



**A STUDY  
OF  
THE HOLY SPIRIT**

**BY  
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## INTRODUCTION

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THE STUDY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT is seemingly often neglected. In fact, the Spirit Himself seems neglected in our worship. We talk regularly of the Father and the Son, and well we should. However, when was the last time you heard someone in worship speak specifically of the Holy Spirit, if even to thank or praise Him as a person of the Godhead? While we speak of God and His love and power, do we recognize that the Holy Spirit is God?

I wonder how many of us realize the number of hymns we sing that mention the Holy Spirit? For example, the song *Blessed Assurance* reminds that we are “born of His Spirit, washed in His blood.” The song *Heaven Came Down* says of the Son that He was “Born of the Spirit with life from above...” In the hymn *More About Jesus* we sing the words, “Spirit of God my teacher be...” Still, how many could pick out any of these or other songs that mention the Holy Spirit?

The Holy Spirit is such a mystery to us. The concept of a Father we understand. We also relate to the concept of a Son. When it comes to the idea (indeed the truth) of a Spirit we have difficulties.

Among brethren, there are many books written on the subject of Holy Spirit. Yet, with the many books come many different interpretations, and with the many different interpretations comes much disagreement. There is disagreement as to whether or not the Holy Spirit personally indwells a believer today. There are disagreements relating to the details of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. There is disagreement on the nature of the gift of the Holy Spirit promised in Acts 2:38. There is even disagreement as to the function of some of the spiritual gifts. These disagreements are not confined to brethren. In the religious world the same types of disagreements exist. Certainly, there are many aspects of the Holy Spirit that we need to better understand.

Through the years of my personal Bible study I have changed my views on many of these and other Spirit related subjects. Chances are good that more study will result in more changes. I do hope the changes in my understanding are drawing me closer to the truth and not moving me further from it.

As the author of this material this class will reflect my current views on these subjects and (in a given area) not yours. Do not let that discourage or frustrate you in the areas where you disagree with my conclusions. Rather, let it serve as a means of motivating all of us to deeper study.

It is a fact that this study will reveal changes of opinion and understanding among each of us in regards to the Holy Spirit. Let us approach those changes of opinion in a respectful manner. Listen to what others have to say and compare it to your own understanding. Most importantly, let us honestly compare our current understanding on this subject with the Spirit inspired word of God. While we may be wrong in a given area of interpretation, God’s word remains truth. It is His truth on this subject that we will be seeking.

Finally, it is my hope and prayer that this study will give us a greater understanding and appreciation of the Holy Spirit. If we will make that our goal and seek to obtain it, we will accomplish much in our efforts.

John Buttrey II

## LESSON ONE

# THE TRINITY

**T**HAT THE HOLY SPIRIT IS GOD should not create too much of a debate among members of Christ's church. However, recalling verses which illustrate this truth might prove more of a challenge. Thus, in gaining a better understanding and appreciation of the Holy Spirit it will be important for us to begin with a study of the trinity.

It should be stated that the word "trinity" is not found in the Bible. However, the truth of the trinity is clearly revealed in scripture. What are we talking about in mentioning the trinity? What does the word mean? Simply put, the word Trinity is used to describe the three Persons who are known as the one God. These are known as the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Herein is where the confusion begins. How can there be three persons, each known as God, and yet there be only one God? We all believe in one God, or do we? We believe the Father is God. We believe the Son is God. We believe the Holy Spirit is God. But isn't that three? How can three be considered One?

### THREE IN ONE

What needs to be understood here at the outset of our study is that *plurality* and *diversity* can co-exist with *unity*. Take for example Adam and Eve and the institution of marriage as described in the book of Genesis.

For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh.

Genesis 2:24

Here we have a man and a woman being joined together as husband and wife. The two are said to become one flesh. Put in mathematical form it would like this:

$$1 + 1 = 1$$

How is that for "new math"? Actually it is old math. What we see is plurality can co-exist with unity. The Hebrew word that is translated "one" in this verse (*echad*) is not restricted to meaning a single one. It can and is used to speak of unity among more than one. Think of it as diversity equaling one. In this case it is one man and one woman equaling one. Two distinct and separate personalities united in marriage. In this sense, though distinct and separate they are considered "one." Here are some other examples of similar uses for this Hebrew word.

But the Lord said to him, "Surely I will be with you, and **you** shall defeat Midian as **one man**."  
Judges 6:16 (Emp. mine)

Then **all the people** arose as **one man**, saying, "Not one of us will go to his tent, nor will any of us return to his house.

Judges 20:8 (Emp. mine)

With this concept in mind of plurality co-existing with unity, we will be better equipped to relate to the number of passages in the Bible which indicate God (though composed of three

Persons) is one. The Bible is very clear in a number of different places there is only one God. Moses told Israel:

“Hear, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord is one!

Deuteronomy 6:4

God Himself declared through the prophet Isaiah:

“I am the Lord, and there is no other; Besides Me there is no God. I will gird you, though you have not known Me; That men may know from the rising to the setting of the sun That there is no one besides Me. I am the Lord, and there is no other,

Isaiah 45:5-6

The apostle Paul wrote:

[There is] one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all.

Ephesians 4:6

James wrote of this same truth:

You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder.

James 2:19

Interestingly, despite verses such as these which speak of “one” God, there a number of passages which indicate a plurality in God. For example:

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

Genesis 1:1

Grammatically, there are some strange things occurring in this verse. The Hebrew word for God in this verse is the word *elohiym*. This is a masculine plural noun. Some might wonder, should it not be rendered “gods” (plural)? Why is it translated singular (God)? Its singular rendering has to do with the verb “created.” In Hebrew the word is *bara*. It is singular. Grammatically the noun does not agree with the verb. Don’t be alarmed. This is not an error. It is revealing a deeper truth. It is revealing the three Persons of the Godhead.

A little later in the opening chapter of the Old Testament we find the same type of thing occurring.

Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”

Genesis 1:26

Once again we have that plural noun *elohiym* translated singularly, God. But if it is singular, who are the “Us” and “Our” of this verse? These words suggest a plurality. By way of general information, those who oppose the concept of the Trinity suggest God is speaking to an angelic host. Thus, the “Us” and “Our” is God (singular) and the angels (plural). This however will not do in light of the following verse.

God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.

Genesis 1:27

This verse states that God created man in His own image, not in the image of angels. Thus the “Our” and “Us” of verse 26 *must be* a reference to God (cf. Gen. 3:22; 11:7). This type of language is not confined to Genesis. Consider this text from Isaiah:

Then I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, “Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?” Then I said, “Here am I. Send me!”

Isaiah 6:8

Interesting verse! “Whom shall *I* send?” “Who will go for *Us*?” Once again we see the picture of one God, but multiple personalities. Here, there is no indication of the number of personalities in this text or is there? Look at the verses which follow:

9 He said, “Go, and tell this people: ‘Keep on listening, but do not perceive; Keep on looking, but do not understand.’

10 “Render the hearts of this people insensitive, Their ears dull, And their eyes dim, Otherwise they might see with their eyes, Hear with their ears, Understand with their hearts, And return and be healed.”

Isaiah 6:9-10

In the N.T. this passage is referenced in a couple of places that we need to note. The first is in the gospel of John.

39 For this reason they could not believe, for Isaiah said again,

40 “He has blinded their eyes and He hardened their heart, so that they would not see with their eyes and perceive with their heart, and be converted and I heal them.”

41 These things Isaiah said because he saw **His** glory, and he spoke of **Him**.

John 12:39-41 (Emp. mine)

John ascribes the words Isaiah heard as being spoken by the Christ. This is interesting for Isaiah saw Jesus as God before His incarnation. The apostle Paul does something similar. Consider this from the close of the book of Acts.

25 And when they did not agree with one another, they began leaving after Paul had spoken one parting word, “**The Holy Spirit** rightly spoke through Isaiah the prophet to your fathers,

26 saying, ‘Go to this people and say, “You will keep on hearing, but will not understand; And you will keep on seeing, but will not perceive;

Acts 28:25-26 (Emp. mine)

Paul ascribes the words Isaiah heard as being spoken by the Holy Spirit. In the text in Isaiah one gets the picture of the Father God speaking. Here is a great example of the three persons of the Godhead, the “Us” and “Our” of Genesis 1:26.

Throughout the Bible we find scenes such as these we have already noticed. In these scenes one God is mentioned, yet there are indications that there is more than one person involved.

Remember also your Creator in the days of your youth, before the evil days come and the years draw near when you will say, "I have no delight in them";

Ecclesiastes 12:1

You have heard this verse for years. Did you know that the word Creator is actually plural in the Hebrew? Literally the verse could read, "Remember your Creators..." It is essentially the same as Genesis 1:1, "In the beginning God (*elohiym* = *plural*) created the heavens and the earth." Isaiah wrote something similar:

"For your husband is your Maker, Whose name is the Lord of hosts; And your Redeemer is the Holy One of Israel, Who is called the God of all the earth.

Isaiah 54:5

In this verse the word "maker" is plural. Over and over these types of scenes are found in the scriptures.

Speaking of creation all three Persons of the Godhead are described as being involved. All three were working together.

#### *The Father*

"Of old You founded the earth, And the heavens are the work of Your hands.

Psalm 102:25

#### *The Son*

For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through Him and for Him.

Colossians 1:16

#### *The Holy Spirit*

The earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters.

Genesis 1:2

#### **ALL IN ONE**

At this point, let's look at some verses where all three (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) are mentioned together. The one that will immediately come to most Christian's mind is this from Matthew's gospel:

"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the **Father** and the **Son** and the **Holy Spirit**,

Matthew 28:19 (Emp. mine)

It is interesting to point out that the word "name" in Greek is singular. One might then suspect that verse should read, "...in the names of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit." Once again the idea of Three in One is seen in the subtleties of the Greek grammar (cf. Isa. 42:8, 42:11).

After being baptized, **Jesus** [The Son] came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened, and he saw the **Spirit of God** [Holy Spirit] descending as a dove and lighting on Him, and behold, **a voice out of the heavens said**, [The Father] “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased.”

Matthew 3:16-17 (Emp. and additions in brackets mine)

The grace of **the Lord Jesus Christ** [The Son], and the love of **God** [The Father], and the fellowship of the **Holy Spirit**, be with you all.

2 Corinthians 13:14 (Emp. and additions in brackets mine)

But we should always give thanks to **God** [Father] for you, brethren beloved by the **Lord** [Son], because God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the **Spirit** [Holy Spirit] and faith in the truth.

2 Thessalonians 2:13 (Emp. and additions in brackets mine)

John to the seven churches that are in Asia: Grace to you and peace, from **Him** [Father] who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven **Spirits** [Holy Spirit] who are before His throne, and from **Jesus Christ** [Son], the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To Him who loves us and released us from our sins by His blood—

Revelation 1:4-5 (Emp. and additions in brackets mine)

In these texts the three Persons making up the one God are all mentioned together. This helps us in our understanding of passages such as Genesis 1:1.

## CHARACTERISTICS OF GOD

As one studies the scriptures they find that all three Persons of the Godhead possess the same characteristics. Notice these examples:

### *God is Omniscient*

#### THE FATHER

I, the Lord, search the heart, I test the mind, Even to give to each man according to his ways, According to the results of his deeds.

Jeremiah 17:10

#### THE SON

‘And I will kill her children with pestilence, and all the churches will know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts; and I will give to each one of you according to your deeds.

Revelation 2:23

#### THE SPIRIT

For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so the thoughts of God no one knows except the Spirit of God.

1 Corinthians 2:11

## ***God is Holy***

THE FATHER (cf. Isa. 6:3; Matt. 6:9)

“Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify Your name? For You alone are holy; For all the nations will come and worship before You, For Your righteous acts have been revealed.”

Revelation 15:4

THE SON

“But you disowned the Holy and Righteous One and asked for a murderer to be granted to you,

Acts 3:14

THE SPIRIT

The Spirit is repeatedly referenced as the “Holy Spirit.”

## ***God is Truth***

THE FATHER

Then Jesus cried out in the temple, teaching and saying, “You both know Me and know where I am from; and I have not come of Myself, but He who sent Me is true, whom you do not know.

John 7:28

THE SON

“And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write: He who is holy, who is true, who has the key of David, who opens and no one will shut, and who shuts and no one opens, says this:

Revelation 3:7

THE SPIRIT

This is the One who came by water and blood, Jesus Christ; not with the water only, but with the water and with the blood. It is the Spirit who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth.

1 John 5:6

## **EACH PERSON IDENTIFIED AS GOD**

It will be good for us at this point to look at some scriptures where each person of the Godhead is specifically called, “God.” Pertinent to our study are texts identifying the Holy Spirit as God. However, we will look at all three persons.

### ***The Father***

This is really not a problem for most people. They accept the Father as God. We are some examples in scripture where the idea is clearly presented.

Jesus answered, "If I glorify Myself, My glory is nothing; it is My Father who glorifies Me, of whom you say, 'He is our God';

John 8:54

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

1 Corinthians 1:3

Paul, an apostle (not sent from men nor through the agency of man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised Him from the dead),

Galatians 1:1

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ,

Ephesians 1:3

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Philippians 1:2

We could list numerous other passages which basically read the same. This is a very clear concept. The other two persons of the Godhead are also clearly revealed as being God. Interestingly, there are those who discount their deity. After seeing the scriptures that speak of their being God, you may ask yourself why anyone would doubt this truth.

### ***The Son***

One of the clearest texts revealing the deity of Jesus Christ is found in the opening verses of John's gospel.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.

John 1:1-3

In this familiar text John establishes the Son's existence prior to His birth as a man. This too takes us back to the word *elohyim* of Genesis 1:1. John also establishes the Son's equality with God. Later in this first chapter John wrote:

And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.

John 1:14

God became flesh and dwelt among us in the person of Jesus the Christ. What incredible love for His creation, for the Creator to become as the created!

For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through Him and for Him.

Colossians 1:16

Here the apostle Paul in harmony with John and the Genesis account of creation speaks of Christ's involvement in the process.

When it comes to establishing the Deity of Christ and His existence prior to His birth, I like this little exercise. This will work well with the Jehovah Witness' who may come to your door. Read them these verses in this exact order.

“Who has performed and accomplished it, Calling forth the generations from the beginning? ‘I, the Lord, am the **first**, and with the **last**. I am He.’ ”

Isaiah 41:4

Who is the “first and last” that this verse is describing? The obvious answer is Jehovah God. Now we move to the next verse.

Thus says the Lord, the King of Israel and his Redeemer, the Lord of hosts: ‘I am the **first** and I am the **last**, And there is no God besides Me.

Isaiah 44:6

Again you will ask, Who is the “first and last” that this verse is describing? And again the answer will come back Jehovah God.

“Listen to Me, O Jacob, even Israel whom I called; I am He, I am the **first**, I am also the **last**.

Isaiah 48:12

Who is the “first and last” that this verse is describing? Same answer as in the previous examples.

“I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, “who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.”

Revelation 1:8

Who is the “Alpha and Omega” that this verse is describing? And once again, the answer would be the same. If God is the first and the last He is certainly the Alpha and Omega.

When I saw Him, I fell at His feet like a dead man. And He placed His right hand on me, saying, “Do not be afraid; I am the first and the last,

Revelation 1:17

Who is the “Alpha and Omega” that this verse is describing? God.

“I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.”

Revelation 22:13

Who is the “Alpha and Omega” that this verse is describing? After giving the same answer to all of the previous verses, you are ready to show them a very clear and revealing truth.

“And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write: The first and the last, who was dead, and has come to life, says this:

Revelation 2:8

Now the all-important question: Who is the “first and last” this verse is describing? Remember, God alone is the first and last, the Alpha and Omega. However, we notice here that the first and last was dead and came back to life. How can God die? This is a picture not only of the resurrection, but of the deity of Christ as well.

Another text I believe is clear as to Christ’s deity is Philippians 2:5-7. This passage, like the opening verses of John’s gospel, is very familiar to students of scripture.

Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men.

Philippians 2:5-7

Paul’s point in this passage is not to establish the Deity of Christ, although, I believe that is inferred. The main subject is humility and selflessness. And to teach that point he uses the example of Jesus, who he says, “although existing in the form of God did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped.” For me, this passage strongly points to a pre-existent state of Deity. This makes Paul’s point. If God humbled Himself and became a man, so we too ought to humble ourselves toward one another.

In the book of Hebrews the writer clearly establishes Christ as God. You really have to work at missing this truth!

**But of the Son He says, “Your throne, O God, is forever and ever, And the righteous scepter is the scepter of His kingdom. “You have loved righteousness and hated lawlessness; Therefore God, Your God, has anointed You With the oil of gladness above Your companions.” And, “You, Lord, in the beginning laid the foundation of the earth, And the heavens are the works of Your hands; They will perish, but You remain; And they all will become old like a garment, And like a mantle You will roll them up; Like a garment they will also be changed. But You are the same, And Your years will not come to an end.”**

Hebrews 1:8-12 (Emp. mine)

How does one miss this clear truth? Sadly, many do. As stated earlier, pertinent to our study are passages which identify the Holy Spirit as God.

### ***The Holy Spirit***

When it comes to establishing the Holy Spirit as God, the passage most often referenced is Acts chapter five.

But Peter said, “Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart **to lie to the Holy Spirit** and to keep back some of the price of the land? “While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And

after it was sold, was it not under your control? Why is it that you have conceived this deed in your heart? **You have not lied to men but to God.**”

Acts 5:3-4

To whom did Ananias lie? God or the Holy Spirit? This passage establishes the fact that the Holy Spirit is equal with God. He is God.

The argument is made by those who are opposed to the Holy Spirit being considered God, that, aside from Acts five, there is no other passage that directly tells us He is God. Yet, all we need is one! We don't need a dozen or more. All it takes is one passage to establish truth. If we were told in only passage we needed to be baptized, would we discount the teaching based on a lack of a quantity of verses? I would hope not! I would hope the quality of the one passage would establish the truth. The fact is there are more than this one passage (cf. Luke 1:67-70 with 2 Peter 1:21 and Isa. 40:13 with Rom. 11:34).

The Holy Spirit's consistent connection with the Father and the Son establish His deity. The Holy Spirit is a person of the Godhead. This being true it is important we understand that the Spirit is not an "it." Repeatedly the scriptures speak of Him as a person. For example:

“I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that **He** may be with you forever;  
John 14:16 (Emp. mine)

That is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see **Him** or know **Him**, but you know **Him** because **He** abides with you and will be in you.  
John 14:17 (Emp. mine)

“But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you.  
John 14:26

Clearly the language in passages such as these is indicative of the Spirit being a person. He is distinct from the Father and the Son, but clearly a person of the Godhead.

The doctrine of the Trinity may be difficult to explain, but should not be difficult to see. The scriptures present the idea of One God in three Persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

## LESSON TWO

# NAMES AND DESCRIPTIONS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

**T**HOUGH WE TYPICAL REFER TO HIM AS THE HOLY SPIRIT, there are a number of names and descriptions given for this Person of the Godhead. In this lesson we want to see some of those names and descriptions. In this way we will be better able to recognize the Holy Spirit as we read about Him in His word. Under each heading we will not list every reference of the particular name, only a few for your reference.

### **THE HOLY SPIRIT**

Ps. 51:11; Isa. 63:10, 11; Matt. 1:18, 20; 3:11; 12:32; Acts 2:4, 38

*Note: This common phrase is only found a few times in the Old Testament. It is very common in the New Testament.*

### **THE SPIRIT**

Num. 11:26; 27:18; 1 Chron. 12:18; Eze. 2:2; 3:12; Matt. 10:20; Acts 2:4

### **HIS SPIRIT**

Num. 11:29; Isa. 34:16; 48:16

### **SPIRIT OF GOD**

Gen. 1:2; Ex. 31:3; 35:31; Num 24:2; Matt. 3:16; 12:28

### **SPIRIT OF THE LORD**

Judges 3:10; 6:34; 1 Sam. 10:6; 16:13; Isa. 11:2; 61:1; Acts 5:9

### **SPIRIT OF WISDOM AND UNDERSTANDING**

Isa. 11:2

### **SPIRIT OF COUNSEL AND STRENGTH**

Isa. 11:2

### **SPIRIT OF KNOWLEDGE AND THE FEAR OF THE LORD**

Isa. 11:2

### **MY SPIRIT**

Gen. 6:3; Isa. 30:1; 42:1; Acts 2:17-18

### **SPIRIT OF TRUTH**

John 14:17; 15:26; 16:13

### **HELPER**

John 14:16; 15:26

### **SPIRIT OF GLORY**

1 Peter 4:14

### **SPIRIT OF JESUS**

Acts 16:6-7

## LESSON THREE

# THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

WE READ MUCH ABOUT THE HOLY SPIRIT in the New Testament. We know He was very active in the life of Christ, the lives of the apostles, and the early church. However, it might surprise some to learn that He was very active prior to the New Testament. In this lesson we want to notice some examples of the Holy Spirit at work in the Old Testament.

### CREATION

We begin this portion of our study in the beginning. As discussed in our previous lesson, in terms of being God, the Holy Spirit has always been. We see this in the creation account given in the book of Genesis.

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep, and **the Spirit of God** was moving over the surface of the waters. Then God said, “Let there be light”; and there was light.

Genesis 1:1-3

As mentioned in our study of the trinity we see all three persons of the Godhead at work in creation.

- *God* created the heavens and the earth.
- *The Spirit of God* was moving...
- *Then God said...* (The Word or the Son).

The text tells us “the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters.” What does this mean? Leupold writes:

We could never believe that this hovering of the Spirit over the surface of the waters was idle and purposeless. From all other activities that are elsewhere ascribed to the Holy Spirit we conclude that His work in this case must have been anticipatory of the creative work that followed.<sup>1</sup>

Whatever is exactly meant in the description of the Spirit “moving” Leupold is correct. We know it cannot be an idle and purposeless moving. He is moving in anticipation of His role in the creation. In the book of Job the Spirit’s work in creation is further described.

By his spirit he hath garnished the heavens; his hand hath formed the crooked serpent.  
Job 26:13 (KJV)

Some translations replace the word Spirit in this verse with the rendering of breath or wind. I believe Spirit to be the correct rendering. This is consistent with what we have already seen in the book of Genesis. The word *garnished* speaks of being made clear or as some would describe it, “to make beautiful.”

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<sup>1</sup> Leupold, *Leupold on the Old Testament, Genesis, Vol. 1*, 50.

The reference in this verse to the crooked serpent is likely a reference to one of the constellations. Such references are seen elsewhere in the book of Job (cf. Job 38:31-32). This too would be consistent with Genesis where the stars were put in the heavens as signs (Gen. 1:14). Regarding the Spirit's role in creation the book of Job also has these words:

“The Spirit of God has made me, And the breath of the Almighty gives me life.  
Job 33:4

This verse should remind us of a very similar verse in the Genesis account of creation, a verse we have previously referenced.

Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”

Genesis 1:26

As mentioned in our earlier studies, the Spirit is present here in the words “Us” and “Our.” From passages such as these the Spirit's activity in creation is undeniable. However, creation is by no means the extent of His activities in the various events recorded in the Old Testament.

#### **HELPED JOSEPH INTERPRET PHARAOH'S DREAMS**

We are all familiar with the account of Joseph in the Old Testament. We know of how his brothers hated him. We know of Jacob's love for him. We know of how his brothers sold him as a slave. We know of his integrity. What many may not know is that the Spirit played a role in Joseph's life. Take a look at this scene in the life of Joseph which occurred when he was in Egypt.

Joseph then answered Pharaoh, saying, “It is not in me; God will give Pharaoh a favorable answer.”

Genesis 41:16

In context, Joseph is about to give an interpretation of Pharaoh's dream. Joseph is taking no credit for the interpretation. He is giving the glory to God. After the interpretation and providing Pharaoh a plan for the future, Egypt's leader has this to say:

Then Pharaoh said to his servants, “Can we find a man like this, in whom is a divine spirit?”

Genesis 41:38

Here we see the Holy Spirit working in a way in which we see Him working in the New Testament. He is helping Joseph interpret dreams and reveal prophecy (cf. Acts 2:17-19). The words “divine spirit” would be more literally translated “God's Spirit.”

#### **HELPED DANIEL INTERPRET DREAMS**

As we have just seen with Joseph, the Holy Spirit also gave Daniel the ability to interpret dreams and to prophesy. Daniel said this to Nebuchadnezzar:

“However, there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries, and He has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will take place in the latter days. This was your dream and the visions in your mind while on your bed.

Daniel 2:28 (cf. Dan. 4:8)

While the Spirit is not mentioned in Daniel’s word to Babylon’s ruler, this type of work is consistent with that of the Spirit and would rightly be ascribed to this person of the Godhead (cf. Lk. 1:67-70 and 2 Pet. 1:21).

### **THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE TABERNACLE**

When the time came for Israel to build the tabernacle, the Spirit was again at work. And again, He was working in a way that was consistent with His later work during the New Covenant.

Then Moses said to the sons of Israel, “See, the Lord has called by name Bezalel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah. **“And He has filled him with the Spirit of God, in wisdom, in understanding and in knowledge and in all craftsmanship;** to make designs for working in gold and in silver and in bronze, and in the cutting of stones for settings and in the carving of wood, so as to perform in every inventive work. “He also has put in his heart to teach, both he and Oholiab, the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan. “He has filled them with skill to perform every work of an engraver and of a designer and of an embroiderer, in blue and in purple and in scarlet material, and in fine linen, and of a weaver, as performers of every work and makers of designs.

Exodus 35:30-35 (Emp. mine)

To borrow from the language of the New Testament, we might say that these men were given “gifts of the Holy Spirit.” These gifts aided them in the construction of the tabernacle.

In the various sections listed below you will find verse after verse speaking of the Spirit’s involvement with the people of God during the days of the Old Testament (cf. Dt. 34:9 and Num. 27:15-23).

### **THE SPIRIT IN A GENTILE PROPHET**

And Balaam lifted up his eyes and saw Israel camping tribe by tribe; and the Spirit of God came upon him.

Numbers 24:2 (cf. Num. 22:9, 13, 20, 22ff)

### **IN THE DAYS OF THE JUDGES**

The Spirit of the Lord came upon him [Otheniel], and he judged Israel. When he went out to war, the Lord gave Cushan-rishathaim king of Mesopotamia into his hand, so that he prevailed over Cushan-rishathaim.

Judges 3:10 (Addition in brackets mine)

Now Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lappidoth, was judging Israel at that time.

Judges 4:4

So the Spirit of the Lord came upon Gideon; and he blew a trumpet, and the Abiezrites were called together to follow him.

Judges 6:34

Now the Spirit of the Lord came upon Jephthah, so that he passed through Gilead and Manasseh; then he passed through Mizpah of Gilead, and from Mizpah of Gilead he went on to the sons of Ammon.

Judges 11:29

Then the woman gave birth to a son and named him Samson; and the child grew up and the Lord blessed him. And the Spirit of the Lord began to stir him in Mahaneh-dan, between Zorah and Eshtaol.

Judges 13:24-25

The Spirit of the Lord came upon him mightily, so that he tore him as one tears a young goat though he had nothing in his hand; but he did not tell his father or mother what he had done.

Judges 14:6

### **IN THE LIFE OF SAUL**

When they came to the hill there, behold, a group of prophets met him; and the Spirit of God came upon him mightily, so that he prophesied among them.

1 Samuel 10:10

Then the Spirit of God came upon Saul mightily when he heard these words, and he became very angry.

1 Samuel 11:6

Now the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the Lord terrorized him.

1 Samuel 16:14

### **IN THE LIFE OF DAVID**

Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers; and the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon David from that day forward. And Samuel arose and went to Ramah.

1 Samuel 16:13

Now Saul was afraid of David, for the Lord was with him but had departed from Saul.

1 Samuel 18:12

Do not cast me away from Your presence And do not take Your Holy Spirit from me.

Psalms 51:11

Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence?

Psalms 139:7

Now these are the last words of David. David the son of Jesse declares, The man who was raised on high declares, The anointed of the God of Jacob, And the sweet psalmist of Israel,

“The Spirit of the Lord spoke by me, And His word was on my tongue. “The God of Israel said, The Rock of Israel spoke to me, ‘He who rules over men righteously, Who rules in the fear of God,

2 Samuel 23:1-3

## **THE WORDS OF THE PROPHETS**

The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, Because the Lord has anointed me To bring good news to the afflicted; He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to captives And freedom to prisoners;

Isaiah 61:1

Now the word of the Lord came to me saying,

Jeremiah 1:4

Then He said to me, “Son of man, stand on your feet that I may speak with you!” As He spoke to me the Spirit entered me and set me on my feet; and I heard Him speaking to me.

Ezekiel 2:1-2

Moreover, the Spirit lifted me up and brought me to the east gate of the Lord’s house which faced eastward. And behold, there were twenty-five men at the entrance of the gate, and among them I saw Jaazaniah son of Azzur and Pelatiah son of Benaiah, leaders of the people.

Ezekiel 11:1

And the Spirit lifted me up and brought me in a vision by the Spirit of God to the exiles in Chaldea. So the vision that I had seen left me. Then I told the exiles all the things that the Lord had shown me.

Ezekiel 11:24-25

But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one’s own interpretation, for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.

2 Peter 1:20-21

## **REBUILDING THE TEMPLE**

Then he said to me, “This is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel saying, ‘Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,’ says the Lord of hosts. ‘What are you, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel you will become a plain; and he will bring forth the top stone with shouts of “Grace, grace to it!” ’ ”

Zechariah 4:6-7

In each of the above sections the Spirit’s involvement in Old Testament times is clearly seen. This should not surprise us. Remember, He is God. God is always involved in the lives of His people.

## LESSON FOUR

# THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

**A**S CHRISTIANS WE ARE MUCH MORE FAMILIAR with the work of the Holy Spirit in the New Testament. In this lesson we will illustrate a number of such examples. Some of these examples will be subjects for future lessons. In such cases, detailed discussions of these examples will be reserved for later study.

### THE BIRTH OF JESUS

The work of the Spirit in the New Testament, just as in the Old Testament, is seen “in the beginning. When the angel Gabriel appeared to Mary he told her:

The angel answered and said to her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy Child shall be called the Son of God.

Luke 1:35

Matthew confirms the involvement of the Holy Spirit in the birth of Jesus:

Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: when His mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit.

Matthew 1:18

This was the miraculous work of the Holy Spirit. The birth of Jesus was unlike any other. As the text in Matthew tells us, Mary was a virgin. The power of God in the person of the Holy Spirit brought about the birth of our Savior.

The work of the Holy Spirit in the birth of Christ is also seen in the various prophecies that were fulfilled (Isa. 7:14; 9:6-7; Mic. 5:2; Hos. 11:1).

### THE BAPTISM OF JESUS

As the earthly ministry of Jesus began, once again the Holy Spirit was “in the beginning.” We see Him at the baptism of Jesus.

After being baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove and lighting on Him, and behold, a voice out of the heavens said, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased.”

Matthew 3:16-17

John testified saying, “I have seen the Spirit descending as a dove out of heaven, and He remained upon Him. “I did not recognize Him, but He who sent me to baptize in water said to me, ‘He upon whom you see the Spirit descending and remaining upon Him, this is the One who baptizes in the Holy Spirit.’ “I myself have seen, and have testified that this is the Son of God.”

John 1:32-34

As discussed in our study on the trinity, all three persons of the Godhead are present at the baptism of Jesus.

### **LEADING JESUS INTO THE WILDERNESS TO BE TEMPTED**

After His baptism, it was the Holy Spirit who led Jesus into the wilderness to be tempted. This was a critical period of testing for the Son of Man.

Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.

Matthew 4:1

### **JESUS ANOINTED WITH THE SPIRIT**

In properly understanding the life of Jesus Christ and how He was tempted, it is important to know that He was tempted as a man (cf. James 1:13). Yes, He was God, but Jesus lived and died as a man. This is how He is able to sympathize with our weaknesses (Heb. 4:15).

In the same way, the many miracles He performed were not performed by Jesus as God. Rather, Jesus, living as a man, was anointed with the Holy Spirit. It was the Holy Spirit working in Jesus that allowed these signs and wonders to occur. Scripture bears witness to this truth.

“For He whom God has sent speaks the words of God; for He gives the Spirit without measure.

John 3:34 (cf. Luke 4:18-21)

“You know of Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and with power, and how He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him.

Acts 10:38 (cf. Isa. 42:1-4; Matt. 12:18-21, 28)

### **GIVEN BY JESUS TO THE APOSTLES**

In what is known as the limited commission, Jesus gave some measure of the Holy Spirit to the apostles.

Jesus summoned His twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every kind of disease and every kind of sickness. Now the names of the twelve apostles are these: The first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; and James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother; Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; Simon the Zealot, and Judas Iscariot, the one who betrayed Him. These twelve Jesus sent out after instructing them: “Do not go in the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter any city of the Samaritans; but rather go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. “And as you go, preach, saying, ‘The kingdom of heaven is at hand.’ “Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons. Freely you received, freely give.

Matthew 10:1-8 (see also vs. 20 and Luke 10:1ff)

### **PROMISED TO THE APOSTLES**

As the close of His earthly ministry approached, Jesus promised the Holy Spirit to the apostles. This promise would be a greater measure of the Spirit than they had previously received.

“I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you.

John 14:16-17

“But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you.

John 14:26 (cf. John 15:26)

“But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come.

John 16:13 (cf. John 20:22)

Gathering them together, He commanded them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for what the Father had promised, “Which,” He said, “you heard of from Me; for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”

Acts 1:4-5 (cf. Lk. 24:49)

#### **AT THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE CHURCH**

When the New Testament church began, once again we find the Holy Spirit “in the beginning.”

And they [the Apostles] were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit was giving them utterance.

Acts 2:4

“For these men are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only the third hour of the day; but this is what was spoken of through the prophet Joel: ‘And it shall be in the last days,’ God says, ‘That I will pour forth of My Spirit on all mankind; And your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, And your young men shall see visions, And your old men shall dream dreams; Even on My bondslaves, both men and women, I will in those days pour forth of My Spirit And they shall prophesy.

Acts 2:15-18

#### **IN THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH**

As one reads through the book of Acts and the various letters to the churches, it is clear that the Holy Spirit was miraculously involved. I am listing here a number of examples.

But Peter said, “Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back some of the price of the land?

Acts 5:3

“Therefore, brethren, select from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may put in charge of this task.

Acts 6:3

“You men who are stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears are always resisting the Holy Spirit; you are doing just as your fathers did.

Acts 7:51

Now when the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent them Peter and John, who came down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit. For He had not yet fallen upon any of them; they had simply been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they began laying their hands on them, and they were receiving the

Holy Spirit. Now when Simon saw that the Spirit was bestowed through the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money,

Acts 8:14-18

Then the Spirit said to Philip, "Go up and join this chariot."

Acts 8:29

While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who were listening to the message.

Acts 10:44

While they were ministering to the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them."

Acts 13:2

But Saul, who was also known as Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, fixed his gaze on him,

Acts 13:9

They passed through the Phrygian and Galatian region, having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia; and after they came to Mysia, they were trying to go into Bithynia, and the Spirit of Jesus did not permit them;

Acts 16:6-7

Except that the Holy Spirit solemnly testifies to me in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions await me.

Acts 20:23

This is by no means an exhaustive listing of the activity of the Holy Spirit recorded in the book of Acts. However, it should be enough to emphasize the great extent of His work. As we proceed with our study various Holy Spirit references in the New Testament letters will be observed.

## LESSON FIVE

# THE GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

**T**HERE IS GREAT JOY IN GIVING GIFTS to those we love. Much thought and time is spent searching for just the right gift for that someone special in our life. We want to give them a gift they can use. We want it to be a gift they will appreciate. However, imagine giving a gift to someone, only to have them ask with a puzzled look, “What is it?” Then, imagine others telling them the gift was something other than what you had intended.

I wonder how God must feel when so many of His children have no idea what is meant in the gift of the Holy Spirit? How does He feel when others tell them the gift is something different than He intended? How might He feel if in learning the truth of the gift they felt disappointed?

In this lesson we will discuss the Gift of the Holy Spirit. When it comes to this subject there are some different interpretations offered by well-studied students of scripture. However, we must understand that not every interpretation of this subject is going to be accurate. There may be some truth in each of them. However, it will be our task to determine which one is most consistent with the word of God (cf. Acts 17:11). In our pursuit of properly understanding this gift we will consider three common interpretations. Along with each presentation some critique of each position will be offered. When this lesson is complete you be the judge as to which one (according to scripture) has the most truth.

### ***INTERPRETATION NUMBER ONE:***

#### **THE GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IS THE HOLY SPIRIT HIMSELF**

The first view we want to consider is the belief that the gift of the Holy Spirit is the Holy Spirit Himself. In other words, at baptism one receives a personal bodily indwelling of the Spirit. This particular view is presented in the book *Alive in the Spirit*, by Jim Jividen. Simply stating the view Jividen writes:

The gift of the Holy Spirit, along with the forgiveness of sins, was not confined to the first-century Jews on the day of Pentecost. The promise was “for you and your children, and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God shall to Himself” (Acts 2:39). This makes the gift of the Holy Spirit a present reality. He is received by someone when he is baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.<sup>2</sup>

Jim Jividen is not the only one to hold to this view. This excerpt is used merely as an example of the view being stated. There are many Christians who find comfort in the belief that the Holy Spirit personally indwells them. Supporting their belief are a number of New Testament passages that *seemingly* speak of the Spirit indwelling a believer (cf. Rom. 8:11; 1 Cor. 6:19; 2 Cor. 1:22). When one reads passages like those referenced it indeed seems clear that the Spirit dwells in believers. However, as we will later see these supposed passages of support can be (and sometimes are) interpreted differently.

Of serious concern for accepting and embracing this view is the absence of a biblical example of the Spirit Himself being automatically and immediately received when one is baptized. Aside from the example of Jesus (whose baptism was itself unique), there are no such

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<sup>2</sup> Jim Jividen, *Alive in the Spirit* (Gospel Advocate, Nashville, TN. 1990), 46.

examples. On the contrary, there are examples of the Spirit *not* being personally received at baptism.

When Philip preached the gospel to the people of Samaria, those who believed were baptized (Acts 8:12-13). Yet in regards to the reception of the Spirit the inspired text reads as follows:

Now when the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent them Peter and John, who came down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit. For **He had not yet fallen upon any of them**; they had simply been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

Acts 8:14-16 (Emp. mine)

It was not until the apostles came down and prayed for the people and laid their hands on them, that they *then* received the Spirit (cf. Acts 8:18).

When the apostle Paul encountered some disciples of John in the city of Ephesus he had them baptized in the name of the Jesus. However, they did not at that point automatically receive the Holy Spirit. Turning to the inspired text we read:

And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they began speaking with tongues and prophesying.

Acts 19:6

It was not until the apostle Paul laid his hands on them that they *then* received the Holy Spirit.

The two examples referenced would seem to indicate that the Spirit *was not*, and *is not* automatically given at one's baptism. The Spirit was given to an individual through the laying on of hands by an apostle. Without apostle's today how then would one receive the Holy Spirit? We have seen no proof texts that this happens automatically at baptism. If one today is claiming to possess the Spirit, the question to ask them is, "How and when did you receive Him?"

These points of critique considered, what passage of scripture is used to support this view? Jividen and others use Acts 2:38 as the main proof text for their view.

Peter said to them, "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and **you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.**

Acts 2:38 (Emp. mine)

Those who hold to this first view read this text as if all of it applies to believers today. In other words, repentance and baptism are required in order for one to obtain forgiveness of sins. With this we agree. However, is the gift of the Holy Spirit still given today? Jividen notes of this "proof text":

"Most everyone would agree that this 'gift of the Holy Spirit' is received by a Christian when he is baptized. The disagreement comes because of a different understanding of what is involved in this 'gift.'<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Jividen, 48.

Yes there is much debate about the promised “gift.” Jividen is also correct when he says, “Most everyone...” It should be noted right here that not all agree that the gift mentioned in Acts 2:38 is given to believers today. More on that later.

In support of this first view we are considering, some might point to the example of the household of Cornelius (Acts 10:44-48). However, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the household of Cornelius was a *special sign* (Acts 11:15-18). Even Jividen states of this case, “This is not to suggest that the way the Holy Spirit worked at Cornelius’ house is the same was that He works upon those who receive the Holy Spirit at baptism.”<sup>4</sup>

This first position is an interesting and certainly comforting view of the gift of the Holy Spirit. It is a view held by many Christians. But is there enough biblical support for this interpretation? With the absence of a biblical example of the Spirit being given at baptism, but rather examples of just the opposite; how does the Spirit get into a believer today? This is an important question to be scripturally answered by those who hold this position.

### ***INTERPRETATION NUMBER TWO:***

#### **THE GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IS THE PROMISE OF ETERNAL LIFE**

The second interpretation of the gift of the Holy Spirit we need to consider is one that says the gift is eternal life. Sometimes this gift is described as all the promises of God. As it relates to being the gift of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit is the guarantee of God’s promises. It is all related back to the promise to the fathers (cf. Acts 2:39; 13:32; Gal. 3:29).

Like the first view we considered, this interpretation would read Acts 2:38 as if the gift of the Holy Spirit was given to a person (then and now) automatically and immediately upon their baptism. However, different than the first view, the gift would not be the Holy Spirit Himself, but rather the seal of the Spirit guaranteeing the promises of God. Support for this view begins with a look at language that is similar in usage to “the gift of the Holy Spirit.”

Jesus answered and said to her, “If you knew **the gift of God**, and who it is who says to you, ‘Give Me a drink,’ you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water.”  
John 4:10 (Emp. mine)

In this passage, Jesus speaks to the woman at the well of the gift of God. Was Jesus making reference to God Himself as a gift? No. He was speaking of gift that God would give. In this particular case the gift was actually Jesus as the One who had come to give His life.

But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of **the gift of Christ**.  
Ephesians 4:7 (KJV Emp. mine)

Did Paul have reference to Jesus Himself as a gift? No. He is speaking of the gifts Christ gives. Newer translations make this clear.

The language in both of these texts is similar to that of Acts 2:38. Notice a quick comparison of all three:

|           |                              |                                      |
|-----------|------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| John 4:10 | “The gift of God”            | (A gift <i>from</i> God)             |
| Eph. 4:7  | “The gift of Christ”         | (A gift <i>from</i> Christ)          |
| Acts 2:38 | “The gift of the Holy Spirit | (A gift <i>from</i> The Holy Spirit) |

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<sup>4</sup> Jividen, 50.

In each example the promised gift is *not the person* Himself. Rather, the gift is that which is given *by the person*. For those who wish to dig a little deeper into the grammatical structure of these texts, the following is offered from Foy Wallace's *Mission and Medium of the Holy Spirit*.

The argument based on an assertion that the gift of the Holy Spirit in Acts 2 :38 is in the objective genitive case, and therefore the personal Holy Spirit must be the direct object of the verb receive, requires some further attention. The late Doctor A. T. Robertson has been called the incomparable master and teacher of the New Testament Greek. His exhaustive *Grammar Of The Greek New Testament* comprises nearly fifteen hundred pages. On pages 493 to 501 he discusses the relation of both the subjective and the objective cases to the possessive genitive, and clearly states that the possessive genitive may carry along with it either without changing the possessive structure of the sentence.

Now the genitive is the simple possessive, and it is the specifying case--as Robertson states, "it is this and no other"--it becomes the adjectival case, or a noun functioning as an adjective. For example "the gospel of John" is John's gospel, and the adjectival form makes the noun John an adjective, in its use. So in Acts 2:38 "the gift of the Holy Spirit" in the possessive genitive is of adjectival construction--hence, the Holy Spirit's gift takes the adjectival form and the noun Holy Spirit becomes an adjective in use as in the example of John's gospel--the Holy Spirit's gift.

On the subject of the subjective and the objective in relation to the possessive genitive the Robertson *Grammar Of The Greek New Testament* says, on pages 499 to 501, that the subjective can be distinguished from the objective only by the context, and that in such instances the genitive remains the common possessive merely looked at from another angle. It further states, in itself the genitive is neither subjective nor objective, but lends itself readily to either point of view without changing the possessive case. This means, in the case of Acts 2:38, that "the gift of the Holy Spirit" is the possessive genitive--that is, the Holy Spirit's gift--but it embodies the objective in that which the Holy Spirit gives, or the gift that proceeds from the Holy Spirit, would be the far out object--thus the objective element reaches out beyond the possessive, but does not change the possessive case.

Thus the "objective genitive" argument of the professors falls flat, and the misuse of it in the attempt to force "the gift of the Holy Spirit" to mean a direct indwelling of the personal Holy Spirit is a failure. It is not the objective genitive--but is plainly the possessive case with the objective point of view, which is the Holy Spirit's gift, and in the adjectival form it is descriptive of what the Holy Spirit gives or bestows, or the blessings that proceed from it. This genitive, which in our English is the simple possessive, simply does what is termed expressing quality, as an adjective qualifies or describes the noun--and in this case the Holy Spirit is adjectival in its use, simply used as an adjective to qualify and describe the noun gift--the Holy Spirit's gift. These men are taking advantage of the readers and "by smooth and fair speech" they have beguiled the innocent, by making assertions about "the Greek genitive" which neither text nor context in the Greek or in the English will support.

## THE OBJECT OF THE VERB RECEIVE

In the study of Acts 2:38--"ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit"--it is outside the range of grammatical structure to have the verb receive governing both the accusative noun gift and the possessive genitive noun of Spirit. The accusative case is the object of verbs or prepositions; and the genitive is identical with the English possessive. In the sentence "ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit," the verb receive is lambano, and the accusative noun gift is dorean, and the possessive genitive noun of Spirit is Pneumatos: Ye shall receive (lambano) the gift (dorean) of Spirit (Pneumatos). Now, the accusative noun dorean (gift) and the possessive genitive noun Pneumatos (of Spirit), because of their different case, cannot be the double objects after any verb. To make gift, the accusative (dorean), and of Spirit, the possessive genitive (Pneumatos) the objects of the one verb receive (lambano) is not grammatically possible.

For further illustration, "the gift of God" and "the gift of Christ" are definitely in the possessive genitives. So, the noun gift (accusative) and the phrase "of God" (possessive genitive) , simply because one is the accusative case and the other the genitive possessive case, cannot be the objects of the same verb, Greek or English. But in Acts 2:38 the phrase "of Spirit" is the same structure, of the exact construction as "of God" and "of Christ"-the possessive genitive case. Now, the gift of God (Jno. 4:10) and the gift of Christ (Eph. 4 :7) and the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2 :38) are the same identical phrase. The noun gift is the accusative case and is the direct object ; but "of God" and "of Christ" and "of the Holy Spirit" are all in the possessive case. Therefore, just as "the gift of God" means God's gift, and "the gift of Christ" means Christ's gift, so "the gift of the Holy Spirit" means the Holy Spirit's gift. The gift of God (Jno. 4:10) , being in the possessive genitive, God himself cannot be the gift; and, the gift of Christ (Eph. 4:7), being the possessive genitive, Christ himself cannot be the gift-so, the gift of the Holy Spirit, (Acts 2 :38) being possessive genitive, the Holy Spirit himself cannot be the gift.<sup>5</sup>

While support for this view rests heavily on the above argumentation and rules of grammar (that the gift is *not* the Holy Spirit Himself, but rather the gifts given by the Spirit), further support is found in a comparison of Acts 2:38 and Acts 3:19.

Peter said to them, "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Acts 2:38

"Therefore repent and return, so that your sins may be wiped away, in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord;

Acts 3:19

Notice the similarities between these two texts. Both speak of repentance. Both talk of having sins forgiven or wiped away. The idea of "return" in 3:19 would include and relate to baptism. Both speak of receiving something (in 2:38 it is "the gift of the Holy Spirit"; in 3:19 it is the "times of refreshing").

Based on these similarities it is concluded that the gift of the Holy Spirit and the times of refreshing are one and the same thing. According to this view that one and the same thing would

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<sup>5</sup> The Mission and Medium of the Holy Spirit (Foy Wallace Publications, 1967) 40-43.

be the promises of God, among which is that great promise of eternal life. The Holy Spirit is said to be the guarantee of all these blessings and promises. This is supported in texts such as these by the apostle Paul:

For as many as are the promises of God, in Him they are yes; therefore also through Him is our Amen to the glory of God through us. Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and anointed us is God, **who also sealed us and gave us the Spirit in our hearts as a pledge.**

2 Corinthians 1:20-22 (Emp. mine)

In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, **you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is given as a pledge of our inheritance,** with a view to the redemption of God’s own possession, to the praise of His glory.

Ephesians 1:13-14 (Emp. mine)

These texts seem very clear in regards to our being sealed with the Holy Spirit. However, as with passages considered in the first view, there are some other interpretations of these texts that will be considered in our study of Interpretation Number Three..

Overall, this second view we have considered seems to have more biblical and grammatical support than the first view we examined. As an additional point, those who hold to this view generally (though not exclusively) do not believe in a personal bodily indwelling of the Holy Spirit as in the first view. They would claim the Spirit dwells in us only through the Spirit inspired word of God. Charts such as the one that follows are offered in support of the Spirit dwelling in us *only* through thru the word.

| <b>HOLY SPIRIT</b> | <b>THRU MEANS OF</b> | <b>THE WORD</b>   |
|--------------------|----------------------|-------------------|
| John 3:5           | Born Again           | 1 Peter 1:23      |
| 2 Cor. 3:6         | Begets               | James 1:18        |
| Neh. 9:30          | Instructs            | 2 Tim. 3:16-17    |
| John 16:8          | Convicts             | Titus 1:9         |
| Titus 3:5          | Saves                | James 1:21        |
| 1 Cor. 6:11        | Sanctifies           | John 17:17        |
| 1 Cor. 6:11        | Cleanses             | John 15:3         |
| 1 Cor. 6:11        | Washes               | Eph. 5:26         |
| Gal. 5:16-18       | Walk                 | Psalms 119:9-10   |
| Rom. 8:14          | Leads                | Psalms 119:105    |
| Acts 9:31          | Comforts             | Rom. 15:4         |
| John 6:63          | Makes Alive          | Psalms 119:50, 93 |
| 1 Cor. 12:8-14:26  | Edifies              | Acts 20:32        |
| John 6:44-45       | Draws                | 2 Thess. 2:14     |
| Rom. 8:9           | Dwells               | Col. 3:16         |

***INTERPRETATION NUMBER THREE:***

**THE GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT WAS THE MIRACULOUS GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

The third interpretation of the Gift of the Holy Spirit that we want to consider looks at this gift in its biblical and historical context. It is this third view that I have come to accept in my understanding of the gift of the Holy Spirit. As we consider this view, our main text will once again be Acts 2:38. Here it is again:

Peter said to them, “Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Acts 2:38

I will begin this section of our study by stating that I do not believe the gift of the Holy Spirit was something each of those gathered on the day of Pentecost received immediately upon their repentance and baptism. Further, I do not believe the gift of the Holy Spirit is something that *any* believer today receives. In fact, there is no way for any today to receive this gift.

As stated in the title to this section, I believe the gift of the Holy Spirit was the miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit that were given to believers only by the laying on of the apostles hands. Hence, even though Peter said they would receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, they would need an apostle to lay hands on them. As far as we know, this did not occur with every new believer on the day of Pentecost. Since there are no apostles today, no believer today would be able to receive this gift.

Peter’s words regarding the gift of the Holy Spirit must be considered in light of the historical context. In this regard, those gathered that day were seeing the fulfillment of the words of the prophet Joel. Peter, quoting the prophet Joel, said this:

‘And it shall be in the last days,’ God says, ‘That I will pour forth of My Spirit on all mankind; And your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, And your young men shall see visions, And your old men shall dream dreams; Even on My bondslaves, both men and women, I will in those days pour forth of My Spirit And they shall prophesy.

Acts 2:17-18

There was a promise of the Spirit being poured out on all mankind, male and female, Jew and Gentile, in the last days. The last days being the last days of the Old Covenant (cf. 1 Tim. 4:1; Heb. 1:2; 8:13; 9:26; James 5:1-3; 1 Pet. 1:20; 2 Pet. 3:3-4). Historically, this is a period long gone. We today are not living in the last days referenced by Joel. The prophecy of Joel stated that the dreams and vision and prophecy would occur in the last days. If we were in the last days it would not be unreasonable to expect this type of work from the Spirit through believing men and women.

How was the Spirit given to Jew and Gentile, male and female so that they would prophesy, see visions, and dream dreams in the last days? As we have already very clearly seen the Spirit was given through the laying of hands by the apostles. With the deaths of the apostles the ability to distribute the gift of the Holy Spirit also died.

Relating to this third interpretation what biblical support is found that would establish the gift of the Holy Spirit as being: the miraculous measure of the Holy Spirit? Consider a few examples of the phrase “gift of the Holy Spirit” in the book of Acts.

But Peter said to him, "May your silver perish with you, because you thought you could obtain the gift of God with money!"

Acts 8:20

Contextually, the reference here to "the gift of God" would be equal to "the gift of the Holy Spirit." Remember, the gift of the Spirit according to Luke 24:49 was the promise of the Father. The gift of God here in Acts 8:20 has to do with the miraculous measure of the Holy Spirit given through the laying of hands by the apostles.

All the circumcised believers who came with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also.

Acts 10:45

Here is the third reference to the gift of the Holy Spirit in the book of Acts. Here the gift is not the Holy Spirit Himself, but rather the miraculous measure of the Holy Spirit given to the Gentiles prior to their obedience to the gospel. This was intended as a sign that the gospel should now be preached to the gentiles, as Peter later explained:

"Therefore if God gave to them the same gift as He gave to us also after believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could stand in God's way?"

Acts 11:17

Here is a reference to "the same gift." Once again the idea of gift relates not to the Spirit Himself or the promises of God, but to the miraculous gifts of the Spirit. The household of Cornelius received the gift of tongues.

As further proof that the gift of the Holy Spirit was the miraculous measure of the Spirit, consider this side by side comparison of Mark 16:16-17 and Acts 2:38

"He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned. "These signs will accompany those who have believed: in My name they will cast out demons, they will speak with new tongues;  
Mark 16:16-17

Peter said to them, "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.  
Acts 2:38

Notice the similarities:

**Mark 16:16-17**

Believed      Baptized      Saved      Signs

**Acts 2:38**

Repent      Baptized      Forgiven      Gift of the Holy Spirit

Both texts are virtually identical. Both speak of what one (in the last days or today) must do in order to be saved. However, we would agree that the signs of Mark 16:17 were confined to the

first century and are not active today. In the same way, can we not agree that the gift of the Holy Spirit (that made possible the signs) was also confined to the first century?

Let me at this point in our study consider some objections to what I have presented thus far. Those who hold to view number two previously considered, might ask, “What about the seal of the Spirit?” (Eph. 1:13). Let’s look at that text.

In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise,  
Ephesians 1:13

We saw this passage referenced in support of view number two. How would it apply to this third view? Consider some of the phrases used in this verse:

*Having also believed.* Let’s look at these words in comparison to these words of Paul found in Acts 19:2. Paul asked some disciples of John, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?” As we continue we will see how these two verses connect and identify for us what being sealed with the Spirit is all about.

*You were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of Promise.* This portion of the verse can be (and perhaps should be) rendered “Having believed in Him (Jesus) you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise.” This is what occurred in the text in Acts 19. After the disciples of John were baptized, Paul laid his hands on them and they received the Spirit. It is similar to Acts 2:38 where upon repentance and baptism one could receive the Holy Spirit when an apostle would lay hands on them.

*The Holy Spirit of Promise.* This takes us back to the prophecy of Joel and the promise of the Spirit being poured out in the last days. It takes us back to the words of Jesus to His apostles in Luke’s gospel. Jesus told them, “And behold, I am sending forth the promise of My Father upon you; but you are to stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high” (Luke 24:49).

The word “seal” is important in putting all of this together. Typically, a seal is something visible. A seal was placed upon something or someone to identify it or them. The apostles had the miraculous demonstration of the Holy Spirit as a seal that they were sent by God. Believers of the first century who (through the apostles hands) had the miraculous measure of the Spirit demonstrated a seal upon them. As we read earlier from Mark’s gospel, “these signs will accompany those who have believed.” The signs were a seal. In this way, the seal referenced by Paul in Ephesians 1:13 would speak of the miraculous measure of the Spirit which some or many of the Ephesians possessed. The question must be asked: How would a personal indwelling of the Holy Spirit be an outward or visible sign?

To summarize all we have presented for this third interpretation, Acts 2:38 must be considered in its historical context. The Spirit worked in believers in the first century in a way that He does not do so today. Does this mean repentance and baptism were necessary only in the first century? Of course not. There are too many other examples of the necessity of such for us today.

Someone argues, but what about all the New Testament passages that speak of the Spirit dwelling in us? Remember when the New Testament was written! It was written during a period where the Spirit was given to believers through the apostles. As we read these texts we must keep in mind their first century context.

All three views considered, which one do you find most consistent with the inspired scriptures?

# The Gift of the Holy Spirit

## *Three Views Side by Side*

|  | Interpretation 1   | Interpretation 2   | Interpretation 3  |
|--|--|--|---|
| <b>The Gift of the Holy Spirit is:</b> | The Spirit Himself   | Eternal Life   | Miraculous Gifts of the Spirit  |
| <b>How or When is Gift Given?</b>      | At Baptism   | At Baptism   | Through Apostles Hands  |
| <b>Active Today?</b>                   | Yes  | Yes  | No  |
| <b>Spirit Indwells:</b>                | Personally   | Through the Word<br><i>(Personally also according to some)</i>   | Personally in First Century, through the Word Today   |
| <b>Strengths:</b>                      | New Testament passages that speak of the Spirit indwelling believers.        | Passages such as Eph. 1:13-14; 2 Cor. 1:20-22. Consistent with other scriptures.   | Consistent use of the phrase “Gift of the Holy Spirit” or “Gift of God” (cf. Acts 8:20; 10:45; 11:17)                     |
| <b>Weaknesses</b>                      | No N.T. record of Spirit being given automatically at baptism to a believer. | N.T. passages that speak of Spirit indwelling believers in the first century seem to indicate a personal indwelling as opposed through the word. | N.T. passages which speak of the Spirit indwelling believers must be interpreted (or limited) to a first century context. |
| <b>No tes:</b>                         |  |  |   |

## LESSON SIX

# THE GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

HAVING DISCUSSED THE GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT we now want to enter a study of the gifts of the Spirit. These gifts are outlined very clearly in the twelfth chapter of First Corinthians. Let's begin by noticing Paul's inspired listing.

- 1 Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware.
- 2 You know that when you were pagans, you were led astray to the mute idols, however you were led.
- 3 Therefore I make known to you that no one speaking by the Spirit of God says, "Jesus is accursed"; and no one can say, "Jesus is Lord," except by the Holy Spirit.
- 4 Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit.
- 5 And there are varieties of ministries, and the same Lord.
- 6 There are varieties of effects, but the same God who works all things in all persons.
- 7 But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.
- 8 For to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, and to another the word of knowledge according to the same Spirit;
- 9 to another faith by the same Spirit, and to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit,
- 10 and to another the effecting of miracles, and to another prophecy, and to another the distinguishing of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, and to another the interpretation of tongues.
- 11 But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually just as He wills.

1 Corinthians 12:1-11

Of first importance in understanding the apostle's words here concerning the spiritual gifts is what he tells the Corinthians in verses 4-6. There is a great picture of the trinity found in the words God (Father), Lord (Son), and Spirit. However, this is not Paul's main point. He wants them to know that God works in different ways through each of them. Yet, despite the different ways, it is the same God who is behind all they were experiencing. And, the differing gifts were not intended to bring about division simply because they were different. The different gifts come from a triune God. God can work together and so should they as a body.

The fact that they are called gifts is also important for the Corinthians to understand. A gift is something not earned, but freely given. Paul tells them there are different ministries (vs. 5). This means the gifts were not for possessor of the gift. They were designed to benefit others.

- ***The word of wisdom.*** This would appear to be a teaching gift. It is not the gift of knowledge, it is the word of wisdom (cf. Ex. 31:1-6; 35:1ff). Perhaps this had to do with wise counsel in various matters. It is not so much theology as it is practical everyday Christianity.
- ***The word of Knowledge.*** This is a miraculous imparting of knowledge by the Holy Spirit.
- ***Faith.*** How does this gift work? Is this miraculous faith? If so, how does it compare to the working of miracles or healings? How would it be unique from those gifts? Lipscomb said of this gift that it was, "A faith that enabled one to remove mountain, of which Jesus speaks." However, notice exactly what Jesus said about moving mountains:

And He said to them, “Because of the littleness of your faith; for truly I say to you, if you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move; and nothing will be impossible to you.

Matthew 17:20

And Jesus answered and said to them, “Truly I say to you, if you have faith and do not doubt, you will not only do what was done to the fig tree, but even if you say to this mountain, ‘Be taken up and cast into the sea,’ it will happen.

Matthew 21:21

There does not appear to be anything miraculous in what Jesus says in regards to faith. He does not indicate that miraculous power is needed. On the contrary, He says all they needed was faith the size of a mustard seed. If it is as Lipscomb suggested, miraculous faith that could remove mountains, but the faith is given by the Spirit, how is it really faith? Miraculous faith would be more than a mustard seed.

This particular gift may not be in realm of the miraculous. The same apostle outlines gifts in Romans chapter twelve. There he mentions the gift of service. Is this miraculous service? How about the gift of exhortation? Would this be miraculous or a Spirit equipped ability to exhort? How about giving mercy as a gift of the Spirit? Isn't this something we are all supposed to do?

Some of this is admittedly difficult. Not having lived during this period we are sometimes left to educated and reasonable interpretations in seeking to properly understand some of these matters.

- ***Gifts of healings.*** To be able to heal various diseases.
- ***Working of miracles.*** Miracles would be different than healings. At least they are listed as a separate gift here.
- ***Prophecy.*** To be to able to reveal through the Spirit revelations needed for the church.
- ***Distinguishing of spirits.*** To expose false prophets (1 John 4:1).
- ***Various kinds of tongues.*** To speak in different languages (cf. Acts 2). To understand what is being described with this gift we must keep in mind the context of Paul's description of the gifts.

The gift of tongues becomes clearer when we examine chapter fourteen of First Corinthians. All Paul says in regards to tongue speaking is in the context of an assembly of saints. The tongue speaker here is speaking things the assembly in general cannot understand, unless there is someone present who can interpret (1 Cor. 14:27-28). Some have concluded based on this verse that the gift of tongues being described here is different than that which took place in Acts chapter two. I believe the gift of tongues described here was exactly the same as that which is seen in Acts chapter two.

It is important to consider these characteristics of the gift of tongues: 1). Tongues were a sign for unbelievers (Mk. 16:26; Acts 2; 10:44-46; 11:13-18; 1 Cor. 14:22). The tongue speaker does not speak to men, but to God (1 Cor. 14:2). What does this say about our normal interpretation of tongue speaking as a means to evangelism? 3). The tongue speaker does not understand what he is saying (1 Cor. 14:2, 14-15). If this is true, how could the gift of tongues

be used for evangelism? No jokes here about preachers not understanding what they are saying (or writing)!

Perhaps, our previous understanding of the purpose of the gift of tongues has been wrong. This is not to say that it was not the ability to speak in foreign languages. I believe it was. But that was for a sign. Someone is sure to point out Acts chapter two. However, what exactly were the apostles speaking in other tongues? (cf. Acts 2:11). They were not preaching the gospel. They were praising God. This was a sign for unbelievers.

Note these contrasts between Acts two and the Corinthian letter. The contrasts remarkably show how the gift in Acts two and 1 Corinthians fourteen were one and the same. They seem different because the situations were different.

**Non-Assembly**

Acts 2; 10:44-46; 19:1-6; Mk 16:17;

In Acts 2 a multitude of different languages

In Acts 2 twelve tongue speakers

In Acts 2 no interpreter necessary

**Assembly**

1 Cor. 14

Primarily Greek speaking

2 or 3 (vs. 27)

Only if there is an interpreter

• **Interpretation of tongues.** The ability to interpret what was said in a different tongue.

Also important to our discussion of the gifts of the Spirit is a consideration of their purpose. Take a look at these passages.

“These signs will accompany those who have believed: in My name they will cast out demons, they will speak with new tongues;

Mark 16:17

God also testifying with them, both by signs and wonders and by various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit according to His own will.

Hebrews 2:4

But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.

1 Corinthians 12:7

And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers,

Ephesians 4:11

According to these texts the purpose of the gifts was two-fold. 1). They were a sign that those who possessed them were from God. 2). They were an aid to the early church.

We have already seen that the gift of the Holy Spirit, or the ability to possess these gifts came through the laying on of hands by an apostle. This being true, there are no miraculous gifts today.

## LESSON SEVEN

# THE BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

**A**S CHRISTIANS WE ARE VERY FAMILIAR with water baptism. We can point out various New Testament texts where it was practiced. We know what it represents and what it is all about. However, what many of us are not as familiar with is the baptism of the Holy Spirit. What is this baptism all about? Is Acts chapter two the only place in scripture where it is found? Can someone today be baptized with the Holy Spirit?

There are those today who claim the baptism of the Holy Spirit is still occurring. I have talked to some who claim they have personally experienced it. Interestingly, their experience does not usually match that which is recorded in the New Testament when the baptism of the Holy Spirit *actually* occurred. Let's look to the scriptures to see what we can learn about this subject.

### TO WHOM WAS IT PROMISED?

A good place for us to begin our study is by considering to whom Holy Spirit baptism was promised. In answering this question we will need to understand these words of John the Baptist.

“As for me, I baptize you with water for repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, and I am not fit to remove His sandals; He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.

Matthew 3:11

Contextually, John is speaking to Jews who were coming to him to be baptized. The One coming after John who would baptize with the Holy Spirit and fire is clearly a reference to Jesus Christ. The baptism of the Holy Spirit and fire would come from Him.

Before we continue our discussion regarding to whom the baptism of the Holy Spirit was promised, we should talk for a moment about the baptism of fire. We do so because some have incorrectly associated the baptism of fire with the baptism of the Holy Spirit. They see a fulfillment of these words in the events of the day of Pentecost as recorded in Acts chapter two. There we are told that tongues like as fire appeared to the apostles and rested on them (Acts 2:3). The problem with this interpretation is that the tongues were only “as of fire.” Remember the definition of the word baptize: to immerse. The example in Acts would be far from an immersion (or baptism) of fire. As we will later see, on the day of Pentecost as recorded in Acts chapter two, we definitely have a baptism of the Holy Spirit. However, Acts chapter two does not record a baptism of fire.

It is two different baptisms that John is referencing. He speaks of a baptism of the Holy Spirit and a separate and distinct baptism of fire. It is my belief that the baptism of fire is a reference to the destruction of Jerusalem. John is essentially dividing his Jewish listeners into two categories: fruitful and unfruitful trees: Those who would be saved and those who would suffer punishment. The punishment they would experience would be a baptism of fire.

This brings us back to the question: To whom was the baptism of the Holy Spirit was promised? In speaking of Jesus, John said, “He will baptize *you* with the Holy Spirit...” Who is the “you”? Right away we might want to say that the “you” represented everyone of the Jews at that time. However, this cannot be correct. Were all the Jews baptized with fire? No. Neither were all the Jews baptized with the Holy Spirit. John himself indicates that there was a difference

between the wheat and chaff. The wheat would be gathered into the barn (saved) and the chaff would be burned up (the baptism of fire).

The “you” then is a general reference to Israel. The unfaithful of Israel were indeed baptized with fire. That Old Covenant came to a burning end. As far as the baptism of the Holy Spirit was concerned, the faithful of Israel became benefactors to the Spirit’s work in the Apostles, who alone experienced the actual “baptism of the Spirit.” In this sense, John could say to those of Israel who were gathered that day, “He will baptize *you* with the Holy Spirit and with fire.”

A more direct “you” relating to the baptism of the Holy Spirit is found in the opening verses of the book of Acts. (Acts 1:1-4)

1 The first account I composed, Theophilus, about all that Jesus began to do and teach,  
2 until the day when He was taken up to heaven, after He had by the Holy Spirit given orders to the apostles whom He had chosen.  
3 To these He also presented Himself alive after His suffering, by many convincing proofs, appearing to them over a period of forty days and speaking of the things concerning the kingdom of God.  
4 Gathering them together, He commanded them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for what the Father had promised, “Which,” He said, “you heard of from Me;  
5 for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”

Acts 1:1-5

The “you” here is clearly a reference to the Apostles. At the close of Luke’s gospel the same kind of direct and specific identification of the apostles is made by Jesus.

“And behold, I am sending forth the promise of My Father upon you; but you are to stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.”

Luke 24:49

The specific application of the “you” being only the apostles as recipients of the baptism of the Holy Spirit is seen when we look at what occurred on the day of Pentecost as recorded in Acts chapter two.

When the day of Pentecost had come, **they** were all together in one place.

Acts 2:1 (Emp. mine)

Contextually, the “they” mentioned here are the apostles. Other verses in this same chapter make this abundantly clear. Some refer to the “they” as the one hundred twenty disciples in verse fifteen. However, what we read in Acts two is a different gathering than that which is seen in chapter one.

And **they** were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit was giving them utterance.

Acts 2:4 (Emp. mine)

Once again we have “they” (the apostles) being filled with the Holy Spirit. This is what Jesus had promised. This is the baptism of the Holy Spirit. This is what John said would happen. Here the apostles as representative of Israel are immersed in the Holy Spirit. In this way,

approximately three years earlier, John could say to the Jews who stood before him, “He will baptize *you* with the Holy Spirit.”

They were amazed and astonished, saying, “Why, are not all these who are speaking **Galileans?**  
Acts 2:7 (Emp. mine)

Here is further identification of the apostles as those who had been baptized in the Holy Spirit.

**But Peter, taking his stand with the eleven,** raised his voice and declared to them: “Men of Judea and all you who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you and give heed to my words.  
Acts 2:14 (Emp. mine)

In this verse the twelve are seen standing together. The twelve were the subject of discussion among the crowd.

Everyone kept feeling a sense of awe; and many wonders and signs were taking place **through the apostles.**

Acts 2:43 (Emp. mine).

From passages such as these have seen it is clear that the focus is on the apostles. All the Jews gathered that day were not baptized with the Holy Spirit. The one hundred and twenty disciples were not baptized with the Holy Spirit. It was the apostles alone who received this baptism.

#### **WHAT ABOUT THE HOUSEHOLD OF CORNELIUS?**

Any discussion of the baptism of the Holy Spirit is going to involve the events that occurred with the household of Cornelius. Here is how Luke records the events:

44 While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who were listening to the message.

45 All the circumcised believers who came with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also.

46 For they were hearing them speaking with tongues and exalting God. Then Peter answered,

47 “Surely no one can refuse the water for these to be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we did, can he?”

48 And he ordered them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked him to stay on for a few days.

Acts 10:44-48

In explaining his actions of going to the Gentiles, Peter explained the events that occurred with these words:

15 “And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell upon them just as He did upon us at the beginning.

16 “And I remembered the word of the Lord, how He used to say, ‘John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.’”

17 “Therefore if God gave to them the same gift as He gave to us also after believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could stand in God’s way?”

18 When they heard this, they quieted down and glorified God, saying, “Well then, God has granted to the Gentiles also the repentance that leads to life.”

Acts 11:15-18

Is this another occurrence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit? Many believe this is exactly what occurred. In support of their view is Peter’s description of the events which seemingly identify this as a baptism of the Holy Spirit. However, when Peter makes reference to the words of Jesus saying, “you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit”, the “you” was the apostles. Peter’s reference to the apostles being baptized in the Holy Spirit speaks of the *manner* in which the Gentiles received the Spirit and the not the *measure*. The Gentiles got the Spirit directly from God just as the apostles. The fact that they received it in the same way says nothing about the measure of the Spirit which the Gentiles received.

“Surely no one can refuse the water for these to be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we did, can he?”

Acts 10:47

“And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell upon them just as He did upon us at the beginning.

Acts 11:15

These would seem like great proof texts for establishing the view that the household of Cornelius received the baptism of the Holy Spirit. However, a few things must be considered before we can say with absolute certainty that this is what occurred. Let me remind you of some promises Jesus gave specifically to the apostles.

“I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you.

John 14:16-17

“But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you.

John 14:26 (cf. John 15:26)

“But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come.

John 16:13 (cf. John 20:22)

“And behold, I am sending forth the promise of My Father upon you; but you are to stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.”

Luke 24:49

Gathering them together, He commanded them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for what the Father had promised, “Which,” He said, “you heard of from Me; for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”

Acts 1:4-5

When were these promises fulfilled for the apostles? They were fulfilled on the day of Pentecost when they were baptized with the Holy Spirit. Was the household of Cornelius endowed with power from on high as were the apostles? If so, other than speaking in tongues, where were the miraculous demonstrations of the power of the Holy Spirit? Did the Holy Spirit come to guide the household of Cornelius into all truth as He did the apostles? The apostles upon being immersed with the Holy Spirit were able to bestow the gifts of the Spirit to others. Was this true for the household of Cornelius? If so, we have no record of it occurring.

When the apostles were baptized with the Holy Spirit there was a noise like a violent rushing wind. There were tongues as of fire that appeared to them and rested upon each of them. Where were these events at the household of Cornelius? They seem significant enough that if they again happened, Luke would have recorded it. Jim Jividen who believes the Gentiles were baptized with the Holy Spirit writes:

Both events could have included “a noise like a violent, rushing wind,” “tongues as of fire,” and speaking in foreign languages “as the Spirit was giving them utterance.” Luke said these happened at Jerusalem, but he does not include the wind sounds or sight of tongues of fire in recording what happened at Caesarea. It could have happened, and Luke just did not record it. It could have been that the events were basically alike in source and purpose but not alike in every detail. We know, in fact, that the people and places were different.<sup>6</sup>

Of course the people and places were different, but would we not expect something so significant as the baptism of the Holy Spirit to have the same type of incredible events at each occurrence? Again, if these events did occur they most certainly would have been mentioned. It would have made the case for the Gentiles receiving the gospel even stronger!

All Peter says is that the Holy Spirit fell on the household of Cornelius just as He did upon us at the beginning. In other words, the Spirit was not given to the apostles or the household of Cornelius through the laying on of hands. What the Gentiles received was the gift of the Holy Spirit, not the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Peter even says this:

“Therefore if God gave to them **the same gift** as He gave to us also after believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could stand in God’s way?”

Acts 11:17 (Emp. mine)

The baptism of the Holy Spirit was a specific promise to the apostles to equip them for their divinely commissioned work. They had a measure of the Spirit that no others at the time enjoyed.

### COMPARISON OF ACTS TWO AND TEN

| Acts Two  | Acts Ten            |
|---|---------------------|
| Tongues as of Fire (2:3)<br>Loud Noise (2:2)<br>Speaking in Tongues (2:4)<br>Many Signs and Wonders (2:43)<br>Apostles Clothed with Power (Lk. 24:49)<br>The Promise of the Father (Acts 1:4) | Speaking in Tongues |

<sup>6</sup> Jim Jividen, *Alive in the Spirit*, 37.

### **WHAT ABOUT 1 CORINTHIANS 12:13?**

There is one more passage we should consider in our discussion. It comes from one of Paul's letters to the church at Corinth.

For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.

1 Corinthians 12:13

Some have said this is a reference to all being baptized in the Holy Spirit. I believe this is an incorrect conclusion. This verse simply talks about the Spirit's work in baptism. Consider these verses:

Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

John 3:5

He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit,

Titus 3:5

Having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever,

1 Peter 1:23

What Paul says in 1 Corinthians 12:13 is this: "For by one Spirit (through His teaching in the word) we were all baptized (in water) into one body (the church).

### **Is the Baptism of the Holy Spirit Still Happening?**

If it was promised and fulfilled specifically to the apostles how could it still be happening today? If there are no other New Testament examples of Christians being baptized in the Holy Spirit, how could one say it is still happening today?

For those who insist it still occurs: Where are the signs? Where is the noise like a violent rushing wind? Where are the tongues as of fire? Where are the mighty signs and wonders? They are not found. For one to insist that they possess the same powers as the apostles, or those of the first century, through the Holy Spirit dwelling in them today is either the result of self-deception or an outright lie.

## LESSON EIGHT

# THE SPIRIT INSPIRED WORD OF GOD

**N**O STUDY ON THE HOLY SPIRIT would be complete without a look at His role in revealing the word of God. Such a study will give us a greater understanding and appreciation of how we got the Bible and with that, a greater confidence in its make-up of books. We must know without any doubt that the Bible is the inspired word of God. As the inspired word of God, a respect for the authority of the scriptures is essential to one's interpretation and application of the Bible's truths.

### **Inspiration**

The Bible is not a work of man, although, men had a part in its formation. As to the Spirit's role in delivering the inspired word of God to us, the Bible is very clear. Peter wrote these familiar words:

So we have the prophetic word made more sure, to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts. But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but **men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.**

2 Peter 1:19-21 (Emp. mine)

That verse closes with a very insightful statement: "Men spoke from God." These words reveal the process of inspiration. God chose certain men to receive his words and write them down. What they wrote became what we know today as the Bible. They wrote as God inspired them. By *inspiration* we are talking about God directing these men in regards to the words they would write. Also reflective of the process of inspiration, Jesus told the apostles how the Holy Spirit would assist them.

"But when He, **the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth;** for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come.

John 16:13 (Emp. mine)

Here we see that the Holy Spirit would guide these men into all truth. In other words, their writings would be free from error. Because God's book is free from error it becomes very profitable to man. The apostle Paul described it well:

**All Scripture is inspired by God** and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

2 Timothy 3:16-17 (Emp. mine)

God in the Person of the Holy Spirit communicated the words we have in the Bible to certain men who recorded His words. This is known as inspiration. One person defined this act of inspiration very well:

The supernatural act of God whereby He so directed human authors of Scripture that, without destroying their individuality, literary style, or personality, His complete and connected thought toward humanity was received/recorded without error or contradiction—each word being supernaturally written and preserved so as to result in an infallible document in the original writings.<sup>7</sup>

There is a lot in that definition to think about and discuss. The idea of individual personalities coming through one's writing is not always agreed upon. There is the belief that the Holy Spirit chose every single word an author would write. However, if this be true it would seem that all the individual writers would sound exactly alike. Yet, Paul's style of writing is unique to him. John's is unique to John, and so on. Peter even remarks that some of Paul's writing are hard to understand (2 Pet. 3:16). Though individual styles, all of the writings in the Bible are inspired writings. All of it is truth. Remember what Jesus told His apostles, the Spirit would *guide* them into all truth. The Spirit did this very thing through the use of each writer's own literary style.

Describing the process of inspiration in a more detailed manner, one resource offered the following:

From the biblical description of the process of inspiration, the necessary constituents of a theological definition of inspiration may be derived. There are three:

1. *Divine causality*. The prime mover in inspiration is God: "No prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God" (2 Peter 1:21). In other words, God *moved*, and the prophet *mouthed* the truths; God *revealed*, and man *recorded* His word. The Bible is God's word in the sense that it originates with Him and is authorized by Him, even though it is articulated by men. God speaks *in* their written records.
2. *Prophetic agency*. The prophets played an important role in the overall process of inspiration; they were the means by which God spoke. The word of God was written by men of God. God used persons to convey His propositions. In other words, as J.I. Packer perceptively observes, there God exercised "*concurative operation* in, with and through the free working of man's own mind." He amplifies the concept further saying,

We are to think of the Spirit's inspiring activity, and, for that matter, of all His regular operations in and upon human personality, as (to use an old but valuable technical term) *concurative*; that is, as exercised in, through and by means of the writers' own activity, in such a way that their thinking and writing was *both* free and spontaneous on their part *and* divinely elicited and controlled, and what they wrote was not only their own work but also God's work.

God prepared the prophets by training, experience, gifts of grace, and, if need be, by direct revelation to utter His word. "By it [inspiration], the Spirit of God, flowing confluent with the providentially and graciously determined work of men, spontaneously producing under the Divine directions the writings appointed them, gives the product a Divine quality unattainable by human powers alone." In inspiration, then, God is the primary cause, and the prophets are the secondary causes. Thus the divine influence did not restrict human activity but rather enabled the human authors to communicate the divine message accurately.

3. *Scriptural authority* is the final product of God's causality and the prophetic agency. Hence, the Bible is a divinely authoritative book. God moved the prophets in such a way as to breathe out (literally, "spirate") their writings. In other words, God spoke to the prophets and is

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<sup>7</sup> Charles Swindoll, *A Look at the Book*, (Dallas, Texas: Word Publishing, 1992), p. 5.

speaking in their writings. Although some might argue that the prophetic model of inspiration is inadequate, in order to shift the basis of the believer's authority from Scripture to some other locus, Carl F. H. Henry rightly observes that "the church is neither the locus of divine revelation, nor the source of divine inspiration, nor the seat of infallibility. Rather, the church has the task of transmitting, translating, and expounding the prophetic-apostolic Scriptures."

The cause of inspiration is God, the means is the men of God, and the end result is the word of God in the language of men.

Therefore, this definition of inspiration is suggested: *Inspiration is that mysterious process by which the divine causality worked through the human prophets without destroying their individual personalities and styles to produce divinely authoritative and inerrant writings.*<sup>8</sup>

The process of Divine inspiration through the Holy Spirit is illustrated in a number of different places in the Bible. For example:

Then **the Lord said to Moses, "Write down these words,** for in accordance with these words I have made a covenant with you and with Israel." So he was there with the Lord forty days and forty nights; he did not eat bread or drink water. **And he wrote on the tablets the words of the covenant, the Ten Commandments.**

Exodus 34:27-28

God told Moses what to write, and Moses recorded the very words of God. This same type of pattern is seen in other passages.

**Moses wrote down all the words of the Lord.** Then he arose early in the morning, and built an altar at the foot of the mountain with twelve pillars for the twelve tribes of Israel.

Exodus 24:4

Moses wrote down the words of the Lord. God speaks, and men write. In the days of Daniel, we have this recorded:

...I, Daniel, observed in the books the number of the years which was **revealed as the word of the Lord to Jeremiah the prophet** for the completion of the desolations of Jerusalem, namely, seventy years.

Daniel 9:2

What the prophet Jeremiah recorded were the words of God. All of this takes us back to the *inspired words* of Peter, "men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God." They wrote what God in the person of the Holy Spirit told them to write.

The following chart reveals very clearly that based upon what we have seen thus far, the Bible is indeed the word of God.

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<sup>8</sup>Geisler, Norman L., and William E. Nix. *A General Introduction to the Bible*. Includes Indexes. Includes a Short-Title Checklist of English Translations of the Bible (Chronologically Arranged). Rev. and expanded., Pages 38-39. Chicago: Moody Press, 1996, c1986.

| <b>What Scripture Says, God Says</b>   |  |
|--|--|
| <b>GOD SAYS . . .</b>  | <b>SCRIPTURE SAYS . . .</b>  |
| Gen. 12:3<br>Ex. 9:16  | Gal 3:8<br>Rom. 9:17   |
| <b>SCRIPTURE SAYS . . .</b>  | <b>GOD SAYS . . .</b>  |
| Gen. 2:24<br>Ps. 2:1<br>Ps. 2:7<br>Ps. 16:10<br>Ps. 95:7<br>Ps. 97:7<br>Ps. 104:4<br>Isa. 55:3 | Matt. 19:4-5<br>Acts 4:24-25<br>Heb. 1:5<br>Acts 13:35<br>Heb. 3:7<br>Heb. 1:6<br>Heb. 1:7<br>Acts 13:34 |

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### **Inerrancy**

If it be accepted that the Bible is the inspired word of God, the conclusion must then be reached, and accepted, that the original scriptures are wholly infallible, completely true and without any error. This is what is meant by the term “inerrancy.”

“Inerrancy” and “infallibility” are theological terms used by many Christians in defining the uniqueness of the Bible. Christians believe that God has communicated the Good News of salvation both “in person” through Jesus Christ and “in writing” through the Bible. The Bible, therefore, has always been regarded by Christians as unique and qualitative different from other books.<sup>10</sup>

Jesus Himself declared the word of God to be infallible, “Your Word is truth” (John 17:17). David wrote, “The law of the Lord is perfect” (Ps. 19:7). Consider also these words from the book of Proverbs:

Every word of God is tested; He is a shield to those who take refuge in Him. Do not add to His words Or He will reprove you, and you will be proved a liar.

Proverbs 30:5-6

Because the scriptures are inspired of God, and because they are inerrant, we can look to the Bible with a confidence in its teachings. We can know without any doubt that its teachings are reliable and trustworthy.

It should be noted here, that the inspiration of the scriptures, and therewith, the inerrancy and infallibility of the same, applies only to the original autographs. Copies of the scriptures, and translations, are not inspired or infallible. However, that is not to say that the scriptures are not the inspired word of God or infallible. It is to say, that at times, a copyist’s error will appear. These are usually identified as earlier manuscripts are compared with later-dated copies. Alleged

<sup>9</sup>Geisler, Norman L., and William E. Nix. *A General Introduction to the Bible*. Includes Indexes. Includes a Short-Title Checklist of English Translations of the Bible (Chronologically Arranged). Rev. and expanded., Page 51. Chicago: Moody Press, 1996, c1986.

<sup>10</sup>Harold O.J. Brown, *The Origin of the Bible*, 37.

contradictions, through proper interpretation methods are resolved. A particular translation may contain an editor's bias as to how a Greek or Hebrew word should be translated. However, these too, through some basic Bible study skills can be identified. None of these "problems" destroy the integrity of the scriptures. The truth of the Bible being the inspired word of God is remarkably demonstrated.

All this understood, we must recognize the serious task given us as students of the word. While the Bible is the inspired of God and completely inerrant, one's interpretation of the scriptures is not. This means, great care must be exercised in how we go about interpreting the Bible. Full respect must be given to its authority. We must be careful to let God speak to us through the word, and not read into it our own wishes.

## LESSON NINE

# BLASPHEMY AGAINST THE HOLY SPIRIT

**T**HE TITLE FOR THIS LESSON IN OUR STUDY of the Holy Spirit comes from a statement of Jesus recorded in all three of the synoptic gospels (Matt. 12:31; Mk. 3:29; Luke 12:10). As we will see, this is a warning that we today must heed. To avoid being guilty of such blasphemy let us discuss the meaning of these important words of our Savior. Here is how the text in Matthew reads:

“Therefore I say to you, any sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven people, but blasphemy against the Spirit shall not be forgiven. “Whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, either in this age or in the age to come.

Matthew 12:31-32

Vines, says of the Greek word translated blasphemy: either from *blax*, “sluggish, stupid,” or, probably, from *blapto*, “to injure,” and *pheme*, “speech...”<sup>11</sup> In other words, blasphemy is speech that injures, or to speak to hurt another. This develops into the idea of speaking against someone. In this case it would be speaking against the person of the Holy Spirit. Jesus expresses this thought when He says, “whoever **speaks against** the Holy Spirit...” (vs. 32). Describing how one could be guilty of speaking blasphemously against the Holy Spirit, H. Leo Boles wrote:

When one attempts to injure by speech, either oral or written, God or any divine person, that one is guilty of blasphemy. To speak against any of the revealed attributes of God, Christ, or the Holy Spirit is to blaspheme. When one speaks irreverently of the word of God, one is speaking blasphemously. When one profanes the worship of God by speaking against it, that one is guilty of the high crime of blasphemy. To rail upon, reject, refuse, misrepresent, and pervert the words or works of the Holy Spirit is to blaspheme against the Holy Spirit.<sup>12</sup>

In the context of the passage referenced above in Matthew’s gospel, the Pharisees were saying that Jesus cast out a demon through Beelzebul, the ruler of the demons (Matt. 12:24). In connection with Boles’ description, the Pharisees were speaking against the work of the Holy Spirit, or that divine power through which Jesus expelled the demon. This was blasphemy.

The seriousness of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is emphasized when Jesus says such an act will not be forgiven (vs. 32). This is sometimes described as the unpardonable sin. Why will it not be forgiven? If men reject the Spirit inspired word of God there is nothing else to save them. The Hebrew writer points this out.

For in the case of those who have once been enlightened and have tasted of the heavenly gift and have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, and then have fallen away, it is impossible to renew them again to repentance, since they again crucify to themselves the Son of God and put Him to open shame.

Hebrews 6:4-6

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<sup>11</sup>Vine, W.E., Merrill F. Unger, and William White. *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*. electronic ed., Vol. 2, Page 69. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997, c1996.

<sup>12</sup>H. Leo Boles, *The Holy Spirit*, 155.

Here we have an example of people who reject God's sacrifice of His Son. The writer says it is impossible to renew them again to repentance. Why? Because they have rejected the only sacrifice to cleanse them of their sins. Thus, they will die in their sin receiving no forgiveness. The apostle John describes a similar condition.

If anyone sees his brother committing a sin not leading to death, he shall ask and God will for him give life to those who commit sin not leading to death. There is a sin leading to death; I do not say that he should make request for this.

1 John 5:16

Every sin of which one repents can be forgiven. When one does not repent of their sin, as the Spirit inspired word teaches, that sin will lead to death (cf. Luke 13:3; Rom. 6:23). A sin leading to (or resulting in) death is a sin for which one refuses to repent. This is essentially a blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, for it is a rejection of what the word of God requires one to do in order to obtain forgiveness. First John 1:9 says "If we confess our sins He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins." Thus, according to the teaching of the inspired word of God, here and in other places, repentance and confession are necessary for a child of God to receive forgiveness. To refuse to follow this instruction is a rejection (blasphemy) of the word of God.

#### **BUT WHAT ABOUT?**

What is challenging for many when studying the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit, is the fact that Jesus says blasphemy against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but blasphemy against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven. Wouldn't blasphemy against Jesus as the Son of Man be blasphemy against the Holy Spirit? Would it not be blasphemy against God?

One explanation that is offered to solve this challenge says, that while Jesus walked upon this earth many of the Jews rejected Him. However, after He had ascended into heaven and the apostles preached the gospel, these same Jews would have a chance to repent (cf. Acts 2:38). In repenting and obedience to the gospel they would obtain forgiveness. Thus, their rejection of the Son of Man would be forgiven. However, if they rejected the gospel (the Spirit inspired word) they would never obtain forgiveness.

Another explanation involves a little deeper study regarding Jesus' use of the phrase "Son of Man." Translators capitalize the 'S' in Son and the 'M' in Man believing Jesus was using the term of Himself. However, is this a reasonable conclusion?

Throughout the Bible we can find a variety of different names and titles for Jesus. He is called:

The Lamb of God  
The Prince of Peace  
The Good Shepherd  
The Light of the World  
The Truth  
The Christ  
The Bread of Life  
Savior

The list is quite lengthy of titles and descriptions of Jesus. The one that concerns this section of our study is the name or description of Jesus as "The Son of Man." This was the way Jesus

most commonly referred to Himself. It was therefore, the name or description He thought best described who He was and what He was all about. He did not commonly call Himself the Lamb of God, Savior, or even the Son of God. It was most often, Son of Man.

It is interesting to point out that the title “Son of Man” appears 88 times in the New Testament. Of those 88 times only four are not found in the gospels. Which means in the four gospels the phrase is found 84 times and of those 84 times, only twice is the phrase not used by Jesus. However, in that particular passage it is Jesus being quoted. Here it is:

The crowd then answered Him, “We have heard out of the Law that the Christ is to remain forever; and how can You say, ‘The Son of Man must be lifted up’? Who is this Son of Man?”

John 12:34

Here the crowd is quoting the words of Jesus in regards to the title Son of Man. All this to say, that in the gospels the phrase Son of Man is used 84 times almost exclusively by Jesus about Himself. Jesus obviously felt this title was important. But what does it mean? What is represented in this description of Jesus? Does Jesus always use the description of Himself?

That this title of Jesus is somewhat difficult to fully understand is seen in the fact that if you do a study on it, you will find a number of different explanations given by Bible scholars. Some relatively simple, some difficult to grasp, and others so abstract you are not exactly sure what they are trying to say.

There are even some “scholars” who believe that when Jesus was referring to the Son of Man He was speaking of someone else, and not Himself. This is because Jesus often spoke of the Son of Man in the third person. For example:

“But whenever they persecute you in one city, flee to the next; for truly I say to you, you will not finish going through the cities of Israel until the Son of Man comes.

Matthew 10:23

On the surface, this passage makes it seem as if the Son of Man were someone other than Jesus Himself. The same type of thing occurs here in Luke:

“And I say to you, everyone who confesses Me before men, **the Son of Man will confess him** also before the angels of God; but he who denies Me before men will be denied before the angels of God.

Luke 12:8,9

Again, in this text you see the Son of Man referred to in the third person. If these were the only passages that mentioned the Son of Man we might conclude that the Son of Man was in fact someone other than Jesus, but they are not the only such passages. There are many others which confirm the truth that Jesus Himself was the Son of Man. We just read the example in Luke where Jesus talks (in the third person) of the Son of Man confessing before the angels of God those who would confess Him before men. Look at Matthew’s parallel account:

“Therefore everyone who confesses Me before men, **I will also confess him** before My Father who is in heaven. But whoever denies Me before men, I will also deny him before My Father who is in heaven.

Matthew 10:32,33

Here it is clearly Jesus who is identified as the Son of Man. He is the One who in Luke's account will confess before the angels of God those who confess Him before men. Notice another example:

“Blessed are you when men hate you, and ostracize you, and insult you, and scorn your name as evil, for the sake of **the Son of Man**.

Luke 6:22

Again we have the Son of Man being used in the third person. However, look at Matthew's parallel account:

“Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of **Me**.”

Matthew 5:11

“Me” in this verse and “the Son of Man” in Luke's gospel are clearly the same individual. Jesus is the Son of Man.

In describing the meaning behind the title “Son of Man” many would associate it with the humanity of Jesus. It is said to speak of His identification with man as being the Word which became flesh. While I believe there is some truth to this idea, the title Son of Man is really much deeper and more meaningful than just simply Christ's identification with mankind. More on that later.

#### **ANOTHER MEANING FOR SON OF MAN?**

At this point in our discussion there are some very interesting and difficult New Testament passages we should consider, where the idea of “Son of Man” in its human sense, might help us in obtaining a better understanding these particular texts. These passages relate to the texts we noted earlier where blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is described.

As we begin looking at them, we should point out that the phrase “Son of Man” in Aramaic (the language Jesus is believed to have spoken), is *bar nasha*. In Hebrew it is *ben adam*. Translated in their natural sense, both of these expressions would mean: a man, a human. We can see this idea in the Old Testament in passages such as this one, where Balaam says:

“God is not a man, that He should lie, Nor a **son of man**, that He should repent;  
Has He said, and will He not do it? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?

Numbers 23:19

The idea here in the usage of the term son of man is that God is not a human. This is not a Messianic passage. Here is another example:

Do not trust in princes, In **mortal man**, in whom there is no salvation.

Psalm 146:3

The words “mortal man” in this verse are rendered “son of man” in the King James, New King James, and American Standard versions. In this verse the same Hebrew words rendered “son of man” in other places are used. As Jeremiah spoke of the destruction to come upon Edom he wrote:

“Like the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah with its neighbors,” says the Lord, “no one will live there, nor will a **son of man** reside in it.

Jeremiah 49:18

In each of these examples, and there are others that could be shown, son of man simply meant a human being. When we get to the New Testament, there are some passages where the understanding of a human being (as a son of man might be what is intended, as opposed to a reference to Jesus. Consider this example:

Jesus said to them, “The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath. “So the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath.”

Mark 2:27,28

I know how we typically interpret this passage. We say, Jesus (as God) is the Lord of the Sabbath. But in view of the idea of son of man as a human being, could there be another possible interpretation?

Notice that these two verses or statements by Jesus are connected with the word “so.” In the KJV and NKJV the word “therefore” is used. That being the case the obvious meaning of the text, contextually and linguistically would be something like this:

“The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath. *So* man (as the one for whom the Sabbath was made) must decide himself what he will do in his observance of it. In his observance man must not allow himself to be saddled and burdened with rules and regulations which hinder him from extending mercy.”

If the passage is taken in this sense, then it is not Jesus who is the one in control of the Sabbath, but man, for whom it was made. In this passage it is certainly “possible” that the phrase son of man should not be capitalized as it is in our English translations. It could very simply be a reference to a human being.

Also in Mark’s gospel we have the account where four friends of a paralytic lower the man through the ceiling in order to get him to Jesus. As Jesus begins healing the man, He does so by forgiving His sins.

“But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins”—He said to the paralytic, “I say to you, get up, pick up your pallet and go home.”

Mark 2:10-11

In Matthew’s parallel account, he adds an incredible statement which may throw some light on the use of Son of Man in Mark’s gospel. Matthew adds this:

But when the crowds saw this, they were awestruck, and glorified God, who had given such authority to men.

Matthew 9:8

If we take son of man in this text in its human sense we have Jesus saying something to the effect: “I am here in my humanity; a son of man; and in that state I am bringing to this man forgiveness of his sins, and the proof of this is that he can rise and walk.”

What we see here then is the great truth that there are times when there is given to men (by God) the greatest of all privileges. Not the privilege of forgiving all of a man sins, but the privilege of conveying to Him God's forgiveness.

This brings us to the passage which is the subject of this lesson. The text where blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is discussed. Here it is as it appears in Matthew and in Luke:

“Therefore I say to you, any sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven people, but blasphemy against the Spirit shall not be forgiven. “Whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, either in this age or in the age to come.

Matthew 12:31,32

“And everyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but he who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him.

Luke 12:10

If the son of man in these two texts is to be regarded as Jesus Christ, then isn't it somewhat strange to find sins against Him are not the greatest of all sins? If we sin against Jesus Christ, the word which became flesh and dwelt among us, we can be forgiven. But if we sin against the Holy Spirit it can never be forgiven? Are not both sins against God?

Would it make more sense to apply son of man as a human being rather than Jesus? In this way, the thought of the passage would be something like: “It is forgivable to refuse or reject instruction given by a human, but to refuse the instruction given by the Holy Spirit is unforgivable.” Or “To speak against a man can be forgiven, but to speak in rejection of the Holy Spirit can never be forgiven.” With this in mind, notice Mark's account of this statement from Jesus:

28 “Truly I say to you, all sins shall be forgiven the sons of men, and whatever blasphemies they utter;

29 but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin”—

Mark 3:28-29

Mark omits completely the reference to the son of man. He talks of the sons of men. Who are the sons of men? Humans! Sins committed against men can be forgiven, but sin committed against the Holy Spirit will not. If you reject the Holy Spirit you have rejected God's word. And if you have rejected God's word you have rejected your only means of salvation.

## LESSON TEN

# SPIRIT OR SPIRIT?

**I**N THIS LESSON WE WILL EXAMINE some verses where the word “spirit” has been translated with a capital ‘S.’ Where this occurs in the Bible it means the translators felt the particular verse was referencing the Holy Spirit. As we will see, there are times when they may be incorrect in their conclusions. Interestingly, different translations of the Scriptures will vary in a particular verse in their choice of capitalizing the word. For example, compare the King James and New American Standard rendering of the same verse:

For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, so that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the **spirit**;

1 Peter 3:18 (NASB)

For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the **Spirit**:

1 Peter 3:18 (KJV)

We will discuss this verse in detail later in this lesson. For now, notice how two different translations render the verse differently. Spirit or spirit changes the meaning the passage. The determination of whether or not to capitalize the word ‘spirit’ is found strictly in the context and meaning of the verse and not in the Greek manuscript. Clearly, not all are in consistent agreement with the context or meaning of certain scriptures.

The Greek word in our New Testament that is translated “spirit” or “Spirit” is *pneuma*. This one word is used to describe a human spirit (Heb. 12:23), the Holy Spirit (Acts 13:2), angels (Heb. 1:14), demons (Acts 16:16), or an attitude or state of mind (Rom. 8:15). A couple of times the word *pneuma* is translated “wind” instead of Spirit or spirit (John 3:8; Heb. 1:7).

Our task in this lesson is a difficult one. If each of the verses where the word spirit is used were clear, all translations would read the same and this lesson would be unnecessary. As we have seen all translations are not in agreement in this matter. Neither will we be in complete agreement with the verses we will investigate. With that known at the outset, let us cautiously proceed.

### Revelation 1:10

The first passage we want to notice is one where the word *pneuma* is consistently rendered with a capital ‘S’. I am unaware of a translation that uses a little ‘s’.<sup>13</sup> Yet, I have doubts that the capital ‘S’ is correct. Here is the verse in question.

I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like the sound of a trumpet,

Revelation 1:10

Most interpret this passage as if John were saying he was full of the Holy Spirit (or filled with the Spirit) on the Lord’s Day. The problem is this is not what the passage says. In texts

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<sup>13</sup> The New American Standard does include a side column note that indicates a little ‘s’ is possible.

where one is said to be full of the Holy Spirit those words are used (Lk. 4:1; Acts 7:55; 11:24; Eph. 5:18).

Literally, the verse would read, “I was in spirit on the Lord’s Day.” Notice there is no definite article. John does not say, “I was in THE spirit...” He only says, “I was in spirit...” Had the definite article been used it would be easy to conclude ‘Spirit’ would be the correct rendering. In the absence of such, John only appears to be saying he was in a state of spirit. Arthur Ogden offers these helpful comments:

In the Revelation the expression, “in the Spirit,” appears to identify John’s visionary posture. A literal rendition is: “I came to be in [the] spirit.” “I came to be” indicates a transformation. Three other times in the book John mentions this posture (cf. 4:2; 17:3; 21:10) and in each case he seems to be explaining the same visionary form described in this text. Paul wrote similarly to the Corinthians. He said, “I knew a man in Christ above 14 years ago, (whether in body, I cannot tell; or whether out of body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such a one caught up to the third heaven. And I knew such a man, (whether in body, I cannot tell; or whether out of body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;)” (2 Cor. 12:2-3). Paul was not fully convinced concerning his visionary appearance, but John knew that he was *in the spirit*, or outside the body.<sup>14</sup>

To put a capital ‘S’ on the word spirit here *seems* to be an incorrect rendering of the thought of the passage.

### 1 Peter 3:18

We come now to the passage we used as an example earlier in our study. The word *pneuma* is used a couple of times in the verses we will investigate.

For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, so that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the **spirit**; in which also He went and made proclamation to the **spirits** now in prison, who once were disobedient, when the patience of God kept waiting in the days of Noah, during the construction of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through the water.

1 Peter 3:18-20

These verses have been interpreted and understood in several different ways, mainly with respect to identifying the “spirits now in prison.” There is the view that says the “spirits in prison” to whom Peter makes reference are humans who sinned in the days of Noah. To these the pre-incarnate Christ preached via the Holy Spirit, through Noah. In support of this position, 2 Peter 2:5 is offered, where we are told that Noah was a preacher of righteousness. Also in support of this view is 1 Peter 1:11 where we read of the Spirit of Christ speaking through the prophets. This interpretation is not found to be in contradiction with other inspired texts; and is, on the surface, a reasonable and practical understanding of the passage.

Another view would say that the “spirits in prison” are humans (the lost of all ages) who sinned, and that when Jesus Christ died on the cross He went and preached to them prior to His resurrection to give them a second chance for salvation. However, this view contradicts several other passages of scripture and therefore cannot be the case. The Bible tells us it is appointed for men to die once, and after that the judgment (Heb. 9:27). There are no second chances after

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<sup>14</sup> Arthur Ogden, *Avenging of the Apostles and Prophets*, 110.

death. Who in the Hadean world would turn down a second chance for eternal life (cf. Luke 16:24)?

A third view of this passage looks at the “spirits in prison” as being angels (cf. Isaiah 24:21-22). In particular, the angels who sinned in the days of Noah.

Who are these “spirits now in prison” who Christ “made proclamation to” or, as the AV renders the verse, “preached to”? The determination one makes as to their identity will obviously affect how they understand the events recorded in this text. So let us consider some possibilities as to who they might be.

Is it possible that they are human spirits? As mentioned, there are some interpretations of these verses which would take such a view. That the “spirits” referred to in this text could be angels is seen in the New Testament usage of the Greek word *pneuma*. In most every case where this word is used without specific definition (My Spirit) or modifying adjectives (Holy Spirit), it refers to either angels (cf. Heb. 1:7, 14) or demons (cf. Matt. 8:16; 12:45; Mk. 9:17-20; Lk. 10:17-20).

Greek scholar Kenneth Wuest points out in regards to these *spirits* and the fact that they could not be human:

Observe with what meticulous care the inspired writer of the letter to the Hebrews uses the word *pneuma* in 12:23. He uses the word as a designation of angels in 1:7, 14. In 12:22 he uses the word “angels” when referring to myriad’s of heavenly beings, and in connection with them he speaks of the saints in heaven in the words “spirits of just men made perfect.” He seems to feel the word *pneuma* here needs some qualifying phrase to indicate to the reader that he is not referring to a created intelligence as such...<sup>15</sup>

As Wuest illustrates, if the Hebrew writer felt the need to qualify *specifically* which type of “spirits” he was talking about, one would think Peter would have done the same. Yet, there is no qualifying indicator that these are the disembodied spirits of humans. Understanding this usage of *pneuma* is critical in identifying these “spirits in prison.”

If they cannot be humans, then logically they are either angels or demons. The question is... which does Peter have in view here... angels or demons? In consideration of their being angels or demons, notice that in the context of the passage it was *spirits* (no qualifier) who sinned (*as* spirits), and who are now in prison. In harmony with his second epistle, where Peter speaks of angels who sinned, and as a result are now in “hell” (Tartarus... a type of prison); it would seem that it is once again angels who Peter has in mind.

More pertinent to our lesson, in verse eighteen, Peter tells us that Jesus Christ was “put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit.” The King James capitalizes “Spirit” in this verse, indicating that they believed Peter was referring to the Holy Spirit. However, as we have mentioned, that is purely interpretative, since the oldest Greek manuscripts we have are written entirely in CAPITAL LETTERS. If it is the Holy Spirit who is in view, the sense of the passage would be that Jesus was raised from the dead by the Holy Spirit. The KJV rendering of the verse would clearly lead one to such a conclusion, “quicken**ed** **by** the Spirit.”

However, rather than being a reference to the Holy Spirit raising Jesus from the dead, Peter seems to be illustrating for us a sequence of events. The first event was “the putting to death,” which is followed by being “made alive **in** the spirit” (note the **in** versus the **by**). In essence,

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<sup>15</sup> Kenneth Wuest, *Word Studies in the Greek New Testament*, Vol. 2 *First Peter in the Greek New Testament*. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1973), 99. Used by permission.

there is a contrast presented here, a contrast between the flesh and the spirit. Interestingly, in the Greek text the article is missing in front of both flesh and spirit. More literally the phrase would read, “Christ was put to death *in flesh*, but made alive *in spirit*.” Though His physical body was put to death, His spirit lived on (cf. Luke 23:46; James 2:26).

That the “Holy Spirit” is not in view in this passage becomes even clearer through a study of verse nineteen. The phrase “in which” in the Greek is *en ho*. The use here could indicate “in which spirit of His” or “in which state.”<sup>16</sup> In other words, without His physical body (which was put to death), but **in** (*not* by) spirit (which lives apart from the body), Jesus was then made alive. To see this even clearer, notice how Peter (a few verses later) applies this same type of progression to those who have heard the gospel; who though dead in the flesh, are made alive **in spirit**.

For the gospel has for this purpose been preached even to those who are dead, that though they are judged in the flesh as men, they may live **in** [the] **spirit** according to the will of God.

1 Peter 4:6<sup>17</sup>

Alive in a state of spirit, we are told, that Jesus went somewhere. The word “went” is *poreuomai* which is a Greek word that speaks of “traveling from one place to another, to go on a journey.” Taken together, the words we have discussed would mean... Christ was put to death in the flesh, but made alive in a state of spirit, and in that state of spirit, (prior to His resurrection) He traveled. Where did He travel to? We know He went to the Hadean world (Luke 23:43). But according to Peter, Jesus also visited (either symbolically through what He had accomplished, or literally in spirit) the prison holding these spirits we have discussed (cf. Rom. 10:6-7; Eph. 4:9-10).

What did He do there? Verse nineteen tells us (in the AV) that He “preached.” The Greek word is not *evangelizo* (such as to evangelize or preach the gospel) but rather *kerusso* (to announce or proclaim). *Kerusso* is used in the New Testament very often in regards to the sharing of the gospel (cf. Luke 24:47; Acts 8:5; 9:20); yet here it does not seem to be so much evangelistic preaching that is in view, but rather (in context) an announcement or proclamation (cf. Rom. 2:21; Rev. 5:2). It certainly could not have been the gospel He was preaching to these imprisoned spirits; He had at point, not as yet risen from the dead (cf. 1 Cor. 15:1-4).

Jesus traveled in His spirit and announced or proclaimed something to these spirits (angels). What did He announce to them? *Possibly* His triumph over Satan... the bruising of his head as prophesied all the way back in the garden of Eden (Gen. 3:15; Heb 2:14). A proclamation of His victory over the one the angels chose to serve. *Perhaps* it was simply His victory over death. Not that He literally went and made any verbal proclamation to these spirits; His victory alone spoke loud and clear! In connection with this, notice how Peter finishes out his thought, keeping in mind that “authorities and powers” also refer to orders of angels and or demons.

Corresponding to that, baptism now saves you—not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience—through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who is at the right hand of God, having gone into heaven, **after angels and authorities and powers had been subjected to Him.**

1 Peter 3:21-22

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<sup>16</sup> Dickason, 247.

<sup>17</sup> Note: No definite article in the Greek. Again it is “in spirit” not “in *the* spirit.”

Jesus Christ was victorious! All authority has been given to Him in heaven and on earth (Matt. 28:18). In Him, through our obedience to the gospel, we have a victory (1 Cor. 15:57). That is certainly a great message to proclaim!

Based on all that Peter presents for us in this fascinating and often misunderstood text, consider the following logical and natural sequence of events surrounding the death, burial, and resurrection of our Savior.

1. Put to death in flesh (vs. 18)
2. Made alive in spirit (vs. 18)
3. Went in spirit (vs. 19)
4. Proclaimed His victory and Satan's defeat to angels (vs. 19)
5. Resurrection from the dead (vs. 21)
6. Ascension into heaven (vs. 22)

### **Romans 1:4 (1 Timothy 3:16)**

We come to yet another example where there is some question as to whether or not the word spirit should be capitalized. This one is found in the book of Romans.

(1) Paul, a bond-servant of Christ Jesus, called as an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, (2) which He promised beforehand through His prophets in the holy Scriptures, (3) concerning His Son, who was born of a descendant of David according to the flesh, (4) who was declared the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead, according to the Spirit of holiness, Jesus Christ our Lord,

Romans 1:1-4

Paul says Jesus was “declared the Son of God with power.” Declared in Greek is *horizō* meaning to determine, to mark off as a boundary, to appoint. The idea of “with power” would be power over death (Heb. 2:14), or as Paul so clearly states, “by the resurrection from the dead.” The resurrection of Jesus Christ was the ultimate proof of His identity as God’s Son. Christ prophesied He would rise from the dead (cf. John 2:18-22; Matt. 16:21). The Old Testament spoke of His resurrection (Ps. 16:10). The resurrection was the fulfillment of the promise all the way back in the garden of Eden, that the Seed of woman, Jesus (Gen. 3:15) would crush Satan’s head, or authority (Heb. 2:14). The resurrection testified to the fact that God accepted the sacrifice of Jesus Christ and that the payment for our sins was accomplished. Paul establishes the absolute importance of the resurrection in very thorough fashion in 1 Corinthians 15.

Now come the words relevant to our study, Paul writes, “according to the Spirit of holiness, Jesus Christ our Lord.” Is this a reference to the Holy Spirit (the Spirit of Holiness)? James Coffman believes so. He writes, “...there seems to be no good reason for denying”<sup>18</sup> that this is what Paul had in view. Jim McGuiggan takes another approach. He believes this to be a reference to “the divine side of the Christ.”<sup>19</sup> This would *appear* to be a logical conclusion. Murray notes: “Since it is parallel to ‘according to the flesh’ in verse 3 and since the latter refers to the human nature of our Lord, it has been supposed that the term in question must have in view the divine nature.”<sup>20</sup> However, Murray continues, adding, “This does not follow.” Murray

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<sup>18</sup> James Coffman, *Commentary on Romans*, 7.

<sup>19</sup> Jim McGuiggan, *Romans*, 53.

<sup>20</sup> John Murray, *NICNT, Epistle to the Romans*, 10.

believes the phrase refers to Christ's post-resurrection condition as He was endowed with Spirit powers.

There is another interpretation that we believe to be more fitting. Under this interpretation, the spirit of holiness would be a description of Christ's human spirit, having lived obediently, sinless, (holy) before the Father (cf. Lk. 23:46; 1 Tim. 3:16; 1 Pet. 3:19). That Christ was raised from the dead according to the spirit of holiness speaks of the Father's approval of His sinless life. This connects with another passage where we again have a determination to make as to whether or not spirit should be capitalized.

By common confession, great is the mystery of godliness: He who was revealed in the flesh,  
Was vindicated in the **Spirit**, Seen by angels, Proclaimed among the nations, Believed on in the  
world, Taken up in glory.

1 Timothy 3:16

Notice the words "vindicated in the Spirit." As with the passages we noted in Revelation and First Peter there is no definite article before the word Spirit. Literally it would read "vindicated in spirit." To be vindicated means to be declared right.

Here is another passage where "Spirit" should probably be rendered "spirit." The Holy Spirit is certainly not in view. Jesus was not vindicated in the Holy Spirit. It is not Christ as God (a Divine Spirit) that is in view. How could God be vindicated? And who would have such authority as it be able to declare Him right? God is right! Christ was declared right by the sinless nature of his *human* spirit (Jn. 1:1-3, 14; Heb. 2:14). This harmonizes well with the passage in Romans where Paul spoke of Christ being raised from the dead according to the spirit of holiness. His sinless life provided an acceptable sacrifice for sin, and His resurrection power over death.

### **Romans 8:26-27**

Our study now brings us to a discussion of Romans 8:26-27. In this eighth chapter of Romans the word *pneuma* is used 21 times! This is in contrast to the word "flesh" which is used 13 times in the chapter. Here again the challenge is determining when *pneuma* should be capitalized. At times, capitalization might *seem* obvious. However, in many instances there is much debate that can be offered on both sides of the matter. The verses we will investigate are clear proof of this challenge.

In the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words; and He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

Romans 8:26-27

How should the word *pneuma* be translated in these verses? Should it be rendered as it is in every translation of which I am aware: "Spirit"? Is it possible that it could be rendered "spirit"? This is a difficult matter to resolve.

The majority favor the idea that the Holy Spirit is in view in this passage. If this be the case, then the Holy Spirit plays the role of intercessor along with Jesus in our prayers. For many Christians this is a very comforting verse. It tells them that when they pray the Holy Spirit helps them express what they themselves are not able to express with words. That is indeed a

comforting thought. So much so, that when anyone dares to suggest another possible interpretation, it can raise some very strong and heated objections. So, for what I am about to suggest, let us all remain calm and try to maintain a Berean type of attitude.

It is my belief that this interpretation has a number of problems. The first and most obvious of which is that Christ is said to be our intercessor and not the Holy Spirit. This is brought out in several different passages.

Who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us.

Romans 8:34

Therefore, He had to be made like His brethren in all things, so that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. For since He Himself was tempted in that which He has suffered, He is able to come to the aid of those who are tempted.

Hebrews 2:17-18

Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin. Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Hebrews 4:14-16

Each of these passages speak of Christ's ability to make faithful intercession as our High Priest. As the Word which became flesh and dwelt among us, Jesus experienced the temptations and frustrations of this life which we experience. As such, He is the One truly qualified to be our intercessor and not the Holy Spirit.

Another problem with the view is the work this view assigns to the Holy Spirit. Franklin Camp explains:

Is there another possible explanation of Romans 8:26-27, other than the previous one mentioned? I believe there is another interpretation that harmonizes with the general teaching of the Bible and also the context of Romans 8. My study of the Scriptures establishes the fact that it was the work of the Holy Spirit to reveal the mind of God to man, through selected men, and confirm the revelation as genuine revelation from God. Numerous passages make this point clear.... If Romans 8:26-27 mean that the Spirit takes the groanings of the Christian and makes them known to God, this is a direct reversal of the general work of the Spirit in revealing the mind of God to man. I can understand why it was necessary for the Spirit to reveal the mind of God to man, but it is a little difficult for me to understand why God needs the Spirit to interpret man's needs to Him. Of course the fact that I cannot understand something does not mean that it is not so....

There is still another problem with the explanation that these verses teach that the Spirit takes the groanings of the Christian and interprets them to God today. If this is true, then this work of the Spirit is confined to the Christian Age. There is not the slightest indication that the Spirit did this either in the Patriarchal or the Jewish Age. But there were people who had burdens before the Christian Age. There were those who groaned under their burdens before the Christian Age. For example, Thayer, on page 587, on the word "groaning," gives Romans 8:26 and Acts 7:34 together. Acts 7:34 is a reference to Israel in Egyptian bondage. They groaned;

God heard their groanings. The Holy Spirit did not take their groanings and interpret them to God. If God could hear the groanings of the Israelites while they were in Egyptian bondage, without the Holy Spirit interpreting their prayer to Him, why may not God likewise hear the groanings of Christians today?<sup>21</sup>

Interestingly, despite his disagreement with the majority interpretation of Romans 8:26-27, Camp does believe the Holy Spirit is in view in the passage. In other words, he believes the word *pneuma* should be capitalized. Here is a summary of his view:

Is there an explanation that harmonizes with the general teaching of the Scriptures, that it was the work of the Holy Spirit to reveal and confirm the Word of God? In the apostolic age, there was inspired prayer. Just as the Holy Spirit revealed the mind of God for instruction, the Holy Spirit also revealed prayer. Look at 1 Corinthians 14:14: “For if I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful.” The tongue was a gift (1 Corinthians 12:10). If one spoke in a tongue, it was by direct revelation. If one prayed in a tongue, it was by direct revelation. A prayer in a tongue was an inspired prayer, but inspired prayer was not limited to the one that had the gift of tongues. Paul only mentioned this type of inspired prayer in 1 Corinthians 14 because he was discussing the abuse of tongues. A commentary on this type of prayer is found in Jude 19 and 20. Verse 19 speaks of uninspired teachers; sensual (animal, fleshly); having not the Spirit; that is, uninspired teachers. Then verse 20 says, “...praying in the Holy Spirit.” “Praying in the Holy Spirit: was praying by the inspiration of the Spirit. Just as the one of 1 Corinthians 14 that prayed in a tongue, prayed by inspiration, so the one of Jude 20 that prayed in the Holy Spirit, prayed an inspired prayer....

This is exactly what the Spirit did in an inspired prayer. In revealing the prayer, He threw Himself into it, took part in it. This interpretation at least harmonizes with the work of the Holy Spirit in revealing God’s will.<sup>22</sup>

According to Camp, Romans 8:26-27 is Paul describing an “inspired prayer.” Certainly an interesting interpretation to consider. As Camp notes it is at least consistent with the work of the Holy Spirit in the scriptures. With this conclusion we would agree.

Foy Wallace takes another approach to Romans 8:26-27. Wallace believes the word *pneuma* should not be capitalized. In his work, *The Mission and Medium of the Holy Spirit*, Wallace writes:

1. It should be observed, first of all, that if the Spirit of this passage means the Holy Spirit, its application would be to the functioning of the Holy Spirit in heaven with God and Christ and the angels, and therefore would have no point in a discussion of “the personal Holy Spirit dwelling within us.”
2. The context of the two verses indicate clearly that the groaning is done by the spirit of the one who is praying. The word groan is indicative of pain, either physical or mental, and there is no conceivable reason for the Holy Spirit to groan. Our own spirit groans with yearnings which we cannot utter, cannot vocalize or put in words, when we pray: “For we know not how to pray as we ought.”
3. He who searches the heart and knows the mind of the Spirit is Christ, our intercessor—he knows the mind of the spirit of the one who is praying, but who cannot utter the yearnings of his heart. Christ our Intercessor knows the mind of our spirit and He intercedes for us. To make the Spirit here mean the Holy Spirit would have the Holy Spirit searching his own mind. And to

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<sup>21</sup> Franklin Camp, *The Work of the Holy Spirit in Redemption*, 249-250.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.* 250-252.

make it mean that God knows the mind of the Holy Spirit could have no point--why all the talk about God knowing the mind of the Holy Spirit who is in heaven with him, when the Holy Spirit is an equivalent of the Spirit of God. It would amount to saying that God knows his own spirit.

4. The entire context is based on the initial statement: "For we know not how to pray as we ought." The infirmity mentioned has reference to the inability of the mind to put yearnings into words. But He who searches the heart knows the mind of the spirit the yearnings and the desires which it is unable to express--and in this way the spirit, our own spirit, helpeth our infirmity when He who searches the heart knows what is the mind of the spirit. There is but one divine Intercessor--Jesus Christ, not the Holy Spirit—and the "exegesis" of this verse, which has the personal Holy Spirit operating within us, has God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit mixed up and confused with the human spirit.<sup>23</sup>

We have seen three interpretations for this difficult text. As you can no doubt see, determining consistently whether or not the word *pneuma* should be rendered with a capital or little 's' is not always easy. There are other verses that could be considered in this section of our study. We'll save those for another time.

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<sup>23</sup> Foy Wallace, *Mission and Medium of the Holy Spirit*, 71-72.

## LESSON ELEVEN

# THE HOLY SPIRIT TODAY

**W**E COME NOW TO THE FINAL LESSON in our study of the Holy Spirit. At this point we have seen and hopefully learned a lot more about the Holy Spirit. We have seen Him at work in Old Testament times. We have seen Him at work in the New Testament. The question we now want to consider, is how does the Holy Spirit work today? This is a question that no doubt been on the mind of many of us as we have worked our way through the various lessons. To answer this question, let us begin by reviewing what do know about the Holy Spirit. Below you will find a series of questions. Please answer (as you are able) each with scriptural support.

1. Does the promise of John 16:13 apply to everybody?  
*If not, to whom did it apply?*
  
2. What does question one tell us about the work of the Holy Spirit today?
  
3. Does the promise of Acts 1:5 apply to everybody?  
*If not, to whom did it apply?*
  
4. What does question three tell us about the work of the Holy Spirit today?
  
5. How did the prophets of old know what God wanted them to say? (2 Pet. 1:20-21)  
*Do you believe the Holy Spirit still communicates this same miraculous way?*
  
6. What does question five tell us about the work of the Holy Spirit today?
  
7. Do you believe the miraculous gifts of the Spirit outlined in 1 Corinthians 12:1-12 are still active today?
  
8. What does question seven tells us about the work of the Holy Spirit today?
  
9. How was the Holy Spirit given to believers in the first century? (Acts 8:18)  
*Are there still apostles today with this ability?*
  
10. What does question nine tell us about the work of the Holy Spirit today?

11. Do you believe the Holy Spirit personally indwells believers today?  
*If so, how does He get within the believer?*
- If not, how do you explain all the N.T. passages which speak of the Spirit within us?*
12. If you answered yes to question 11, what does the Spirit do for the believer?
13. If you answered yes to question 11, explain how God abides in us (1 John 4:12), and how Christ dwells in us (Rom. 8:10).
14. If you answered no to question 11, how would you explain the gift of the Holy Spirit in Acts 2:38?
15. What do questions 11-14 tell us about the work of the Holy Spirit today?