

## THE HOLY SPIRIT

In the world today there is a tremendous amount of confusion about the Holy Spirit. Many Christians believe that the Holy Spirit is wrapped in a shroud of mystery,

unable to be understood. Others believe that the Spirit's ministry is exactly the same for us today as it was for the apostles. While others will argue that only by some mysterious manifestation of the Spirit can one know that he is saved.

The subject of the Holy Spirit has and continues to be ignored in the brotherhood today, despite the fact that the Spirit is prominently mentioned in the Word of God. The Spirit is mentioned in forty-seven books of the Bible; more than two hundred and fifty times in the New Testament, more than four hundred times in the entire Bible. (1) In my some twenty five plus years as an adult, I have never heard a lesson from the pulpit addressing the subject of the Holy Spirit. What or who the Spirit is? Is He just the third wheel of the Godhead? What is the baptism of the Spirit? Does the Spirit empower or indwell the average Christian today? What is the Spirit's relationship to the world and Christians today?

In addressing the subject of the Holy Spirit, one must first ask what or who is the Holy Spirit? Is the Holy Spirit a person? If the Holy Spirit is a person, what is His status in comparison to the Father and Jesus? Is He equal or is He to be thought of as someone who just tags along as the third wheel?

The Holy Spirit is a person (not an inanimate force) and possesses the attributes of personality. John 16:13-14 states *"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, He will glorify me, for He will take of Mine and will disclose it to you."* Nine times Jesus speaks of the Holy Spirit as a person. He is life, thought, volition, action, speech, individuality, character and influence.(3) In 1<sup>st</sup> Timothy 4:1 the apostle Paul says *"But the Spirit explicitly says that*

*in later times some will fall away from the faith”* the Holy Spirit speaks and it is explicit, not confusing or unclear but to the point. If one reads Acts chapter 2, the Spirit also empowered the apostles to speak. The Holy Spirit testifies, he is a witness for Jesus, *“When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, that is the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify about Me.”* The Holy Spirit teaches: *“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 have said to you.”* (John 14:26). The Holy Spirit guides and hears according to John 16:13,14 (quoted earlier) and if one will read Acts 16:6-10 we also learn that the Holy Spirit forbids. These are all characteristics or traits that can not be attributed to an inanimate force or influence. The Holy Spirit is a person

The Holy Spirit is also a person that possesses intelligence; an intelligence that can be slighted. In Romans 8 :27 Paul says *“He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the mind of the Spirit is.”* The Holy Spirit possesses mind. The Holy Spirit has knowledge: *“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<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 2:11) The Holy Spirit possesses a will: *“But one and the same Spirit works all these things distributing to each one individually just as He wills.”* (1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 12:11) The Holy Spirit also has affection: the Spirit loves. In Romans 15:30 Paul wrote *“Now I urge you, brethren, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to strive together with me in your prayers to God for me.”* However, just as the Spirit loves, the Spirit can also be slighted. Ephesians 4:30 states *“Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God , by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.”* Luke records

in Acts 7:51 that the Holy Spirit can be resisted “*You men who are stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears are always resisting the Holy Spirit*” And Jesus tells us in Matthew 12:32 that the Holy Spirit can be blasphemed: “*Whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, either in this age or in the age to come.*” The Holy Spirit is a person.

The Holy Spirit has intellect and personality, but how does He compare with God and Christ? Is the Holy Spirit equal or is He regulated to third class status? The Holy Spirit is Deity; He possesses all the attributes of Deity. The Holy Spirit is Eternal: “*how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God.*” (Hebrews 9:14). The Holy Spirit is Omniscient “*For the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God.*” (1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 2:10). The Holy Spirit is Omnipotent: “*On the other hand I am filled with power—With the Spirit of the Lord—And with justice and courage to make known to Jacob his rebellious act, even to Israel his sin.*” (Micah 3:8) The psalmist in Psalms 139:7-10 also tells us that the Holy Spirit is Omnipresent: “*Where can I go from your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence... You are there... You are there... Even there you will lead me, And Your right hand will lay hold of me.*” The Holy Spirit has the nature of God.

The Holy Spirit also performs the works of Deity. The Holy Spirit created the universe “*You send forth Your Spirit, they are created; And you renew the face of the ground.*” (Psalm 104:30). The Holy Spirit regenerates man: Jesus told Nicodemus in John 3:5 “*Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.*” The Holy Spirit will also resurrect the body; “*He who*

*raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.*” The Holy Spirit is also placed on an equal to the Father and Son. In Matthew 28:19 the authority of all three is invoked at baptism “...*baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.*” At the baptism of Jesus we find all three persons of the Godhead manifested in Luke 3:21-22. One can also look at John 14:16-17 and Romans 8:12-17. But perhaps the best example is 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 13:14 “*The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.*” What happens to salvation when you take one of the three out? It is clearly seen that the Holy Spirit is an eternal person in the Godhead. He is a person. The Holy Spirit is not inferior to God or Christ in wisdom, power or knowledge. He is God (1).

God so loved the world that He gave us His Son according to John 3:16 and Jesus set before us the supreme example of Himself in Philippians 2:5-11, then how does the Spirit bring us into fellowship with God? To answer this question one must look at what the baptism of the Spirit is? Does the Spirit empower us today? What is meant by the indwelling of the Spirit? Does the Spirit work in the Christian, thus, the world today?

In Joel 2:28-32, God promised that the Spirit would come or be poured forth upon all mankind. John the Baptist predicted that the Spirit would baptize or be poured forth upon all men who were listening to him (Matthew 3:7-12, Mark 1:8, John 1:22-23, Luke 3:15-16). If we only had Acts 1 as the only reference with regard to the baptizing with the Spirit, one might conclude that the promise was only for the apostles. However, if one reads these other passages, especially Luke’s account, it was for all of the people. This can also be seen in the conversion of Cornelius found in Acts 10:45 “...*that the gift*

*of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even for the Gentiles.*” The words “poured forth” are perfect tense indicating an action completed in the past but resulting in a continuous and perfect state of being. The baptizing of the Spirit was simply the promise of the outpouring, baptizing or sending of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost in Jerusalem. A one-time, never-to-be-repeated act

The baptizing of the Spirit however is not any of the following things: Anything administered by man, anything that took place before Pentecost, the power to perform miracles, inspiration, speaking in tongues or their being filled with the Spirit. In Luke 3:13-17 and in John 1:31-34 John the Baptist declares that Jesus would be the baptizer. In Acts 2:33 Peter says that Jesus and the Father had poured forth the Spirit. In the Old Testament certain men were given the power to perform miracles as well as the apostles before Pentecost (Luke 10:17-20) Peter declares in 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter 1:20-21, that holy men of God in Old Testament times, with the gift of inspiration, spoke as the Holy Spirit moved them; Second Timothy 3 confirms this by explaining all scripture is inspired by the Holy Spirit of God. The baptism of the Spirit is not their being “filled with the Spirit”, since one can find examples of certain people being filled with the Spirit prior to Pentecost. (Luke 1:15, 41, 67) This expression “filled with the Spirit” means to be influenced by the Spirit through the Word or to be influenced in a miraculous manner; the context of the passage determines this influence. (Ephesians 5:18). Lastly the Baptism of the Spirit does not have reference to speaking in tongues since it is the Spirit who gives this power and not Jesus “*But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually just as he wills.*” 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 12:11. Also, before Pentecost Balaam’s

donkey was empowered to speak with the tongue of man and no one believes he was baptized with the Holy Spirit.

Did the Holy Spirit empower the men in the apostolic age? Does the Spirit empower man today? Is there a difference between the indwelling of the Spirit and the empowering of the Spirit?

There is a clear distinction between the gift of the Spirit and the gifts from the Spirit. Christ is the giver of the Spirit, to the apostles and to all who obey (John 7:38-39; John 14:16-17; Acts 2:38-39; 5:32). The Spirit gave miraculous power as He willed, as we saw in 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 12:11.

In Jesus' farewell discourse we have His most elaborate statement concerning the Spirit's function. In John 16:14 Jesus says "*He will glorify Me, for He will take of mine and will disclose it to you.*" Jesus came to seek and save the lost; He died for us on the cross; our justification is through His blood. Many people get caught up on spiritual gifts or the ministry of the Spirit and forget that the mission of the Spirit is to glorify Jesus. If one reads Act you will find that the Spirit worked through the apostles, empowering them to work signs, wonders and miracles for the purpose of convicting people to obedience in Christ. The central theme of the apostles teaching was Christ and the resurrection. Once the kingdom started to grow we see that other men such as Philip the Evangelist, could perform miracles. However, it was only those whom the twelve apostles had laid their hands on and it was the Spirit who gave power.

In the world today there is not one single person on whom one of the twelve apostles has laid hands on. But with the completion of the New Testament, the need for further displays of miracles has ceased. Today there is no need for preachers to back up

what they say by an appeal to miracles. John 20:30-31 teaches that the recorded miracles are more than sufficient to accomplish what the actual miracles did. (3)

In John 7:37-39 Jesus says *“If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the scripture said, From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water. But this He spoke of the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive for the Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.”* Jesus promised that He, the Spirit, would act within and through the lives of His believers.

Peter in Acts 2 teaches that those who obey will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Although in our day, talk about the indwelling of the Spirit tends towards the mysterious, Christians in the first century accepted His presence as the vitalizing force of their lives.

(4) This can be seen from the way Paul speaks of “the fruit of the Spirit” in Galatians 5

Does the Spirit work in the Christian’s life today? The answer is yes. The Spirit is the gift of God. Paul says *“or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have from God. For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body”* 1st Corinthians 6:19. God lives in us. We are not on our own; the Spirit enables us to live the Christian life. The Comforter is here giving us the seal of God unto salvation, and the earnest of our inheritance, 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 1:21-22. The Spirit motivates us to godly living and purity of life, interceding for us (Romans 8). Life in the Spirit is the only atmosphere and climate in which godly qualities can grow and in which Christian graces can ripen.

Does the Spirit still work in the world today? The answer is yes. The power lies in the inspired word of God, to convict: *“convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment.”* The power of the Spirit today lies in the Holy Spirit’s

witness through the Word of God. Still convicting men of sin and of righteousness and of judgment

To belong to Christ we must have the Spirit living within us. If we do not we are not His (Romans 8:9). Thus having the Spirit depends upon being a Christian, and successfully living the Christian life depends upon the Spirit. (3)

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