

A STUDY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

In the beginning words of the Scriptures it is recorded, "the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters" (Gen 1:2).

Here is evidence of the existence of the Spirit of God, a fact which is repeatedly confirmed throughout the Scriptures.

UNDERSTANDING OF MATTERS WHICH EXISTED BEFORE CREATION
such as

God's existence,

His having a Son Who is also God, and
similar and related questions

are likely beyond our present comprehension, but
some brief and

certainly limited observations

regarding the nature and identity of the Spirit are in order as we
delve into this most interesting subject.

INTRODUCTORY OBSERVATIONS

The SPIRIT of Jesus

is spoken of in Galatians 4:6, "And because ye are sons,
God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts,
crying, Abba, Father."

The SPIRIT of the Lord

is mentioned in 2 Cor. 3:17, "Now the Lord is that Spirit:
and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty."

The COMFORTER and Jesus

are spoken of as one and the same in John 14:16-18,
"And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter,

that He may abide with you for ever; 17 Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him: but ye know Him; for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. 18 I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you."

Both JESUS and the HOLY SPIRIT
make intercession.

"Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit Itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And He that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because He maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God...Who is He that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, Who is even at the right hand of God, Who also maketh intercession for us" (Rom 8:26-27, 34).

"Wherefore He [Jesus] is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Heb. 7:25).

God the FATHER of Jesus,
yet Matthew 1:18 states, "Now the birth of Jesus was on this wise: When as His mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost."

Luke 1:35, And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that Holy Thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God."

The Holy Spirit is never called by a NAME,
yet in addition to terms which relate to Their being,
God the Father is called JEHOVAH (Exodus 6:3, Psalms 83:18),

God's Son is called JESUS (Matthew 1:21),
but the Holy Spirit is not designated by name.

The Spirit of God extended to Jesus.

"And Jesus, when He was baptized, went up straitway out of the water: and lo, the heavens were opened unto Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him; and a voice from heaven, saying, This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased."

We are further informed in John 4:24 that "God is a Spirit" and in Psalms 99:5, "Exalt ye the Lord our God, and worship at His footstool; for He is holy."

While there are multitudes of passages which would extend and expand our understanding regarding the Spirit of God, it is sufficient for our present study to note that God presents Himself as the Holy Spirit.

IN THE STUDY OF SCRIPTURE

it is important to determine

under what period of time a particular passage applies,
who is addressed and for what purpose, and
the complete context of the passage.

God instructed Noah to "make thee an ark" (Genesis 6:14).

We would be considered very foolish in our day to began construction of an ark. Those instructions were for
another era of time,
for another person, and
for another purpose.

So it is with the Holy Spirit. While the Holy Spirit has been ever present, He has appeared
 at different times
 under different circumstances
 for different purposes -
 so we must be careful to not misapply Biblical references to Him and His work.

In the Christian era we find the Holy Spirit active in six distinct areas of operation:

- Directly and independent of human agency
- Without measure upon Jesus
- Through the apostles
- Baptism with the Holy Spirit
- Being imparted to others by the apostles
- As an indwelling Presence in God's people.

DIRECTLY AND INDEPENDENT OF HUMAN AGENCY

"The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light: and there was light" (Genesis 1:2-3).

About 1,656 years later at the approach of the flood, "The Lord said, My Spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years" (Genesis 6:3).

"When they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the Word of God with boldness" (Acts 4:31).

God retains the privilege and the power to exercise His presence at any time and in any place.

IN JESUS WITHOUT MEASURE

The Holy Spirit was given to and reserved for Jesus without limitation. This was not so with any other being.

“For He whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto Him” (John 3:34).

“God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: Who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with Him” (Acts 10:38).

THE APOSTOLIC MEASURE

John 20:19-23, especially verse 22.

Predicted earlier in Matthew 16:13-19, especially verse 19.

Note that this was NOT to Peter alone, for Matthew 18:18 included ALL the twelve, the apostles to be.

But just prior to Jesus' ascension He gave these instructions, Luke 24:46-49, especially verse 49.

Acts 1:2-8 confirms Luke's comments, especially verses 4, 8.

Thus, the former twelve were given their apostolic measure as noted in John 20:22 when Jesus “breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost.”

But they were to wait some forty-seven days (Acts 1:3-4) to the events which took place on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2) when the New Testament era (the Lord's church and

Christianity) were to have their beginning (Acts 11:15).

The apostolic measure was not a result of baptism with the Holy Spirit spoken of and witnessed in Acts 2 and Acts 10.

As we will note,

1. Holy Spirit baptism had a different purpose.
2. Paul did not receive Holy Spirit baptism (Acts 9:1-19) but he was an apostle (Romans 1:1, Romans 11:13, 1 Cor 9:1). He bore evidence of an apostle (Acts 1:15-26, especially verses 21-22, and 2 Cor 12:11-12). Some three years absence might suggest Paul's preparation (Acts 9:23-30, Gal 1:17-18)

BAPTISM WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT

"And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out My Spirit upon all flesh" (Joel 2:28).

At the time of Joel (about 700 B.C.) all human flesh was constituted in two groups: Jew and Gentile.

At the end of the Old Testament era and the beginning of the Christian dispensation (26-30 A.D.), the Jew was first approached for discipleship (Matthew 10:5-6, John 1:11, Acts 2:5).

It was some three and one half years later (Daniel 9:27, Acts 10) that the Gentile was admitted to Christianity.

Paul acknowledged this in Romans 1:16, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek."

Baptism with the Holy Spirit occurred on only two occasions.

First upon the apostles on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-21),

as had been foretold by Jesus (Acts 1:4-5).

Thus was opened the door of the Lord's church to the Jews (Romans 1:16).

Second upon Cornelius and his household (the Gentiles) three and one-half years later at Caesarea (Acts 10), thus opening the door of the Lord's church to the Gentiles.

By means of these two operations of the Spirit, "all flesh" came under the scope of God's intent and provision through the death of His Son, Jesus.

Evident with this baptism in both instances was the ability to "speak in tongues."

This measure of the Spirit was not for the purpose of forgiving sins, for:

the apostles had already become disciples of Jesus and Cornelius was commanded after his Holy Spirit experience to be baptized, the response wherein forgiveness was attained (Acts 22:16).

The first of these Holy Spirit baptisms had the effect of causing the Jews to recognized that the apostles were speaking for God and that a new era had begun.

The second had the effect of convincing the Jewish Christians that the Gentiles had now been accepted by God with them as subject to the gospel message.

Paul explained it as, "For He is our peace, Who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us" (Ephesians 2:14).

These was no need for baptism with the Holy Spirit to ever again be administered, for in these two instances the intended purpose had

been served. We do not receive baptism with the Holy Spirit in our day, but we do enjoy the continuing effect of it, being part of "all flesh" for which it was intended.

THE HOLY SPIRIT IMPARTED

The apostles possessed Divine inspiration not common to all disciples. This included the presence of the Holy Spirit with such measure as to:

1. "Teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you" (John 14:26),
2. Power to perform miracles such as casting out devils, speaking in unknown languages, taking up serpents, drinking deadly things, and healing the sick (Mark 16:17-18), and
3. Imparting miraculous powers to others (Acts 8:15-17, Acts 19:6).

It is to be carefully noted that after the establishment of the Lord's church (Acts 2), miraculous powers and gifts were limited to the apostles and to those upon whom such powers were imparted by "the laying on" of the apostles' hands (Acts 6:6, 2 Timothy 1:6).

The imposing of hands was a common means of expressing approval and endorsement, such as in

Acts 13 when Barnabas and Saul were sent on a mission into Asia (Turkey).

1 Timothy 4:14 where the elders had shown their approval and support of Timothy.

But only when this was done by an apostle could there be imparted spiritual gifts.

This is evident in Acts 8:5-17 where Philip, who had earlier had the apostles' hands laid upon him in Acts 6:5-6, was instrumental in converting those of Samaria. It was only upon the arrival of the apostles Peter and John that the Holy Spirit was imparted to those converted.

Another example of such imparting is in Acts 19:6 where Paul, an apostle, imparted the Holy Spirit through the laying on of his hands. Since the apostles were the only ones empowered by God to impart to others these gifts, then it becomes evident that when the last apostle died (likely John), this power ceased.

Since others who had received the laying on of the apostles' hands could not pass-on these gifts, then upon their deaths such gifts also ceased.

By the time of the Third Century such miraculous powers were no longer being practiced. Any suggestion of such in our day implies an improper understanding of the Holy Spirit and His work.

A distinction is evident and should be made between the gift of the Spirit and the gifts of the Spirit.

The gift has to do with the Holy Spirit Himself becoming a part of the Christian's life by His presence in that life.

The gifts, however, were those miraculous abilities exercised by the apostles and those upon whom the apostles laid their hands.

The gift continues, the gifts ceased by the Third Century.

THE INDWELLING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

But we hasten to say that all who are children in God's family, His

church, did receive the Holy Spirit when they were symbolically born-again in baptism.

It can be truthfully and joyfully said that we do possess the Holy Spirit.

Note with pleasure what is stated in Acts 2:38, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, AND YE SHALL RECEIVE THE GIFT OF THE HOLY GHOST."

Through baptism is realized two blessings:

Remission of sins

The gift of the Holy Ghost.

Peter further speaks of "the Holy Ghost, Whom God hath given to them that obey Him" (Acts 5:32).

It is evident, then, that the Holy Ghost becomes a real and actual presence in the life of every child of God.

Paul writes of the Spirit's presence as an indwelling.

"Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are" (1 Cor 3:16-17).

"But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His" (Romans 8:9).

But what does it mean to say that the Spirit dwells within us?

To the unbelieving Athenians Paul stated, "God...dwell^{eth} not in temples made with hands" (Acts 17:24).

Nor does God today dwell in cathedrals constructed by the hands of men.

Men gather in buildings; God dwells within His people.

Consider other expressions in which the idea of dwelling occurs:

To the church at Pergamos (Rev 2:13) "Where Satan's seat is... where Satan dwelleth."

"Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me" (Romans 7:17).

"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me" (Galatians 2:20).

"Unto...all they that have known the truth; for the truth's sake, which dwelleth in us" (2 John 1-2).

"If we love one another, God dwelleth in us" (1 John 4:12).

"That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith" (Eph 3:17).

"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly" (Col 3:16).

"The Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us" (2 Timothy 1:14).

In these passages indwelling is spoken of, not as something physical and with a material presence, but rather as the influence,
control, and
presence
to which a person allows himself to become subject.

It could be an evil and sinful indwelling such as we were subject to before becoming a Christian. But as these

passages illustrate, we are now indwelt by
 Christ,
 truth,
 God,
 word of Christ,
 the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit dwells within us in exactly the same way as does
 God, Christ, the truth, and the word - by the effect their influence
 has upon our lives. A beautiful way of expressing this is as Jesus did
 in John 14:20, 23,

"At that day ye shall know that I am in My Father, and ye
 in Me, and I in you...If a man love Me, he will keep My
 words: and My Father will love him, and We will come unto
 him, and make our abode with him."

This measure of the Spirit is spoken of in Scripture as Someone Who
 lives within us.

Do you possess the Spirit of Christ and is He living within you?
 His presence will be evident in your manner and quality of life.

What the Holy Spirit Does by His Indwelling

1. Gives Assurance

"He that keepeth His commandments dwelleth in Him, and He in
 him. And hereby we know that He abideth in us, by the Spirit
 which He hath given us" (1 John 3:24).

2. Renders Help

"The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy
 Ghost which is given unto us" (Romans 5:5).

Romans 8:16, "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God."

Romans 8:26, "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities."

3. Makes Intercession

Romans 8:27, "For we know not what we should pray for a we ought: but the Spirit Itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And He that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because He maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God."

4. Causes Things to Have Proper Result

"We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose" (Romans 8:28).

5. Permits Us to Abound in Hope

Romans 15:13, "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost."

Through the word? Absolutely! Not through the word ONLY, but in conjunction with His presence.

6. Bears Fruit

"The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance" (Gal 5:22-23).

7. Delivers From Temptation

“There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, Who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it” (1 Cor 10:13).

8. Bestows Strength

“That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man” (Ephesians 3:16).

“And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption” (Ephesians 4:30).

PRESENT DAY APPLICATION

These passages bring to us assurance of the marvelous blessings and attributes inherent in the presence of God’s Spirit within us. But let us make some practical observations which will illustrate the beauty of this presence.

Many are the times we pray, both individually and collectively, for our brethren who are laboring in foreign fields of the Master’s vineyard.

What are we expecting as a result of our prayers? Are we simply uttering words without expectation? No! We really desire and have every confidence that God, according to His will, will respond to our petition.

When we pray for the Lord's blessings on a journey we are about to make, do we really pray in faith that He will hear?

Jesus said, "And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive" (Mt 21:22).

James taught, "Let him ask in faith, nothing wavering" (1:6).

Your wife is going into the hospital for a serious operation. You gather your children in prayer and request also that the congregation engage in prayer for your loved one. But why do we do this?

We have utmost confidence in the doctor
The hospital has an excellent reputation
The required equipment is tested and in place
The necessary medicines are available to effect recovery.

But even this is not enough. We must have one more Essential there, as well? We earnestly desire that God will also be present and oversee this operation.

We want God there! And He will be there in the presence of His Holy Spirit.

This is why we so earnestly pray - or else our prayer is meaningless.

But Because of Much Misunderstanding

in the religious atmosphere of our day, it would surely be well to point-out the limited duration which the Lord placed upon miraculous powers enjoyed by His inspired disciples. Mark 16:17-18 clearly described some of those powers:

Casting out devils
Speaking in new tongues

Taking up serpents

Drinking deadly things without ill effect

Recovering the sick by laying on of hands.

Peter raised Tabitha from the dead (Acts 9:36-42).

Paul was bit by a serpent without being harmed (Acts 27:3-6).

In 1 Corinthians 13:8 Paul explains:

“Prophecies shall fail” (not continue to be given)

Speaking in tongues would cease (to be given)

Gift of knowledge would vanish away (cease to be given).

He stated that such as these were “in part” (limited), “But when that which is perfect [complete] is come, then that which is in part shall be done away” (verses 9-10).

The Scriptures had at that time not been completely given and the church had not at that time been completely informed of matters later revealed and enjoined (1 Cor 11:31, 16:1).

When the condition of completeness had arrived, then these limited gifts ceased for they had then served their purpose (as explained earlier in this treatise).

While miraculous powers are restricted from disciples today, this does not for a moment suggest that God has lost any of His power.

He is as powerful as He ever was in forming and now in sustaining this world and all that pertains to it.

It Should be Further Noted

that during the Christian era the Holy Spirit never acted DIRECTLY upon a person to accomplish that person’s salvation.

We are not saved by the Spirit overpowering us in some supernatural way and compelling our compliance.

We do not see some strange light or hear some wee, still voice calling to us.

You will detect from the Scriptures, however, that the Spirit of God does operate upon us through the power of God's word.

In the conversion of Saul, he indeed saw a light and heard Jesus' voice, but he was told by Jesus, "Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do" (Acts 9:6).

In the conversion of Cornelius and his household, Cornelius was told by the angel, "Now send men to Joppa, and call for one Simon, whose surname is Peter: he lodgeth with one Simon a tanner, whose house is by the sea side: he shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do" (Acts 10:5-6).

It is highly possible that God, indeed, may provide an opportunity for the honest of heart to be exposed to the teaching of His word, as He did to both Saul and Cornelius.

But neither were saved directly, on the spot.

They were instructed to go to where an inspired man taught them the truth.