The holy spirit before and after Pentecost

We saw in the article: “Body, soul and spirit” that Adam was originally created as body, soul and spirit and that when he ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil he lost the spirit. Therefore, God could no more communicate with him since he lacked the necessary receiver i.e. the spirit. In this article we will examine the availability of the holy spirit before and after Pentecost.

1. The holy spirit before Pentecost

Since the spirit was not available after Adam’s fall, what was happening during that period was that God put His spirit upon those that He wanted to communicate with. This does not mean that the spirit was available. From Genesis to Acts, there is no record of any instruction on how to receive the spirit, for the simple reason that the spirit was not available (see footnote 1). Really John 7:37-39 tells us:

John 7:37-39
"On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. He who believes in me, as the scripture has said, out of his belly will flow rivers of living water. But this he spoke concerning the spirit which those believing in him would receive; for the holy spirit was not yet given; because Jesus was not yet glorified."
According to this passage, the holy spirit was not available at the time that Jesus Christ spoke these words and of course it was not available before that time as well. It became available on the day of Pentecost. During all this period (from Adam's fall to the day of Pentecost) if God wanted to communicate with someone, He put His spirit upon him. Let's see some related examples from the Old Testament, starting from Numbers 11:16-17. According to the context, Moses wanted helpers for governing the people of Israel and God answered his request in verses 16-17:

Numbers 11:16-17
"So the Lord said unto Moses: "Gather to Me seventy men of the elders of Israel, whom you know to be the elders of the people and officers over them; bring them to the tabernacle of meeting, that they may stand there with you. Then I will come down and talk with you there. I will take of the spirit that is upon you, and will put the same upon them; and they shall bear the burden of the people with you, that you may not bear it yourself alone."

As it is clear from this passage, Moses had spirit and he had it upon him. It is important to point out two things here: first that the spirit was not in Moses, but upon him. Second: the fact that Moses had the spirit of God upon him, was not because he decided that he would like to have spirit. Even if he decided that he would like to have spirit, there was no guarantee that he would have it, for the simple reason that the spirit was not available. Actually, it was God that decided to put His spirit upon Moses and not the other way round. The same is true for those seventy men as well: the spirit of God came upon them, not because they decided to receive it but because God put it upon them to make communication with them possible. Here are some more Old Testament passages concerning God putting His spirit upon people:
Judges 3:9-10
"When the children of Israel cried out to the Lord, the Lord raised up a deliverer for the children of Israel who delivered them, even Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb’s younger brother. And the Spirit of the Lord came upon him and he judged Israel and went out to war....."

Did Othniel have spirit before? No. God put it upon him for the reason that he was the judge of Israel and God wanted to communicate with him. Let’s see another example:

Judges 6:33-34
"Then all the Midianites and the Amalekites and the people of the east gathered together; and they crossed over and encamped in the valley of Jezreel. But the spirit of the Lord came upon Gideon, and he blew a trumpet [to gather the people of Israel for war]; and the Abiezernites gathered behind him."

Did Gideon have spirit before? No. Was it Gideon who received the spirit from God or was it God who put the spirit upon Gideon? To receive something it must be available and spirit was not available after Adam’s fall. So it was God Who chose to put His spirit upon Gideon for the reason that Gideon was the judge of Israel at that time and God wanted to communicate with him. There are more similar example in the Old Testament. Also if one examines the case of Saul, the first king of Israel, it can be seen that when he disobeyed God, the spirit of God that was upon him departed from him (see: 1 Samuel 15:26, 16:14).

So to summarize: Adam and Eve were originally body, soul and spirit. However, in the day they ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, they lost the spirit. Death is the loss of life. That’s why they died on that day,
exactly as God had said, with their physical death also following. From that time onwards the spirit was not available. On the other hand, for God to communicate with people, they have to have spirit. For this reason during this period, God had to put His spirit upon certain men of His choice.

For example, all the prophets had the spirit of God upon them. God put it upon them to give them revelation. Therefore, regarding the period before the day of Pentecost three things need to be noted:

1. The holy spirit was not available.
2. God put His spirit upon those that He wanted to communicate with.
3. They could lose the spirit, which means that they had it under restrictions.

2. From Pentecost onwards: the holy spirit is again available

Having seen what was the situation before the day of Pentecost it is now time to see what happens after the day of Pentecost.

2.1. Born from above

To start with, let’s go to the gospels to see some things that Jesus said there. As we read the respective records, we must bear in mind that - as we have already seen from John 7:37-39- at the time that Jesus Christ was on earth the holy spirit was not yet available. Therefore, whatever we see in the gospels about the spirit refers prophetically to the time that it would become available. Bearing this in mind, let’s have a look at John 3:1-6:

John 3:1-6
"There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. This man came to Jesus by night and said to him, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with him." Jesus answered and said to him, "Most assuredly, I say unto you, unless one is born again [the Greek text reads "born from above"], he cannot see the kingdom of God."

According to Jesus Christ no man can enter the kingdom of God, if he isn’t born again or born from above. This is probably enough to resolve many arguments and guesses as to how one makes it to the kingdom of God. The answer is simple: **He must be born from above.** Now what does this “born again” or "born from above" mean? The only birth that most of us know is our natural birth. Nevertheless, here Jesus Christ tells us that there is one more birth and this birth is the prerequisite to "see the kingdom of God". Questions like the following may come immediately to our minds: "How does this birth occur?", "who is the parent of this birth?", "what do I receive from this birth?". How will we answer these questions? By going to the Bible and leave it to interpret itself. So let’s see what it says:

**John 3:4-5**

"Nicodemus said to him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born? Jesus answered, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God."

In this passage Jesus Christ explains us that for a man to enter the kingdom of God he should be born of water and of the spirit. To be born of water means the first birth. Without having been born once, how could you be born again? He tells us also that one should be born of the spirit.
"spirit" has various usages in the Bible. However, most of the usages refer either to God who is spirit (John 4:24 "God is spirit") or to the spirit that God gives. In the above passage "born of the Spirit" means born of God, Who is spirit. In the first birth you were born "of water (see footnote 2) ". In the second birth you are born of the spirit i.e. you are born of God, Who is Spirit. That in this second birth you are born of God is also clear in verse 6 where we also learn what is received by this birth:

John 3:6
"That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit."

Again the two births are put together in the same sentence but this time the purpose is to contrast them and to show that they are entirely different. From the first birth you received what your parents are i.e. flesh and blood. Similarly, from the second birth you receive what your parent, God, is i.e. spirit.

The Bible is also very clear about how this second birth occurs. In 1 John 5:1 we read:

I John 5:1
"Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God"

In this passage the Word of God tells us that to be born of God what is needed is to believe with your heart that Jesus is the Christ i.e. the Messiah, the Savior. Take a minute to think about it. If you are born of God what are you then? A child of God. A son or a daughter of God!! That is exactly what the epistle to Galatians also tells us:
Galatians 3:26
"For you are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus."

To become a child of someone requires birth. And in the above given passages the Word of God declares that at the time that one believes in Jesus Christ is born of God. Do you believe with your heart in Jesus as the Christ, the Messiah, the raised from the dead Son of God? If yes, God is your Father. Is anyone more powerful than God? NO. What is impossible for Him? Nothing. Most people, because of either religion or tradition, think that God is someone that you cannot approach. Someone that is far from them and He becomes a bit nearer only after they follow a certain ritual or do certain religious works. If you believe the same, you must change it, replacing it with what the Word of God says that you are: a child of God. Let's expand a bit more on this. Isaiah 49:15 tells us:

"Can a woman forget her nursing child and not have compassion on the son of her womb?"

If not, then where do all these children that live in the streets and in the institutions come from? That’s why God says:

Isaiah 49:15
"Surely they may forget"

However, it does not stop there. It continues:

Isaiah 49:15
"yet I will not forget you"
Many parents forget or mistreat their children. However, God will never forget you. Do you know why? Because you are His child and He loves you. Also as Hebrews 13:5 tells us:

"Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, **I will never leave you nor forsake you.** So we may boldly say: "The Lord is my helper; I will nor fear. What can man do to me?"

Who said that? Not me. God ("He Himself") said it. He promises that He will never leave you nor forsake you. Your friends may leave you, the government may abandon you, your boss may forsake you. But God will never leave you, because you are His child. If you feel forgotten, neglected etc. it is because you look upon wrong things. Look to God your Father; develop a father-child relationship with Him and you will see how much more light your life will have. You also then may boldly say: "**The Lord is my helper; I will not fear. What can a man do to me?**"

To sum up therefore: for somebody to enter the kingdom of God, He needs to be born from above ("born from the Spirit", or "born again", or "born of God"). This is the new birth. And to be a partaker of the new birth you need faith, true faith: faith in Jesus as the Christ, the Messiah, the resurrected from the dead Son of God.

2.2. What happened on Pentecost?

As we have seen in the articles "**Body, soul and spirit**", Adam lost the spirit the day he sinned. After this day the spirit was no longer available. Nevertheless, in John 3:6 Jesus Christ, speaking prophetically to Nicodemus, said that one could again have spirit. The point in time where spirit was again
made available was the day of Pentecost, about 2,000 years ago. So let’s read to see what happened on that day:

Acts 2:1-4
"When the day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the holy spirit and began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance."

What is described above is the first outpouring of the holy spirit, that happened on the day of Pentecost. From that day onwards, the holy spirit is again available and everyone that confesses with his mouth that Jesus is Lord and believes with his heart that God raised him from the dead (Romans 10:9:-10) receives it and he can also manifest it with the nine ways listed in 1 Corinthians 12:7-10. One of these ways is speaking in tongues and it is this manifestation that was operated in the above passage of Acts.

2.3 From Pentecost onwards: the spirit is in you and you are the temple of God.

We saw previously that before Pentecost people had the spirit of God upon them. It wasn’t in them. On Pentecost also this situation changed dramatically. From that day onwards, not only everyone that believes with his in Jesus Christ receives holy spirit, but also this spirit is in him. As 1 Corinthians 6:19 tells us:
1 Corinthians 6:19
"Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the holy spirit which is IN you, which you have from God.....?"

Where does the holy spirit, which you received when you believed in Jesus Christ, dwell? IN YOU. It is not upon you. It is IN you. As 1 Corinthians 3:16 tells us:

"Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the spirit of God dwells in you?"

Again where does the spirit of God dwell? It dwells in you. As the passage also tells us "you are the temple of God". So the temple of God is not the church at the corner of the street but you and do you know why? Because the spirit of God dwells in you. Here is then a great difference between having the spirit upon you (before the day of Pentecost) and having the spirit in you (from the day of Pentecost). Before the day of Pentecost, those few people that had the spirit of God upon them, were not the temple of God for the simple reason that the spirit of God was not in them but upon them. That is the reason that the temple of Solomon was constructed. It was a temporary dwelling place of God. But today, there is no more need for man-made temples for the reason that today God does not dwell in buildings, but in men that have faith in His Son Jesus Christ.

Conclusion
To conclude this article: after Adam’s fall and till Pentecost the holy spirit was not available. Instead what happened till Pentecost was that when God wanted to communicate with someone, He had to put His spirit upon him. However, on Pentecost and due to the accomplishments of Jesus Christ,
this situation changed dramatically. Since that day the holy spirit is again available, as a gift, to everybody who genuinely believes that Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah, the raised from the dead Son of God. In addition everyone who genuinely believes becomes a child of God i.e. he is born again or born from above. As a result, God can again communicate with us and we with Him. In addition, the holy spirit dwells in us and it is not, as in the Old Testament, upon us. We are really then, as Paul says in 1 Corinthians 3:16: “the temple of God” because “the spirit of God dwells in us”

Tassos Kioulachoglou

Footnotes
1. In case such instructions were given, they were only spoken prophetically for the period after the day of Pentecost.
2. In the first birth the baby is surrounded by water and therefore it is really "born of water".