

Glad Tidings

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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The Spirit and Living Water

Jerry Fite

The feast of tabernacles was the last of the three main feasts of the year for the Jews. It was a seven day long observance of God sustaining His people while they were in the wilderness when God delivered them from Egypt. The people would gather fruit. They would also collect branches of palm trees, boughs of thick trees and willows of the brook and make booths to dwell in for the week. It was a reminder “*that your generations may know that I made the children of Israel to dwell in booths when I brought them out of the land of Egypt*” (Leviticus 23:43). It was a time to “*rejoice before your God seven days*” (Leviticus 23:40)

During the week of this festival, Jesus taught the people that willingness to do the will of God will allow them to recognize the Divine authority behind His teaching. It is fitting for Jesus on the last day of the feast to speak of sustenance. But what Jesus is offering is far greater than any protective booth or nourishing fruit. *Jesus says, “He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, from within him shall flow rivers of living water. But this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believed on Him were to re-*

ceive: for the Spirit was not yet given; because Jesus was not yet glorified” (John 7:38-39),

The inspired interpretation of Jesus’ words connects receiving living water with the Spirit as one believes on Jesus. Second, such reception of the Spirit is conditioned upon Jesus being glorified.

Some believe Jesus is speaking of receiving miraculous power which would occur after Jesus ascended to Heaven. The New Testament certainly points to such “receiving of the Spirit”. Paul asks those baptized of John’s baptism, “*Did ye receive the Holy Spirit when ye believed?*” (Acts 19:2). After being baptized into the name of the Lord, these disciples of John received the miraculous power of the Holy Spirit to speak in tongues and prophesy (Acts 19:5-6).

Jesus, however, had already introduced everlasting life, not miraculous power, with the metaphor of living water. Jesus said to the woman at the well, “. . . *whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall become in him a well of water springing up unto*

eternal life” (John 4:14). Receiving the spirit in this sense is not being “lively” in the Spirit, as our Pentecostal friends promote, but receiving life that is everlasting. As the bread of life Jesus claims, “*He that cometh to me shall not hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst*” (John 6:35).

Until Jesus was glorified by rising from the dead, eternal life in His name could not be received (John 17:1-2, Philippians 2:9, Acts 4:10, 12). Receiving the Spirit is receiving the life that comes from “*the Law of the Spirit of life*” (Romans 8:2).. Salvation is inward when the soul is purified at one’s obedience to the truth (I Peter 1:22). That river of life that flows from within is eternal life.

This life flowing from within is also a blessing to our fellow man. The sharing with others occurred during the feast of tabernacles. The Israelites were “*to eat the fat, drink the sweet and send portion unto him for whom nothing is prepared*” (Nehemiah 8:10). Flowing living water gives life to others as the gospel is shared. “*The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that is wise winneth souls*” (Prov. 11:30).