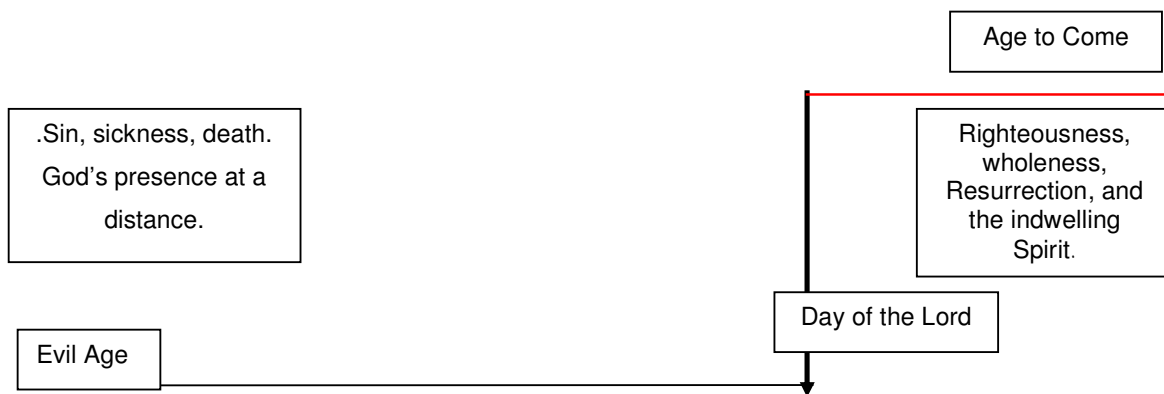


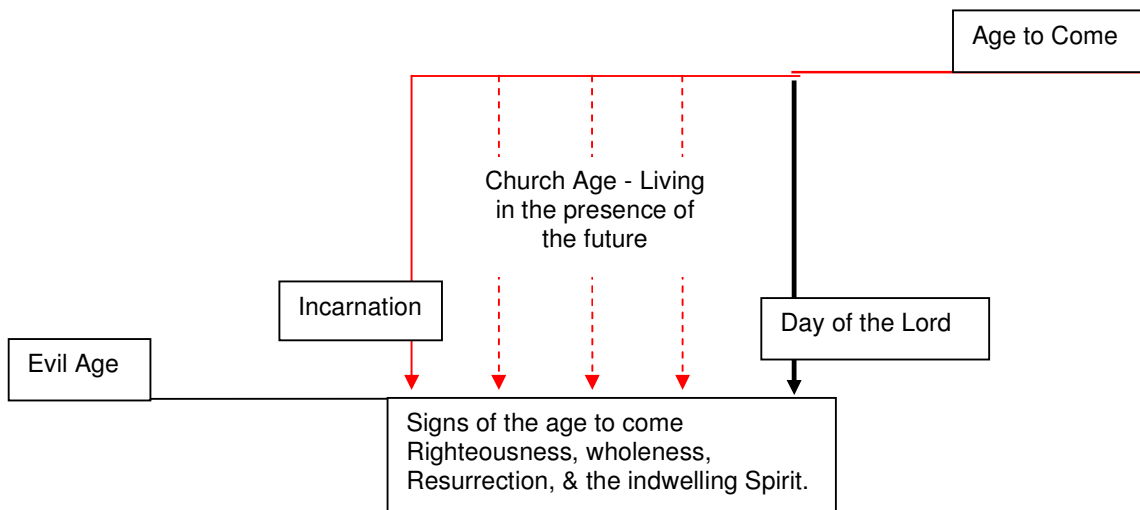
1. A New Age – A New Kingdom

The Messiah and the Day of the Lord.

- Jewish thought, at the time of Jesus, was that God's Messiah would bring a dramatic end to this present evil age of sin, sickness, death and the absence of God's presence. The "day of the Lord" would signal the beginning of God's Kingdom and "The Age to Come" of righteousness, wholeness, resurrection, and the indwelling Spirit.



- Jesus' announcement of The Kingdom of God, framed him as *The Messiah*, a created an expectation of a coming Day of the Lord. Jesus' ministry of healings, demon expulsions, and raising the death, were understood by some as signs of the future Kingdom. Dramatically *The Cross* seemed to rule Jesus out as the Messiah, however his resurrection (and of others) was seen by the earliest Christians as marking the beginning of the age to come and the outpoured Spirit at Pentecost was a clear indication of this conviction.



- The early church, therefore, saw themselves *as living between the times*. The future had **already** been set in motion but had **not yet** been completed fulfilled. They already lived the life of the future in the present, and yet awaited *the return of Jesus (The Day of the Lord)* which could break in at any moment. It is this new eschatological (end time) reality that rightly dominated the thinking of the early church.

The Saving work of Jesus and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit changed everything for those first Christians. It changed the way they viewed the world and their Jewish heritage. The centre of our theology is ever and always Jesus Christ, but close to the centre is the outpoured Spirit, making Christ known, and empowering all genuine Christian life and experience. This caused them to re-evaluate everything from this new perspective. **How a person was made righteous? Who were the true people of God? What about the Temple? What did this mean for the future?**

### 1. A New Righteousness - The Spirit as Salvation made effective.

- First century Jewish thought was dominated by the Covenant of Moses – (The Law or Torah). Yet in there were hints in scripture that God's messiah would institute of a New Covenant. (A new promise)
- Jeremiah 31:33 *"This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time," declares the LORD. "I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. 34 No longer will a man teach his neighbour, or a man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest," declares the LORD. "For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more.*
- God's people were to be those who had God's law written on their hearts. Who would experience forgiveness and know God intimately. This internal work of the heart was to be a work of the Spirit. The new covenant would be **a covenant of the Spirit**.
- Ezekiel 36:26 *I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. 27 And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws. 28 You will live in the land I gave your forefathers; you will be my people, and I will be your God"* See also Eze 37:14 & 39:29
- The old Covenant although spiritual it had become a list of external requirements to be obeyed to the letter it was powerless to bring about human transformation and set people free from Sin. The Covenant of the life-giving Spirit was able to bring about **a righteousness of the heart**. 2 Corinthians 3:6 *...as ministers of a new covenant - not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.*

- The developing understanding of God as Trinity (Father, Son and Spirit) for Paul and early Christians saw salvation as a work of God, initiated by the father, secured by the son, and **made effective by the Holy Spirit**. Salvation by faith in the saving work of Jesus freed those early Jewish Christians from living under the old covenant of law keeping, placing them as participants of a new covenant of the Spirit.
- The dynamic and experiential reality of the Holy Spirit was literally God's empowering presence to conform every believer into the likeness of Christ. 2 Corinthians 2: 17 *"Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. 18 And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being **transformed into his likeness** with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.*
- It is the Spirit, not rule keeping that produces, God's likeness (his righteousness and character) within us. Galatians 5:16 *"So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature (flesh)...22 **But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness and self-control.** Against such things there is no law. 24 Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature (flesh) with its passions and desires. 25 Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit"*

**The saving work of Jesus on the cross was made effective by the outpoured Spirit.**

*"For Paul to be a believer meant nothing less than being filled with, and so to live in and by the Spirit"* Gordon Fee

## 2. The New People - The Spirit as the mark of God's people.

- Moses great plea with God in Exodus 33:15 demonstrated his clear understanding that it was God's presence with his people that was God stamp of ownership of them. *Then Moses said to the Lord, "If your Presence does not go with us, do not send us up from here. 16 How will anyone know that you are pleased with me and with your people unless you go with us? What else will distinguish me and your people from all the other people on the face of the earth?"*
- However the centrality of was lost in the proceeding centuries as increasingly the Jews saw outward observations such as circumcision, Sabbath keeping and food laws as the mark that they were God's people. The outpouring of The Holy Spirit recaptured for those first Jewish believers the central importance of God's presence as the seal of ownership upon his people. These Jewish Christians saw themselves as the true succession of God's old covenant people.

- Ephesians 1:13 *And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit*” Entry into the people of God was no longer by birth and circumcision, but by new birth, through faith in the death and resurrection of Christ. Belonging to God’s people was evidenced by the Spirit’s crying Abba from within their hearts. Romans 8:15 ... *you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father."* 16 *The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children.*
- When later the Gentiles received the Spirit, it was this event that made it clear that gentiles were also to be included in the people of God. In fact Paul opposed Peter in stating that outward circumcision was now longer necessary to a people that had been marked and sealed by the Spirit, and received a circumcision of the heart.

**The activity of The Holy Spirit remains that vital mark amongst us as a church that we are God’s people.** Gordon Fee “The history of the church has far more been about that of an institution than of the life of the spirit in the community of faith”

### 3. A New Temple - The Spirit as God’s presence in and amongst us.

- Again first century Jewish thought saw God as involved with his creation, by his Word and his Spirit, but separated mankind by our sinfulness. The architecture temple illustrated this with the Holy of Holies, behind a curtain, as the place where God dwells, which was entered carrying blood only once a year.
- God’s presence as demonstrated by his outpoured Spirit was also only given *to specific people (Kings, Priests, Prophets) at specific times for specific functions.*
- **The Old Testament prophets however promised a return of God’s personal presence to his temple** (Malachi 3). God was no longer to be far off and “known” by a few (Jer 31:31) God was going to come close Ezekiel 39:29 *I will no longer hide my face from them, for I will pour out my Spirit on the house of Israel, declares the Sovereign LORD."*
- The death of Jesus with the symbolic tearing for the Curtain of the Temple from top to bottom. Matthew 27:51 *At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook and the rocks split. 52 The tombs broke open and the bodies of many holy people who had died were raised to life”*

- The separation between God and Mankind had been removed. People were free to enter God's presence and God's presence was to come to all by his Spirit. Joel 2:28. *In the last days, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days.*
- Paul later was to bring together the themes of Temple, Presence and Spirit. Ephesians 2:21 *"Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. 21 In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. 22 And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit"*
- Every individual Christian was to be the temple in which God dwells by his Spirit, but this was more powerfully demonstrated by the gathered Church (1 Peter 2) a temple built of living stones, which was to be the place, the true temple, where God was to be encountered in the true worship. As Jesus declared to the woman at the well. John 4:21 *... a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. ... 23 Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. 24 God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth."*

**We as individuals and as a church are to expect to encounter the living God.** Gordon Fee *"The Spirit was no longer perceived as a dynamic experience. The general loss of this dynamic and experiential life of the Spirit on entrance to the Christian life accounts for the feebleness in individual believers throughout much of church history"*

#### 4. A New Hope – The Spirit as the first taste of a new future.

- The conviction of the early church that future had been set in motion, created a vibrant bold and energised end time community. 1 Corinthians 10:11 *us, on whom the fulfillment of the ages has come.*
- The role of the Spirit was vital in this end time perspective 2 Corinthians 3:8 *will not the ministry of the Spirit be even more glorious? 9 If the ministry that condemns men is glorious (the law), how much more glorious is the ministry that brings righteousness! ... 3:12 Therefore, since we have such a hope, we are very bold.*
- Christians lived as those living between the ages; experiencing the already, the reality, of their salvation into new Kingdom, and the not yet of its fulfilment.

- Paul saw the outpoured Spirit as the evidence and guarantee of the future. Ephesians 1:13  
*And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, 14 who is a **deposit guaranteeing** our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession--to the praise of his glory.*
- The word “araborn” translated “a deposit guaranteeing” has its roots in commerce and carries with it a sense of a down payment, the first instalment that establishes a contract and guarantees its fulfilment. The word also is used in Greek for an engagement ring, with its imagery of love and a promise of greater commitment and fulfilment to come on the wedding day. The Holy Spirit is our (individually and as a church) experiential down payment of the love of God and the secure promise, the future hope of intimacy, blessing and a spiritual body and an eternal reality that was yet to come.
- The Spirits in dwelling in the community of God’s people created that true perspective on difficulties, and challenges as well and the comforts and temptations of this present evil age. Roman 8 *“The Spirit helps us in our weakness”* 2 Corinthians 4:16 *Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. <sup>17</sup> For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. <sup>18</sup> So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal”*

**The work of the Spirit helps us become neither triumphalistic in acting as if there were no challenges, nor ignoring the present reality of the spirit as God’s empowering presence amongst us now!** Gordon Fee *“If we are to count for much in this postmodern world, the spirit must remain the key to the churches existence”*