

The Holy Spirit

Introduction: There is a great deal of uncertainty and ignorance about the Holy Spirit. Actually, this is true of Deity in general. We are dealing with a subject too big for us, and what we can know is what is revealed. Let us approach the subject of the Holy Spirit in this manner and see what we can learn about Him.

- I. Who or what is the Holy Spirit?
 - A. When God chose words for the Spirit, He chose a word in both the Hebrew and the Greek languages that means breath, wind, disposition, spirit.
 - B. We can find verses where the word for "spirit" has each of these meanings.
 1. Breath (Job 9:18; Acts 17:25).
 2. Wind (Exodus 14:21; John 3:8).
 - C. Sometimes the problem is deciding whether the word spirit means "disposition" or a being known as the "Holy Spirit."
 1. Disposition: "What will ye? Shall I come unto you with a rod, or in love and a *spirit of gentleness*? (1 Cor. 4:21).
 2. Holy Spirit: "Go ye therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matt. 28:19).
- II. But what does the Holy Spirit do?
 - A. Come back to the words translated "Spirit."
 - B. Just as wind *moves* a ship (2 Pet. 1:21), and just as breath animates the body, so the Holy Spirit exerts the influence and power of God.
 - C. Accomplishes His will.
 1. Creation (Gen. 1:2; Job 26:13).
 2. Samson (Judg. 13:25; 14:6).
 3. Conception of Christ in Mary's womb (Luke 1:35).
 - D. The Holy Spirit searched the mind of God and revealed the thoughts of God to men.
 1. The scriptures teach that even before the beginning of time God devised a plan to save men when they sinned (1 Pet. 1:18-19; 1 Cor. 2:6-9).
 2. The revealing work of the Spirit is set forth in passages such as John 14:26; 15:26; 16:13.
 3. It is specifically described in 1 Cor. 2:10-14 and in Eph. 3:3-5.
 4. Even in the Old Testament, men spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit (2 Pet. 1:21).
 - E. The Holy Spirit confirmed the word (Mark 16:17-20; Heb. 2:3-4).
 1. Miracles were not ever meant to be scattered like flower petals at a wedding. They had a specific purpose.
 2. In other words the purpose of miracles was to prove that the word spoken by the apostles was inspired.
 3. Furthermore Mark 16:19-20 shows that the promise of Jesus in Mark 16:17-18 was fulfilled.
 4. This is not therefore a promise to be fulfilled now; it has already been fulfilled.
 - F. Intercedes for us with groanings that cannot be uttered (Rom. 8:26-27).
 1. The word pertaining to the intercession of the Spirit in verse 27 is the same as in 8:34 referring to the intercession of Christ.
 2. But the intercession of the Spirit and the intercession of Christ differ.
 3. The intercession of Christ is that of a Priest offering a sacrifice for the worshiper.
 4. The intercessions of the Holy Spirit means that He greatly helps us with our groanings that cannot be uttered.
 5. He does this by creating in us the mind of the Spirit, a mind that God knows and acknowledges. "So the 'mind of the Spirit' is the mental disposition, or mood, produced by the Spirit. All that the gospel contains stirs up in the heart of the honest searcher, knows the

Acts 4:23-31

mental disposition, the feelings, and aspirations thus produced by the Spirit" (Whiteside's commentary on Romans, p. 186).

6. Thus the Spirit's intercession is accomplished by the teaching of His revelation.
 - G. Produces fruit in us (Gal. 5:16-23).
 1. This fruit is produced by the teaching and training of the Spirit through His revelation.
 2. The garden of the Spirit.
 - H. Everyone would pretty well agree that the Holy Spirit did these things: The scriptures go on to teach, however, that the things the Spirit does for us He does through the word that He revealed, and upon this everyone does not agree.
- III. One of the first things I notice in the scriptures about the Holy Spirit, however, is that He did not by any means speak to everybody, not in the Old Testament, not in the New Testament, now ever.
- A. Today, the going thing seems to be that the Holy Spirit is expected to speak directly to all the children of God. That has never happened.
 1. Throughout the Bible, the Spirit spoke to a selected few who then made known what the Spirit said to others. In the Old Testament the word was made known unto patriarchs, such as Abraham, who shared the word with the family or tribe. Or the word was revealed to prophets who then told others what God had said.
 2. Likewise, Paul says, "But now hath God revealed them unto us through the Spirit . . ." (1 Cor. 2:10).
 3. Who is the "us"? In Eph. 3:5 Paul says it was revealed unto the holy apostles and prophets in the spirit.
 4. If ever the word was expected to be revealed from God to men generally, then there would have been no role for special spokesmen.
- IV. When the New Testament was completed, the testimony of the apostles and prophets had been given and confirmed by the Holy Spirit. There was no further work of revelation or confirmation. At that time miracles of the Spirit ceased.
- A. The revealing of God's will was not expected to be a thing that would go on forever, or else there would have been no need for God to have His word written as it was revealed.
 1. Everything the Bible teaches about God's word indicates that He planned for it to be given in portions until it was completed at which time the revelation process would be completed (Heb. 1:1-2).
 - B. Paul pointed out that miracles would stop (1 Cor. 13:9-10).
 1. The contrast in this passage is between "part" knowledge and "perfect" knowledge.
 2. Therefore "that which is perfect" refers to complete revelation, complete knowledge.
 3. Some say "that which is perfect" is Christ, but Christ is not a "that which." He is a "who which."
 4. Besides there is nothing in the context about Christ's coming.
 5. The subject of the context is things such as speaking in tongues and prophesying, things connected with the incomplete revelation of God's word.
 6. When the full revelation was given, the revealing process would stop, and so would the miraculous confirmation.
- V. Let me show how the Bible clearly teaches that there would be a cessation of miracles.
- A. Remember that Jesus told His **apostles** that the Holy Spirit would guide them into all the truth (John 16:13).
 1. Notice carefully that in Acts 1, Jesus promised someone that they would be baptized in the Holy Spirit not many days later (Acts 1:5).

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2. He told them to wait in Jerusalem for the promise to be fulfilled. Now to whom did Jesus say this? The apostles (Acts 1:2).
 3. On the day of Pentecost the Holy Spirit fell on those who were gathered together, and they began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance (Acts 2:1-4).
 4. Who were these upon whom the Spirit fell? I believe that, again, it was only the apostles. These are my reasons.
 - a. It had been promised to them (Acts 1:2, 5; John 14:26; 15:26; 16:13).
 - b. When the multitude gathered together, one of their comments was, "Are not all these men Galileans?" If the hundred and twenty of Acts 1:15 were included in this group, it is highly unlikely that they would all have been of Galilee, when one considers how many disciples Jesus had in Judea and Jerusalem.
 - c. Some in the audience accused them of being drunk. The text then says, "Then Peter, standing up with the eleven," not "with the 119."
 - d. Peter proceeded to defend himself and the apostles saying, "These men [referring to the 11] are not drunk as ye suppose" (Acts 2:15).
 - e. If the 120 had been baptized with the Holy Spirit, then we would expect to see tongues spoken and miracles being done by all of them, but this is not what we find.
 - (1) We find in Acts 2 that it was the apostles who did miracles (2:43).
 - (2) We find in Acts 3 that it was apostles who did the miracle of healing the lame man.
 - (3) We find in Acts 4:33 that it was the apostles who continued to work miracles.
 - (4) And in Acts 5:12 it was the apostles who were doing miracles, no one else.
 - (5) In fact no one else does a miracle until the apostles laid their hands on other men.
 - (6) In Acts 6 seven men were chosen to assist the apostles in the work of ministering.
 - (7) In Acts 6:6 the apostles laid their hands on them, and promptly we read of one of them, Stephen, doing miracles (Acts 6:8).
 - (8) The next person said to have done miracles was another one of that seven men upon whom the apostles laid their hands, Philip.
- B. Having seen the scriptural proof that only the apostles received the baptism of the Holy Spirit, let me show you the next step in our reasoning.
1. Philip went to Samaria and did signs and wonders (Acts 8:12).
 - a. He converted many people in Samaria.
 - b. They believed and were baptized as Jesus had commanded (Mark 16:15-16).
 - c. But notice that they did not receive the Holy Spirit, and Philip could not give them the Holy Spirit, nor did the Holy Spirit fall upon them.
 - d. The Bible says (Acts 8:14-16).
 - e. The Samaritans had received the word (8:14), had been baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus (8:16), but the Spirit had fallen upon none of them.
 - f. Of the apostles the text says, "Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit" (8:17).
 - g. Simon the sorcerer saw that "through the laying on of the apostles' hands, the Holy Spirit was given," (8:18), and he sought to buy the power to lay his hands upon people to give them the Holy Spirit. The apostles told him that he had neither part nor lot in this matter.
 2. There is one other case where an apostle laid his hand on people and gave them the power of the Holy Spirit (Acts 19:6). There is no case where anyone except an apostle ever laid his hands on anyone and gave them the Holy Spirit.
 3. Sometimes people point to Acts 9:17 where Ananias told Saul (Paul) that the Lord had sent him that "thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Spirit."
 - a. It is true that Ananias had to come and tell Saul what to do to be save, and he had to tell him the Lord's will for him before Saul could receive the Holy Spirit.
 - b. But the reason for Ananias's laying his hands on Saul is specifically state in 9:12: "He

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hath seen a man named Ananias coming in, and laying his hands on him, *that he might receive his sight.*”

- c. Ananias did not give the Holy Spirit to Saul; the Spirit was given to Saul by the Lord Himself, just as the apostles on the day of Pentecost received Him.
4. One other passage is used to attempt to prove that others than the apostles could lay their hands on people to give them the Holy Spirit (1 Tim. 4:14).
 - a. The presbytery would be the elders of a certain congregation, probably the elders of the church at Lystra, where Timothy was a member (Acts 16:1), and from which he set forth to go with Paul to preach the gospel.
 - b. The question is: Was the gift that Timothy was given through the laying on of the hands of the presbytery?
 - c. No, it was with the laying on of the hands of the elders. In other words, at the time the gift was given, the presbyters or elders also laid their hands upon Timothy.
 - d. Then how did Timothy receive his gift? “Through the laying on of my hands” Paul writes in 2 Tim. 1:6.
 - e. But why did the elders lay their hands on him? For the same reason the brethren at Antioch laid their hands on Barnabas and Paul when they set out on the first missionary journey (Acts 13:30), and that was to send them forth on their mission, to wish them success in their work.
- C. So far, we have read of two ways in which men received the Holy Spirit in the New Testament:
 1. Directly from heaven without the laying on of hands (Acts 2; Acts 10).
 2. Through the laying on of the hands of the apostles (Acts 6; 8; 19; 2 Tim. 1:6). There are no other ways described.Before we draw our conclusions, let us deal with one other case.
 1. One of the times we see the Holy Spirit coming directly upon men without anyone laying hands upon them is in the case of Cornelius in Acts 10.
 - a. Peter had been sent for to tell Cornelius and his household what they had to do to be saved (Acts 11:14).
 - b. As he preached to Cornelius and his household, “The Holy Spirit fell on all them that heard the word” (10:44).
 - c. Look at what Peter told his Jewish brethren (11:15-16).
 - d. Peter compared what happened to Cornelius to what happened to the apostles at “the beginning.”
 - e. Experience of Cornelius was different from all the cases in which the apostles laid their hands on people.
 - f. To find a situation like Cornelius’s Peter had to go all the way back to the beginning.
 - g. Why did God pour the Spirit out directly upon Cornelius and “them that heard”?
 - h. Let the scriptures answer. When Peter saw this happen, he said, “If then God gave unto them the like gift as he did also unto us, when we believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I, that I could withstand God?”
 - i. Look at the conclusion of Peter’s brethren (11:18).

VI. A final summation.

- A. God has never spoken generally to all men.
- B. His revelations were ever aimed at a complete communication of His will.
- C. His miracles were given to accomplish His will in some special way, and/or to confirm the words of His spokesmen.
- D. The New Testament is the completion of God’s revelation.
- E. It was delivered through the Holy Spirit to the apostles and prophets, who wrote it so that we might read it and understand it.
- F. The Holy Spirit came directly only upon the apostles and upon Cornelius (and that for a specific

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purpose that was not repeated). All other miraculous giving of the Spirit was through the laying on of the apostles' hands.

- G. When the apostles died, no one was left to confer the Spirit upon anyone.
- H. When those upon whom the apostles had conferred miraculous gifts died, no one was left to work miracles.
- I. Therefore, when the revelation of God was complete, there was a cessation of the miraculous work of the Holy Spirit.
- J. For years I have appreciated the statement of Philip Schaff, one of the greatest of the writers on church history. He said: "The hand of God has drawn a bold line of demarcation between the century of miracles and the succeeding ages, to show ^{by the} ~~the~~ abrupt transition and the striking contrast, the difference between the work of God and the work of man, and to impress us the more deeply with the supernatural origin of Christianity and the incomparable value of the New Testament" (HCC 2:4).

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