he would select a particular place to dwell among them (Deuteronomy 12:11, 23:16). God later revealed that the place where he would dwell among his people was Jerusalem, or more specifically, in the house or Temple that was built in Jerusalem (1 Kings 8:13, 1 Kings 11:13, 32, 36, 2 Kings 21:7, etc.). This promise that God would dwell among his people in Jerusalem was fulfilled when the Temple was dedicated under Solomon. At that time fire came down from heaven and God's glory filled the house (2 Chron. 7:1-4).

As God brought Israel out of Egypt, he explained that their inheritance of what was promised to them was conditional. This conditional is spelled out more explicitly in passages like Deuteronomy 11:26-12:1 and Deuteronomy 28:1-68. The blessings and curses mentioned in Deuteronomy 28 lay out two possibilities. If God's people would be obedient, they would remain in the Promised Land. Or, if God's people would be disobedient, they would be cast away from God's presence among them and from what was promised to them forever.

At the time of Joshua, the Israelites entered Canaan Land and began to possess it. And for many generations spanning over hundreds of years, the people of Israel continued to possess that which God had promised would forever belong to them. However, the people and their leadership began to stray from the commands that God gave to Moses. As Israel disregarded God's warnings through the prophets, God brought upon them the consequences of disobedience that he had declared to them in Deuteronomy. Ultimately, Israel was conquered and exiled from their land as a punishment for their disobedience. The Assyrians conquered the northern kingdom of Israel, cut them off from God's presence in Jerusalem, and exiled them from the Promised Land. Then, the Babylonians conquered the southern kingdom of Judah, exiled its people from the land in a series of deportations, and ultimately destroyed Jerusalem and the Temple itself. The exile of Judah to Babylon took place over 70 years. During this time God's people lost the land that God had promised to give to them forever and God's presence was no longer among them.

Furthermore, the restoration of what was promised was also conditional upon a timing factor. God did not allow repentant and faithful Jews in exile to return to Israel as soon as they repented and began to follow his commands again. Rather, as Jeremiah 25:11-12 and 29:10 inform us, the exile was to continue for 70 years. Faithful Israelites could not return to the Promised Land until these 70 years were fulfilled. This parallels God's statements to Abraham in Genesis 15. Abraham's

descendents would go into bondage for a period of years and only afterward would return to what God had promised them.

After the Babylonian exile concluded the Jewish people returned to the land and rebuilt the Temple. However, God's presence did not dwell in the new Temple as he did in the time of Solomon's Temple. God did visit this Temple in the person of the incarnate Word, but not until hundreds of years after the Temple was rebuilt by the Jews returning from exile. In the New Testament period, the Temple was again destroyed in 70 AD and the Jewish people were again exiled from the land that God had promised forever to give to them. This time the loss of what God had promised lasted for almost 2,000 years. It wasn't until 1948 when Jewish exiles returned to the newly formed state of Israel. And it wasn't until 1967 that Jerusalem was returned to them. And the Temple has still not yet been rebuilt.

These events demonstrate that things God has promised to give to his people forever are conditional upon obedience to God's commands and upon timing factors. If God's people fail to keep God's commandments faithfully they can be deprived of what God has forever promised to give them even though their predecessors once possessed what was promised. And once lost, what God has promised will not necessarily be immediately restored, not even if the people repent. Instead, even the faithful and repentant among God's people may have to wait until an appointed time when God will return what was promised to them.

### *Connecting the Old Testament to the New Testament: The Condition of Obedience*

In the Old Testament, the Temple in Jerusalem was the one place where God dwelled among his people. In the New Testament, Christians are told that we are the Temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 3:16-17, 6:19, 2 Cor. 6:16). In Matthew 18:18-20 Jesus tells his followers that he would be present with them until the end of the age and that he would be present with them "wherever two or three gathered." These statements connect to the idea that Christ's followers are the Temple of the Holy Spirit. Unlike the Old Testament where God would only dwell in one location among his people (the Temple in Jerusalem), in the New Covenant God would be present wherever his people were gathered.

We should also notice Matthew 18's declaration that Jesus would be present with his followers until the end of the age. Matthew 18:18-20 contains strong parallels to Matthew 28:16-20. Both passages include a remark about Jesus' being present in his followers until the end of the age. And both passages include a statement from Jesus about authority in heaven and on earth.

When speaking of authority in Matthew 28:19-20, Jesus instructs the apostles to go and teach all nations and baptize them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. As he sends them out he explains that he will be with them always even until the end of the age. Mark 16:17-20 records that Jesus said signs would

follow those that believe what the apostles taught. These signs include some of the charismatic gifts (such as speaking in tongues and healing the sick) which are exhibited by early Christians in New Testament texts after the day of Pentecost comes in Acts 2. The implication from Mark 16, of course, is that signs would not be performed by those who did not believe Jesus' teaching. Luke's account is found in Luke 24:36-53. Luke records Jesus' mention of the coming of "the promise of the Father" a phrase that Luke uses in Acts 1:4 and Acts 2:33 to refer to the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. And Hebrews 2:4 explains that the miraculous signs discussed in Mark 16 and Acts 2 were done by the Holy Spirit in confirmation of the apostles' teaching just as the gospels state.

Alongside these passages we should also include John 14:16, 26, John 15:26, and John 16:7 where Jesus explains that after he went away he would send the Holy Spirit and that the Spirit (Comforter) will abide with them forever. It is important to note that here (and in Acts 1:4-8) Jesus is presenting a situation in which he will be physically absent from the church, but yet his presence will remain among them through the person of the Holy Spirit.

From these passages we see that the Holy Spirit is promised to Jesus' followers, that the Holy Spirit is promised to be with us until the end of the age, and that the Holy Spirit will give us miraculous gifts as a result of his presence among us. In fact, right in the middle of these passages in John 14-16, Jesus outlines the conditional nature of receiving from God in John 15:1-7. (Even an earlier verse in John 7:39 identifies belief in Jesus and his teachings as a prerequisite for receiving the Holy Spirit.)

But we can also see that these New Testament statements about the Holy Spirit and the miraculous gifts are connected to and parallel Old Testament promises and things that were given to God's people forever. These connections indicate that the New Testament promises and gifts of God are conditional just as the promises and the things God gave to his people in the Old Testament were conditional. In the Old Testament the Temple demonstrated God's presence among his people in the land that he'd given them forever. And yet, God removed the people from his presence and took away the land that he'd given them forever when they failed to obey his commands and teachings. Sometimes the loss of the promises continued for long periods of time. And the restoration of the lost promises was also contingent upon God's timing. Even those who had repented and were faithfully keeping God's commands would not have what God had promised to them restored until a particular appointed time.

Similarly, in the New Testament Christ's followers are called the Temple of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is promised to us until the end of the age. And we are told that the Holy Spirit would enable Christ's followers to perform miraculous signs and wonders. However, we are also told that if we fail to keep Christ's teachings we will grieve the Holy Spirit (Eph. 4:30), quench the fire of the Holy Spirit (1 Thess. 5:19), and "defile God's Temple" (1 Cor. 3:6-7). In Old Testament terminology, the concept of defiling God's Temple and quenching the fire (which was present in the Temple and signified God's presence among his

people) related to the destruction of the Temple which occurred when God turned his face from his people and took away what he'd promised them because of their disobedience.

Moreover, in the New Testament only those Jews who were followers of Christ were able to receive the Holy Spirit and the miraculous gifts that he bestowed. Those who did not believe in Jesus did not receive the Holy Spirit or the miraculous gifts. Once again this demonstrates that the gifts given to God's people through the power of the Holy Spirit are conditional in the New Testament period just as they were in the Old Testament period. The condition is repentance from sin as well as belief in and obedience to Christ's teachings.

These and other indications which are discussed in more detail in our Charismatic and Faith Movement study, demonstrate that the condition of obedience which was in effect regarding the gifts and promises given by God in the Old Testament period are also in effect regarding God's gifts and promises in the New Testament period.

#### *Connecting the Old Testament to the New Testament: The Condition of Timing*

Likewise, the New Testament also shows that the condition of timing is also in effect regarding New Testament gifts and promises. In Acts 1:4-5, Jesus tells the apostles that they must wait in Jerusalem until the Holy Spirit came upon them. Acts 2 shows that the Holy Spirit came on the day of Pentecost.

The coming of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost indicates a correspondence to the Mosaic festivals. Pentecost was a harvest festival related to the offering of the first fruits. It occurred at a particular point in the Jewish calendar year (during the month of May or June on our modern calendar). Correspondent to Pentecost was a fall festival called the Festival of Ingathering, which also involved an offering of the harvest (Ex. 23:16, 34:22). It coincided with the Feast of Tabernacles. Both festivals (Pentecost and the Festival of Ingathering) were related to the harvest of the crops. Annual crop production relies heavily on the amount of rain that the crops receive. In Israel there were two major periods of rain, the latter rain (in spring) and the former rain (in fall). These two periods of rain corresponded to the two biblical harvest festivals that God commanded his people to keep. The concept of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit relates very well to the idea of God sending the rain, to the harvest of crops, and to these annual Mosaic festivals. The New Testament teaches that the work of the Holy Spirit, which like rain, nourishes the crops to maturity for the harvest.

What we see displayed at Pentecost in Acts 2 then is the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on a kind of "first fruits" of God's people. In his sermon on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2, Peter uses a prophecy from Joel 2 which speaks of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:16-21 and Joel 2:28-32). It is worth noting

that Joel 2:23 refers to both the harvest and God giving the latter and former rains. Similarly, it was during the Feast of Tabernacles (and Ingathering) in John 7 that Jesus first mentioned the coming of the Holy Spirit upon his people (John 7:2, 14, 37-39).

From these texts we can see a connection between the Jewish harvest festivals of Pentecost and Ingathering (Tabernacles) and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Acts 2 shows that the coming of the Holy Spirit among God's people is limited to certain initial events correspondent to the annual timing of the Jewish feast days. This leads us to two expectations.

First, that a second outpouring correspondent to the festival of Ingathering will occur at some point during the fall feast days of some future year, just as the first outpouring occurred during the actual, annual feast of Pentecost in Acts 2.

Second, since the church did not and could not receive the miraculous gifts until the initializing event of the coming of the Holy Spirit in Pentecost, the only way in which the church can receive these gifts again (once they were lost) is through another initializing event correspondent to the second outpouring in accordance with a Feast of Ingathering in the fall. Given the duration of time encompassed by the interruptions in Israel's reception of the promise of God and the interruption of God's presence and power among them, we have reason to conclude that any loss which occurs due to unfaithfulness in the church may not be restored until after potentially a significantly long period time.

Traditionally, the Rosh Hashanah (New Year's Day, "head of the year") is thought to commemorate the beginning of creation. In the annual festival calendar of the Jews, Pentecost came in later spring or early summer nearly eight months after Rosh Hashanah occurred in the fall. There were four months between Pentecost and the next Rosh Hashanah as well as the subsequent Feast of Ingathering (which occurred just after Rosh Hashanah every fall).

According to chronological data we have available from the scriptures, Pentecost in Acts 2 can be dated at roughly 4,000 years after creation. If 4,000 years from creation until Pentecost in Acts 2 corresponds to the eight months from Rosh Hashanah to Pentecost in the annual Jewish festival calendar, then the four months between Pentecost and the Feast of Ingathering would roughly correspond to an additional 2,000 years of time.

These specificities regarding the timing of Acts 2 combined with the fact that the Jewish people had experienced a lack of God's presence after the Babylonian exile indicate that God's restorative outpouring of the Holy Spirit is also conditional upon certain appointed times. This would suggest that God will not pour out his Holy Spirit upon His people again until nearly 2,000 years after Pentecost in Acts 2. If this is the case, then a restoration of lost gifts cannot be claimed at any point in history less than 2,000 years after Acts 2. This would seem to rule out claims of the restoration of the charismatic gifts among Christian

groups at any time during the Medieval or Renaissance periods and perhaps even in the early 20th century.

Likewise, since Acts 2 occurred on the actual feast of Pentecost, any restoration of the gifts would necessarily require an initial event correspondent to the annual timing of the Feast of Tabernacles in fall. And we should expect such an event to be accompanied by all the signs that were present in Acts 2 such as the actual shaking and filling of the location with a mighty wind and the subsequent tongues of fire that appeared visibly above the heads of the recipients.

### *Conclusions*

As we conclude this study we should point out another important correspondence between the charismatic gifts discussed in the New Testament and the kingdom of Israel in the Old Testament. Both the nation of Israel in the Old Testament and the miraculous gifts of the Spirit mentioned in the New Testament represent the coming, eternal messianic kingdom on earth.

God's promise to give Abraham and his descendants Canaan Land and to dwell among them there culminated in the kingdom of Israel: Abraham's descendants living in the Promised Land with God dwelling in the Temple at Jerusalem. In this way the Old Testament nation of Israel represented and foreshadowed the eternal kingdom and dominion that God would bring upon the earth through the Jewish people, or more specifically, through the Messiah. This is what God promised to Abraham and his descendants by faith in Christ (Matthew 8:11, Galatians 3:8-29). The apostles made this connection between the Old Testament kingdom of Israel and the coming Messianic kingdom (Acts 1:6-8). Similarly, in the New Testament, the miraculous gifts performed by Jesus and later by his apostles and the early church represented and demonstrated the eternal kingdom that Jesus the Messiah would one day bring upon the earth (Matthew 5:23, 9:35, 10:7-8, 12:28, Luke 9:2, 10:7, 11:20).

Both of these representational phenomena were sustained upon the condition of obedience. Just as the kingdom of Israel was promised to Abraham and his descendants forever and yet was taken away because of disobedience, the gifts of the Spirit in New Testament were also conditional upon obedience and could be removed. And just as the kingdom of Israel could not be restored immediately once it was lost, the gifts of the Spirit in the New Testament cannot be restored immediately but must wait for a specific appointed moment in time.

Lastly, it should be mentioned that leaders in the early Church were well aware of the idea of conditional cessation of the gifts. To be fair, we do not find in their writings a discussion of the church potentially losing the gifts. But they are familiar with the essential relationship that miraculous gifts serve to demonstrate who has the true teaching of God and that those who formerly had God's true teaching lost the miraculous gifts when they failed to accept God's teachings.

Justin Martyr explains these concepts when trying to persuade a non-Christian Jewish man named Trypho.

### **Dialogue of Justin –**

PHILOSOPHER AND MARTYR, WITH TRYPHO, A JEW

CHAP. LXXXII. **"For the prophetic gifts remain with us, even to the present time.** And hence you ought to understand **that [the gifts] formerly among your nation have been transferred to us.** And just as there were false prophets **contemporaneous with your holy prophets, so are there now many false teachers amongst us,** of whom our Lord forewarned us to beware; so that in no respect are we deficient, since we know that He foreknew all that would happen to us after His resurrection from the dead and ascension to heaven.

CHAP. LXXXVII. **Accordingly He(2) rested, i.e., ceased, when He came,** after whom, in the times of this dispensation wrought out by Him amongst men,(3) **it was requisite that such gifts should cease from you; and having received their rest in Him, should again, as had been predicted, become gifts which, from the grace of His Spirit's power, He imparts to those who believe in Him, according as He deems each man worthy thereof.**

In the excerpts above, Justin's point is clear. The Jewish nation previously had miraculous gifts but as a result of the coming of Christ, the Jewish community that rejected Christ's teachings ceased to have miraculous gifts among them. Instead, the miraculous gifts were "transferred" to Christians (whether Jewish or Gentile) who accepted Christ's teachings. In saying these things, Justin asserts the fundamental premises that the presence of miraculous gifts is inherently conditioned on correct teaching and the loss of miraculous gifts among those who depart from God's teachings is matter of plain historical fact.

These biblical observations teach us that the conditions of obedience and timing apply not only to promises and gifts in the in the Old Testament period, but to us in the New Testament period as well. In both testaments these same two conditions are applied to things that God has promised his people forever, yet this promise of perpetuity did not overrule the conditionality of the promises. As it was in the Old Testament, the promise, presence, and power of the Holy Spirit among God's people are conditional upon obedience to God's commands and could be removed (even for long periods of time) when God's people failed to remain faithful to God's teachings. Once lost, God's people can expect that their restoration must wait for a particular point in time ordained by God and in accordance with Jewish annual festivals. Biblical context prevents us from simply concluding that New Testament statements about the gifts of God or the promise of the Holy Spirit were unconditional and would remain with the church forever regardless of our faithfulness to God's teachings and commandments.