

The Spirit Summarized

A man in a light blue button-down shirt and jeans walks across a city street, looking down at a black folder he is carrying. To his left, a glowing, ethereal spirit figure is captured in motion, appearing to be in a dynamic pose. The background consists of tall, multi-story buildings with many windows, suggesting an urban environment. The lighting is dramatic, with a mix of cool blues and warm oranges, possibly from a sunset or sunrise.

Louis Rushmore

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Preface

The Spirit Summarized is the result of a personal effort several years ago to familiarize myself more thoroughly with what the Bible teaches about the Holy Spirit. I was aware that faithful brethren disagree on some fundamentals of this topic. Further, some other brethren are beginning to adopt charismatic and Pentecostal platforms. Therefore, for my benefit first, and second to enable me as a preacher and a teacher to satisfactorily instruct others, I was compelled to engage in this particular study.

I determined to examine all the resources available to me at the time. This task included sifting through the writings of brethren who were published over several preceding decades. Extensive quotations representing a spectrum of perspectives about the Holy Spirit are included herein for reflection.

Doubtless the conclusions at which I arrived about the Holy Spirit are not universally accepted throughout our brotherhood. Yet, I firmly believe that the following is at least generally true and consistent. A certain underlying view of the Holy Spirit is urged upon the readers. Latitude for disagreement is afforded to otherwise faithful brethren. I hope to receive the same consideration in return. Short of ignoring blatant error (e.g., Pentecostalism), we simply acknowledge, “we are brethren” (Genesis 13:8).

Disconcerting, though, is the realization that the written teachings of many brethren over the years are often ambiguous. Furthermore, various students of the Holy Spirit historically have vacillated back and forth in their views. Certainly, some matters concerning the Holy Spirit belong to the meatier matters of the Word of God (Hebrews 5:12-14 KJV).

I do not profess to have learned any new thing or even everything discernible from the Bible about the Holy Spirit. Whenever I study a biblical topic, or generally in life, I attempt to encapsulate things into a compressed and more manageable summary.

For years I have taught *The Spirit Summarized* in churches with which my family labored and by appointment at other congregations. It is presented to you with the hope and the prayer that it will prove edifying.

~ Louis Rushmore

Chapter 1

Introductory Matters

Perception of the manner in which the Holy Spirit *indwells* the Christian is fundamentally related to one's view of every other facet of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, this first chapter briefly identifies the basic concepts of the *indwelling of the Holy Spirit* held by several writing brethren. These positions neither represent the total summary of statements published by brethren, nor does even one of them, apart from the Bible itself, constitute Bible authority in the matter before us. These excerpts simply and concisely identify the two primary differences of thought among faithful brethren relating to the Holy Spirit.

Nearly all our brethren writing about the Holy Spirit begin by devoting many pages to the firm disavowal of the miraculous operation of the Holy Spirit now. Even those who argue for an indwelling of the Spirit apart from the Word of God emphasize no new revelations are received today and no leadings or pronouncements of the Holy Spirit occur today apart from the Word of God. Then, the pages that follow typically lay the ground work for the writer's later contention for his understanding of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the child of God. So, the pages preceding that announcement are colored by the *indwelling of the Holy Spirit chapter* later in the volume.

To this writer, the position that supposes the Holy Spirit indwells the Christian separate and apart from the Word of God is unwarranted, unnecessary and potentially dangerous. It is unwarranted because it is not precisely taught in the Bible—only affirmed by its proponents. What brethren conclude from various passages is rather the point to be proved. This indwelling theory is unnecessary since the Holy Spirit is not empowered to do anything apart from the Word of God. Finally, it is dangerously close to adoption of the erroneous Pentecostal and charismatic platform. There is only one short step away from contending that the Holy Spirit operates directly in salvation, enables the recipient to per-

form miracles, delivers newly inspired revelation or provides contemporary, direct special guidance and leadings.

However, as long as differing brethren can seemingly walk the tightrope without falling into the “*Pentecostal pit*” and joining the “*charismatic circus*,” no test of fellowship is proposed here. Brother Franklin Camp voiced this tolerance of the opposing view in the introduction of his book, *The Work of the Holy Spirit in Redemption*:

...one thing I want to make crystal clear is that I do not believe that any differences about the gift of the Holy Spirit and the indwelling of the Spirit should ever be made a test of fellowship. (ix-x)

The Holy Spirit indwells the Christian through the Word of God.

Franklin Camp

The proposition that the Holy Spirit works only through the Word is one that has stood the test on the polemic platform for more than a hundred and fifty years. ...The main theme of this book sets forth the proposition that the Holy Spirit works through the Word in conversion and sanctification. (ix)

Z.T. Sweeney

...(2 Cor. 6:16)...(Eph. 3:17). Now, if God, Christ and the Spirit dwell in us, is there any teaching that the Spirit dwells in us in a different sense from that in which the Father and the Son dwell in us? ...Gal. 3:2... The above Scriptures clearly teach that when the words, thoughts and Spirit of God are controlling in our lives, God dwells in us; that when the gospel controls us, Christ dwells in us; that when we receive the gospel by the hearing of faith, the Spirit dwells in us. (117-119)

James M. Zachary

Who would be so foolish as to contend that God or Christ dwells in any Christian or church as a veritable personality? ...The personal habitation of God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit is in heaven, and they only dwell in Christians by faith and through the influence of wisely adapted means or medium. The theory of the abstract and direct spiritual influence destroys the personality of the Holy Spirit, turns it into a mute and dumb substance... (51)

Foy E. Wallace, Jr.

Independent of the Word we could never know “whether there be any Holy Spirit.” ...God and Christ never personally occupied anyone; and for the same reason the Holy Spirit does not personally occupy anyone. ...If the Spirit dwells in a person directly he must provide direct testimony for that immediate indwelling in the demonstration of it. The very theory of a direct indwelling exists to accommodate the mysterious influence, but it has no proof. (7)

Guy N. Woods

It seems certain that God, Christ and the Holy Spirit dwell in the hearts of faithful disciples in exactly the same manner, i.e., through the word of truth. He who can see a personal, literal and actual “indwelling” in the words, “The Spirit dwelleth in you,” but nothing more than a representative “indwelling” in the words, “God dwelleth in him” (1 John 4:15 ASV) ...has abandoned all reasonable exegesis. ...The Holy Spirit dwells in Christians today through the word which he inspired. (*Questions and Answers* 279-280)

The Holy Spirit indwells the Christian apart from the Word of God.

V.E. Howard

The Holy Spirit is received as a gift by those who obey the gospel. ...The child of God and the Holy Spirit live in the same house. The temple of God must remain Holy. The body is the only dwelling place of the soul of man. When the man moves out, by reason of death, the body is dead; the temple is unoccupied. If the Holy Spirit is forced to vacate the temple because of sin and unrighteousness, spiritual death is the result. ...The Holy Spirit, as a person, does dwell in the body of a child of God, having begotten life through the seed. Man's own spirit dwells in the natural body, having been begotten through the seed which produces natural life. It is not within the realm of human wisdom to fully understand how this is possible regarding spiritual life, or natural life. It is a fact! (*The Holy Spirit* 167, 169-170, 172)

Elmer L'Roy

The indwelling of the Spirit is not the word of God, the instruction of the Spirit, or one's knowledge of the word ...(Acts 2:38). (82)

T.W. Brents

...Rom. viii: 9-11 ...To our mind, the passage admits of one interpretation, and only one; namely, that the Spirit of God—the Holy Spirit—dwells literally and really in every Christian, and by it God will re-animate his body in the great day. (639-640)

Robert Milligan

...Acts ii, 38. By the gift of the Holy Spirit in this passage we are not to understand the miraculous powers of the Spirit bestowed on the Apostles and many other primitive Christians, but the Holy Spirit itself. (277)

J.W. McGarvey

After commanding the inquirers to repent and be immersed for the remission of sins, Peter adds the promise, “and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” ...The latter expression means, the Holy Spirit as a gift. (44)

E.G. Sewell

When Peter promised the gift of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost to those that would repent and be baptized, he certainly meant more than that the word should be received, for they had by faith already received the truth of the gospel, and their repentance and baptism was still further reception of the word into their hearts and their lives; and then the promise of the Holy Spirit was something beyond this, the reception of which depended upon their obedience to the gospel. ...The gift of the Holy Ghost as mentioned in this passage we understand to be the Holy Spirit himself, which every one that obeyed the commands given had the promise of receiving. It was not pardon... (317-318)

David Lipscomb

The gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38) was the Holy Spirit himself. (318)

How the Holy Spirit indwells a person is mildly disputed. That the Holy Spirit (1) dwells in the child of God (2) and in a non-miraculous way is affirmed heartily and universally by faithful brethren.

Chapter 2

The Holy Spirit: A Divine Person

“Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man’s device” (Acts 17:29). This verse and two other passages (Romans 1:20; Colossians 2:9) specifically cite the “Godhead” and imply *divine personality*. The *number* of divine persons comprising the Godhead from other Scripture is learned to be *three*. Thus, men often apply the human terms “triune” and “Trinity” to God or to the Godhead, suggesting “three persons in one.” These three Divine Persons of the Godhead are uniformly identified in the Bible as God the Father, God the Son (Jesus Christ) and God the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 8:6; John 1:1; Acts 5:3-4). “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost” (Matthew 28:19).

The Bible doctrine of three divine persons in one Godhead is fully documented in God’s Word (Matthew 3:16-17; John 15:26; Romans 15:30). However, man experiences difficulty in fully comprehending the fact of the Godhead because there is nothing on earth to which he can completely compare it. Students of God’s Word accept: (1) the fact of the Godhead and (2) that it is comprised of three divine persons. Whatever divine and personal qualities are biblically ascribed to the Father and to the Son apply equally to the Holy Spirit as well. The Holy Spirit is not in Scripture relegated to consideration as an “it” or a mere influence, and He is not properly addressed as such by mortal man either.

The Holy Spirit Has Personality

The Holy Spirit, like the Father and Jesus (at least before his incarnation), has no physical form (John 4:24; Luke 24:39). However, this does not detract from personality. Personality is the product of personal expression, not physical traits, alone. The absence of personal expression (e.g., among the mentally deficient) does not make one an animal, but personal expression verifies that the one making the ex-

pression is not animal, an “it” or merely an influence. So, the Holy Spirit, because *He* expresses *Himself* is not an “it” or a mere influence.

The Bible applies personal pronouns to the Holy Spirit, incidentally attesting to the individual personality of the Spirit (John 14:26; 15:26; 16:13). The Holy Spirit also is ascribed these personal characteristics by Scripture: (1) He speaks (1 Timothy 4:1). (2) He testifies (John 15:26). (3) He teaches (John 14:26). (4) He guides (John 16:13). (5) He searches (1 Corinthians 2:10). (6) He has a mind (Romans 8:27). (7) He has knowledge (1 Corinthians 2:11). (8) He has affection (Romans 15:30). (9) He has a will (1 Corinthians 12:11). (10) He has goodness (Nehemiah 9:20). (11) He can be grieved (Ephesians 4:30; Isaiah 63:10). (12) He can be despised (Hebrews 10:29). (13) He can be blasphemed (Matthew 12:31-32). (14) He can be resisted (Acts 7:51). (15) He can be lied to (Acts 5:3) (Sweeney 35-39). (16) He chose certain men (Acts 13:2) and (17) He makes intercessions (Romans 8:26) (Howard, *Holy Spirit* 11-12).

The foregoing personal characteristics of the Holy Spirit are tempered with *divine* qualities. The Holy Spirit is: (1) eternal (Hebrews 9:14); (2) omniscient (1 Corinthians 2:10-11); (3) omnipotent (Micah 3:8) and (4) omnipresent (Psalm 139:7, 10). He also participated or participates in: (5) creation (Genesis 1:2; Job 26:13), (6) providence (Psalm 104:30), (7) redemption (John 3:5), (8) the coming resurrection (Romans 8:11) and (9) was the source of miracles (1 Corinthians 12:9, 11) (Sweeney 39-42).

Lastly, as one would expect of a person, the Holy Spirit is addressed in God’s Word by name. (While it is true animals and objects also *may have* names, typically every person does have a name.) Someone has suggested there are “...18 different names used in referring to the Spirit in the Old Testament and 39 in the New Testament for a total of 52 different names in the Bible since five of them are common to both Old and New Testaments” (L’Roy 6). These references include: the Spirit of God; Spirit of the Lord; my Spirit; Holy Spirit; Spirit; thy good Spirit; Spirit of truth; Spirit of Christ; Spirit of the Living God; Spirit of his Son; Comforter; right Spirit; free Spirit; Spirit of wisdom and understanding, of counsel and might of knowledge and fear of the Lord; Spirit of Holiness.

Chapter 3

The Word: The Holy Spirit's Medium of Operation

The Holy Spirit's medium through which He operates is the Word of God. Were some brother so bold as to propose that the Spirit operates anytime apart from this medium, he could not tell precisely *what* the Holy Spirit does or *how* He does it. The moment one announces the *what* and the *how* outside the medium of God's Word, he embraces Pentecostalism and the charismatic, and he denies the Word of God. Rather, "The fact that every effect and influence that the Holy Spirit exerts upon and within us is affirmed of the Word of God proves that the Spirit operates only through the Word..." (Wallace 18).

Brother Foy E. Wallace, Jr. lists thirty-one joint effects of the Holy Spirit **and** the Word of God upon man. Nothing with which the Holy Spirit is charged to do today is accomplished outside the Word of God. (1) The spiritual begetting is with the Word (James 1:18; 1 Corinthians 4:15). (2) The spiritual birth springs from the incorruptible and eternal Word (1 Peter 1:23). (3) The quickening of the heart is with the operation of the Word (Ephesians 2:1, 5; Colossians 2:12-13). (4) The spiritual cleansing is a process of the Word (John 15:2; Ephesians 5:26). (5) The soul is purified in obedience to the Word (1 Peter 1:22). (6) The soul is saved by the implanted Word (James 1:21-22; 1 Corinthians 15:1-2). (7) The justification by faith comes through obedience to the Word (Romans 2:13). (8) Men are filled with spiritual knowledge through application of the word of the Gospel (Colossians 1:5, 9). (9) Members of the church were given inspired instruction to let the Word dwell in them (Colossians 3:16; Ephesians 5:18-19).

Note the two preceding passages are nearly identical, only the former verse names the Word and latter verses mention the Spirit; the Holy Spirit dwells in Christians the way the Word dwells in the same. "And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but

be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord” (Ephesians 5:18-19 NKJV). “**Let the word of Christ dwell in you** richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord” (Colossians 3:16).

(10) The means of direction and guidance is that of being led by the Word (Psalm 119:105; Luke 1:77-79). (11) The witness within the heart of true believers is the Word of Truth (1 John 5:6; John 17:17). (12) The growth of the spiritual babe is by the milk of the Word (1 Peter 2:2; 1:23). (13) The effectual working within is accomplished by the indwelling Word (1 Thessalonians 2:13). (14) The truth within produces fruit without (Colossians 1:5-6). (15) The indwelling truth is the rule by which the followers of Christ walk in the doing of His entire will (2 John 4; 3 John 4). (16) The source of strength is the knowledge of the Word of His grace (Acts 20:32; Colossians 1:10-11). (17) The inspired Word has in it the power to comfort the bereaved (1 Thessalonians 4:18; Romans 15:4; 2 Corinthians 1:3-4). (18) The spirit of grace in the apostolic epistles is set forth as the Gospel of Christ (Acts 20:24, 34; Titus 2:11-12; Hebrews 10:29). (19) The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Gospel (2 Corinthians 4:4-6; Romans 5:5). (The two preceding passages attribute affect on the human heart to the Gospel and to the Spirit.) (20) The Word is said to live within the one who believes it (John 6:35, 51). (21) The Words spoken by Christ engender spirituality in us (John 6:63) “The Holy Spirit cannot make any one more spiritual than the spiritual words of Christ can make him.” (22) The Word within the heart flows outward into the life (John 4:14; 6:31-35; 7:38-39). (23) The entrance of the Word enlightens the heart (Psalm 119:130; 19:8). (24) The source of understanding is the inspiration of the Word (Psalm 119:104; 2 Timothy 3:16-17). (25) The work of sanctification is completed by the Word (John 17:17). (26) Not lending ear to the Word is resisting the Spirit (Acts 7:51; Nehemiah 9:30). (27) The unbelief of the Word is grieving the Spirit (Hebrews 3:7-12). (28) The disobedience to the Word is quenching the Spirit (1 Thessalonians 5:19). (29) The repudiation of the Word is blaspheming the Spirit (Mark

3:28-29; 1 Timothy 6:1; Titus 2:5). (30) The body that is interred in the tomb will be raised at the last day by the Word of Christ (John 5:28-29). (31) The criterion of the judgment will be the Word of Christ (John 12:48) (Wallace 18-34).

After consideration of what the Word of God does for man when it is applied to the soul, what is left for any other agency, including the Holy Spirit, *outside and apart from the Word of God? Absolutely nothing!* “They may continue to chant that the Holy Spirit does it, too—but the incontrovertible conclusion is that the Spirit accomplishes all of it through the Word” (Wallace 34). Further, “**Independent of the Word we could never know ‘whether there be any Holy Spirit’**” (Wallace 7). The Holy Spirit and the Word of God *must* work their works together or in opposition to each other. Whatever the Holy Spirit were to do apart from the Word of God would at the same time indict the Gospel for inefficiency. However, the Bible is *all sufficient* (2 Timothy 3:16-17; John 8:32; Acts 20:32).

Chapter 4

The Work of the Holy Spirit

What Was the Work of the Holy Spirit in the Past?

Not everything the Holy Spirit did in the past is something that He is charged to do today. For instance, as noted in *Chapter Two*, the Spirit participated in creation (Genesis 1:2). After creation, procreation and natural law continue what the Spirit began. Furthermore, the Holy Spirit conveyed new revelation from God to mortal men (2 Peter 1:21), but no new revelations are forthcoming today (Jude 3; Galatians 1:6-9). Also, the Holy Spirit empowered men to perform miracles (1 Corinthians 12:7-11), and yet, they were imperfect, partial and temporary compared to the written revelation of God (1 Corinthians 13:8-13; Ephesians 4:11-13; James 1:25). The Holy Spirit guided the apostles and caused them to remember what Jesus told them during the Lord's earthly ministry (John 14:26; 16:13); there are no apostles today and no survivors from the days of Christ's earthly mission. In short, **nothing the Holy Spirit may have done in the past, apart from the written Word of God, is chargeable to Him to perform today.**

What Is the Work of the Holy Spirit Today?

The Holy Spirit is active in the redemptive process when penitent believers are baptized (John 3:5; 1 Corinthians 12:13). Thus, Bible baptism addresses the whole man—body and spirit. However, the new and spiritually purifying birth is affected "...by the word of God..." (1 Peter 1:22-23; James 1:18; 1 Corinthians 4:15; Ephesians 5:26). This process is easily discerned in Acts Two: (1) the mass heard the Word proclaimed (Acts 2:4, 6-8, 11, 14, 22, 29). (2) Many who were present believed the preaching (Acts 2:37). (3) They were told to repent and to be baptized for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38). (4) Several received the Word and were baptized (Acts 2:41). (5) Those baptized were added to the church by the Lord (Acts 2:47) or translated into the kingdom (Co-

lossians 1:13; 2:12). What John 3:5 attributes to the Holy Spirit in conversion, Acts 2:47 and Colossians 1:13 attribute to Jesus Christ. In both instances, the Word is the medium through which the redemptive process occurs.

Another function of the Holy Spirit today is to teach man, which He does exclusively through the written Word of God. The Holy Spirit delivered Scripture (2 Peter 1:21; Acts 1:16). That Scripture, also called "...the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" (Ephesians 6:17; Hebrews 4:12), enables one to discern between good and evil and become spiritually strong (Hebrews 5:11-14). The spiritually strong or mature can in turn teach others, too.

Sweeney enumerates additional roles of the Holy Spirit today, each of which is inseparably tied to the Word of God. (1) He bears witness with our spirits that we are children of God (Romans 8:16). (2) The Spirit maketh intercession for us (Romans 8:26). "This is not a work done in us nor upon us, but is something done for us before the throne of God." (3) He changes us from glory to glory (2 Corinthians 3:18). (4) One day he will quicken our mortal bodies (Romans 8:11) (Sweeney 131-140).

What the Work of the Holy Spirit Never Was

It was never the work of the Holy Spirit to operate directly on a soul to save it. Yet, the false notion that the Holy Spirit operates directly to save souls is the most prevalently believed doctrine about the Holy Spirit today. This erroneous theory of the direct operation of the Holy Spirit is also responsible for the popularly held belief among our brethren of a literal indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Those brethren claim the literal indwelling of the Holy Spirit occurs, but that the Spirit does not do anything apart from the Word. It's just there, doing nothing! Embracing the proposition of a literal indwelling of the Holy Spirit is dangerously close to also embracing Pentecostalism. Brother Camp noted, "It is impossible to make Pentecostal arguments, find people to accept them, and not end up in the Pentecostal camp" (2). A personal, literal indwelling of the Spirit is the first step and stepping stone to endorsement of the direct operation of the Holy Spirit apart from the Word.

There is no biblical evidence the Holy Spirit ever operated directly on any soul to save it from anything. Were souls saved through direct operation of the Holy Spirit, the conversion of the Ethiopian eunuch would have been an excellent opportunity to record it in Scripture. To the contrary, an angel told Philip to go in the direction of the prospect (Acts 8:26). Then, the Spirit instructed him to go to the eunuch (Acts 8:29). Philip preached Jesus to him and baptized him in water (Acts 8:35-39). Salvation by direct operation of the Spirit would have eliminated (1) the angel, (2) Philip, (3) preaching Jesus and (4) the water.

The theory of the direct operation of the Holy Spirit on the heart of the sinner belongs to John Calvin, not to God. Direct operation of the Spirit is believed necessary because Calvinism presumes man's heart is totally depraved, and in that condition, unable to respond freely to the Gospel. "Calvinists do not deny that the Holy Spirit uses the Word in conversion, but contend that the Holy Spirit must operate directly and in addition to the Word in conversion" (Wallace 26).

There are many problems with the theory of the direct operation of the Spirit that directly conflict with the Bible. Brother Howard makes these observations:

If God should today convert a soul by direct operation of the Holy Spirit, through miraculous intervention, He would set aside the whole scheme of redemption, revealed by the Holy Spirit through the apostles in the New Testament. ...four thousand years of planning, and requisitioning prophets, angels, His own Son, the apostles, and thousands of disciples, in providing the scheme of redemption ...The false theory of the direct operation of the Holy Spirit in conversion would dispense with the gospel. ...The direct operation theory would dispense with the preacher of the gospel. ...(Romans 10:14)...(1 Corinthians 1:21)... (29-30)

Brother Camp adds:

(1) If the Holy Spirit operates directly and apart from the Word, then it must follow that the Word is insufficient.

...If the Spirit operates directly, He must supply something not supplied by the Word. If He supplies something not furnished by the Word, then the Word is insufficient. ... (2) If the Holy Spirit operates directly and apart from the Word, but in a non-miraculous way, then how does one know when the Spirit is operating? This was no problem when the Spirit operated directly and miraculously. There was tangible evidence to establish that it was the Holy Spirit working. "He hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear," (Acts 2:33). ... (3) The direct operation of the Spirit apart from the Word demands a miraculous operation. ... (4) If the Spirit operates directly and apart from the Word, what does the Spirit do? ... (a) The Spirit could not lead contrary to the Word. ... II Corinthians 13:8 ... (b) If the Holy Spirit operated directly, He could not add any new revelation. Jude 3 ... (c) If the Holy Spirit operates directly today, it would be to interpret the Word, for if the sinner can understand the Word without the Holy Spirit interpreting it for him, why could not the Christian? There would be no point giving revelation if it was impossible to understand the revelation when it was given. ... (d) The direct operation of the Holy Spirit in the Christian strikes at the free moral agency in man. (31-34)

Various objections are offered against the insistence that the Holy Spirit operates today exclusively through the Word of God. Again, to brother Camp we turn for a concise list and refutation of these objections.

Brethren that contend for the operation of the Spirit apart from the Word try to dodge the question by saying that the Holy Spirit is not the Word. They attempt to show that if the Holy Spirit operates only through the Word, the Holy Spirit is the Word. No one believes this. The position of the Holy Spirit operating only through the Word does not lead to this conclusion. ... Christ operates in our redemption through his blood. He certainly does not operate in our redemption apart from His blood. Does the fact that

Christ operates in redemption only through His blood mean that Christ becomes only blood? If Christ can operate in redemption only through His blood and not be only blood, why cannot the Holy Spirit operate only through the Word and not become the Word?

...the proposition that the Holy Spirit operates only through the Word that this makes the Bible take the place of the Holy Spirit. ...Either the Bible is a complete and sufficient revelation from God and meets all of our needs, or it's not. ...The question is not, Is the Holy Spirit working today; but, Is He working directly and without means, or is He working by means of the Word? ...**Any claim for any influence of the Holy Spirit apart from the Word would be a miraculous operation.** ...Before the New Testament was written, the Holy Spirit operated through inspired men. Now He operates through the inspired Book. ...Peter was an apostle and the gospel he preached was infallible, but his conduct was not. The Holy Spirit guided his preaching, but it was up to Peter to put into practice what the Spirit revealed.

Some claim that it is the personal indwelling of the Holy Spirit that keeps religion from being ritualistic and legalistic. One of the fallacies in the thinking of those who claim some operation of the Spirit on the Christian apart from the Word is a failure to see the difference in Judaism and Christianity. They think that it is the operation of the Spirit in the Christian that makes the difference between the legalism of Judaism and the spiritual nature of Christianity. ...The difference between the Old and the New Covenants is the provisions made. ...It would be interesting to hear one of them explain how one can become a Christian in obedience to the demands of the gospel, and still have their obedience not be legalistic.

When the proposition is stated that the Holy Spirit operates only through the Word, some ask the question, "What about prayer?" Is the operation apart from the Word es-

essential to prayers being answered? ...If the personal indwelling and the operation of the Spirit apart from the Word are necessary for God to answer prayers, then the following difficulty needs to be explained. Did God hear and answer prayer before the Christian Age? If yes, then the personal indwelling and operation of the Spirit apart from the Word is not essential to God's hearing and answering prayers.

If the Holy Spirit operates only through the Word, then what about providence? ...The eighth chapter of Acts is the prime passage appealed to. Does the example of Philip and the eunuch prove the operation of the Holy Spirit apart from the Word in providence? If this example proves the operation of the Holy Spirit apart from the Word in providence today, then it also proves the direct intervention of angels in providence. ...A second problem arises concerning the claim that it is necessary for the personal indwelling of the operation of the Spirit apart from the Word. The position is that the Holy Spirit sustains a peculiar relationship to the Christian. This relationship began at the first Pentecost after the resurrection of Christ. Thus, the claim is that the Holy Spirit sustains a relationship to the Christian today that He did not during the Patriarchal and the Jewish Age. Question: Did providence operate before the Christian Age? If no, what about Joseph? ...what about the book of Esther? ...third problem ...Is providence limited to Christians? Does God's providential work include sinners? ...Haman's defeat and death were just as much providence working to this end, as it worked for the benefit of the Jews.

...the infidel can memorize the Scriptures. ...Is an operation apart from the Word necessary in conversion? ...If their example concerning the infidel memorizing the Scriptures proves that the Holy Spirit must operate apart from the Word in sanctification, then it even more defi-

nitely proves that the Holy Spirit must operate apart from the Word in conversion, for the infidel is not a Christian. But not only is this true in reference to the sinner, they have the same problem with the Christian. Can a Christian backslide? Can a backsliding Christian memorize the Scriptures? ...It is not merely a matter of their memorizing the Scriptures, it depends upon whether or not they are willing to receive the Word and submit to it. Acts 2:41... (Camp 12-23)

Summary

1. The work of the Holy Spirit is to take the mind of God and make it known to man. 2. It was the work of the Holy Spirit to take the mind of God, give it to man unmixed with error. 3. It was the work of the Holy Spirit to confirm the truth as a divine revelation. Revelation without confirmation would have made it impossible to distinguish between a genuine revelation and a counterfeit one; therefore, confirmation was essential with revelation. (Camp 12)

The Holy Spirit operates today completely within the scope of and exclusively through the Word of God. *He does not operate miraculously today* (1) openly and independent of man as He did in the creation, (2) in conjunction with man as he did through inspired revelation and healing miracles, (3) through prayer or (4) through providence. The next miraculous intervention among men will be the sudden return of the Lord with the accompanying destruction of this world and followed by the Great Judgment.

Chapter 5

The Baptism of the Holy Spirit

When viewed in its biblical light, the baptism of the Holy Spirit is a topic of historical rather than contemporary significance. For instance, all faithful brethren acknowledge that there has not been an occasion of the baptism of the Holy Spirit for nearly 2,000 years. There are facets of the baptism of the Holy Spirit over which good brethren may disagree, but they concur that the baptism of the Holy Spirit is a *past* ministry of the Spirit, which Scriptures indicate will not occur again. Only Pentecostals, charismatics and Calvinists, all of whom discount the Word and opt for the spectacular, contend for the baptism of the Holy Spirit today.

Questions about the baptism of the Holy Spirit include: (1) To whom was the baptism of the Holy Spirit promised? (2) What was the purpose of the baptism of the Holy Spirit? (3) Who received the baptism of the Holy Spirit? (4) How should the baptism of the Holy Spirit be defined? These four general questions entertain subordinate queries as well. (1) Is the promise of the Holy Spirit a promise to each generation including our own? (2) Was the baptism of the Holy Spirit given to men to save them from their sins? (3) Is the baptism of the Holy Spirit required today to enable men to understand the Bible? (4) Did the 120 disciples receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit as well as the twelve apostles? (5) Did Cornelius and his household also receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit? (6) When and where was the baptism of the Holy Spirit received? (7) Does baptism of the Holy Spirit mean the Spirit literally, personally entered the recipients of that baptism? (8) Does the baptism of the Holy Spirit signify the recipients of that baptism only received a certain measure of power from the Spirit? (9) Is there a difference between being “filled” with the Holy Spirit and being baptized with the Holy Spirit? (10) How could it be known when one was baptized with the Holy Spirit; did baptism of the Holy Spirit always produce a miraculous manifestation?

Holy Spirit Baptism Promised

The first biblical mention of the baptism of the Holy Spirit came from the lips of John the Baptist (Matthew 3:11). “I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire.”

On that occasion, people were present from Jerusalem, Judaea and the vicinity of Jordan (Matthew 3:5). Many of the Pharisees and Sadducees also attended (Matthew 3:7). Though one might discern from verse eleven that at least some who were present then were godly souls, verses seven through ten equally indicate that some who were present were not acceptable to God, namely the Pharisees and the Sadducees. Therefore, the promise of the baptism of the Holy Spirit was not to every soul present before John that day. If, then, the promise of the baptism of the Holy Spirit was only to *some* of those in attendance in Matthew Three, to whom in particular was the promise made? Other passages must fall under the Bible student’s scrutiny to appropriately answer that question.

However, before leaving the context of Matthew 3:11, note that *two* different baptisms are attributed to Jesus: (1) “Holy Ghost” and (2) “fire.” The “fire” does **not** pertain to the baptism of the Holy Spirit, but to the phrase in verse twelve that reads, “he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.”

Some of those present that day before John the Baptist were righteous souls, whereas others who were present were not. John promised some of them would receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit and others would receive a baptism of fire, both of which were to be administered by Jesus. At the baptism of Christ, John again identified Jesus as the administrator of the baptism of the Holy Spirit (John 1:32-33). “...he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost.” Jesus Himself claimed to be the administrator of this baptism (Acts 1:5). “For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.”

The *when*, the *who* specifically and the *how* are not recorded in Matthew 3:11 for either the baptism of the Holy Spirit or the baptism of fire. A few of the apostles were present, who later received the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

People today who pray for the baptism of fire pray amiss. Sadly, they may one day receive the object of their earnest prayers to their eternal dismay. The baptism of fire is equivalent to “hell” or the “lake of fire” (Revelation 21:8). Probably, misguided religious folk associate the “fire” of Matthew 3:11 with the “cloven tongues like as of fire” that accompanied the baptism of the apostles in the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:2).

John Chapters Fourteen, Fifteen and Sixteen promise the baptism of the Holy Spirit *exclusively* to the apostles of Christ. The opening verses of John Thirteen show the twelve disciples and the Lord had retired from public scenes for the observance of the Passover. Only the apostles were present to receive the promise of the baptism of the Holy Spirit throughout the following three chapters. Jesus promised the Holy Spirit (also called the Comforter) twice in Chapter Fourteen (John 14:16-17, 26), once in Chapter Fifteen (John 15:26) and once in Chapter Sixteen (John 16:7-15). The apostles alone were the ones to whom Jesus reiterated that promise immediately preceding His Ascension to Heaven.

Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen... And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence. (Acts 1:2-5)

No one besides the apostles were present in either the contexts of John 14-16 or Acts 1:2-5 to receive the promise of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, in the absence of additional passages that (1) also promise the baptism of the Holy Spirit to people other than the apostles, (2) show that others actually received what Jesus promised only to the apostles or (3) teach the purpose of the bap-

tism of the Holy Spirit applies to others than the apostles, **the Bible student must conclude that the promise of the baptism of the Holy Spirit was meant for the apostles alone.** The *promise* of the baptism of the Holy Spirit was to the apostles only. No one has ever been *commanded* to be baptized in the Holy Spirit.

John Chapters 14-16 do contain material applicable today, though the promise of the baptism of the Holy Spirit does not apply to us today. Some statements of Jesus in those chapters were teachings that did not precisely apply to the eleven disciples present (Judas had already left). For instance:

Jesus answered and said unto him, 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. He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me.
(John 14:23-24)

All then present were faithful to Jesus Christ, and therefore loved him.

Our Lord's promise of mansions in Heaven (John 14:1-3), though in the context spoken to the eleven apostles present, applies to other disciples, even today. Several other verses also promise Heaven to godly disciples (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; 2 Corinthians 5:1, etc.). The difference between the promise of the baptism of the Holy Spirit to the apostles only and additional promises made to them in the same context (i.e., Heaven) is primarily twofold. (1) The promise of the baptism of the Holy Spirit is not elsewhere in Scripture promised to or shown to have been received by others than the apostles. (2) The promise of Heaven, etc. is promised in Scripture to others besides the apostles. Some teachings and principles that Jesus taught were part of the Gospel which was committed to men in the evangelizing of the world (Matthew 28:18-20; 2 Timothy 2:2) and not limited to the apostles alone.

Purpose of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit

The purpose of the baptism of the Holy Spirit is identified in the verses cited above in John 14-16. Nowhere does the Bible teach that

the baptism of the Holy Spirit is a *command* to anyone, including souls today or that this baptism ever saved anybody from anything.

The purpose of the baptism of the Holy Spirit corresponds directly to the function of the apostles to whom this baptism was promised. The purpose of the baptism of the Holy Spirit concisely stated was: (1) to teach the apostles (in the absence of a written New Testament such as we have, John 14:26), (2) to cause the apostles to remember the teachings Jesus taught them personally (John 14:26), (3) to enable the apostles to testify (be true witnesses) of Jesus, (4) to guide the apostles into all truth (John 16:13) and (5) to show the apostles of things to come. Summarized, the baptism of the Holy Spirit was intended to infallibly and by inspiration teach the Word of God in the absence of written revelation, the New Testament. **The baptism of the Holy Spirit was not primarily intended to enable its recipients to *understand* Scripture (the Bible), but to *write* Scripture (the Bible).**

Admittedly, there were some accompanying effects of the baptism of the Holy Spirit that are also of special interest to and especially abused by Pentecostals and charismatics. The miracles that the apostles were able to perform after being baptized with the Holy Spirit were not an end of themselves as many today imagine. Miracles simply confirmed the teachings of the apostles to be the Word of God (Mark 16:20; Hebrews 2:3-4). Brother McGarvey in his commentary on the Book of Acts noted the efficiency of miracles to confirm the Word of God.

This power they now received, and upon the exercise of it depends the entire authority of the apostolic teaching. But power to establish the kingdom and to proselyte the world involved not merely the possession of the miraculous mental power above named, but the ability to prove that they did possess it. This could best be done by an indisputable exercise of it. To exercise it, however, by merely beginning to speak the truth infallibly, would not answer the purpose, for men would inquire, How can you assure us that this which you speak is the truth? ...There is, indeed, but one method conceivable, by which they could exhibit this pow-

er to the immediate conviction of a multitude, and that is the method adopted on this occasion, speaking in other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. (26)

Another effect of the baptism of the Holy Spirit on the apostles was the ability to transfer miraculous power (a gift of the Holy Spirit) to others (Acts 8:14-19). This effect of the baptism of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles contributed to the teaching purpose for which this baptism was given to the apostles.

Who Received the Baptism of the Holy Spirit?

Curiously, few if any brethren differ on to whom the promise of the baptism of the Holy Spirit was made, but some difference among faithful brethren exists regarding *who* received it. Of course, among the Pentecostals, charismatics and Calvinists are legions who in their minds remove the subject from historical significance to a daily happening. Among the churches of Christ, faithful brethren uniformly acknowledge that Holy Spirit baptism has not been perpetuated beyond the first century.

Any disagreements among our brethren regarding who received the baptism of the Holy Spirit, therefore, are academic and relatively inconsequential. These differences revolve around the definition of “baptism” in the terms “baptism of the Holy Spirit.” Here, the divergent views will be noted, after which a recommendation will be made. Again, this is not an area in which a test of fellowship must be made as long as all brethren concur that the baptism of the Holy Spirit is a past ministry of the Spirit, not happening today.

Not infrequently, denominational folk claim that the 120 disciples mentioned in Acts One received the baptism of the Holy Spirit occurring in Chapter Two. This assertion is made by these people to bolster their contention that all disciples of all ages receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit in order to (1) work on their hearts, enabling them to respond to the Gospel, (2) illuminate Scripture so it can be understood and (3) assist the believer in living righteously. They imagine that each of these actions occur today separate and apart from the Word of God.

Our brethren who assert that the 120 received the baptism of the Holy Spirit, however, make no claims for the extension of the baptism of the Holy Spirit past the age of miracles, limited to about the close of the first century or shortly thereafter. Brother David Lipscomb wrote that the 120 received whatever the apostles received in Acts 2:1-4, and indicated it was a popular belief in his day. Interestingly, though, Lipscomb believed Acts 2:1-4 was not a reference to the baptism of the Holy Spirit, but to the gift of the Holy Spirit which the 120, including the apostles received then. He places the baptism of the Holy Spirit on the apostles at another, perhaps undisclosed time.

We have never heard it called in question that the whole one hundred and twenty were present. If the hundred and twenty were present the days preceding Pentecost, when Matthias was chosen in lieu of Judas, certainly there were additional reasons why all should be present on Pentecost. There will always be a difference in opinion as to whether more than the apostles received the gift of the Spirit on that day. We think likely the tongues like as of fire sat upon each of the apostles, but that all in the room received this outpouring of the Spirit, but in different degrees. ... The apostles received the greatest measure of it. ... We are constrained to believe that none on that day received the apostolic measure of the Spirit, because then all would have been apostles. (Lipscomb and Sewell 56-57)

Brother Lipscomb believed that Joel's prophecy denoting both genders would receive miraculous power was fulfilled on the Pentecost following the Ascension of the Lord. The above is his rationale toward that end. T.W. Brents also believed that the 120 were the ones filled with the Spirit in Acts Two (582-583). Brother Brents further agrees with Lipscomb that none present on Pentecost received the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Probably most of our brethren recognize that the apostles received the baptism of the Holy Spirit in Acts Two. They understand that the 120 were not present and did not receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit. With this view I heartily concur.

Reviewing to whom the promise of the baptism of the Holy Spirit was made (John 14-16; Acts 1:2-5) alleviates any difficulty in determining *who* received that baptism. The apostles alone were the ones exclusively to whom the baptism of the Holy Spirit was promised. Therefore, only the apostles were the recipients of this unique baptism of the Spirit. Examination of the fulfillment of this promise bears out the event according to the promise, not contrary to it.

Acts One opens with Jesus addressing His apostles (Acts 1:2-8). He reminded them of his earlier promise to them that they should be baptized with the Holy Spirit (verse 4), alluded to John's earlier promise that some should be baptized with the Spirit (verse 5) and told the apostles to wait in Jerusalem for the baptism of the Holy Spirit (verse 8). (Incidentally, Jesus interpreted John the Baptist's reference to the baptism of the Holy Spirit and applied it to the apostles alone. No one else was present when Jesus made the application.)

Later in the first chapter of Acts, the apostles and other brethren totaling about 120 were gathered together. At this time Matthias was chosen to replace Judas in the apostleship (Acts 1:13-26). The first verse of Chapter Two suggests a time, perhaps days, intervened between the selection of Matthias and the arrival of Pentecost. Pentecost would be "fully come" with the commencement of the daylight hours, whereas, by the Jews' reckoning of time, the day began at 6:00 p.m. the previous evening.

Almost uniformly, if not altogether so, among contemporary brethren, the context of Acts 2:1-4 is understood to chronicle the baptism of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles and upon them alone. Overlooking the somewhat unfortunate and arbitrary "Chapter Two" division supplies the needed antecedent for the pronouns that indicate *who* received that baptism.

...the antecedent of the pronoun "they" in Acts 2:1, is not the hundred and twenty of Acts 1:15, but "the eleven apostles" in Acts 1:26. Thus, only the apostles "were all together in one place." Only the apostles "were filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance" (Acts 2:1, 4). The allega-

tion that others were in the building where the apostles were assembled and that while only the apostles received the baptism of the Spirit, others received a measure of the Spirit of less degree, is utterly groundless. (Woods 51)

J.W. McGarvey adds:

It is indisputable that the antecedent to they is the term apostles; and it is merely the division of the text into chapters, severing the close grammatical connection of the words, which has hid this most obvious fact from commentators and readers. The apostles alone, therefore, are said to have been filled with the Holy Spirit. This conclusion is not only evident from the context, but it is required by the very terms of the promise concerning the Holy Spirit. It was to the apostles alone, on the night of the betrayal, that Jesus had promised the miraculous aid of the Spirit, and to them alone he said, on the day of Ascension, “You shall be immersed in the Holy Spirit.” It involves both a perversion of the text, and a misconception of the design of the event, to suppose that the immersion in the Holy Spirit was shared by the whole hundred and twenty. (24-25)

Further, doubtless not all the 120 disciples were Galilaeans, but the auditors of those affected by the baptism of the Holy Spirit recognized the ones speaking as Galilaeans (Acts 2:7). Formerly, angels dubbed the apostles “men of Galilee” following the Ascension of our Lord (Acts 1:11). This important evidence points to the select group of disciples, the apostles, as the ones singled out by the multitude and upon whom the baptism of the Holy Spirit took place.

The antecedent, “apostles,” to the pronouns in Acts 2:1-4 is contained in the phrase “and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.” In Acts Two, Peter, one of the apostles, standing with the other eleven apostles, addressed the multitude to explain the miraculous manifestations of the Holy Spirit that had confounded the masses. “But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them...” (Acts 2:14). The multitude focused their

attention upon the *twelve apostles only*, who were natives of Galilee and who were demonstrating a miraculous manifestation resulting from the baptism of the Holy Spirit upon them.

The apostles, then, only received the baptism of the Holy Spirit in direct fulfillment of Jesus' previous promises to them alone. **No fewer than all the apostles and no one along with the apostles received the baptism of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost.** This is precisely what one should legitimately expect, no more and no less, from the promise made concerning the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

However, good brethren contend that Cornelius and his household also received the baptism of the Holy Spirit (Acts 10 and 11). Teaching that Cornelius also received Holy Spirit baptism is ill-advised because, as already noted, the baptism of the Holy Spirit was not promised to anyone except to the apostles. Yet, it is not a subject over which heated controversy should arise as long as whatever transpired at Cornelius' home is viewed as an historical event that no longer occurs. We should only become alarmed were brethren to assert: "The baptism of the Holy Spirit received by Cornelius and his household shows that every successive generation, including the present one, should expect to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit."

Baptism of the Holy Spirit Defined

The effect of the Holy Spirit on Cornelius and his household is classed by some brethren as the baptism of the Holy Spirit, whereas other brethren, of which I am one, do not consider this the baptism of the Holy Spirit. The pivotal point determining one's perception is the *definition* of "baptism" in the phrase "baptism of the Holy Spirit." Brother L'Roy neatly assesses the matter.

If one defines the concept to mean being overwhelmed by the Holy Spirit and receiving power and authority to be an apostle, then only one recorded baptism of the Holy Spirit is in the New Testament. There would have of necessity have been two occasions since Paul would have received an unrecorded baptism in the Spirit. If one defines Holy Spirit baptism as the sudden outpouring from on high without human intervention or expectation, there are two

recorded incidents of Spirit baptism; namely, Pentecost and Cornelius. (36)

In the strictest sense, there is no biblical record of a *definition* of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. There exists in Scripture the promise of it and passages describing its occurrence. Brother McGarvey cites the lack of definition and proceeds to discuss the occurrence. The following quotations by brethren Guy N. Woods and Foy E. Wallace, Jr. complement McGarvey's observations. From examination of the enactment of Spirit baptism, these three scholars derive a definition for the baptism of the Holy Spirit that is warranted and consistent with the biblical account.

This is the immersion in the Holy Spirit which had been promised by Jesus, and for which the apostles had been waiting since his Ascension. ...There is not, in the New Testament, a definition of the immersion in the Holy Spirit, but we have here what is possibly better, a living instance of its occurrence. ...The immersion, therefore, consists in their being so filled with the Holy Spirit as to be attended by a miraculous physical power, and to exercise a miraculous intellectual power. (McGarvey 25)

The apostles were "filled" with the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:4). This filling was figurative, not literal; and it refers to the endowment of power which was theirs, and not to a literal infusion of the Spirit. A few days later, following the memorable Pentecost day, the apostles were again "filled" with the Holy Spirit. If the filling was literal, had they lost their earlier reception? And, if the filling was literal and was the baptism of the Spirit, were they again baptized in the Holy Spirit on the occasion described in Acts 4:23-31? Thoughtful people will surely perceive that the pouring out of the Spirit, the filling of the Spirit and the baptism of the Spirit designated the bestowal of power upon the apostles by the Spirit and that the terms used are metaphorical, and not literal representations of what occurred. ...the measures of the Spirit were measures of amounts of power which the Spirit

exercised through those endowed, and not literal affusions of the essence of deity—the Spirit. The Spirit is a Person—not merely an influence. The influence which the Spirit wields today is solely through means—the Word of God which he (the Spirit) gave us. (Woods 51)

It was not the manner of the Holy Spirit's descent from heaven that constituted the baptism of the Spirit, but their being filled or overwhelmed or endued and clothed—it was the result, not the manner of descent, that defines the Holy Spirit baptism, which the apostles only received. (Wallace 99)

In the broadest possible sense, if the baptism of the Holy Spirit is solely defined as *the bestowal of measures of the Spirit and amounts of power that the Spirit exercised through those endowed*, one might be allowed to say every miraculous manifestation of the Holy Spirit in essence represented some degree of baptism in the Holy Spirit. In such a proposition, the Holy Spirit is the source of all miraculous power. The apostles received a certain amount of power, presumably Cornelius and his household received a lesser degree of power and those upon whom the apostles laid their hands to transfer power also received a degree of miraculous power. Accordingly, some of our good brethren affirm Cornelius and his household, in addition to the apostles, received the baptism of the Holy Spirit. I am not aware of any brethren, who claim that Cornelius received the baptism of the Holy Spirit, affirming that as an apostle, Cornelius laid his hands upon others to transfer a miraculous gift of the Holy Spirit.

It appears to me that the *manner* in which miraculous power was received in Acts Two and Acts Ten cannot legitimately be made the lone criteria for defining the baptism of the Holy Spirit. The effect of the baptism of the Holy Spirit must be permitted its voice in defining the matter. Admittedly, the affect was greater upon the apostles than upon Cornelius and his household. Yet, the miraculous power received in Acts Ten and Eleven is more nearly like what those upon whom the apostles laid their hands received from the Spirit. Therefore, if the definition of the baptism of the Spirit equates to receiving a measure of miraculous power, then

advocates of Holy Spirit baptism at the house of Cornelius should be inclined to admit Holy Spirit baptism (but in a lesser degree, of course) was received by everyone else who received miraculous power in the first century. If some brother were to adopt this proposition I would not argue with him as long as he continued to acknowledge the long since cessation of miracles. However, I strongly disagree with such a proposition and the theory that Cornelius and his household received the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

In the strictest sense, **the baptism of the Holy Spirit must be restricted to the apostles alone.** First, the promise of the baptism of the Holy Spirit makes provision for the apostles *only* to receive it (John 14-16; Acts 1:2-8). On Pentecost, the apostles rather than the 120 received the baptism of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:26; 2:1-14).

Second, the degree of miraculous power received by the apostles, resulting from the baptism of the Holy Spirit, markedly differed from the degree of miraculous power received by all other recipients of miraculous power in the first century (2 Corinthians 12:12). This includes the occasion at Cornelius' house.

In the final analysis, **application of the baptism of the Holy Spirit to the household of Cornelius interferes with the only known promises of the baptism of the Holy Spirit.** Further, a revised definition of the baptism between Acts Two and Ten must be made before what occurred at Cornelius' house can be called the baptism of the Holy Spirit. After that is done, the baptism of the Holy Spirit is less by definition than it was in Acts Two.

Agreed, the *purpose* for which the Holy Spirit made his presence known at Cornelius' house was different from the Pentecost occasion. Further, the way the Holy Spirit visited Cornelius' home was similar to the Pentecost event. However, the biblical definition of the baptism of the Holy Spirit is determined chiefly by the promise of it announced before its occurrence, and second by the degree of its affect upon the apostles in Acts Two. Further analysis of the Cornelius episode in the Spirit's miraculous ministry more nearly corresponds to the gift or gifts of the Holy Spirit received through the agency of the apostles. **The promise and the Acts Two fulfillment of the baptism of the Holy Spirit do not have to be explained away if application of Spirit baptism is *not* applied to Cornelius.**

Chapter 6

The Case of Cornelius and His Household

Brethren often affirm that a second baptism with the Holy Spirit (the first being in Acts 2:1-4) transpired at the household of Cornelius. “The one and only other case of Holy Spirit baptism we read about in the New Testament is that of Cornelius and his household...” (Gnanasundram 17). “The idea of being baptized ‘with the Holy Spirit’ appears in the Bible only five times: in Matthew 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; Acts 1:4; and 11:16” (Olbricht 95). However, whether it might be correctly said that Cornelius and those with him received the baptism of the Holy Spirit or a gift of the Holy Spirit revolves around one’s definition of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. It is not crucial to fellowship that all brethren, who already admit the Spirit’s miraculous ministry has long since past, concur on this matter. However, an examination of this biblical event is not without its value, too. The context of Acts Chapters Ten and Eleven contains useful information about the Holy Spirit and His work.

Brethren differ regarding whether Cornelius and his household received the baptism of the Holy Spirit or a gift of the Holy Spirit. Agreed upon by all are these points: (1) Miraculous power was received from Heaven without human intervention. (2) The purpose of this singular event was to assure Peter and all potential critics that the Gentiles too were subject to the call and blessings of the Gospel. (3) The miraculous power received that day was speaking in tongues, the same miracle exhibited by the apostles when they were baptized with the Holy Spirit.

The question is **not**, “Did Cornelius and others then present receive miraculous power from Heaven without human intervention?” The question is **not**, “Was that miraculous manifestation similar to the miracles in Acts Two?” The question does **not** concern the differences in purpose from the Acts Two event to the

Acts Ten and Eleven happening. The real question is, “What should we call it?” It just so happens, though, whatever the event at Cornelius’ house is called reflects on the definition of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Whatever the Cornelius incident of the Spirit’s work is dubbed also affects both the promise and earlier known fulfillment of the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

In the strictest sense, the baptism of the Holy Spirit must be restricted to the apostles alone. First, the promise of the baptism of the Holy Spirit makes provision for the apostles *only* to receive it (John 14:16; Acts 1:2-8). On Pentecost, the apostles *only* received the baptism of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:26; 2:1-14).

Second, the degree of miraculous power received by the apostles, resulting from the baptism of the Holy Spirit, markedly differed from the degree of miraculous power received by all other recipients of miraculous power in the first century (2 Corinthians 12:12). This includes the occasion at Cornelius’ house, unless someone can prove Cornelius and as many family and friends who were with him were also apostles.

The application of the baptism of the Holy Spirit to the household of Cornelius not only interferes with the promises of the baptism of the Holy Spirit, but it requires a revised definition of the baptism between Acts Two and Ten. After that is done, the baptism of the Holy Spirit is less by definition than it was in Acts Two.

However, what appears obvious to me respecting “The Case of Cornelius **and His Household**” is not obvious to other students of God’s Word. For instance, brethren Guy N. Woods (259-260) and J.W. McGarvey (138-139) each penned in their respective writings their belief that Cornelius and those with him received the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Another writer wrote, “With reservation we call Cornelius’ a baptism of the Holy Spirit” (L’Roy 37).

Those of this persuasion conclude the *manner in which* miraculous power was received in Acts Two and Ten (without human intervention) constitutes baptism in the Spirit. Yet, they characteristically are quick to differentiate between the *degree* or *measure* of baptismal miraculous power received by the apostles versus those in Acts Ten and Eleven. **Functionally**, what Cornelius and those with him received was equal to a *gift of the Holy Spirit* ordinarily

obtained by the imposition of apostles' hands. L'Roy denies the proposition that the degree of miraculous power obtained by the apostles and the miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit received by others are all baptism in the Spirit (except for the Cornelius episode). "We reject the idea that every 'gift' of the Spirit is 'baptism' as being unsound and confusing" (37). A *disclaimer* of this sort is necessary only because the position that Acts Two and Ten both record instances of the baptism of the Holy Spirit implies that *all* reception of miraculous power resulted from the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

The *purpose* for which the Spirit visited the household of Cornelius is also thought by some to support the proposition of the baptism of the Holy Spirit at Cornelius' home. Not that the purpose of the baptism of the Holy Spirit (John 14-16; Acts 2) was the same purpose in Acts Ten and Eleven, but the appearance of the Spirit at Cornelius' was for a singularly important reason. It was to show all critics that Gentiles too were amenable to and recipients of the blessings of the Gospel. "The sudden falling of the Spirit on Cornelius was not—we repeat, was not—to make him or anyone an apostle nor to empower him to reveal or confirm the word of truth" (L'Roy 37). So, though an important reason, yet a different purpose from the purpose of the baptism of the Holy Spirit itself, is thought sufficient to warrant the repetition of the baptism of the Spirit on some others than the apostles. An argument for the baptism of the Holy Spirit on Cornelius, his family and friends would better be supported by conformity of purpose between Acts Two and Acts Ten, rather than different purposes. In addition, an argument for the baptism of the Spirit at Cornelius' would better be supported by conformity of purpose between the promise of the baptism of the Holy Spirit (John 14-16) and the purpose of the Spirit's presence at the home of Cornelius.

All recipients of the same thing, in this case the baptism of the Holy Spirit under consideration, received the same thing. The foregoing statement seems redundant and obvious, but **good brethren would have Cornelius and all those gathered with him both receive the same thing the apostles formerly received and at the same time not receive the same thing the apostles received.**

There can be no degrees in Holy Spirit baptism. Any two men baptized in the Holy Spirit would have equal measure of it. ...Paul declared in 2 Corinthians 11:5 that he was “not a whit behind the very chiefest apostle.” There was no such thing as measures of Holy Spirit baptism, or of a limited Spirit baptism. If Cornelius had been baptized in the Holy Spirit he would have possessed all powers imparted by it and belonging to it. He would not have been inferior to the apostles of Christ in any respect; he would have known all that the apostles knew, and could have done all that the apostles did, and it would not have been necessary for Peter to have told him anything. ...The Old Testament records that Balaam’s ass employed the tongue of a man, but I dare say that no one would claim that the ass was baptized in the Holy Spirit! (Wallace 101-103)

Remember, what the donkey received was obtained without human intervention and was to the dumb beast a language in which he had not been schooled. He, though, spoke the Word of God. Also, if it is necessarily confessed (to preserve the proposition) that Cornelius was a Gentile apostle since he received what the apostles received, other Gentiles about whom we know nothing were apostles, too. Imagine, the number of apostles may have been more than doubled that eventful day recorded in Acts Ten. There easily could have been women also in that number at Cornelius’ home who purportedly received the baptism of the Holy Spirit and became apostles. Just a little shift in defining the baptism of the Holy Spirit has significant and far-reaching ramifications!

What Does the Text Say?

The specific contexts that pertain to the question lying before us are: (1) Acts 10:44-47, the event, recorded by Luke and (2) Acts 11:15-17, Peter’s rehearsal of the event, recorded by Luke.

While Peter yet spake these words, **the Holy Ghost fell on all them** which heard the word. And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that **on the Gentiles was**

poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. For they **heard them speak with tongues**, and magnify God. Then answered Peter, Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have **received the Holy Ghost as well as we?** (Acts 10:44-47)

And as I began to speak, **the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning.** Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost. For as much then as **God gave them the like gift** as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; what was I, that I could withstand God? (Acts 11:15-17)

The above event was complemented by (1) a vision and a heavenly prompting (Acts 10:9-17; 11:5-10), (2) the bidding and instruction of the Spirit (Acts 10:19-20; 11:12), (3) attendance by an inspired apostle—Peter (Acts 10:23ff), (4) witnessed by Jewish Christians (Acts 10:23, 45; 11:12) and (5) recorded by an inspired penman (Luke). Other than the resurrection of Jesus Christ, possibly no other single Bible event is more clearly ratified by sundry testimony than the visit of the Spirit to the household of Cornelius. At least, the facts of the visit of the Spirit to Cornelius' are plainly evident and sufficiently proved to be incontestable by brethren nearly 2,000 years ago or even now. Of course, the aim of the array of these facts then was to prove that the Gentiles had a right to obey the Gospel and to become its beneficiaries, whereas, presently, we have another reason for addressing them. However, we should be able to ascertain from the same information what occurred beyond any reasonable doubt. If we can derive from the context what brethren then apparently understood regarding the episode in Caesarea, it will suffice.

“...the Holy Ghost fell on all them...” (Acts 10:44). Acts 11:15 repeats the same information with the addition of **“...as on us at the beginning.”** These phrases only indicate that what occurred at the home of Cornelius was without human intervention, similarly as what occurred in Acts Two was also without human administration.

“The statement of Peter in Acts 11:15, ‘as upon us at the beginning’ indicates of *manner* and not the *measure* of the reception...” (Wallace 101). Naturally, Peter remembered Pentecost on which he received miraculous power. This led him to also remember the promise preceding Pentecost made by John the Baptist of what he received in Acts Two. However, **neither Peter, the vision, the heavenly voice, the Spirit, the Jewish witnesses nor Luke anywhere stated that what Cornelius received was the baptism of the Holy Spirit.** To the contrary, “Two places, chapter 10:45 and 11:17, refer to this outpouring as a ‘gift’ and not as the baptism, and it is nowhere directly called the baptism” (Wallace 101).

“...on the Gentiles also was poured out the **gift** of the Holy Ghost” (Acts 10:45). Acts 11:17 adds, “...God gave them the like **gift** as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ . . .” In both chapters, the affect of the Spirit was said to be a miraculous *gift* of the Holy Spirit, not a *baptism* of the Holy Spirit. Also, note that the comparison made is not between what the apostles received versus what Cornelius received, but between what the Jews received versus what the Gentiles received. The phrase “...who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ...” includes more than merely the apostles to include those upon whom the apostles had laid their hands to transfer miraculous power. The six Jewish brethren (Acts 10:23; 11:12), “...they of the circumcision which believed...” (Acts 10:45), observed “...on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost.” Their astonishment was that the Gentiles received the gift of the Holy Spirit as they had also. **Their amazement was not that the Gentiles received the baptism of the Holy Spirit which they had not received.**

Further, the “like gift” refers to the similarity in manifestation of miraculous power, perhaps inclusive of the direct way it was received without human participation, but certainly respecting the miraculous demonstration—namely, speaking in languages in which one had not been schooled. Therefore, Acts 11:17 is compared with Acts 10:46. Speaking in tongues in which one was not schooled or otherwise familiar was the Spirit’s demonstration on Pentecost through the apostles after their baptism in the Holy Spirit. The same miraculous manifestation accompanied the Spirit’s visit to the home

of Cornelius. Too, speaking in tongues (unfamiliar languages) was one of the manifestations of the Spirit through those upon whom the apostles had laid their hands. Under no valid definition of “like” does it support the notion Cornelius received exactly the same thing the apostles received—the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

“...which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?” (Acts 10:47). This phrase cannot refer to the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Beyond any doubt, Peter was the only apostle present when he uttered this statement. Therefore, he was the only one among the Jews to whom he was speaking who had been baptized with the Holy Spirit. Peter merely cited that the Gentiles had received miraculous power from the Holy Spirit as had the Jews. He did not address the manner of reception, the gift of the Holy Spirit or the baptism of the Holy Spirit. He only cited Gentile reception of miraculous power (compared to miraculous power that he and other Jews had before received) to prove God had accepted both. Therefore, the Gentiles were also acceptable to God and should be baptized. **The “we” who had received miraculous power were (1) Jewish, (2) six non-apostles and (3) one apostle.** The common denominator, then, was the reception of miraculous power from the Holy Spirit without consideration of (1) manner of reception, (2) purpose of reception or (3) extent of miraculous ability.

Neither Cornelius, his kinsmen, nor his near friends, nor anyone besides the apostles ever received the baptism of the Holy Spirit. The baptism of the Holy Spirit was not promised to anyone other than the apostles. The purpose of the baptism of the Holy Spirit is not consistent with its reception by anyone other than the apostles. The application of the baptism of the Holy Spirit to anyone beyond the apostles dilutes and confuses the definition and the biblical doctrine of the Spirit’s baptism. The application of the baptism of the Holy Spirit to anyone other than the apostles is wholly unnecessary to the legitimate exposition of Scripture. Finally, one of the correct answers to modern proponents of the direct operation of the Holy Spirit is: (1) The baptism of the Holy Spirit was promised to and received exclusively by the apostles. (2) The only other New Testament bestowal of miraculous power without human administration was singly applied at the house of Cornelius

to signal admission of the Gentiles to Gospel amenability and blessings. (3) So, since no one today qualifies for apostleship (Acts 1:21-22), the baptism of the Holy Spirit upon men now is disallowed. (4) Since the Jews and the Gentiles, encompassing all humanity, are already amenable to and may enjoy the blessings of the Gospel (Romans 1:16), there remains no occasion for a repetition of the reception of miraculous power in the way it was received by Cornelius. The New Testament also teaches about the *temporary*, inferior nature (1 Corinthians 13:8-13; Ephesians 4:11-13) and purpose (Mark 16:20; John 20:30-31; Hebrews 2:3-4) of miracles. The apostles further transmitted miraculous power by the imposition of their hands (Acts 8:14-18; 19:1-6), which hands are now stilled by death.

Chapter 7

The Indwelling of the Holy spirit

The way the Holy Spirit indwells a Christian is *implied* in previous chapters of this treatise. Hitherto, the personality of the Holy Spirit and that the Holy Spirit functions through the Word of God, not apart from it, point toward how He indwells a Christian. Hence, foregoing chapters herein do not favor the view of a literal, personal, bodily indwelling of the Holy Spirit within the Christian.

The baptism of the Holy Spirit and the case of Cornelius and his household, already addressed in previous chapters, **do not** pertain to the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Yet, typical, denominational interpretation of these two events attributes the miraculous manifestations to the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Whatever one believes about the manner in which the Holy Spirit indwells a person affects his view of every other facet of the Holy Spirit. An erroneous view regarding *how* the Holy Spirit indwells either enhances or hinders a wide spectrum of biblical interpretation and application.

The following passages may not represent all Scriptures to which one may turn in his study of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. However, they constitute a significant repository of the Word of God with which this chapter's topic may be satisfactorily pursued to a valid, biblical conclusion.

The Indwelling of the Holy Spirit

It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life. (John 6:63)

And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall dream dreams: And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy: [38-39] Then Peter said unto them, Re-

pent, 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. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call. [5:32] And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him. (Acts 2:17-18, 38-39; 5:32)

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. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you. ...but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God. (Romans 8:9-16)

Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? [6:19] What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? (1 Corinthians 3:16; 6:19)

This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? [4:6] And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. (Galatians 3:2; 4:6)

And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord. (Ephesians 5:18-19)

Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit. (1 John 4:13)

The Indwelling of God, the Indwelling of Jesus Christ, the Indwelling of the Word of God and the Indwelling of Man

“And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.” (2 Corinthians 6:16)

“That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith...” (Ephesians 3:17)

“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.” (Colossians 3:16)

“And 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. [4:12, 13] No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us. Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit. [15] Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God.” (1 John 3:24; 4:12, 13, 15)

Who Indwells Whom?

Note from the passages above who is indwelling whom. Not only does the Holy Spirit dwell in the Christian, but also: (1) God dwells within the Christian. (2) Jesus Christ dwells within the

Christian. (3) The Word dwells in the Christian. (4) The Christian dwells in God, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit.

In view of the biblical evidence that not only the Spirit dwells in the child of God, but each member of the Godhead indwells the Christian, is there the least justification for the notion that the Holy Spirit dwells in one *differently* from God or Jesus Christ? **Since each person of the Godhead dwells within the child of God, why should there be so much emphasis on the indwelling of the Holy Spirit?** Why is the indwelling of the Holy Spirit singled out from the indwelling of God and Jesus Christ? The intensity with which the indwelling of the Holy Spirit is often addressed is due to the influence of Calvinism. Had John Calvin, or someone else theorizing as he did, not erroneously concluded that the direct operation of the Holy Spirit upon a sinner is essential for one to be saved by the Gospel, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit would not have become paramount in the minds of religious people—including many of our brethren. The indwelling of the Holy Spirit would not have overshadowed the indwelling of God, the indwelling of Jesus Christ, the indwelling of the Word or the indwelling of man in God.

Noting the indwelling of the Christian in God, is there the least justification for the notion that the Holy Spirit dwells in one differently from man's dwelling in God? Why emphasize the Holy Spirit's indwelling of man over man's indwelling of God? The same process through which God indwells man facilitates man's indwelling of God (1 John 3:24; 4:13). Calvinism has ushered the indwelling of the Holy Spirit into the arena of fascination. Even attempts at biblical exegesis by brethren are often overshadowed by Calvinism.

The indwelling of the Holy Spirit does not deserve more emphasis than the indwelling of God, Jesus Christ or the Word in man, or the indwelling of man in God. The emphasis of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit while virtually ignoring the indwelling of God, Jesus Christ, the Word and man dwelling in God is tantamount to another patent mistake in the religious community—selectively appreciating Scripture.

For instance, denominationalism often emphasizes one element to which Scripture ascribes saving power (such as faith, John 3:16) to the exclusion of other elements to which the Bible also attributes

redemptive qualities (such as repentance, Luke 13:3; confessing Christ, Romans 10:9-10; and especially baptism, Mark 16:16).

Respecting the elements to which Holy Writ assigns saving power, each of those elements either works together for the salvation of souls or works against each other (making the Bible therefore contradictory and false). Hearing the Word of God exclusively (Romans 10:17), believing that Word alone (Mark 16:16), repenting of sins (Acts 17:30), confessing Christ (Matthew 10:32), being immersed in water for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38; Colossians 2:12), the blood of Christ (Ephesians 1:7), the mercy of God (Titus 3:5), the grace of God (Ephesians 2:8), hope (Romans 8:24) and every other element to which the Bible attributes saving power work together for the salvation of souls.

Likewise, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, God, Jesus Christ and the Word in man, and the indwelling of man in God, are more nearly alike and relatively equal than different. Each case of indwelling either works together or they are antagonistic toward each other (making the Bible contradictory and false).

How Does Indwelling Occur?

The question is not *only* how the Holy Spirit indwells the Christian, but *how does indwelling occur*. Remember, God, Jesus Christ and the Word dwell within the Christian along with the Holy Spirit. Further, the Christian dwells in God, too.

Ascertaining from Scripture how “indwelling” *occurs* will answer at the same time: (1) “How does the Word dwell in man?” (2) “How does God dwell in man?” (3) “How does Christ dwell in man?” (4) “How does man dwell in the Godhead?” and (5) “How does the Holy Spirit dwell in the child of God?”

Jesus Christ dwells within the Christian through faith. “That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith” (Ephesians 3:17). Bible faith is the calculated result of hearing the Word of God [or “Christ” ASV, ESV]. “So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Romans 10:17). Inspired penman Paul in parallel passages used the indwelling of the “word of Christ” and the indwelling of the “Spirit” interchangeably. “Let the **word of Christ dwell in you** richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonish-

ing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord” (Colossians 3:16). “And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but **be filled with the Spirit**; Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord” (Ephesians 5:18-19).

Not only does the summary of these passages teach that Jesus dwells in the Christian through faith, which is undeniably related to the Word, but that the indwelling of Christ and the Spirit in the Christian heart are interchangeable. Therefore, the Word of God and the Holy Spirit equally dwell in the child of God in the same manner—through faith that arises from obeying the Word of God. If the indwelling of Christ and the Spirit are interchangeable and equal, and the indwelling of Christ results through faith in the Word, then the indwelling of the Spirit also results from faith in the Word. The lowest common denominator for the indwelling of Christ or the Spirit is the Word of God. The indwelling of Christ and of the Spirit in the Christian occur through the Word, not apart from it. “Indwelling” occurs through the Word of God, and unless other Scriptures can be produced that teach that indwelling also occurs some other way, then the indwelling of the Holy Spirit occurs *exclusively* through the Word of God.

God also dwells in the Christian (2 Corinthians 6:16). The way God dwells in the child of God relates to the Word of God as man observes or keeps God’s Word or commandments. “And 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). The latter sentence further states that first-century Christians could also deduce that God was in them (and they in God) because of the evidence that the Holy Spirit was also in them. The only way in which they could legitimately appeal to their senses to observe the Holy Spirit in them (and thereby know that God was also in them and they in God) was by observing the miraculous manifestations of the Spirit. Otherwise, they would have been encouraged to accept the futile and contradictory subjectivity of the Pentecostal and charismatic persuasion. Every man would have been a law to himself as much as every supposed Holy

Spirit filled prophet today contradicts every other supposed Holy Spirit filled prophet and his new revelation. With the cessation of miracles, men cannot observe the Holy Spirit in themselves. Today, everyone must appeal exclusively to and obey the Word of God to know that either God or the Holy Spirit dwells in a Christian. “Independent of the Word we could never know ‘whether there be any Holy Spirit.’” (Wallace 7).

We can also know that God is in us and we are in God, if we practice the Bible’s prescription for love of God and of man. “No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us. Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit” (1 John 4:12-13). To love God, the same writer wrote, is to obey his Word. “If ye love me, ye will keep my commandments” (John 14:15 ASV). After one learns how to properly love God, he can also properly love his fellow man and especially his brethren (John 13:34-35). Again, the dwelling of God within the Christian and the Christian indwelling God reduces to a common denominator—*through the Word of God*.

Yes, the Holy Spirit also dwells in the child of God (1 Corinthians 3:16). However, one passage that teaches this truth also indicates *how* the Holy Spirit came to indwell the Christian (Galatians 3:2). “This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?” The only source of Bible faith through which the indwelling of the Holy Spirit occurs is the Word of God (Romans 10:17). Again, the common denominator for “indwelling” is the Word of God. **The Holy Spirit only dwells in the child of God through the Word of God, not apart from it.**

Summary

A personal, literal, bodily indwelling of the Holy Spirit in man is not explicitly taught in the Bible. A personal, literal, bodily indwelling of the Holy Spirit would serve no purpose whatsoever. A personal, literal, bodily indwelling of the Spirit, since there is no evidence to suggest God or Christ dwells in man differently from the Spirit, would demand that God and Christ also personally, literally, bodily dwell in the Christian. Then too, a personal, literal,

bodily indwelling of the Holy Spirit would further demand a personal, literal, bodily indwelling of man in God, Christ, the Holy Spirit *and the Word of God*. That the Holy Spirit dwells personally, literally, bodily in anyone *cannot be proved!*

The notion that the indwelling of the Spirit is somehow fundamentally different from the indwelling of the Word, God, Christ or man in each of these is the result of Calvinistic theory, not legitimate *Bible* belief. How does the Holy Spirit dwell within us? The inspired apostle Paul penned, “This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?” (Galatians 3:2). The Spirit is not received through the observance of the law of Judaism, but through the “hearing of faith,” the Word of God (Romans 10:17). If the Spirit is received through the Word of God, he is not received through the law *or any other means*, including the personal, literal, bodily theory.

Note once more the competent counsel of some of the scholars whose observations were introduced in the first chapter.

Franklin Camp

The proposition that the Holy Spirit works only through the Word is one that has stood the test on the polemic platform for more than a hundred and fifty years. (ix)

Z.T. Sweeney

...(2 Cor. 6:16)...(Eph. 3:17). Now, if God, Christ and the Spirit dwell in us, is there any teaching that the Spirit dwells in us in a different sense from that in which the Father and the Son dwell in us? ...Gal. 3:2...The above Scriptures clearly teach that when the words, thoughts and Spirit of God are controlling in our lives, God dwells in us; that when the gospel controls us, Christ dwells in us; that when we receive the gospel by the hearing of faith, the Spirit dwells in us. (117-119)

James M. Zachary

Who would be so foolish as to contend that God or Christ dwells in any Christian or church as a veritable personality? ...The personal habitation of God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit is in heaven, and they only dwell in Christians by faith and through the influence of wisely adapted means or medium. (51)

Guy N. Woods

It seems certain that God, Christ and the Holy Spirit dwell in the hearts of faithful disciples in exactly the same manner, i.e., through the word of truth. He who can see a personal, literal and actual “indwelling” in the words, “The Spirit dwelleth in you,” but nothing more than a representative “indwelling” in the words, “God dwelleth in him” (1 John 4:15 ASV)...has abandoned all reasonable exegesis. ...The Holy Spirit dwells in Christians today through the word which he inspired. (279-280)

Gary L. Grizzell

Through the medium of the influence of the Word of God all first century Christians received the indirect, representative (not literal) indwelling of the three persons of the Godhead: God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (they indwelt the Christian by/through “the law of the Spirit,” Rom. 8:2...Today, faithful Christians have the indwelling of the Spirit through hearing, believing and obeying the Word of God, that is, by becoming a child of God...This is an indirect (not literal) indwelling of the Spirit. When one is led by the written instructions of the Spirit today, he is led by the Spirit. ...**Why then some today wish to separate the Holy Spirit from His Sword (the written word, the New Testament, Eph. 6:17) is beyond me!**” (3-4)

Chapter 8

Acts 2:38 and the Gift of the Holy Spirit

Then Peter said unto them, 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. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call. (Acts 2:38-39)

Questions, Questions, Questions

Few passages have undergone such a varied application by sound brethren as has the latter portion of Acts 2:38. What is “the gift of the Holy Ghost”? (1) Is it literally the Holy Spirit himself; is this a literal, bodily, personal indwelling verse? (2) Is the “gift” miraculous and equal to “gifts” of the Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:4)? (3) Is it *salvation* as a “gift of the Holy Ghost,” comparable to the “remission of sins” in the same reading?

Further, to whom is “the gift of the Holy Ghost” promised? (1) Was it promised to every person who obeyed the Gospel in the first century? (2) Was the “gift of the Holy Ghost” promised to every person who obeyed the Gospel in the first century **and** each subsequent generation, including our own? (3) Is it a promise to every class of people in the first century? (4) Is “the gift of the Holy Ghost” a promise to every class of people in the first century **and** each subsequent generation, including our own?

Still, another question begs to be answered. *How* and *when* were the recipients of the promised “gift of the Holy Ghost” to receive the same? (1) Was “the gift of the Holy Ghost” to be received simultaneous to one’s baptism, administered by Heaven as the water baptism was administered by the hands of mortal men? Is a heavenly administered “gift of the Holy Ghost” occurring today as men and women are immersed in water by their fellows? (2) Is it possi-

ble that the “gift of the Holy Ghost” was administered at times and by means not stated in the context in which Acts 2:38 appears?

Another series of questions also relates to the reception of “the gift of the Holy Ghost.” (1) Was the promised “gift of the Holy Ghost” intended to be a *permanent*, ‘can’t-lose-it’ commodity? (2) Was it a *permanent*, ‘can-lose-it’ possession that the recipient could lose, later receive and still later, lose again? (3) Was “the gift of the Holy Ghost” a *temporary* manifestation of the Holy Spirit’s power? Finally, (4) what was the intended *purpose* of “the gift of the Holy Ghost”?

Answers, Answers, Answers

There are answers for these questions and perhaps a few more questions and answers that one might pose respecting Acts 2:38b. Many of the answers, though, partially or wholly conflict with those of other Christians. Therefore, at least some of those *answers* must also conflict with God’s Word. They cannot contradict each other and all answers be true.

Correct answers to the above questions must comply with both the immediate context in which Acts 2:38 appears and with parallel biblical contexts. The immediate context includes: (1) the Holy Spirit baptism of the twelve apostles (Acts 2:1-4), (2) the manifestation of the baptism of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles (Acts 2:5-13), (3) the explanation of the manifestation of the baptism of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles (Acts 2:14-21), (4) the preaching of the Gospel of Christ (Acts 2:22-40), (5) the result of preaching the Gospel (the conversion of sinners and the establishment of the Lord’s church).

The promise of “the gift of the Holy Ghost” in Acts 2:38b and 39 is a reiteration of the prophecy of Joel (Joel 2:28-3:2), which the apostle Peter recalled in Acts 2:16-22. The apostle with the “keys of the kingdom” (Matthew 16:19) unlocked the doors of the church. He, with the other apostles, began to infallibly and by inspiration preach “concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ” (Acts 8:12; 2:4-40). Peter explained that the miraculous power with which he and the other apostles could preach in languages (tongues) in which they had not been schooled was the fulfillment of Joel’s prophecy. Joel’s prophecy, though, was not to

the apostles only. It was not even to be enjoyed by the male gender alone. So, in Acts 2:38b and 39 Peter reaffirmed that the promise of Joel (miraculous power through which the New Testament church was birthed) was promised for other Christians as well.

Verse 39 identifies general categories or classes of people (Christians) in whom the promise of Joel would be fulfilled. “For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.” Territorially, Acts 2:39 compares to Acts 1:8. “But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.” Though the apostles in particular and Jewish Christians in general did not readily realize the significance and the scope of either Acts 1:8 or Acts 2:39, the blessings of the Gospel and miraculous power, too, were always intended for: (1) the Jews, (2) the Samaritans, (3) the Gentiles and (4) all classes of mankind.

Simply, the promise of Joel or “the gift of the Holy Ghost” (Joel 2:28-3:2; Acts 2:16-22; 38b-39) is the miraculous manifestation that accompanied the birth and infancy of the Lord’s church. Joel’s prophecy began to be fulfilled in the baptism of the Holy Spirit that the apostles received, and it was further fulfilled in the miraculous endowments available to other Christians throughout the first-century infancy of the church.

Not addressed in Joel 2:28-3:2; Acts 2:16-22; 2:38b-39 is precisely *when* and *in what manner* the promise of Joel or “the gift of the Holy Ghost” should be received. To learn these details, one must turn to other passages in which miraculous gifts are discussed. For instance, the apostles Peter and John (Acts 8:14-17) and the apostle Paul (Acts 19:1-6) conferred miraculous power (the gift of the Spirit) through prayer and the imposition of their hands upon some Christians.

Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost:

(For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.) Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost. (Acts 8:14-17)

And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples, He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism. . . . And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied. (Acts 19:1-6)

In Acts Eight above, the reception of what Acts 2:38b calls “the gift of the Holy Ghost” was received (1) after conversion, consistent with Acts 2:38 and (2) by the laying on of apostles' hands. Acts 8 does not specifically use the terminology “gifts” or “gift,” but twice “receive the Holy Ghost.” Yet, Bible students recognize the context speaks of the transferal of miraculous power (gifts of the Spirit). No other association is made between the Holy Spirit and these new converts at or following their baptism. Those converts had not been visited at or after their baptism by the Holy Spirit for any reason until they received the gifts of the Spirit.

If Acts 8:12-17 is an enactment of Acts 2:38-39, the reference to the Holy Ghost in Acts 8, gifts of the Spirit and “the gift of the Holy Spirit” are the same. Admittedly, Acts 2:38a is enacted in Acts 8:12-17. If Acts 2:38b is not enacted in Acts 8:12-17, then (1) there is no mention of “the gift of the Holy Ghost” in this conversion context, (2) something else entirely is substituted in place of “the gift of the Holy Ghost” and (3) Acts 8:12-17 *is* and it *is not* at the same time an enactment of Acts 2:38.

In Acts Nineteen above, evidently knowledge of the Holy Spirit was companion information dispatched when the Gospel was preached (beginning on the eventful Pentecost day, the birthday of

the church). This corresponds to the preaching of Peter in Acts Two culminating in Acts 2:38. Therefore, Acts 19:1-6 is a valid enactment of Acts 2:38a *and* 38b. Following their conversion, those souls in Ephesus received “the Holy Ghost” after Paul laid his hands upon them. The manifestation of receiving “the Holy Ghost” and having an apostle lay his hands on one was decidedly *miraculous*. “And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.”

Those disciples had not been visited by the Holy Spirit at all before the appearance of Paul. The only reference to the Holy Spirit in this context pertains to gifts of the Spirit. Therefore, if Acts 19:1-6 is an enactment of Acts 2:38, “the gift of the Holy Ghost” and miraculous gifts of the Spirit are the same. If Acts 2:38b is not enacted in Acts 19:1-6, then (1) there is no mention of “the gift of the Holy Ghost” in this conversion context, (2) something else entirely is substituted in place of “the gift of the Holy Ghost” and (3) Acts 19:1-6 *is* and it *is not* at the same time an enactment of Acts 2:38.

The prophecy of Joel was not completely fulfilled by the apostles’ reception of miraculous power. That prophecy, reiterated by Peter (Acts 2:16-22; 2:38-39), was fulfilled by the reception of miraculous power by other Jews (Acts 1:8; 2:38-39), Samaritans (Acts 8) and Gentiles (Acts 10-11). However, the purpose of miraculous power (Mark 16:17-20) was not fulfilled simply by its reception by Gentiles. Miraculous power was never an end of itself, despite the abuses of miracles by the early church (1 Corinthians 12-14) and the fascination with the miraculous (though we have no more miracles) by contemporary religious people.

The cessation of miracles, consistent with their fulfillment in promise and purpose, hence Peter’s promise (Acts 2:38b-39) and Joel’s prophecy (Joel 2:28-3:2), is evident from two factors. (1) The Bible teaches the temporary nature and ultimate end of miracles (1 Corinthians 13:8-13; Ephesians 4:11-14). (2) Examining the prophets (Deuteronomy 18:21-22) and trying the spirits (1 John 4:1), it can safely be ascertained that true, biblical miracles are not being performed by either man or God today. The second factor relates to the first, since what God has said through his Word is the

test to be applied to prophets and to miracles alike. Even if we thought someone exhibited a miracle, or something for which we had no satisfactory explanation, we would be compelled to rely on God's Word, which clearly teaches that miracles have ceased.

The purpose of miracles was fulfilled with the collection of written revelation, "the perfect law of liberty" (James 1:25; 1 Corinthians 13:10), near the close of the first century. It is possible that inspired men participated in the compilation of those inspired writings, which assembled, we call the Bible. The purpose of miracles was to deliver and confirm revelation from God (Mark 16:20; John 20:30-31; Hebrews 2:3-4).

If not exactly when the Word was sufficiently confirmed, then certainly when the last apostle and person upon whom an apostle laid his hands died, miracles among men forever abruptly ended. (The next miracle will attend the second coming of our Lord and the subsequent Judgment.) Therefore, miracles (the subject of Joel's prophecy, Joel 2:28-3:2; Peter's promise, Acts 2:38b-39; "the gift of the Holy Ghost" and "gifts" of the Spirit, 1 Corinthians 12:4) have gone the way of the phrase "Thy kingdom come" (Matthew 6:10) in the Model Prayer. There *was* a place for "thy kingdom come" in prayer, but there *is not* now a place for "thy kingdom come" in prayer since the kingdom has been established (Colossians 1:13; 1 Corinthians 15:24-28; Revelation 1:9). There *was* a place for the prophecy of Joel, the promise of Peter, "the gift of the Holy Ghost," "gifts" of the Spirit or miracles, but there *is not* now a place for these (which are the same).

Quotes, Quotes, Quotes

Quotations from mere mortals of themselves establish absolutely nothing. Divorced from whatever scholarly proposition they portray, they amount to attempts to engage a popularity contest based on people's names or reputations. However, the diversity of positions entertained by scholarly and sound brethren indicate the difficulty with which mortals have examined a topic. As one might expect, there are numerous conflicting views respecting Acts 2:38 and the gift of the Holy Spirit. Further, two or more quotations

from the same man, written at different times, may not agree. This is also sometimes true regarding the topic presently under scrutiny.

Noted below are three quotations from highly esteemed brethren of yesterday whose views of Acts 2:38 differ from mine. Brother J.W. McGarvey said of Acts 2:38b:

The latter expression means, the Holy Spirit as a gift. ...The gifts of the Holy Spirit were various miraculous powers, intellectual and physical. These were conferred only upon a few individuals, while the gift of the Spirit is promised to all who repent and are immersed. (44)

Milligan wrote:

Acts 2:38. By the gift of the Holy Spirit in this passage we are not to understand the miraculous powers of the Spirit bestowed on the Apostles and many other primitive Christians, but the Holy Spirit itself. ...the gift of the Spirit, that is, the Spirit itself, is promised to every believer under the personal reign of the Messiah. (277, 279)

Sewell answered the question, in part, “The gift of the Holy Ghost as mentioned in this passage we understand to be the Holy Spirit himself, which every one that obeyed the commands given had the promise of receiving. It was not pardon...” (318)

More nearly like my understanding of Acts 2:38, Z.T. Sweeney concluded, “...the ‘gift of the Spirit’ was a supernatural gift for the purpose of enabling the ‘believers’ in apostolic days to work the ‘signs’ which Christ said should accompany them that believe, and ceased when the signs ceased” (95).

He further makes the astute observation, “...many of the exhortations of the New Testament writers were to a church whose members were filled with the supernatural power of the Spirit, and should be interpreted in the light of that fact” (95).

Brother Franklin Camp expressed his view of Acts 2:38 thus:

If the gift of the Holy Spirit is a non-miraculous gift that one receives when baptized, what does the Spirit do? Those that believe the Spirit leads and directs only through the Word are faced with explaining why one has

received this gift of the Spirit, but the gift does not do anything for the Christian apart from the Word. (155)

A thorough, yet concise, and true analysis of Acts 2:38b comes forth from the able pen of brother Guy N. Woods. The following excerpt is found in *Questions And Answers, Open Forum, Freed-Hardeman College Lectures*, on pages 54-59. That book is volume one of a two-volume set; the first in the series is published by Freed-Hardeman College (Henderson, TN), whereas the second is published by Gospel Advocate (Nashville). These books are vital acquisitions to any Christian's study library.

Brother Woods' sage and studious observations concerning Acts 2:38 include:

Often, those holding the view that there is an actual, literal, personal measure of the Spirit received following baptism, seek to avoid the obvious conclusion that they believe in a direct impact of the Spirit on the heart separate and apart from the word of truth, by urging that the "gifts" are received "through the word." But, this begs the question. (1) The word is admittedly received before baptism; (2) the interpretation requires the assumption that the Spirit Himself, and not by means of the word, is received. If the Spirit is the gift; and it is a literal, actual, personal "indwelling," as some among us today claim, they must concede that there is a direct impact of the Spirit upon the heart, and that the Spirit resides there in addition to, and separate from the word. ...The assumption that the "gift" of Acts 2:38 is the Spirit Himself, is in conflict with Acts 3:19, a passage very obviously parallel with, and explanatory of the passage under study. ...The unbiased reader instantly perceives that "the gift of the Holy Spirit," in Acts 2, is comparable to "seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord," in Acts 3. Yet, those who contend for a direct, immediate reception of the Holy Spirit, following baptism today, shrink from any admission of awareness of the Spirit's presence, urge that he does nothing at all for them other than by means of the

word, and admit that their only way of knowing that the Spirit is in them is because Acts 2:38 says so! It would indeed be difficult to find anything refreshing “from the presence of the Lord” in such denials, seeing they confess to no direct blessing by his agency apart from the word. Further, they are faced with the insuperable difficulty of explaining how the Spirit, in his own Person, is actually indwelling children of God, yet (a) gives them no awareness of his presence, (b) teaches them no truth, (c) offers them no protection against accepting error, (d) and requires them to resort to a Book nineteen hundred years old to learn his will through study when he is actually there and in direct contact with the heart (understanding) all the time! Is it any cause for wonder that those who dwell upon an alleged actual personal indwelling of the Spirit often go on, like Pat Boone, to believe that the Spirit does indeed move them to act apart from, and independent of the Word of truth—the New Testament? (55-57)

Subtly stated but openly avowed, proponents of the literal, personal, bodily indwelling of the Holy Spirit definitely believe that the Holy Spirit does something within the child of God that is separate, apart from and extra to what the Word of God provides. “The believer in Jesus, by his obedience to the gospel, receives from God the free gift of the Holy Spirit, **who helps the Christian to lead a good Christian life**” (Gnanasundram 91 emphasis added). “...the Holy Spirit can influence Christians to do good works so that they can overcome the influence of the evil world about them. The Holy Spirit is given to Christians to dwell in them so that they can live in the world without being overcome by the world” (Olbricht 178-179). Not only so, but typically brethren of this persuasion harbor doubts about the genuine Christianity of those who differ with them on this subject. “The Bible teaches that the gift of the Holy Spirit is the basis for Christian brotherhood” (Gnanasundram 95). The so-called *Spirit-on-spirit* touted by Calvinists regarding conversion is no more comely and no less Calvinistic when em-

braced by members of the Lord's church respecting Christian living.

Summary, Summary, Summary

The “gift of the Holy Ghost” (Acts 2:39b) is a reference to miraculous gifts typically received through prayer and by imposition of an apostle's hands upon a Christian in the first century. The baptism in the Holy Spirit that the apostles received and “the gift of the Holy Ghost” are related to the fulfillment of Joel's prophecy and Peter's recollection of that prophecy. The duration of those miraculous gifts was regulated by their purpose (Mark 16:20; Hebrews 2:3) and the life spans of the apostles and those upon whom they laid their hands to impart this power. The “gift of the Holy Ghost” is not the Holy Spirit himself. It is not a personal, literal, bodily indwelling of the Spirit. Neither is “the gift of the Holy Ghost” pardon or remission of sins.

However, the Acts 2:38b controversy among brethren is relatively moot. As long as brethren continue to affirm that the Holy Spirit *does not* impact, influence, lead or instruct man's heart apart from the Word of God, there is little *immediate* harm. However, as brother Woods indicated, the *potential* for great harm to individual Christians and to the Lord's church is inherent, though dormant, to this theory.

Chapter 9

Gifts of the Holy Spirit

Acts 2:38 and the Gift of the Holy Spirit, Part 2

Brother Franklin Camp astutely observed that the word “gift” is used, referring to the Holy Spirit, in Acts 2:38; 8:20; 10:45; 11:17; Ephesians 3:7; 4:7. Further, the reference to “gift” in the latter five instances is admittedly *miraculous*. “Does it not strike you as being strange that the word ‘gift’ is used six times in the passages that refer to the Holy Spirit, and that five of them are miraculous and one non-miraculous?” (137).

The “gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:38b) is also a reference to the miraculous. Camp observes:

...gift of the Holy Spirit, I do not believe that it is a reference to what is commonly called a non-miraculous indwelling. ...I do reject the idea that some have that the gift of the Holy Spirit, which one receives when baptized, operates in him and leads and directs him separately and apart from the truth. This latter position can only end in one following his feelings and moods rather than the Word of God. This position would lead one in any direction and his subjective feelings become the standard, rather than the Bible. ...I believe that the Scriptures teach that the gift of the Holy Spirit refers to miraculous endowments that belonged to the period when these miraculous gifts were for the purpose of confirming the apostles of Christ as His apostles and providing the church with inspiration through these gifts that came through the laying on of the hands of an apostle. (130-131)

Who Received Gifts of the Holy Spirit?

The prophecy of Joel (2:28-3:2), repeated by the apostle Peter (Acts 2:16-21), precisely stated “all flesh” were to be recipients of miraculous manifestations (gifts of the Holy Spirit). “All flesh” included “every creature” (Mark 16:15), “all nations” (Matthew 28:19;

Luke 24:47) involved in the Great Commission and souls “in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1:8). “All flesh” was additionally defined to include men and women, young and old. Yet, not every first-century Christian was partaker of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. “Believers, as a group, did possess such powers; but each individual did not have to” (Camp 96). Men, women, young, old, Jews, Samaritans and Gentiles received miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit, but not every Christian man, woman, young person, older person, Jew, Samaritan and Gentile received a gift of the Holy Spirit. Apparently, many of the Roman Christians were void of miraculous gifts (Romans 1:11). Only those Christians at Rome who elsewhere in their travels had received these gifts at the hands of apostles and subsequently moved to Rome possessed them—possibly some from Rome who became Christians on the birthday of the church (Acts 2:10).

How Were Gifts of the Holy Spirit Obtained?

The ordinary means by which gifts of the Holy Spirit were received was by the imposition of apostolic hands accompanied by prayer (Acts 8:14-17; 19:6). Three and only three exceptions to this rule were the reception of miraculous power by the apostles in Jerusalem, the household of Cornelius and the apostle Paul. In his day, Simon, formerly the sorcerer, recognized only through the apostles’ hands were miraculous gifts given. He committed the infamous sin of trying to buy this power (Acts 8:18-24). “And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles’ hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money” (8:18).

Why, What Gifts of the Holy Spirit Were Received and When Did They Cease to Be Received?

Someone once coined the expression that “Miraculous gifts were to the infant church what scaffolding is to a building under construction. Once the construction is completed, the scaffolding is removed. So was it with the church; when it was completely established on the written, divinely revealed will of God, the miracles were also removed.” **Miracles were only the vehicle through**

which divine revelation was delivered and confirmed.

For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. (2 Peter 1:21)

And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. (Mark 16:20)

How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him. (Hebrews 2:4)

After revelation was both delivered and confirmed, miracles were to end (1 Corinthians 13:8-13; Ephesians 4:7-8, 11-14). The “perfect law of liberty” (James 1:25) replaced the partial revelation of individual prophets. “For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away” (1 Corinthians 13:9-10). “...the New Testament is younger than the church, and the Christians needed spiritual gifts to aid them (Ephesians 4:11-14)” (L’Roy 54).

These were provisional gifts in the absence of the complete revelation of the written word. The mistake is now being made of taking these passages out of time and context. ...It was clearly declared by the apostle in the 1 Cor. 14:6 passage that there could be no profit in the exercise of the gift of tongues, or of any of the special endowments, except for the purpose of completing divine revelation; therefore, there is no need, purpose or reason for the existence of such gifts today. (Wallace 50)

Brother Guy N. Woods concisely numbered the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

There were nine special gifts bestowed by laying on of the apostles’ hands designated in the New Testament. These gifts were enumerated by Paul as follows: (1) word of wisdom; (2) word of knowledge; (3) faith; (4) healing; (5) miracles; (6) prophecy; (7) discerning of spirits; (8) tongues;

(9) interpretation of tongues. (1 Cor. 12:7-11.) (260)

Abuse of Gifts of the Holy Spirit

Much of what is gleaned from Scripture about gifts of the Holy Spirit is found in passages written to correct the abuse of miracles. In particular, 1 Corinthians 12-14 name the abuse of spiritual gifts among the several grievous errors once characteristic of Corinthian Christians. Oddly, there is as much stir, clamor and confusion today about these spiritual gifts, in their absence, as there was at Corinth. Pentecostalism and the charismatic movement have pervaded denominationalism (including Catholicism) and at times the Lord's church, too.

The specifics of statements regulating gifts of the Holy Spirit do not apply today since the miraculous age has ended. However, the principles behind them are very much effective now also. For instance, 1 Corinthians 14:1-19 urged preaching through which the church could be edified rather than merely speaking in languages (tongues) that were not understood. The apostle Paul emphasized that religious edification was the object of preaching or teaching. Though we neither speak in languages that we have not learned nor by direct inspiration in tongues common to our auditors, we should carefully observe the *principle* of making edification the chief object of our religious discourses.

“Even so ye, forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church. . . . I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also” (1 Corinthians 14:12, 15).

Further, even though Bible miracles have ended, other passages in Paul's epistle to the Corinthian church, amidst the regulation of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, apply in principle today. Individuals are responsible souls, able to control themselves and avoid outbursts when another is speaking (14:31-32). The worship assembly should be conducted decently, orderly (14:40), without confusion (14:33) and with one male member at a time leading a song or preaching (14:29-35).

Summary

The prophecy of Joel began to be fulfilled in the baptism of the Ho-

ly Spirit on the apostles in Jerusalem the Pentecost following the Ascension of Jesus Christ. However, though the apostle Peter applied the prophecy to himself and to the other eleven apostles, Joel 2:28-3:2 was not completely fulfilled until all classes of people received miraculous gifts by the imposition of apostles' hands upon them. Jews, Samaritans, Gentiles, the young and the old, and men and women received gifts of the Holy Spirit. However, not every Christian Jew, Samaritan, Gentile, young person, older person, man and woman participated directly in the fulfillment of Joel's prophecy.

The purpose of miracles is clearly recorded in Scripture. Gifts of the Holy Spirit were essential to the early church to: (1) confirm the apostles and other inspired teachers as true servants of God and (2) confirm the word spoken or written as God's Word. **Healing the sick, raising the dead, striking men dead or blind, and so on (the manifestation of the gifts of the Holy Spirit) were merely the *by-products* of confirming new revelation.** After the revelation from God was confirmed and committed to written form, the gifts of the Holy Spirit (miracles) ended.

The baptism of the Holy Spirit was promised exclusively to the apostles. God also imparted miraculous power without human agency to the household and friends of Cornelius for the special purpose of giving the divine stamp of approval upon Gentile admission to the church. Otherwise, all others received gifts of the Holy Spirit through the imposition of apostles' hands. Therefore, after the demise of the apostles and those to whom they imparted these spiritual gifts, miracles naturally ceased. If miracles did not abruptly and universally cease at a time chosen by God, they naturally phased out as the miracle workers died.

No one today is a recipient of even one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Yet, some souls are sincerely deluded and believe that they themselves are either miracle workers (e.g., speaking in tongues) or those upon whom Bible miracles have been performed. Others, especially those in position to benefit financially, knowingly and falsely claim the power to work miracles. The abuse of spiritual gifts is no less than what it was when there really were gifts of the Holy Spirit among men.

Chapter 10

Blaspheming and Sinning Against the Holy Spirit

The Verses and Related Passages

As they went out, behold, they brought to him a dumb man possessed with a devil. And when the devil was cast out, the dumb spake: and the multitudes marvelled, saying, It was never so seen in Israel. But the Pharisees said, He casteth out devils through the prince of the devils. (Matthew 9:32-34)

The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord. It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household? (Matthew 10:24-25)

Then was brought unto him one possessed with a devil, blind, and dumb: and he healed him, insomuch that the blind and dumb both spake and saw. And all the people were amazed, and said, Is not this the son of David? But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils. And Jesus knew their thoughts, and said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand: And if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how shall then his kingdom stand? And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your children cast them out? therefore they shall be your judges. But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom is come upon you. Or else how can one enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the

strong man? and then he will spoil his house. He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad. Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come. Either make the tree good, and his fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt: for the tree is known by his fruit. O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things. But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned. (Matthew 12:22-37; cf. Mark 3:22-30; Luke 11:14-26)

...Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin. (Romans 4:6-7)

Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. And this will we do, if God permit. For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame. (Hebrews 6:1-6)

For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. (Hebrews 10:26-31)

Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him. Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit. Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; Let him know, that he which converted the sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins. (James 5:14-20)

If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it. All unrighteousness is sin: and there is a sin not unto death. We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God

keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not. (1 John 5:16-18)

What Does It All Mean?

Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, sinning against the Spirit and the unpardonable sin are specifically different, but fundamentally the same. Matthew 9:32-34; 12:22-37 and the companion accounts in Mark and Luke chronicle blasphemy against the Holy Spirit during the earthly ministry of Jesus Christ. The Lord also forewarned His apostles that the miracles manifested through them would also be attributed to Beelzebub (Matthew 10:24-25). Therefore, blasphemy against the Holy Spirit first occurred during the ministry of Jesus Christ and His apostles.

Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit was attributing the miraculous manifestation of the Holy Spirit, of which the blasphemers were eyewitnesses, to Satan. Miracles wrought by the Holy Spirit, whether by Jesus Christ, His apostles, Cornelius (and his friends and household in Acts 10 & 11) or those upon whom the apostles laid their hands, were ample proof to all beholders that God was with them and their words (Mark 16:20; John 20:30-31; Hebrews 2:3-4). To attribute the miraculous work of the Holy Spirit to Satan, whether manifested through Christ, the apostles or others, was a *denial of undeniable evidence*.

Why, then, can blasphemy against the Son of God (Jesus) be forgiven while blasphemy against the Holy Spirit cannot be forgiven? Of the resources with which the Godhead could convince men of the scheme for their eternal redemption, Jesus Christ (in person, on earth) was central to that redemption and spokesman for the Godhead. However, the Holy Spirit represented the Godhead's final visitor to earthly habitations to call men to redemption. Rejecting the Holy Spirit, therefore, meant rejecting every Divine effort (including Jesus Christ) and the Godhead's last attempt to save fallen men. As long as one continues to oppose the Holy Spirit (by attributing His miracles to the devil), and thereby also opposing God Himself, His Word and Jesus Christ, there is no hope of salvation for him.

One may ask, "Can souls today blaspheme the Holy Spirit?" The Holy Spirit's miraculous ministry is preserved in Scripture and

produces the same effect on honest hearts today (John 20:30-31). Therefore, in *essence*, rebellious souls who attribute the Spirit's miraculous manifestations to Satan (or deny them entirely) can be guilty of blaspheming the Holy Spirit. It is sure that whoever speaks evil of the Holy Spirit (attributing His work to Satan or discounting that ministry completely) today rejects God, His Word, Jesus Christ and the Godhead's final persuasion to accept eternal redemption. In such a state of perpetual resistance of the Spirit, there is no hope for the lost.

To sin against the Holy Spirit is to refuse to do what the Holy Spirit commands, or to go beyond his commands, just as to sin against Jesus or against God was to sin against their commands. The Holy Spirit came last and gave the final sanction to the laws of God. To set them aside then was to leave nothing more to move the man. The sin against the Holy Spirit, I believe, is to persistently and finally reject his teaching and refuse his testimony. ...To blaspheme the Holy Ghost is to speak reproachfully against the Spirit and his teachings, or authority. To sin against the Holy Spirit is to refuse and reject or disregard his teaching. ...There are ...many ways of sinning against the Holy Spirit ...If we will submit to all the laws and teachings of the Spirit, both in becoming Christians and in living as Christians, we need never be uneasy about committing the sin against the Holy Spirit; but if we put the doctrines and commandments of men instead of the commands of God or in any way reject or refuse the commands of God as given by the Spirit in the word of truth, we may then well be afraid. Our hope of salvation here or in the world to come is to be guided in all things by the words of the Spirit of God, the Spirit of truth. (Lipscomb and Sewell 319)

The man who has actually committed this sin never feels any alarm about it. ...When a man today reaches the comprehensive state of mind that he is going to reject Jesus over any and all evidence, he has gone into the house, shut

and locked the door and thrown away the key. God cannot reach him. (Sweeney 141, 143)

...to blaspheme the work of the Holy Spirit, when his testimony was offered to men in the completion of God's redemptive plan, would constitute a final rejection of all divine overtures, and would have no clemency in this last dispensation of time, and no mitigation in eternity. (Wallace 110)

Brother Wallace also sagely linked the 'damnation' of Mark 16:16 upon unbelievers to the 'damnation' of those who blaspheme the Holy Spirit. The effect is the same in both instances; it is essentially the same.

As noted in the quotations above, no one fearfully conscious about blaspheming the Holy Spirit is guilty of this sin. He may, though, be guilty of other sins, which not repented of will ultimately result in spiritual death (Romans 6:23). If one speaks against the Spirit or refuses to comply with the Holy Spirit through disregard for the miraculously delivered and confirmed Word, he should fear.

The unpardonable aspect of blaspheming or sinning against the Holy Spirit is the impenitent nature of the sin. God cannot forgive sin for which men will not repent. Unpardonable sins or sins unto death for which no one may successfully pray (1 John 5:16-18) are sins for which sinners have not repented. God does not impute sin to those who have covered their sins (Romans 4:6-7) in the divinely prescribed manner (submission to the Author of eternal salvation, Hebrews 5:8-9). The James 5:14-20 context addresses prayer for sinners in the same breath in which it commends redeeming fallen brethren from their sins. No one can be saved in spite of willful sin; repentance must be forthcoming.

The Hebrews epistle was penned to spiritually strengthen Jewish Christians who were in danger of apostasy. The Hebrews 6 statement, "...it is impossible...If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance..." and the similar record in Hebrews 10, "...if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation..." refer

to the same effect of blaspheming or sinning against the Holy Spirit and the unpardonable sin or sin unto death. The common factor, again, is the unwillingness of the sinner to repent. God cannot forgive sin for which one is unwilling to repent. Impenitent souls are hopelessly lost as long as they determine to resist redemption.

In blaspheming against the Holy Spirit, unpardonable sins and the feared Jewish apostasy, God has not decreed that certain souls cannot repent and be saved. Souls involved in sin simply cannot be saved in their persistent failure to repent. Two factors are especially emphasized in the passages relative to these lamentable conditions: (1) There is no additional source to which one can appeal beyond the final redemptive effort of the Holy Spirit. In the case of the Jewish Christians, it is said there is no sacrifice for sins beyond Christ through whom they could be saved, were they to reject the Son of God. (2) One can so reject God's redemptive plan to be self-blinded from the truth, a condition from which it may be impossible to recover.

Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; **having their conscience seared with a hot iron...** (1 Timothy 4:1-2).

...they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them **strong delusion**, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned [judged, ASV] who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness. (2 Thessalonians 2:10-12)

Summary

As in the days of Christ and the apostles, **the only unpardonable sins are those for which one refuses to repent.** There is, though, imminent danger in rejecting the Godhead's call to redemption. One may not live long enough to have a future opportunity to comply with God's plan of salvation (James 4:13-14) or repeated repudiation of God's plan for the eternal habitation of

one's soul may harden the heart (sear the conscience) so that it is impossible to respond to the Divine invitation.

The distinction between sins in the 1 John 5:16-18 context does not concern the types of sins themselves. Both the Catholic theology of “venial” versus “mortal” sins and a similar doctrine espoused by some brethren are false, lacking any biblical support. Whether it be big “F” fellowship versus little “f” fellowship or “situation ethics,” **there is no scriptural support for persisting in any type of sin (Romans 6:1). All types of sin, not repented of, will result in spiritual (eternal) separation from God (Romans 6:23).**

The distinction in 1 John 5:16-18 is between types of sinners (not sins). “...whosoever is born of God sinneth not...” Though both sinners and saints commit sin and may do some good deeds, the sinner majors in sin and the saint majors in righteousness. The sinner is impenitent; the saint is penitent. The sinner's life is one of impenitent sin with perhaps occasions of good deeds, whereas the saint's life is one of righteousness with moments of sin for which he repents. Prayers for the former are fruitless; prayers for the latter are encouraged (James 5:14-20; 1 John 5:16-18).

No sin is safe, but blaspheming or sin against the Holy Spirit is especially dangerous because of the wretched state into which the sinner places himself. Though men may turn from their sins, it is less likely those whose consciences are seared will ever repent; they have put themselves beyond the reach of a benevolent God. “The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance” (2 Peter 3:9).

Chapter 11

Sealed in the Holy Spirit

Two primary but opposing views of the nature of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit are defended by good brethren. This has been observed throughout this study. Some brethren believe that the Holy Spirit indwells the Christian by the means of a vehicle, the Word of God. Others as tenaciously voice their conviction that the Holy Spirit indwells the Christian without the means of a vehicle (the Word of God), yet not antagonistic to, but in conjunction with the Word. Proponents of both positions, however, concur that the work of the Holy Spirit today does not involve performing miracles.

Therefore, due to disagreement about the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, brethren do not agree upon the correct interpretation of being sealed in the Holy Spirit. Is anyone sealed in the Holy Spirit today? If so, is every Christian sealed? Was the first-century seal (Ephesians 1:13; 4:30) miraculous or non-miraculous? What was the effect of being sealed in the Holy Spirit?

Camp observed that of the sixteen times the word “seal” appears in the New Testament, thirteen occur in the Book of Revelation. Further, the verb “sealed” is found seventeen times, ten of which are in Revelation. “The word always denotes a public mark or external sign, such as the seal on a letter” (Camp 173-174). The following Scriptures comprise the primary “sealed” passages.

In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory. (Ephesians 1:13-14)

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

These additional passages lend insight to the application of the term “sealed” in the Book of Ephesians.

He that hath received his testimony hath set to his seal that God is true. (John 3:33)

Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed. (John 6:27)

And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also. (Romans 4:11)

When therefore I have performed this, and have sealed to them this fruit, I will come by you into Spain. (Romans 15:28)

If I be not an apostle unto others, yet doubtless I am to you: for the seal of mine apostleship are ye in the Lord. (1 Corinthians 9:2)

Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts. (2 Corinthians 1:22)

Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity. (2 Timothy 2:19)

The context of John 3:33 equates the word “seal” with the acknowledgment that the testimony of Jesus is true—He is the Christ, the Son of God. The “seal” may be either oral profession, conforming one’s conduct to Christ’s teachings or ideally a combination of both. In any case, the “seal” amounts to a visible, physical demonstration.

The term “sealed” in John 6:27 represents God’s expressed approval of Jesus Christ. This “seal” was not a secret to men whose souls were correctly and spiritually aligned. The “seal” of Romans

4:11 was obviously physical (circumcision). Vine penned this about “sealed” (Romans 15:28):

...the formal ratification of the ministry of the churches of the Gentiles in Greece and Galatia to needy saints in Judaea, by Paul’s faithful delivery of the gifts to them; this material help was the fruit of his spiritual ministry to the Gentiles, who on their part were bringing forth the fruit of their having shared with them in spiritual things; the metaphor stresses the sacred formalities of the transaction (Deissmann illustrates this from papyri of Fayyum, in which the sealing of sacks guarantees the full complement of the contents)... (331)

As with other references (Romans 4:11; 2 Timothy 2:19), Vine further noted that “seal” is equivalent to “authentication.” “...in 1 Cor. 9:2, of converts as a seal or authentication of Paul’s apostleship...” (331). The Lord’s people are confirmed to be God’s chosen (class of people) with a visible, physical manifestation or seal. The application of 2 Timothy 2:19 is no different from that of 1 Corinthians 9:2. The questions, though, still remain regarding the identity and manner of reception of this “seal.”

Brother Camp astutely observed regarding 2 Corinthians 1:22:

This is a reference to the apostles. The apostles were sealed as the ambassadors of Christ by the manifestations of the Spirit. Manifestations of the Spirit were always visible. A non-miraculous indwelling of the Spirit would not seal or confirm the apostles as apostles. (174)

Just what was this seal? How or when was it received? Basically, two conflicting answers are typically suggested to these and related questions. (1) The “seal” *is* the non-miraculous indwelling of the Holy Spirit received by every Christian at baptism, without a vehicle (the Word of God). Some refer to this as the personal, literal, bodily indwelling of the Spirit. (2) The “seal” *was* the miraculously manifested gift of the Holy Spirit received directly from Heaven by the apostles and those at the home of Cornelius and others to whom the apostles transferred miraculous power through the imposition of

their hands upon them. The latter proposition corresponds to the material that has been presented throughout this volume.

A non-miraculous indwelling of the Holy Spirit would lack sufficient manifestation to be a “seal.” A *secret* “seal” does not correspond to the word’s definition **and** customary application in the New Testament. Further, a non-manifested seal (e.g., regarding salvation, 2 Timothy 2:19, or the apostleship of Paul, 1 Corinthians 9:2) would not be verifiable and degenerates to subjectivism or personal feelings. To relegate the “seal” and the “gift of the Holy Spirit” to a non-manifested, non-verbal, non-leading experience assigns to them a circumstance devoid of purpose and usefulness.

“...sealed with that holy Spirit of promise...” (Ephesians 1:13) refers to the prophecy of Joel (2:28-32), rehearsed and applied to the beginning of the Christian Age by Peter in Acts 2:16-21. This apostle also repeated the promise in the same discourse (Acts 2:38-39).

Then Peter said unto them, 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. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.**

Though the promise was to the baptized, the time at and manner in which the promise was realized is not included in Acts 2:38-39. Acts 8:12-17 and 19:1-6 indicate time and manner, and they reflect a miraculous effect (Camp 174-176; see Franklin Camp’s excellent points respecting Ephesians 1:13).

The “seal” or “earnest” (Ephesians 1:14) was miraculous manifestation (inspired revelation and miracles to confirm that new revelation). The church in general and Christians in particular possessed miraculous power. This distinguished God’s kingdom and its citizens from Satan and his kingdom (all others). There are, though, no miracles being performed today. However, the church and Christians do not need *new* miracles today since the miracles that are recorded in Scripture are still effective (John 20:30-31). Neither the church nor Christians are hindered by the absence of *new seals* today.

The *class* of the saved (“...sealed unto the day of redemption,” Ephesians 4:30) were the recipients of the promised (miraculous) gift of the Holy Spirit or seal (Acts 2:38-39; Ephesians 1:13). In the first century, individuals were recipients of the gift of the Holy Spirit or the seal respecting their membership in the class of redeemed, the church. Yet, not every Christian received a miraculous gift (seal) of the Holy Spirit, but every Christian belonged to the class of people endowed with the gift of the Holy Spirit and sealed. Today, every Christian belongs to the class of people (the saved, the church) formerly the recipient of the (miraculous) gift of the Holy Spirit or seal. First-century miracles (the seal) are no less effective today to as many as who are added to the church by the Lord.

Accordingly, respectful disagreement is entertained for the following explanation of *who* received the promised “seal.”

The earnest of the Holy Spirit is the seal of promise, the guarantee deposit, from the highest power there is, an omnipotent God, assuring the child of God of his eternal inheritance and final redemption. (Howard, *The Holy Spirit* 173)

The “seal” must pertain to the *class* of people (the saved) of whom the individual child of God is part. If being sealed in the Spirit were the non-miraculous indwelling (without the vehicle of the Word of God) of the Holy Spirit, occurring at baptism, received by each individual Christian, then the “guarantee deposit” and “assuring the child of God of his eternal inheritance and final redemption” supersedes and is additional to the Word of God. This is exactly where the pernicious road to Pentecostalism and the charismatic circus begins.

As long as one denies that the miraculous gift of the Holy Spirit equals the “seal” or contends that the “seal” is the personal, literal or no-vehicle indwelling of the Holy Spirit, he unwittingly argues for a supernatural communication between the Spirit and the child of God. In essence, an argument for a non-miraculous seal is self-contradictory because it *demand*s a miraculous communication between the Spirit and each Christian. Otherwise, the “seal” is not a certification or guarantee of anything!

Summary

The following are all equal, interchangeable terms and essentially the same: (1) Joel's prophecy pertaining to miracles (2:28-32; Acts 2:16-21), (2) Peter's reaffirmation of Joel's promise, the (miraculous) gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38b-39), (3) gifts of the Holy Spirit, and (4) sealed in the Spirit. First-century Christians were sealed in the Spirit primarily by their membership (fellowship) in the body of the saved, the church, which was fundamentally the recipient of miraculous power. Individual Christians in the first century were sealed in the Spirit upon being added to the class of the redeemed—the church (Acts 2:47). It was immaterial whether an individual Christian could work miracles; some could perform miracles while others could not. With the cessation of miracles, an individual Christian is sealed in the Spirit solely by his membership in the class of the redeemed—the church. The miracles that confirm the Word today are first-century miracles recorded in Scripture—not new miracles. These same miracles seal or certify the Lord's church and Christians.

Chapter 12

The Intercession of the Holy Spirit

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. (Romans 8:26-27)

Sometimes students of the Bible must satisfy themselves with less information about a topic under scrutiny than they prefer. This is true about the intercession of the Holy Spirit. Little is recorded in Scripture respecting the intercessory ministry of the Spirit. Deuteronomy 29:29 advises us to search the things provided man by God and not tamper with or speculate about the rest. This attitude must be adopted regarding the intercession of the Holy Spirit. “The fact of the Spirit’s intercession is taught in the Bible. We may not know much more than the fact of it, but we may believe the word of God” (L’Roy 91). There are, though, certain points that can be extracted from the limited statement or deduced about the intercession of the Spirit.

(1) A mediator stands between two while an intercessor stands by one pleading to another. (2) A mediator represents both parties; the intercessor represents one. (L’Roy 91)

The Holy Spirit aids us in our infirmities (weakness). ...we do not know what, or how, to pray as we ought...the Spirit makes intercession for us “with groanings which cannot be uttered” (Woods 72)

This is not a work done in us nor upon us, but is something done for us before the throne of God. (Sweeney 135)

...this passage has no relevance to any discussion regarding the manner or mode of the Spirit’s indwelling in view

of the fact that it deals with what the Spirit does for us, not to us, and describes an action which occurs in heaven, not on earth—an influence wrought upon God and not upon man! It is a gross perversion of this passage to cite it in support of any theory of “indwelling” of the Spirit. (Woods 72-73)

...it is not the Spirit, but the burdened Christian who groans, and these groans are by the Spirit borne to our heavenly Father and used by the Spirit as the instrument of intercession. (Woods 72)

Every man who is devoted to the Lord finds times when deep down in his heart there are vague desires and longings, and a sense of need, that he is unable to put in words. These are the groanings which cannot be uttered; these are the groanings which the Holy Spirit conveys to the Father in our prayers. (R.L. Whiteside quoted by Woods from *Annual Lesson Commentary* for 1941)

Grief, sorrow or distress may inhibit the full expression of ourselves in prayer for that for which we should pray. Through the intercession of the Spirit, those prayers are complemented and presented to God. However, the fact the Holy Spirit intercedes for saints in this way is not license for lazy or careless Christians to defer prayer to the Spirit.

Chapter 13

The Holy Spirit: True and False

Some things are **true** respecting the Holy Spirit today in the lives of mortals. In addition, some things taught even by members of the churches of Christ are **not biblically substantiated and are doctrinally false**. Irrespective of whether one believes that the indwelling in the child of God by the Holy Spirit is literal, bodily and personal or is instead by means of the Word of God in the Christian, some teachings about the Holy Spirit are true, and some teachings about the Holy Spirit are false.

Generally, advocates of either understanding concerning the manner of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit acknowledge that the miraculous age ended nearly 2,000 years ago. The apostle Paul wrote by Divine inspiration that miracles were to cease when they accomplished their purpose of providing a completed, written revelation—the New Testament (1 Corinthians 13:8-12). The purpose of miracles was always to confirm the Word (Mark 16:20) and to confirm the Christ (John 20:30-31). The inspired penman of the Book of Hebrews acknowledged that miracles in the first century had confirmed the Word of God—especially regarding salvation of the soul (Hebrews 2:3-4).

Therefore, contemporary activity of the Holy Spirit **does not** include present-day communication to the child of God or to anyone else. Historically and during the times of biblical miracles, the Holy Spirit spoke to the Old Testament and to the New Testament prophets of God (2 Peter 1:21). In the absence of miracles and with the completion of the New Testament, the Holy Spirit **does not speak directly** to the child of God in the twenty-first century. Even if a Christian says so, God **does not** speak through the Holy Spirit to anyone now with “a still small voice” (1 Kings 19:12)!

Furthermore, the Holy Spirit neither makes decisions for a child of God nor does He directly guide him in making his decisions. Rather, the Holy Spirit influences those who endeavor to

implement the Holy Spirit-inspired Word of God in their lives. This is especially true with actual, practicing Christians.

The providence of God and how the Holy Spirit is involved in that providence pertains to background circumstances that provide opportunities and choices about which the children of God can make their own decisions. Though the Holy Spirit is involved in Divine providence, that does not directly relate to God through the Holy Spirit speaking to anyone today. Also, providence is the backdrop to God answering prayers, but God's invisible providence does not facilitate direct communication between the Holy Spirit and Christians today.

Whenever God communicated to mankind anciently through the Holy Spirit, that communication was confirmed or validated by miracles (e.g., Moses' rod, Exodus 4:1-5; Gideon's fleece, Judges 6:26-40; etc.). Since the age of Bible miracles ended long ago, "a still small voice" one may suppose that he hears today is not validated with Bible miracles, but instead merely by subjective or personal feelings. Without miracles for authentication, even if one really did hear "a still small voice," he could not discern whose voice it was—God's or Satan's. Only one's subjective and personal feelings could guess its source.

Direct leading, direction or communication ascribed to the Holy Spirit today **is not Divine in origin**. Neither are such assertions based on biblical evidence (i.e., the New Testament), but instead they spring forth from charismatic and Pentecostal doctrines, which are unscriptural and anti-scriptural.

Nevertheless, the churches of Christ are being led by the Holy Spirit when they are comprised of Christians who are being "led by the Spirit" (Romans 8:14; Galatians 5:18). Churches and Christians ought to consent to be led by the Holy Spirit today, but in order to do that, they must resort to the Holy Spirit-inspired, miracle-validated Word of God—the New Testament. In addition, we ought to "speak as the oracles of God" (1 Peter 4:11) and avoid speaking "the language of Ashdod" (Nehemiah 13:24).

Questions

Chapter 1: Introductory Matters

1. What basic concept about the Holy Spirit typically affects one's understanding of every other facet of the Holy Spirit?
2. Name the two primary propositions that faithful brethren sometimes believe about the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

Chapter 2: The Holy Spirit: A Divine Person

3. The term "Trinity" is a favorable reference to what the Bible calls the "Godhead." What relationship does the Holy Spirit sustain to these terms that reflect the personality of the Spirit?
4. Enumerate some of the personal characteristics, divine qualities and names ascribed in Scripture to the Holy Spirit.

Chapter 3: The Word: The Holy Spirit's Medium of Operation

5. What is the exclusive vehicle through which the Holy Spirit operates openly today?
6. What can a man know about the Holy Spirit apart from the Word of God?

Chapter 4: The Work of the Holy Spirit

7. Contrast the work of the Holy Spirit in the early Christian Age with His work today. How is that work the same, and how is that work different?
8. Describe what the work of the holy Spirit *never was*.
9. What are the ramifications of the theory of the direct operation of the Holy Spirit in redemption?

Chapter 5: The Baptism of the Holy Spirit

10. To whom was the baptism of the Holy Spirit promised? Were they the exclusive recipients of this baptism? How many persons received the baptism of the Holy Spirit?

11. Define “baptism of the Holy Spirit.” What parts do the “promise” and the “purpose” have in defining the baptism of the holy Spirit, if any?

Chapter 6: The Case of Cornelius and His Household

12. Did Cornelius and those with him receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit or a gift of the Holy Spirit? How essential is it that otherwise faithful brethren concur on the answer to this question?
13. What does the text *say* Cornelius, his household and his friends received? Did the Bible promise the baptism of the Holy Spirit to Cornelius and those with him?
14. How does one’s definition of baptism in the Holy Spirit affect his understanding of the event at the house of Cornelius?

Chapter 7: The Indwelling of the Holy Spirit

15. Besides the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, what relationship do God the Father, Jesus Christ and the children of God entertain to the indwelling question? Who dwells in whom, how?
16. Why is the question of how the Holy Spirit indwells the Christian important today?

Chapter 8: Acts 2:38 and the Gift of the Holy Spirit

17. What various suggestions do good brethren offer regarding the interpretation of the gift of the Holy Spirit?
18. Document and explain your concept of the gift of the Holy Spirit in Acts 2:38b.

Chapter 9: Gifts of the Holy Spirit

19. Relate the gifts of the Holy Spirit to their prophetic mention in Joel 2:28-32. Why did Peter quote Joel in Acts 2:16-21? When was Joel’s prophecy completely fulfilled?
20. Trace the arrival, use, abuse, purpose and cessation of gifts of the Holy Spirit according to New Testament evidence.

Chapter 10: Blaspheming and Sinning Against the Holy Spirit

21. How are blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, sinning against the Spirit and the unpardonable sin fundamentally the same?
22. Can one commit any or all of these sins today?

Chapter 11: Sealed in the Holy Spirit

23. How does one's concept of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit affect his understanding of being sealed in the Spirit?
24. Why does an argument for a non-miraculous seal in the Holy Spirit involve a self-contradiction?

Chapter 12: The Intercession of the Holy Spirit

25. How is the mediation of Jesus Christ different from the intercession of the Holy Spirit?
26. Does the intercessory mission of the Spirit bear a message *from* God or *to* God? *From* man or *to* man?

Chapter 13: The Holy Spirit: True and False

27. In what way does the Holy Spirit today influence and lead the child of God?
28. In times past, how did the Holy Spirit validate communication with humans?

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“...some today wish to separate the Holy Spirit from His Sword (the written word, the New Testament, Eph. 6:17)...” ~ Gary L. Grizzell