

HOME BIBLE STUDY SERIES

A Study of
The Nature and Work
of the Holy Spirit

- 1 -- The Nature of the Holy Spirit
- 2 -- The Holy Spirit and the Word
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- 4 -- The Miraculous Gifts of the Holy Spirit
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Lesson One

"The Nature of the Holy Spirit"

A unified understanding about the Holy Spirit has been hard to come by among professed believers in the Bible. Even in our present religious situation, there are various false concepts about the Spirit of God—not only about His work, but about His very being (nature).

A very early controversy arose over the question of the Holy Spirit's Personage and Deity. The Arians taught that neither Jesus nor the Holy Spirit were Deity. They advocated that they were created by God. They also taught that the Holy Spirit was only an exerted energy of God manifested in the created world. Socinius revived the controversy during the Reformation Movement. He taught that the Holy Spirit was merely the eternal proceeding energy of God and laid the foundation for the Unitarian Church. The "Jehovah Witness" religious group teaches that the Spirit is only an influence, not a person. There are others, today, who believe that He is a person, but not Deity. The purpose of this lesson is to look at what the Scriptures indicate about the Nature of the Holy Spirit.

The Personage of the Holy Spirit

Because we are human and basically understand things from a human (personal) standpoint, we use the term "person" to identify with God, the Father, but also the Son and the Holy Spirit. A person to us has life, thought, volition, action, individuality, character, and influence. The Bible indicates that the Holy Spirit has all of these things: He lives, He wills, He acts, He has a separate individuality from the Father and the Son, He has a particular character and possesses influence. His personage is indicated by the fact that He:

- (1) Possesses a mind (Rom. 8:27);
- (2) Has knowledge (1 Cor. 2:11);
- (3) Has affections (Rom. 15:30);
- (4) Has a will (1 Cor. 12:11).

His personage is indicated by the names and titles attributed to Him. There are approximately 400 Scripture references to the Holy Spirit. Over 50 use different terms, titles, names to identify the Holy Spirit (Spirit of Truth, Comforter, Spirit of God, Spirit of Christ, etc.). Also, personal pronouns show His personage. The Holy Spirit is referred to as a "He" (John 14:26). Even though the word for Spirit is neuter (Pneuma), it is always followed by a masculine pronoun. The Holy Spirit is not a "thing," nor an "it." Pronouns are used to refer to people.

The Holy Spirit's Personage can also be shown by abilities and activities, as well as by the fact that He can be offended, etc. See the following that illustrates:

- 1) He speaks (1 Tim. 4:1).
- 2) He can be grieved or vexed (Eph. 4:30).
- 3) He testifies (John 15:26).
- 4) He can be despised (Heb. 10:29).
- 5) He teaches and quickens and brings to remembrance (Jn. 14:26).
- 6) He can be resisted (Acts 7:51).
- 7) He can be lied to (Acts 5:3).
- 8) He guides (John 16:13)
- 9) He can be blasphemed (Matt. 12:31).
- 10) He searches (1 Cor. 2:10)
- 11) He intercedes (Rom. 8:26)
- 12) He restrains and forbids (Acts 16:6-7).
- 13) He convinces the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment (John 16:8).
- 14) He commands (Acts 13:2).

The Deity of the Holy Spirit

Several terms are used in Scripture to refer to the Supreme Being of the universe: God, Deity, Divinity, Godhead, Jehovah, God Almighty, Lord, etc. One strong emphasis of Scripture is that there is but One God (not many gods). However, the Bible pictures God as:

- 1) One God, but in three personages of equal rank and dignity.
- 2) Yet, in some sense there is a certain subordination of function and manifestation.
- 3) Three in One—a tri-unity—a trinity!

And, of course, three different terms are used to identify each personage of the God head: Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit. (Matthew 28:18-20)

The Holy Spirit is identified with Deity by a reasoning process. In Acts 5:1-4, Peter said that Ananias had lied to the "Holy Spirit" (verse 3); but, he also said that he had lied to "God" (verse 4). We could conclude that the Holy Spirit is God. What Isaiah records in Isaiah 6:1-13 as being spoken by Jehovah, Paul by inspiration attributes such to the Holy Spirit in Acts 28:25. This is even a stronger indication of the Deity of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is associated on an equal basis with the Father and the Son (Matt. 28:19; 2 Cor. 13:14).

- 1) He was with the "Father" at creation (Gen. 1:1-3);
- 2) He was with the "Father" at the baptism of the "Son" (Lk. 3:21-22)
- 3) Jesus speaks of the Father sending the Comforter (John 14:16).

- 4) The Father gives us the Spirit and we become heirs with Christ (Rom. 8:12-17).

For the Holy Spirit to be Deity, He must possess the attributes of Deity. Scripture shows Him to have such attributes:

- 1) He is spoken of as the “eternal Spirit” (Heb. 9:14).
- 2) He is said to know all things, even the mind of God (1 Cor. 2:10-11).
- 3) There is no place man can go from the Spirit of God (Ps. 139:7).
- 4) His holiness is noted by His special name—Holy Spirit.
- 5) He is the giver of life (John 3:5).
- 6) He is all-powerful (Micah 3:8).
- 7) He was involved in the creation of the universe (Ps. 104:30).
- 8) He performs miracles and will be involved in the resurrection of man’s bodies (1 Cor. 12:4-11; Rom. 8:11).

Concluding Thoughts

From the above it should be evident that the Holy Spirit is God in every sense of the word.

- 1) He is **not** a created being.
- 2) He is **not** just a mere emanation from God, an influence, exerted energy.
- 3) He is **not** a lesser god in some sense from the One God.
- 4) He is **not** an invisible active force emanating from God.
- 5) He is **God**—just as much as the Father and the Son.

Thus, to take away from His personage and His Deity is not only religious error, but a disrespect to the God of Heaven. The Holy Spirit is due Honor, Respect, Reverence, and Worship that belongs to Deity.

Questions for Discussion

True or False

- ___ ___ 1. There has been a fairly good unified understanding of the Nature and Work of the Holy Spirit among those who profess belief in the Bible as the Word of God.
- ___ ___ 2. Deity is nowhere spoken of in the Scriptures as being a person.
- ___ ___ 3. There are over 50 different terms, titles, or names used to identify the Holy Spirit in the Scriptures.
- ___ ___ 4. The Holy Spirit can speak even though He does not have a human body.
- ___ ___ 5. The Holy Spirit can be resisted.

- ___ ___ 6. The terms: God, Deity, and Divinity are used to refer to the Supreme Being of the Universe.
- ___ ___ 7. The term, "Tri-unity," is used to identify God.

- ___ ___ 8. The Holy Spirit is associated with the "Father" and the "Son" on an equal basis.
- ___ ___ 9. The Holy Spirit was present when all things were created in the beginning.
- ___ ___ 10. The Holy Spirit possesses the attributes of Deity.

Lesson Two

"The Holy Spirit and the Word"

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.....And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us...." (John 1:1, 14). The identification in these verses is obviously with Jesus the Christ, the Son of God. While we cannot separate entirely Jesus, the Word, from His spoken and written word; yet, in this study we need to make that distinction. We will be looking at the connection between the Holy Spirit and the spoken and written word of God. God chose to make man with the ability to hear and to speak. He chose to communicate with man by words. The expression, *"The Pen is mightier than the Sword!"* helps to illustrate the great importance of the spoken word between human beings. Throughout the Old Testament the expression, *"And the Lord God said.....,"* is used a great number of times—which would be expected. But the emphasis was placed upon what God said, not what man has said! So, what makes the Bible, what is called the Word of God, so important to mankind? It is because it comes from God, not just a group of men. This is what it claims for itself.

The "Inspired" Word

"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God....." (2 Timothy 3:16). The Scriptures (the Bible) makes a claim as being from God. The literal meaning of the Greek words here is "God breathed." God spoke through these men and guided them as they wrote down the message. *"But holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit."* (2 Peter 1:21; Ephesians 3:3-6). The Holy Spirit's guidance caused their spoken message to be infallible and their written message to be inerrant. But the Spirit was able to accomplish them in a way that did not take away their own feelings and expressions. The Spirit helped them to write only what God wanted written....so it would be in fact "the Word of God!" Additional passages to study: 1 Corinthians 2:6-13; 1 Peter 1:10-12; Matthew 10:19-20). It is important to recognize that the Spirit did not communicate through feelings, etc. (2 Peter 1:21; 1 Timothy 4:1; Matthew 10:20; Luke 4:18), but through words.

Similar Actions of the Spirit and the Word

A great number of passages can be sited to show that what the Spirit was said to do that the Word also did the same thing. In some instances it will be evident that the Spirit does the action through the inspired word of God. However, a distinction must be made between the Spirit and the Word—they are not the

same! (Ephesians 6:17). The Spirit can do some things separate and apart from the Word, while doing most of His work through the Word. The following can show the likenesses in action.

1) In Creation:

- a) The Spirit was there at Creation and evidently taking part (Gen. 1:2; Ps. 104:30).
- b) But it was by the Word of God that Creation happened (Hebrews 11:3; 2 Peter 3:4-5).

2) In Giving Life:

- a) The Spirit gives life (2 Corinthians 3:6).
- b) But life is also given by the Word of Truth (James 1:18).

3) In Being Born of God:

- a) The New Birth is a spiritual birth brought about by the Spirit (John 3:3-8).
- b) But the Word of God is the vessels by which that life can happen (1 Peter 1:23).

4) In Salvation:

- a) We are renewed (saved) by the Holy Spirit (Titus 3:5).
- b) But it is the implanted word that saves our souls (James 1:21).

5) In Sanctification:

- a) We are sanctified from our all sinful life by the Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:11; 2 Thessalonians 2:13).
- b) But Jesus prayed that we might be sanctified by His Truth (Word of God)(John 17:17).

6) Indwelling:

- a) We are told that the Spirit indwells the people of God (Romans 8:11).
- b) But we are encouraged to allow the Word of God to dwell in us richly (Colossians 3:16). The question to be ask is—can both the Spirit and the Word abide in us?

7) Power:

- a) God wants us to have joy & peace by the power of the Spirit (Romans 15:14).
- b) But God upholds all things by the word of His power (Hebrews 1:3).

The Spirit's Use of the Word

Since the Spirit has given us the Word and confirmed it by miracles, wonders, and signs (Hebrews 2:3-4), we would naturally assume that there was a good reason for Him giving it to mankind. In other words, He had a use for it in the work that God wanted to accomplish. We know from what is revealed that there are three areas in which the Spirit works, but He operates through the revealed Word to accomplish these tasks.

- 1) **The Conviction of man's heart.** God has chosen to communicate with His creatures by His inspired Word. The first purpose of that communication is to bring about a conviction within man of His need of God. The Spirit accomplishes this when the Word of God is read or preached and finds lodgment in good and honest hearts (John 16:8-11; Acts 2:22-39; 7:51-54; Hebrews 4:12).
- 2) **The Conversion of man.** If man is to be saved eternally, he must be converted, turned back to God and away from disobedience to God. It is the work of the Holy Spirit to see that such is accomplished—but without taking away man's power of choice. This is simply accomplished by the Word of God finding lodgment in a good and honest heart. The following Scriptures show clearly the involvement of both: John 3:5; Titus 3:4-8; James 1:18; 1 Peter 1:23; Romans 10:13-17; 1:16-17).
- 3) **The Sanctification of man.** To be sanctified means that we are cleansed and set apart to do service unto God. Again, both the Spirit and the Word are involved in the process, but it seems evident that it is the Spirit working through His tool, the Word of God. (1 Corinthians 6:11; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; John 17:17; Ephesians 5:26).

Concluding Thoughts

It is important to remember that the Spirit is one of the three personages of the Godhead and is accomplishing what Deity had decided before the foundation of the world. The Spirit's powerful tool is the Word of God to bring man back to Himself!

Questions for Discussion

True or False

- ___ ___ 1. The Word was in the beginning with God and was God.
- ___ ___ 2. God made the choice on how He would communicate with man through words (language).
- ___ ___ 3. Holy men of God were moved by the Holy Spirit to reveal God's message to mankind.
- ___ ___ 4. The Holy Spirit revealed the message to men and they spoke and wrote it down in their own words.
- ___ ___ 5. The Spirit communicated through feelings also.

- ___ ___ 6. The Holy Spirit and the Word of God are said to do the same thing.
- ___ ___ 7. The Holy Spirit was involved in the creation of all things.
- ___ ___ 8. The new birth is brought about by the Holy Spirit and the Word of God.
- ___ ___ 9. The Holy Spirit convicts man's heart so that He will listen to the Word of God.
- ___ ___ 10. Both the Spirit and the Word of God are involved in man's sanctification.

Lesson Three

"The Reception of the Holy Spirit"

To be empowered by the coming of the Holy Spirit was not a new thing to the Apostles or the early church. The Old Testament has many examples of such. The Holy Spirit enabled people to do things that they ordinarily could not do. Samson is a good illustration of this. The Holy Spirit stirred him (Judges 13:25). When a lion came against him, the Spirit came upon him mightily so that he tore the lion as one tears a young goat (Judges 14:5-6). Events like this happened upon several occasions. The one that is possibly remembered the most is when he was able to collapse a building and kill many of the Philistines (Judges 16:28-30). Both Old and New Testaments have examples of such empowering by the coming of the Holy Spirit upon people.

Terms That Describe Reception

It is important to understand that the reception of the Holy Spirit does not automatically guarantee that one has supernatural powers. The context usually makes this clear in most instances. The following may help to make a distinction in regards to whether power is received or not.

1. Terms that indicate reception of Miraculous powers:

- 1) Pour out upon
- 2) Come upon—overshadow
- 3) Descending upon
- 4) Anointed with
5. Baptized with
6. Come unto
7. Sat upon
8. Fell on
9. Laying on of Apostles' hands
10. Shed forth from heaven
11. Full of power

2. Terms that do not indicate reception of Miraculous powers:

- 1) Dwell in
- 2) Sealed with
- 3) Made partakers of
4. Ministered to
5. Sent forth unto

3. Terms that are used either of the above two ways:

1. Filled with or full of
2. Received

3. Gift of God
4. Given unto

**Examples of outpouring of the Holy Spirit
That Gave Miraculous Powers**

The following is certainly not a complete list of all the people that may have been empowered by the coming of the Holy Spirit into their lives, especially in the Old Testament. And it should be quite obvious that we are only given a few instances of such in the New Testament. Notice the following:

1. Examples in the Old Testament:

- a) Joseph was given the ability to interpret dreams that led to his being appointed to high position in the land of Egypt (Genesis 41:38-40).
- b) The Spirit that had been on Moses that enabled him to perform miracles, God placed on the 70 elders and they prophesied (Numbers 11:25-26).
- c) The Spirit endowed various craftsmen to do the work on the Tabernacle (Exodus 28:3).
- d) The Spirit of the Lord came upon Othniel that enabled him to judge the people of Israel (Judges 3:9-10).
- e) When Samuel anointed David to eventually be king over Israel, the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him (1 Samuel 16:12-13).
- f) All the Prophets sent to Israel were given both revelations and had miraculous powers given to them (Ezekiel 2:2; 2 Kings 5:1-14).

2. Before and during the Public Ministry of Jesus:

- a) Zacharias was filled with the Spirit and prophesied (Luke 1:67).
- b) Elizabeth was filled with the Spirit and prophesied to Mary (Luke 1:41-45).
- c) John the Baptizer was to be filled with the Spirit from birth (Luke 1:15).
- d) The Spirit came on Jesus at His baptism that enabled Him to do many mighty works (Luke 4:14-19).
- e) The Apostles and the 70 disciples also received powers by the Spirit (Mark 6:7; Luke 10:17).

3. In the Early Church:

- a) The Apostles received Power when the Holy Spirit came to them (Acts 1:4-5, 8; 2:1-4)
- b) Cornelius & His household were able to speak in tongues when the Holy Spirit came on them (Acts 10:44-47).

- c) The Holy Spirit was given to Paul upon his conversion that enabled him to receive revelations and have unusual powers (Acts 9:17).
- d) Many of the early Christians were able to perform various powers as gifts of the Holy Spirit (Mark 16:17-18).

Concluding Thoughts

The point of this lesson is to show that the outpouring of the Spirit upon people occurred both in the Old Testament times as well as New Testament times. This outpouring enabled them to do things that they ordinarily could not do—have visions, revelations, or performed all kinds of miraculous things. This outpouring was not to save a person, but to empower them! It was even done with a donkey on one occasion—he was made to talk. The thing to remember is that God was the giver of this outpouring—not man. It was not something man could do to get it, but something God chose to give to certain people. Future lessons will deal with this concept more in detail.

Questions for Discussion

True or False

- ___ ___ 1. To receive the Holy Spirit is to automatically receive miraculous powers.
- ___ ___ 2. To receive the outpouring of the Holy Spirit that enabled a person to speak a language that they had never learned was something new that the Spirit did.
- ___ ___ 3. Samson is a good example of one who received the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, but he had no unusual powers.
- ___ ___ 4. Both the Old and New Testaments record men having received the Holy Spirit and had miraculous powers.
- ___ ___ 5. The Holy Spirit is said to have "sat upon" certain persons.
- ___ ___ 6. The persons that the Holy Spirit dwells in will have miraculous powers.
- ___ ___ 7. Only a very few people received miraculous powers in the Old Testament times.
- ___ ___ 8. All of the Old Testament Prophets were given both revelations and miraculous powers also.
- ___ ___ 9. All of the Apostles received miraculous powers.
- ___ ___ 10. All of the early Christians received miraculous powers.

Lesson Four

"The Miraculous Gifts of the Spirit"

One of the most obvious facts to people who know the Bible very well is that God has given miraculous gifts unto men—both under the Old Covenant and the New. While the study of the miracles performed under the Old Covenant would be of great interest; yet, our primary thrust in this lesson is to look at the miraculous gifts God has given under the New Covenant. The word “gifts” is used to identify the powers that were given to early Christians (1 Corinthians 12:1-4). God chose to give us a listing of these gifts in His Word so that we might be aware of what helped to start and keep Christianity going until the inspired Word of God was completed (1 Corinthians 13:8-12).

Listing and Defining of Gifts
(1 Corinthians 12:1-11, 27-31; Mark 16:17-18)

The Word of Wisdom. The ability to know and understand things beyond your years of study and experience.

The Word of Knowledge. The ability to know something without having to study. To know God’s will for us under the New Testament without having read or heard it.

Faith. Faith comes by hearing the Word of God, but this faith did not have to depend upon hearing it—it was imparted to them. “Faith that can remove mountains.”

Gifts of Healing. All kinds of sicknesses: diseases, blindness, crippled, affected speech and hearing, etc., to let people know that God was behind their efforts.

The Working of Miracles. All kinds of signs and wonders were performed to show that their message was from God and not of men. To confirm the word!

Prophecy. It was to have the ability to know and speak God’s message by revelation and inspiration without having to study. They spoke God’s message to man before it was written down.

Discerning of Spirits. The person had the ability to know if someone was speaking by the Spirit of God or by another spirit.

Divers Kinds of Tongues. The person had the ability to speak in a known language, but unknown to him, so that he could be understood by one who knew the language.

Interpretation of Tongues. The person can translate from one language to another without having to know both languages.

Helps, Governments, Apostles. The early church in its beginning had to be supervised by the Apostles and Prophets in order to keep it faithful to God.

All of the above gifts were exercised in the early church for the benefit of starting and stabilizing the churches until the New Testament could be completed.

How Were These Gifts Received?

It is critical to a proper understanding of the miraculous gifts that we know how people received these gifts. Did God just pour out the Holy Spirit upon a lot of people so they could have these gifts? Was there anyway that the people could secure the gifts themselves? What role did the Apostles play in these gifts of the Holy Spirit? From the Scriptures we can see two ways that these gifts were passed on to certain people.

1. They were given with the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. John the Baptizer told people that even though he was baptizing in water, one was coming after him that would baptize with the Holy Spirit (Matthew 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16). After the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus, He appeared to His chosen disciples so that they could be fully persuaded of His being raised from the dead. Before leaving them and ascending back to the Father, He told them to wait in Jerusalem in order to receive the promised coming of the Holy Spirit (John 16:13). Jesus called the coming of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostle a “baptism of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 1:4-5). He told them that when the Holy Spirit came that He would give them power and that they would be witnesses of Jesus into all the world (Acts 1:8). In Acts 2:1-4, the Holy Spirit came upon the Apostles and they all spoke in Tongues (Languages that they had not studied and learned). The Apostle Peter, in his sermon to the people, said that this outpouring of the Spirit was a fulfillment of the prophecy of Joel (Joel 2:28-30). Saul of Tarsus became an Apostle later on and was told he would receive the Holy Spirit (Acts 9:17-18). From all indications, he must have received the same power and gifts that the other Apostles had received (2 Corinthians 12:11-12). Saul’s conversion and becoming an Apostle was unusual, but was for the blessing of mankind.

Another unusual event occurred when a Gentile and his household receive the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and spoke in Tongues as well. Joel had promised that God would pour out of His Spirit upon “all flesh.” This is generally understood to have reference to both Jew and Gentile. The Jews received the

promise when the Apostles and Saul of Tarsus received the outpouring of the Spirit. Now, God's Spirit needed to be poured out on the Gentiles and Joel's prophecy would be completed. This is what happened in Acts 10:1-48; 11:1-18). It took three miracles to bring about the conversion of the Gentiles: (1) The Angel appearing to Cornelius and telling him to send for Simon Peter to tell him words whereby he and his house could be saved; (2) Peter receiving a vision and the command to go with the Gentiles that were sent by Cornelius who were waiting at the gate; and (3) As Peter was preaching to the Gentiles, the Holy Spirit fell on them as it did upon the Apostles in Acts 2:1-4—they spoke with Tongues. Peter's conclusion was God wants the Gentiles to be saved just like the Jews. When this was discussed back with other Jewish Christians, they drew the same conclusion: ***"Then God has also granted to the Gentiles repentance to life."*** (Acts 11:18).

2. A Second way of receiving the gifts was by the laying on of the hands of the Apostles. When trouble arose in the early church, efforts were made to appoint seven men who could take care of the neglected Grecian Widows (Acts 6:1-4). But when these men were appointed, the Apostles also laid hands on them to impart gifts (6:5-6, 8; 8:5-8). After this both Philip and Stephen were recorded as having gifts (power).

When news came back to Jerusalem to the Apostles that the people in Samaria had been obedient to the Gospel through the preaching of Philip, They decided to send Peter and John up there to check on the situation. Philip could perform miracles, but could not pass on any gift to others. The Apostles were the only ones that God used to pass on the gifts to other. So, when the Apostles had prayed and laid hands on the Christians in Samaria, they received miraculous gifts of the Spirit. The way we know this is that it said that when Simon saw that through the laying on of the Apostles' hands that the Holy Spirit was given, he offered them money. He had to have seen some miraculous activity. (Acts 8:14-19).

When Paul was at Ephesus on one of his mission trips, he ran across 12 men who were disciples, but were not taught correctly. He understood this when he asked them if they had received the Holy Spirit since they believed in Jesus. He discovered they had been baptized with John's baptism, not Jesus'. He then, commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus. It was then that Paul laid hands on them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied (Acts 19:1-7). Thus, Paul was able to do what the other Apostles did in passing on the gifts to Christians. Paul also stated that he had given a gift to Timothy, a constant companion to Paul, by the laying on of his hands (2 Timothy 1:6). Paul also wrote to the church at Rome desiring to come and impart some spiritual gift to them so they could be established (Romans 1:11).

Concluding Thoughts

The Apostles seemed to have possessed the use of all the gifts themselves, but those upon whom they laid their hands were given only a gift. And in addition, not all Christians would have to have gifts—only those gifts that were needful for the benefit of stabilizing and strengthening the church would be given. The Holy Spirit, Himself, seems to have determine this (1 Corinthians 12:11). But each congregation would need to have the gifts in their midst to help them until the Word of God could be completely written down and circulated. The purposes of the gifts were:

- a) To perfect and edify the church (Ephesians 4:11-16).
- b) To bear witness to the message as being from God (Hebrews 2:1-4).
- c) To guide the church into all truth (John 16:13).

Note: There was no New Testament, as we know it now, at first...it was being spoken by inspiration and then being written down from about 48-96 A.D.

Questions for Discussion

True or False

- ___ ___ 1. There were only 8 miraculous gifts of the Spirit given to the early church.
- ___ ___ 2. Interpretation of Tongues has reference to translating a language unknown by the people into a language they did know.
- ___ ___ 3. Only the eleven Apostles received the Baptism of the Holy Spirit.
- ___ ___ 4. Saul (Paul's) reception of the Holy Spirit was different from the other Apostles.
- ___ ___ 5. Philip had the power to perform miracles but could not pass them on to others.
- ___ ___ 6. The reception of the Holy Spirit by Cornelius and his household was different from what happened to the Apostles in Acts 2.
- ___ ___ 7. Paul could lay hands on people and give them miraculous gifts.
- ___ ___ 8. The Apostles received all the miraculous gifts to use.

Lesson Five

"The Duration of Miraculous Gifts"

There are three questions that are important in our study about the miraculous gifts given by the Spirit:

- 1) How were these gifts given to the church?
- 2) For what purpose were these gifts given to the church?
- 3) For how long were these miraculous gifts to last or what was their duration?

We believe that the first two questions are critical to understand before looking at the third question. In fact, proper Biblical answers to the first two questions will help answer the third question. Primarily in this lesson we are examining the Bible to see if there is any indication of just how long these gifts would be available to mankind. If they are still available today, then, we should want to know how we might possess such. If the gifts ended, then we should not expect them today.

How Were the Gifts Given?

1. The Gifts were given by an outpouring by God directly. This seems to have been the case with Jesus possibly as indicated in Matthew 3:16; John 3:24; and Acts 10:38. When the Holy Spirit came upon the Apostles on the day of Pentecost, they received **Power** as promised and began by "speaking in tongues." However, the Apostles did not seem to be limited in the power that they had access unto as others were (John 14:26; 15:26; 16:7-8, 13; Acts 1:4-5, 8; 2:1-4). But the gift of speaking in tongues were given to Cornelius and his household direct from God for the purpose of convincing the Jewish Christians (as well as the Apostles) that God wanted the Gentiles to be saved just like the Jews were offered salvation (Acts 10:34-48; 11:15-18; 15:8). And the Holy Spirit was sent to Saul (Paul) because he was to become a chosen Apostle (as one born out of due season). He, too, was unlimited in his powers just like the other Apostles (Acts 9:17; 13:9; 2 Cor. 12:11-13). It is important to notice that the outpouring was directly from God, and not man. This outpouring was upon both Jews (at Pentecost) and Gentiles (household of Cornelius)—thus, fulfilling God's promise through Joel 2:28-30 that He would pour out of His Spirit upon "all flesh."

2. These Gifts of the Spirit were given by the laying on of the hands of the Apostles. Three different examples are given to illustrate this fact.

- 1) After the Apostles laid hands on the seven men in Acts 6:2-6, we find that both Philip and Stephen were able to perform miracles (6:8; 8:6-7).

- 2) When the people in Samaria obeyed the Gospel, the Apostles had to go to the city and lay hands on some of the people to impart the miraculous gifts (Acts 8:14-19). Philip, who could perform miracles, was not able to pass on that power to others.
- 3) In Acts 19:1-7, twelve men had been baptized with John's baptism, but taught about Christ's coming. Paul taught them correctly and baptized them into Christ. He then laid hands on them and imparted gifts of the Holy Spirit (speaking in tongues and prophesying).

These gifts were evidently not given to all Christians, but only to sufficient number to get the job done of teaching and grounding these new Christians. They were to desire the gifts, but to use them correctly for the building up of the church in their assemblies (1 Cor. 12:31; Chs. 13, 14).

What were the Purposes of the Gifts?

If you noticed that the above question indicates the possibility of more than one purpose. In fact the Scriptures clearly indicate at least three reasons for the giving of these gifts.

1. Gifts were to reveal God's truth to mankind so that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God (1 Cor. 2:12).

- a) They made known the mystery that had previously been kept secret (Eph. 3:3-5).
- b) The Apostles were to be guided by the Spirit into all truth (John 16:13; 20:31).
- c) Jude states that the "faith" was once for all delivered unto the saints (Jude 3).
- d) Peter says that we have been given all things that pertain to life and godliness (2 Peter 1:3).
- e) James called it a perfect Law of Liberty (James 1:25).
- f) Paul states that this revelation can make us ready for all good works (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

2. Gifts were to confirm the message preached as being from God (Mark 16:15-20; Heb. 2:3-4).

- a) Philip's preaching was confirmed by miracles and it helped people to believe that his message was really the message of God (Acts 8:5-13).
- b) The Apostle Paul stated that the signs that he did helped to prove his Apostleship and his message as being from God (2 Cor. 12:12).
- c) Speaking in Tongues was especially pointed out to be a sign to unbelievers (1 Cor. 14:22).

3. Gifts were to be used to edify (build up) the church (1 Cor. 14:5, 26).

What Was the Duration of the Gifts?

The same Bible that tells us about the Gifts and their regulation also tells us they were to cease! It is enlightening to notice that God begins things by a miracle or miracles and continues them, however, without any more miracles. Adam and Eve serve as a good example of this. They were miraculously created by God, but children were brought into the world by a natural birth process designed by God. Miraculous Gifts were evidently necessary at the beginning of the church because they did not possess a completed New Testament. They needed Divine guidance until it could be completed. So, the gifts served a dual purpose: (1) The revealing of the Word of God and (2) The confirmation of that Word by miracles, wonders, and signs. Once completed and confirmed, there would be no further need of the miraculous. This is what 1 Corinthians 13:8-12 is pointing out. Paul states that the gifts would cease (verse 8), and even tells when....when the complete (perfect) has come (verse 10). It should be obvious to all that the spoken revelations in the churches were giving only partial revelations—a little at a time (verse 9). When they are all written down and brought together into a completed book (James 1:25), the Gifts will have served their purposes.

Another approach that could be taken that is a very strong one goes back to the way that these gifts were given in the early church. The Apostles were the only ones that could give such by the laying on of their hands. Upon their death, the Gifts would of necessity have to cease—no one to pass them on. A passage that might strongly support this idea is in Ephesians 4:4-6, where it states that there is “one baptism.” This was written about A.D. 62-63 from Rome by the Apostle Paul by inspiration. However, in Acts 1:4-5; 2:1-4, 38, 41, it clearly shows that there were two baptism—baptism of the Holy Spirit and baptism in water. By the time Paul wrote the Ephesian letter, one of these baptisms had ceased. The logical one to cease would be the one that was a promise, not the one commanded for people to do to be saved.

Concluding Thoughts

There are several warnings given in the New Testament of the dangers of false teachers making use of “false signs and wonders” to deceive people into believing their false teaching (Matthew 7:21-23; 24:23-24; 2 Cor. 11:13-15; 2 Thess. 2:8-12, etc.). God has given us a complete Bible to serve as our complete guidance for this life and eternity. We need nothing else.

Questions for Discussion

True or False

- ___ ___ 1. Duration of Miraculous Gifts is a mute point in our study.
- ___ ___ 2. Only God could give these Miraculous Gifts to people.
- ___ ___ 3. Only the Apostles had the power to pass these Gifts on to people.
- ___ ___ 4. Both Philip and Stephen were able to perform miracles after the Apostles had laid their hands on them.
- ___ ___ 5. The ability to lay hands on people by the Apostles to give Miraculous Gifts was a sign of one being an Apostle.
- ___ ___ 6. There is only two purposes mention in Scripture for the giving of Miraculous Gifts.
- ___ ___ 7. The New Testament actually tells us that these Gifts would cease.
- ___ ___ 8. 1 Cor. 13:8-12 indicates the duration of these Gifts.
- ___ ___ 9. The New Testament is called the "perfect Law of liberty."
- ___ ___ 10. The ending of Gifts is not determined by the question of God's Power, but of what He states He will do.

Lesson Six

"The Holy Spirit in Conversion"

Jesus stated that the Holy Spirit would come and convict the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment (John 16:8). From this statement, it should be evident that the Holy Spirit is involved in the conversion process of people turning to God. Thus, the real issue here is not whether He is involved, but in what way or how does He accomplish His work? Some advocate that the Holy Spirit comes down and operates directly on the human heart and gives him an "experience of grace"—which means he has been saved! The problem with this is that none of this is taught in the Scriptures. Such beliefs are mere conjecture or subjective thinking, not provable by Scriptures. In fact, it is in plain contradiction to the teachings of Scripture. The real question that needs to be answered is—"Does the Holy Spirit convert the sinner directly or does He accomplish His Work through the preached Word of God and the sinner's obedience to the Gospel?"

**Did the Holy Spirit Come Upon the Apostles
to Save Them?**

There is no Scripture that I am aware of that states such! The Holy Spirit came upon them to empower them for the work of teaching, confirming God's message, and to pass on these Gifts to Christians to help build up the church. When Jesus promised the Holy Spirit to the Apostles, He stated that when He comes He will:

- 1) Teach them all things (John 14:26)
- 2) Testify of Jesus (John 15:26)
- 3) Guide them into all truth (John 16:13)
- 4) Glorify Jesus (John 16:14)
- 5) Equip them to be witnesses into the entire world (Acts 1:8).
- 6) Confirm their message as being from God (Heb. 2:3-4).

Out of some 16 different passages that talk about the activities of the Holy Spirit, none state that He would directly come upon anyone to save them. But, again, it is obvious that the Holy Spirit is involved in bringing about the salvation of mankind.

- 1) We are born of the Spirit (John 3:3-8).
- 2) The Spirit gives life (John 6:63; Rom. 8:2, 10; 2 Cor. 3:6).
- 3) We are washed, sanctified, and justified by the Spirit (1 Cor. 6:11).
- 4) It is by one Spirit that we are all baptized into one body (1 Cor. 12:13).
- 5) We are renewed by the Spirit (Titus 3:5).

But the question again is—"Does He do these things directly or through an instrument that leads to man's salvation?"

The Holy Spirit and the Word

In a previous study we pointed out that what the Spirit is said to do, the Word of God is also said to do—not in the absolute, but in most instances. When we look to see what the Word of God does in conversion, it coincides perfectly with what is said of the Spirit.

- 1) The Word convicts the heart of the sinner (Titus 1:9).
- 2) The Word pricks the heart (Acts 2:37)
- 3) The Word begets us unto God (1 Cor. 4:15; James 1:18; 1 Peter 1:23).
- 4) The Word saves us (James 1:21; Romans 1:16).
- 5) The Word purifies us (1 Pet. 1:22).
- 6) The Word sanctifies (John 17:17).
- 7) The Word cleanses us (John 15:3; Eph. 5:26)

If they both do the same thing, it would seem logical that the Word of God is the means that is used by the Holy Spirit to bring about man's salvation (Eph. 6:17). Romans 10:11-18 makes it very clear that man's salvation depends upon his hearing, believing and obeying the Word preached unto him.

Examples of Conversions Show This

An Overview of Acts:

- 1) 3000—"When they Heard this." (2:37-38).
- 2) 5000—"Many heard the word and believed." (4:4)
- 3) Samaritans—"They believed Philip preaching." (8:12)
- 4) Simon—"He believed also." (8:13)
- 5) The Eunuch—"Philip preached unto him Jesus." (8:35-38)
- 6) Saul—"Shall be told thee what to do" (22:12)
- 7) Cornelius—"Words whereby you shall be saved." (11:14)
- 8) Lydia—"Heard, attended to the things spoken." (16:14)
- 9) Jailer—"Spake unto him the word." (16:32)
- 10) Corinthians—"hearing, believed, and were baptized." (18:8)
- 11) Bereans—"Received the word." (17:2)
- 12) 12 Men at Ephesus—"When they heard this they were baptized." (19:5)

The Conversion of the Gentiles shows this clearly (Acts 10:1-48; 11:1-18):

- 1) Cornelius saw a vision that told him to send for Peter.
- 2) Meanwhile, Peter was given a vision and then told to go with the men from Cornelius.
- 3) Peter came for the purpose of speaking words to them so they could be saved.
- 4) Peter preached to them.
- 5) The Holy Spirit fell upon them like it did on the Apostles at the beginning, and they spoke in tongues.

- 6) Peter was convinced, seeing this outpouring of the Holy Spirit that God wanted the Gentiles to be saved as well as the Jews by an obedient faith.
- 7) So, Peter commanded them to be baptized.

It is obvious that the Holy Spirit was involved in this conversion. It took three miracles to help Peter and the Jewish Christians with him that God wanted the Gentiles to be saved also. The Gentiles were told to do the same thing to be saved as the Jews were (Acts 2:38; Acts 10:43, 47-48). The Holy Spirit gave them power to speak in tongues, but He did not save them by such. They were told Words to believe and be obedient to like everyone else had been told (Acts 11:14).

Concluding Thoughts

For those that would advocate that the Holy Spirit saves a man directly apart from the Word of God, the following things should be honestly dealt with:

- 1) Such a belief contradicts all passages that say that the Word of God saves.
- 2) The Holy Spirit becomes a respecter of persons because He does not convert everyone.
- 3) Preaching to sinners becomes foolishness.
- 4) Such a belief relieves the individual of personal responsibility and accountability.
- 5) It violates man's freedom of choice.
- 6) It contradicts passages that indicate that the Holy Spirit is given to the Sons of God—not sinners (Acts 5:32).

God's Spirit has given us His Word. There is no conversion to God without the preaching of the Word of God (1 Cor. 1:21). There are no Christians where the Word has not gone! Man must respect God's Word, listen to it, believe it, and obey it to be saved.

Questions for Discussion

True or False

- 1. The real issue here is "how" the Holy Spirit converts men to God.
- 2. From the 16 passages that speaks about the activities of the Holy Spirit, there is only one that states that He comes upon a person to save him.
- 3. When the Holy Spirit fell on the Apostles, He saved them.
- 4. What is said that the Holy Spirit does, it also says that the Word does the same thing.
- 5. The New Testament tells us that the Word saves us, not the Holy Spirit.
- 6. Man's salvation depends upon his hearing, believing and obeying the Word preached unto him.
- 7. All 12 cases of Conversions in Acts stated that people were preached to.
- 8. The Holy Spirit came on Cornelius and his household to save them.
- 9. The Gentiles were told to be saved the same way as the Jews were told.
- 10. There is no conversion to God without the teaching of the Word of God.

