



The Spirit Was Not Yet

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A Place in the Wilderness

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The Gospel of John is a book of mysteries. One that is particularly difficult to apprehend is seen in John 7:39. There, according to the Greek, the apostle says, “The Spirit was not yet, because Jesus was not yet glorified.”

Changing the Bible

Nearly all translations of the Bible add a word or two to this verse. Most often it is translated, “The Spirit was not yet *given*, because Jesus was not yet glorified.” Sometimes it is translated, “The Spirit was not yet *received*” or “not yet *experienced*.” It is very rarely translated according to the literal Greek. Of the numerous English translations of the Bible, I have found only four that render this verse literally.

Why would the translators add a word or two words to this verse? This should not be done lightly. It is a serious matter to add something to the Bible. In fact, in Revelation¹ we are warned not to add anything

¹ Rev. 22:18

to that book under penalty of receiving the plagues described in it.

The reason why translators add words to John 7:39 is that, to them, the literal translation of the Greek makes no sense. How could the Spirit not yet be? Wasn't the Spirit of God present in the Old Testament?¹ Wasn't the Spirit of God present at Jesus' incarnation and baptism?² And, there is only one Spirit, isn't there?³ Since the answer to these questions is, absolutely yes, how could the Spirit not yet be? Because of this seeming impossibility, most Bible translators have added something to this verse to make it understandable—that is, understandable to *them*.

However, if John—the writer of this book—meant the Spirit was not yet given, or experienced, or received, would he not have said so? Are we to believe that the Apostle made a mistake when he wrote this verse? Did John somehow leave out a word? The answer to these questions is, of course not. John wrote exactly what he meant to write, and he understood what he was writing.

By adding a word or two to this verse, the Bible translators obscure a profound and meaningful mystery. How could John say the Spirit *was not yet*? The

¹ Gen. 1:2; Jud. 6:34; 1 Sam. 11:6; and so forth

² Matt. 1:18; 3:16

³ Eph. 4:4

key to understanding John 7:39 is this phrase: *the Spirit, which those who believed in Him were to receive*. John was speaking of the Spirit the believers receive, not the Spirit of God per se, who came *upon* man. While He is the same Spirit, there is a difference between the One who came upon man in the Old Testament and the One we receive. To understand this, we must delve deeply into the Bible, starting with Genesis.

The Fall

Shortly after man was created, he ate of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, and fell.¹ Adam's fall was not simply a matter of disobedience. While it is true that Adam's disobedient act was serious, that was not Adam's major problem. When Adam fell, he not only disobeyed God, but he also *took something into himself*. The fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil imparted something into Adam, something poisonous and damaging. This element within man mutated him. It changed his body into what is termed the flesh.² It is in this flesh that this evil element—called sin—dwells.³

¹ Gen. 3:1–7

² Gen. 6:3

³ Rom. 7:17–18

Sin is not a thing that damages man's body. No, rather, sin is an active and aggressive force moving within mankind to take over man's soul, change his thoughts and thinking, damage his emotions, and weaken his will. This evil force—the evil nature—within man is something of Satan, imparted from him to destroy man and frustrate God's purpose.

Guarding the Way

In the Garden of Eden, there were two trees that God named particularly: the tree of knowledge of good and evil and the tree of life. Adam partook of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. However, shortly after that, God set an angel with a flame and sword to guard the way to the tree of life.¹

God was wary that man might stretch forth his hand, take of the tree of life, and live forever.² Why was God concerned? It was because if man had taken of the tree of life while he was in the condition he was in, he would live forever in that fallen condition. He would forever be struggling within with sin, and subject to its great power forever. There would be an eternal struggle in man between sin and the life of the tree of life. There would never be a way to resolve that struggle.

¹ Gen. 3:24

² Gen. 3:22

Life

Life is imparted to us by the Spirit. Indeed, it is the Spirit who gives life.¹ He is even called the *Spirit of life*.² The life of the tree of life comes to us through the Spirit.

However, here we can see the great problem. If man were to take in this Spirit of life, when He was simply the divine Being He was in the Old Testament and at Christ's incarnation and baptism, this would result in man struggling forever with the sin in his flesh. There would be no way for the Spirit—as *only* the divine Spirit—to overcome the sin within man.

Christ's Death

Therefore, it was for this cause God became a man. This man, Jesus, died on the cross and then resurrected. It is true that Jesus died for our sins, but that is not all he accomplished on the cross.

Recall that it was through death that He destroyed the devil.³ Concerning His crucifixion, the Lord said, “As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted

¹ John 6:63

² Rom. 8:2

³ Heb. 2:14

up.”¹ Moses lifted up a brass serpent, not an actual one. Similarly, Jesus was in the *form* of a serpent when he was crucified. Although he did not have the serpent's nature, He did have the serpent's form.

Condemning Sin

Furthermore, by taking the form of a serpent, on the cross Christ allowed God to condemn sin in the flesh.² Through Christ's death as the brass serpent, much was accomplished. In God's eyes, on the cross Christ was sin,³ and through this God was able to judge that sin. Sin was judged and Satan destroyed.

Incorporated

But how could these things be applicable to us? We are told that when Christ died, he offered himself *through* the eternal Spirit.⁴ That is, all that Christ passed through in His death and resurrection occurred in the Spirit. The Spirit incorporated Christ's death and resurrection.

¹ John 3:14

² Rom. 8:3

³ 2 Cor. 5:21

⁴ Heb. 9:14

Furthermore, in resurrection, Christ became the life-giving Spirit.¹ So, today, the Spirit is not merely the *divine* Spirit. He is the divine Spirit—with all that Christ is and all that Christ has accomplished—incorporated within Him. Once, the Spirit was merely divine, but after Christ's death and resurrection, He contained the elements of Christ's death, resurrection, human living, and all that Christ is and has done!

The Holy Anointing Oil

This is seen in the Old Testament with the holy anointing oil. Oil is a type² of the Spirit. However, the holy anointing oil was not simply oil. Rather, it contained spices: flowing myrrh, cinnamon, calamus, and cassia.³

All these spices typify different aspects of Christ's death and resurrection. Flowing myrrh was a fragrant and costly spice, which was used in Christ's burial.⁴ It speaks of the preciousness and sweetness of Christ's death.

¹ 1 Cor. 15:45

² A *type* is a person, place, thing, or event in the Old Testament that foreshadows someone or something in the New Testament.

³ Ex. 30:22–25

⁴ John 19:39

Cinnamon was a fragrant and sweet spice often used for medicinal or culinary purposes. It signifies the sweetness and effectiveness of Christ's death.

Calamus is a fragrant reed which sprouts up from water in marshes. It, too, has medicinal purposes, and tells us of Christ's resurrection.

Cassia is a sweet, aromatic, and pungent spice known to possess insecticidal properties. It signifies the power of Christ's resurrection.

So then, the holy anointing oil—a type of the Spirit who anoints us¹—consisted of not simply the oil (the Spirit), but also of various spices (crucial aspects of Christ's human living and accomplishments, namely His death and resurrection).

The Spirit Today

This shows us who and what the Spirit is today. He is not simply divine, as He was in the Old Testament. Today He has within Him the elements of Christ's humanity and all His accomplishments as a man. Today the Spirit is even more wonderful than the Spirit of God in the Old Testament!

The Spirit we receive today has Christ's death and resurrection within Him. It is through that death and resurrection that sin within us is judged, put to the cross, and killed. Christ died to judge sin not just

¹ 1 John 2:20

in a general way, but to judge sin within our own flesh.

Before His death, the Spirit did not contain that element. After His death and resurrection, the Spirit does. And so, today when we receive the Spirit, we receive the life of God and with that the effectiveness, sweetness, and power of Christ's death and resurrection, which puts to death the evil one within us, ending forever the struggle within. How blessed we are!

Glorification

It says in John that the Spirit we receive *was not yet* because Christ was not yet glorified. How was he glorified? Through His death and resurrection.¹ The Spirit we receive—that is, the Spirit with Christ's death and resurrection—was not yet, because Christ had not yet died and been resurrected. The Holy Spirit was there—the Spirit of God was there—but not the Spirit we receive.

We receive the Spirit with Christ's humanity and His accomplishments. When we see this, we also see why John wrote the way he did. Indeed, the Spirit we receive *was not yet*, because Jesus had not yet been glorified.

¹ John 17:1, 5; Luke 24:26

Today, the Spirit is not only the Spirit of God¹ and the Holy Spirit,² He is also the Spirit of Christ,³ the Spirit of Jesus,⁴ and the Spirit of Jesus Christ.⁵ This Spirit is both divine and human in nature.

How wonderful what Christ has accomplished on the cross and in His resurrection! Today to us, the power of sin within can be terminated by the wonderful flowing of the Spirit. We no longer wrestle with sin. Rather, we pray, “Lord, I open to You. I open to Your Spirit. I let all that You are and all that You have accomplished spread within me, putting to death everything of the evil one and bringing me up in resurrection with You. How I thank and praise You, Lord, for such a wonderful Spirit.”



¹ Rom. 8:9

² Matt. 28:19

³ Rom. 8:9

⁴ Acts 16:7

⁵ Phil. 1:19