God Within You

A Book about The Holy Spirit



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Restoration Movement Literature

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The reader, blessings to you for reading such imperfect writing.

The critic, for continually helping me perfect my craft.

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CHAPTER ONE –

THE HOLY SPIRIT IS INTRODUCED TO US

NASB 1995 update used throughout unless otherwise specified.

We do not have to wait long for the Holy Spirit to make an appearance in Scripture:

Genesis 1:2 – “The earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters.”

I. The Holy Spirit has been present and active since the beginning of creation

b. And yet He has been largely misunderstood since the beginning!

c. This is because most people:

i. Get most of their “information” about the Holy Spirit from their own experiences and the anecdotal experiences of others.

ii. And, mix and consequentially distort their Scriptural knowledge of the Holy Spirit with their experiences and therefore – intentionally or unintentionally – use their own experience to interpret Scripture.

iii. It is the goal of this study to understand the Holy Spirit by means of the Holy Bible.

d. The Holy Spirit is God, the third member of the Godhead/”Trinity”:

i. 2 Corinthians 13:14 – “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all.”

ii. Matthew 28:19 – “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit”

iii. Matthew 3:16-17 – “16 After being baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove and lighting on Him,17 and behold, a voice out of the heavens said, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased.”

iv. 1 Peter 1:1-2 – “Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who reside as aliens, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, who are chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with His blood: May grace and peace be yours in the fullest measure.”

v. 1 Corinthians 12:4-6 – “ Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are varieties of ministries, and the same Lord. There are varieties of effects, but the same God who works all things in all persons.”

vi. Ephesians 4:4-6 – “There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all.”

e. There are many other verses that equate the Father and Son, for example, or the Spirit and the Son, etc.

f. The above verses are given as they equate the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit altogether. This truth is the basis for our study.

g. Anything truthful about the Holy Spirit Himself or what He does is found in Scripture alone. This truth is the basis for how we will come to understand the Holy Spirit and our relationship to Him.

II. There are many false understandings of the Holy Spirit:

a. We will only quickly review the major falsehoods

i. There are endless falsehoods:

ii. So as-is best practice for separating the true form from the counterfeit for anything – it is better to study “the genuine article” as thoroughly as possible than try to study all the possible false variations.

iii. The false variations will be obvious every time if we understand the genuine article thoroughly.

iv. For example, it is not nearly as helpful to study endless false religions than to best understand New Testament Christianity through God’s Word. The “counterfeits” then become obvious.

b. Major Falsehood #1 – The Holy Spirit is not God but a “force” or “energy” of God or a creation of God

i. Also known as the “Biblical unitarian” view (not universalist Unitarian, though there is nothing “Biblical” about either view)

ii. Scriptures that demonstrate the Holy Spirit is God, one in the same: 2 Corinthians 1:21-22, 3:17, 12:4-6, Luke 1:35, Matthew 28:19, Matthew 3:16-17, John 14:16-17, Romans 14:17-18, Luke 3:21-22, Genesis 1:1-2, 1 Peter 1:1-2

iii. This view is usually motivated by a view of making Christianity more mystical and thereby ecumenical (less understood / more “experienced”, less doctrinal, more communal)

iv. Feeds into dualistic thinking (good/bad as equal forces, dark/light as equal but opposites); Christianity is not dualistic! For God is greater, i.e. infinitely greater than Satan!

v. Feeds into universalism (i.e. the false view that the term “The Holy Spirit” is just another way of understanding the generic concept of “god” that all religions point to)

c. Major Falsehood #2 – The Holy Spirit is just another term for Scripture[[1]](#footnote-1)

i. A view from certain sects of the extremely-conservative non-instrumental churches of Christ, some fundamental Baptist groups, some isolationist groups, etc.

ii. This belief is at least partially motivated to be an “equal and opposite” reaction to all forms of charismatic belief.

iii. The problems with this view (though it is genuinely tempting for some) far outweigh any anti-charismatic “advantage”:

1. Then there is no literal Holy Spirit, no third member of the Godhead.[[2]](#footnote-2) This means:

a. No literal comforter (John 14:26)

b. No indwelling Spirit (Acts 2:38)

c. No seal unto salvation (Ephesians 1:13)

d. No Spirit to indwell the Lord’s temple (our bodies) (1 Corinthians 6:19)

2. The Bible, even as God’s Word, does not fill the role of the Holy Spirit. Both are essential to us and our salvation!

iv. If the Holy Spirit is just another term for Scripture, then there are Bibles that literally:[[3]](#footnote-3)

1. Hover over water (Genesis 1:2 – “Spirit of God hovering over the waters”)

2. Are sad (Isaiah 63:10 – “grieved His Holy Spirit”)

3. Live inside of people (Isaiah 63:11, Luke 1:15, 41, 67, 4:1; Acts 2:4, 4:8 – “within him”)

4. Lived inside of Jesus while He was on earth (Luke 4:1 – “full of the Holy Spirit”)

5. Is being given out by God the Father (Luke 11:13 – “give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him”)

6. Is being taken away by God Himself (Psalm 51:11 – “do not take your Holy Spirit from me”)

7. That impregnate women (Matthew 1:18, 20 – “to be with child by the Holy Spirit”)

8. That baptize (Matthew 3:11; Mark 1:8, Luke 3:16; Acts 1:5 – “That baptize you with the Holy Spirit”)

9. That hit people on the head (Luke 1:35, 2:25, 3:22; Acts 1:8 – “came upon”)

10. Float up and down in the air (John 1:33 – “descend and ascend upon”)

11. Say things that it does not say (Acts 1:2, 16 – “after he had by the Holy Spirit given orders to the Apostles whom He had chosen”)

12. Were handed out on Pentecost (Acts 2:38 – “you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit”)

13. There are many more examples and verses for each of the above, but for the sake of our study, this is enough. Clearly, the Holy Spirit is not Scripture itself. This is confusing the message and a Messenger, and denying the role each plays in salvation.

v. Now, it is certainly true that the Holy Spirit often speaks through Scripture and references Scripture, but it is not Scripture itself.

1. This is like saying the mailman and the mail are the same thing.

2. Acts 1:16 – “the Holy Spirit foretold by the mouth of David concerning Judas” (giving new revelation, based on Scripture)

3. Psalm 69 and 109 – “Let their habitation be desolate; let none dwell in their tents.” (confirmed by Paul in Romans 11:9)

4. David is remembered as a King, but he also prophesied – 2 Samuel 23:2; also see quotes of David’s prophecies in the New Testament ala Matthew 10:20, 1 Corinthians 2:13, and 1 Timothy 4:1, for example).

5. Of course, the Psalms, many written by David, are full of prophecy the Holy Spirit was involved in fulfilling.

6. So it is demonstrated that although the Holy Spirit often speaks through Scripture and references it, these two are not one in the same.

d. Major Falsehood #3 – The Holy Spirit is largely understood by personal experience

i. This is the major falsehood to falsify throughout our study.

ii. This is the great myth: that God’s personage or expectations is known through our experiences and/or emotions.

iii. The goal of a Bible study about the Holy Spirit is to set any subjective experiences aside, any emotions aside, and look at Scripture for what it says about the Holy Spirit.

iv. As a friend told me once, “Christians should never be afraid of good research.” If we have no fear of God’s Word, then we should have no fear of testing our beliefs against it in any category, including our understanding of the Holy Spirit!

v. When we do so, we will experience God rightly – through His Word – and therefore know the Father, the Son, and Holy Spirit rightly. Our relationship with God can then be right. That’s what we want!

vi. Three hypotheses for our study:

1. The Holy Spirit’s being and actions is only known rightly through the Word of God.

2. Our relationship to the Holy Spirit can only be correctly understood through the Word of God.

3. The Holy Spirit does not work through our emotions or experiences to teach us about divine things.

a. We can certainly learn wisdom through experience in life (i.e., how to fix something, help someone)

b. We can certainly learn some things about life from our emotions (i.e., our preferences, to some degree our abilities or how to encourage someone)

c. But we do not learn divine things – things about God, Jesus, or the Holy Spirit – from experience or emotion. In fact, those things are often misleading when it comes to divine things. We only learn divine things from God’s Word!

d. Scripture tells us how we come to know God:

i. The only thing we learn about God apart from His Word is His existence and power (Romans 1:20); that is the extent of your experience and emotions’ ability to conceive God. This is not enough to save or grow in a relationship with Him!

ii. We learn about God’s character through His Son (Matthew 1:23)

iii. We learn about what we are to know and do through His Word (John 17:20)

Author’s Thoughts:

A final thought I want to leave the reader is that our experiences and emotions are not meaningless in our interactions with the Holy Spirit – not at all! My point is that they are subject to the Word of God, and do not add to it, as far as who He is and what we know about Him. Our feelings towards Him, nonetheless, will grow warmer as learn more about Him, and experience life with His help. You will see Him work; He is very much actively working both within you and the world.

I have had many emotional sessions of prayer, asking the Spirit to intercede for me (Romans 8:26). He has provided peace, sometimes momentous relief to me.

I hope you too will experience the joy of the Holy Spirit. But, learn first and foremost from the Word. Then your relationship with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit will all be right and good and meaningful.

CHAPTER TWO – What Good Does a Deeper Study of the Holy Spirit Do?

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1. There is a natural resistance by both Satan and even many believers to deeper studies on many topics in Scripture:
	1. For Satan: Falsehoods will be exposed (Ephesians 4:25)
	2. For people, #1: Long-held beliefs or traditions may be questioned or even expelled (more on this later)
	3. For people, #2: It’s challenging work 😊 Colossians 3:23; Galatians 6:9
2. As it’s been put to me dozens of times in my various ministries: “I’m just a simple man/woman, preacher. I can’t understand anything that isn’t just plain right in front of me.”
	1. My response is that we don’t use this excuse anywhere else in life:
		1. Let’s say we have a farm to plow, but our tractor has broken down. If the problem isn’t obvious, we don’t just give up, right? I mean, if the answer isn’t “plain”, if the solution isn’t “simple”, we investigate until we figure it out. We should at least give Bible study the same amount of effort we do anywhere else in life, if not more!
	2. Look at a gas grill assembly-instruction manual – it sure looks complicated! Nonetheless, a little study, patience, trial and error, and we have a working grill. The same is true with much of Biblical doctrine.
3. The unfortunate thing is, when we claim simple ignorance as our excuse for not studying Scripture on a consistent basis to better understand it, the following Scriptural consequences come:[[4]](#footnote-4)
	* 1. We fail to be a diligent student of the Word – 2 Timothy 2:15
		2. We are unable to destroy falsehoods – 2 Corinthians 10:5; 1 Timothy 1:4, 2 Timothy 2:23
		3. We are unable to answer those who we have been commanded to be able to answer – 1 Peter 3:15
		4. We are unable to mimic the pattern of the early church to “argue from the Scriptures that Jesus is the Christ” – Acts 18:28
		5. Traditional/denominational/cultural understandings will prevail over the plain text of Scripture – a common example includes 1 Timothy 3:2 (“husband of one wife” as qualification to be an elder)
	1. This preacher recently purchased his first gas grill. Some facts about gas versus charcoal:
		1. Charcoal grills are incredibly easy to understand: “match lights fire, fire cooks food”. The grill itself is just a convenient place for the fire to cook the food and contain the heat.
		2. Charcoal grills are cheaper (at least up front): less parts = less cost
		3. Charcoal grills are “typically” easier to assemble.
		4. So why would I switch to gas?
			1. Much faster start-to-finish cook times
			2. Controlling temperatures is much easier
			3. No concerns about the fire going out (unless you run out of gas!)
			4. Less mess to clean up afterwards
		5. So a retort might be, “But it costs more and harder to assemble!” Yes, but it was worth both the cost and work for its aforesaid benefits.
		6. Nonetheless, the point here is that just because something looks complicated and takes more work, does not mean it does not have significant benefits!
		7. In fact, what worthy thing in life does not require challenging work?
4. So let’s set aside these silly, self-inflicted encumbrances and focus on what God has taught us about the Holy Spirit:
	1. The words “Holy Spirit” appear in ten passages in the Old Testament
	2. The words “Holy Spirit” appear in ninety-five passages in the New Testament!
	3. There are five hundred and ninety-eight passages about “spirits” in the Bible (including the Holy Spirit)
	4. Yes, this is going to be work. Yes, we will not be able to answer all questions. But also – yes! – we will have a far better understanding of the Holy Spirit, nonetheless, and a better relationship with God (i.e. the Holy Spirit is God) and His Word.
	5. We will sufficiently know WHO the Holy Spirit is
	6. We will sufficiently know WHAT the Holy Spirit has done and is doing
	7. We will sufficiently know what OUR relationship to the Holy Spirit is (how Scripture shows us what our interactions with Him is)
	8. We will be able to sufficiently tell others the above

A common question: “Do I have to know all these things about the Holy Spirit to be saved?”

Answer: Acts 2:38 tells you all that you must know about the Holy Spirit to be saved – that He, along with the forgiveness of your sins, is given at your repentance and baptism.

Another common question: “If that’s all I need to know, then why should I bother learning more about the Holy Spirit?”

Answer(s)[[5]](#footnote-5):

1 Corinthians 3:1-2 – “And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual men, but as to men of flesh, as to infants in Christ. I gave you milk to drink, not solid food; for you were not yet able to receive it. Indeed, even now you are not yet able,”

1 Corinthians 14:20 – “Brethren, do not be children in your thinking; yet in evil be infants, but in your thinking be mature.”

Colossians 3:16 – “Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God.”

Ephesians 4:15 – “but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ,”

Hebrews 6:1-2 – “Therefore leaving the elementary teaching about the Christ, let us press on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, of instruction about washings and laying on of hands, and the resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment.”

1 Timothy 4:15 – “Take pains with these things; be absorbed in them, so that your progress will be evident to all.”

James 1:2-4 – “Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.”

1 Peter 2:2 – “like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation,”

2 Peter 3:18 – “but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.”

Final Thoughts on “Why Know More?”

1. Is this question asked from fear? “Perfect love casts out fear” – 1 John 4:18
2. Is this question asked from insecurity? “Do not be anxious about anything” – Philippians 4:6
3. Is this question asked from laziness? “Do not lag in diligence, but be fervent in spirit” – Romans 12:11
4. Is this question being asked trying to protect potentially-poor traditions?
	1. Scripture speaks of both good and bad traditions:[[6]](#footnote-6)
		1. Good traditions – 2 Thessalonians 2:15, 1 Corinthians 11:2, and others
		2. Bad traditions – Colossians 2:8, Matthew 15:3, and others
		3. How can we tell the difference?[[7]](#footnote-7)
			1. Man-made traditions are, by Scriptural definition, always up for review – Isaiah 29:13; Matthew 15:2; Mark 7:3, 5; Colossians 2:8
			2. If a tradition flatly contradicts the Bible, the tradition has to go – Matthew 15:3, 6; Mark 7:8, 9, 13
			3. Even centuries-old traditions may be wrong – Galatians 1:14
			4. Traditions directly from Scripture are always to be practiced – 1 Corinthians 11:2; 2 Thessalonians 2:15, 3:6
5. Is this question asked because of worldly distractions?
	1. Psalms 119:15 – “I will meditate on your precepts and fix my eyes on your ways.”
	2. Philippians 4:8 – “Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.”
	3. 1 Corinthians 7:35 – “I say this for your own benefit, not to lay any restraint upon you, but to promote good order and to secure your undivided devotion to the Lord.”
	4. Galatians 5:16-17 – “But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do.”
	5. 2 Timothy 4:10 – “for Demas, having loved this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica; Crescens *has gone* to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia.”
	6. 1 John 2:15 – “Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.”
6. So you see the Bible has an answer for every excuse. Give the Bible your due diligence and just see what you will learn, how you will grow, and what God can and will do through you!

Author’s Notes: A famous scholar of antiquity once said, “The unexamined life is not worth living.”[[8]](#footnote-8) Even without that quote, the Bible clearly states repeatedly it is worthy of our deepest study and thought each of us are capable of.

This preacher rejects a “simple-minded” faith, just as I would reject a simple-minded contractor to build my house. The Bible, after all, uses the same illustration on how to build a life (Matthew 7:24-29).

Also, an incredible depth of joy is lost in the simple-minded, brain-dead faith. When your well is deep and filled with Scripture to the brim, it is hard for the devil to find a chink in armor tinted with the divine.

When the storms of life come down hard (and they never come just once), the rock your life is built on should be the Christ of the Scriptures, and therefore the more you know about Him and His Word will make your foundation stronger and stronger. You will be impressed by what you can withstand, what faith you have in God’s promises, when you are saturated in God’s Word!

For fear I may find myself on a soapbox, let me close with this: I read a lot of secular philosophy, other theologies, other religions, culture, history, etc. The Bible continually impresses me how vastly superior it is in each of field of study in which it makes any statement. In today’s world, that is a value statement that is rejected simply because it makes a truth-claim that the Bible is a better study than all the above.

Well, it is. And it is a life-giving study on top of that. I can’t say that about anything else I have ever read.

CHAPTER THREE – One-Time Actions vs. Habits of the Holy Spirit

NASB 1995 update used throughout unless otherwise specified.

I. There are some things the Holy Spirit has only done once and will not do again.

a. There is a good Scriptural concept to interpret Scripture correctly: “patterns”

i. God has always used patterns to demonstrate truth:

1. Acts 7:44 – ““Our fathers had the tabernacle of testimony in the wilderness, just as He who spoke to Moses directed him to make it according to the **pattern** which he had seen.”

2. Philippians 3:17 – “Brethren, join in following my example, and observe those who walk according to the **pattern** you have in us.”

3. Hebrews 8:5 – “who serve a copy and shadow of the heavenly things, just as Moses was warned by God when he was about to erect the tabernacle; for, “SEE,” He says, “THAT YOU MAKE all things ACCORDING TO THE **PATTERN** WHICH WAS SHOWN YOU ON THE MOUNTAIN.”

4. Patterns are by definition (and in Scripture) repeatable and consistent; therefore, one-time occurrences do not make patterns, or as it is commonly quoted, “one does not make a pattern”[[9]](#footnote-9)

ii. Who the Holy Spirit is a consistent pattern in Scripture (God, third member of the Godhead/trinity – Acts 17:29; Romans 1:20; Colossians 2:9 – especially in the KJV): Genesis 1:2; Matthew 3:16-17, 28:19; 1 Corinthians 12:4-6; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Ephesians 4:4-6; 1 Peter 1:1-2

iii. How to be saved is a consistent pattern in Scripture: Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38; 8:12, 13, 38; 10:48, 16:15, 33; 18:8

iv. All the same, we learn the most about the Holy Spirit by examining patterns: if He has done something again and again, then we can be confident that pattern indicates His operation

v. Therefore, any one-time, unique work of the Holy Spirit should be understood, by definition, as a one-time occurrence, not a reoccurring one.

vi. For example, are we expecting any more virgin-born babies? No.

1. And yet, this is the first mention of an act of the Holy Spirit in the New Testament – Matthew 1:18, 20

2. This story is repeated again in Luke 1:35

3. But Luke 1:35 is a parallel passage (same story, same occurrence) – so it is not a pattern, but a unique, singular truth [that the Holy Spirit conceived in Mary our Lord Jesus Christ as a baby]

vii. Interpreted incorrectly, or this circumstance taken by itself, we would be expecting the Holy Spirit to be conceiving more virgin-born babies!

viii. By studying the patterns of Scripture, we can avoid such misinterpretations and instead understand what the Holy Spirit is engaged in both regularly and presently separated from what He has done uniquely.

b. Some one-time actions of the Holy Spirit:

i. Conceived a virgin-born baby – Matthew 1:18, 20; Luke 1:35 (parallel passage)

ii. Descended upon a person during a baptism (this is different than the indwelling gift given upon baptism – Acts 2:38) – Matthew 3:16; Luke 3:22 (parallel passages)

iii. Descended upon people before their respective baptism (Acts 10:44-45; this same occurrence is retold by Peter in Acts 11:15-16, with a little more description)

iv. He spoke openly at a church – Acts 13:2, 4 (he spoke to the Apostles and other Scripture writers privately multiple times, and through others to both the nation of Israel and to the church multiple times throughout Scripture – 2 Peter 1:21) but only once

v. Transported someone to another physical location – Acts 8:39

vi. We should not expect the above to be the normal operation of the Holy Spirit, but rather to look to His repeated (you might even say “regular”) operations throughout Scripture to see how He has (and to some degree, continues) to operate

II. What the Holy Spirit did do regularly (New Testament times only)

a. The next chapter will deal with how the Holy Spirit operates today. This chapter focuses on what He did do in New Testament times that ceased at the end of the 1st century church.

b. It is often said, “If the Holy Spirit came upon [name any Bible character], then He can/will come upon me!”

c. However, Scripture never indicates that everything the Holy Spirit ever did happened to everyone – 1 Corinthians 12:29-31

i. In Scripture, the only operation of the Holy Spirit that occurs in every baptized believer’s life is His indwelling presence.

ii. Any other “regular” or “patterned” operation of the Holy Spirit is limited in scope:

1. The Holy Spirit only “baptized” a select few AND stopped doing so after Acts 10/11:

a. The “baptism of the Holy Spirit” is predicted in Matthew 3:11, Mark 1:8, Luke 3:16, and John 1:33 (all parallel passages)

b. The “baptism of the Holy Spirit” is fulfilled by the Apostle Peter’s own words in Acts 11:15-16!

c. The “baptism of the Holy Spirit” had a SPECIFIC purpose: to confirm that the Word preached was for both Jew and Gentile, everybody! (Acts 10:45-47, 11:15-16)

d. The “baptism of the Holy Spirit” never occurs again in Scripture. Why? Because its purpose had been fulfilled as stated by Peter himself.

e. The Holy Spirit continued to operate in many ways after Acts 11 but never again is “the baptism of the Holy Spirit” mentioned in Scripture. That specific operation was finished.

2. The Holy Spirit only spoke through a select few:

a. Through David – Mark 12:36 quoting Psalm 110:1

b. Through Isaiah – Acts 28:25 quoting Isaiah 6:9-10

c. Through the Apostles – Mark 13:11; Luke 12:12; John 14:26; Acts 1:8, 2:4, 4:8, 4:25, 15:28

d. Through Elizabeth (to Mary) – Luke 1:42ff

e. Through Zechariah – Luke 1:67

f. Through Paul – Acts 13:9-10

g. Through Scripture – Hebrews 3:7-11 quoting Psalms 95:7-11; Hebrews 10:15-17 quoting Jeremiah 31:33-34; 2: Peter 1:21

h. Scripture predicts this would cease when Scripture was completed – 1 Corinthians 13:8-10

3. The Holy Spirit spoke privately to only a select few:

a. To Zacharias – Luke 1:67ff

b. To Simeon – Luke 2:25-32

c. To Paul – Acts 20:23

d. To Agabus – Acts 21:11

e. There is no indication in Scripture that the Holy Spirit literally speaks to each believer.

4. The spiritual gifts of the Holy Spirit were only given by the laying on of an Apostle’s hands:

a. Acts 8:17 – “they began laying their hands on them, and they were receiving the Holy Spirit”

b. Acts 8:18 – “Now when Simon saw that the Spirit was bestowed through the laying on of Apostles’ hands…”

c. More Scriptures supporting that spiritual gifts of the Holy Spirit were only given by the laying on of the Apostle’s hands: Acts 9:17; Romans 1:1; 1 Timothy 4:14; 2 Timothy 1:6, etc.

d. These gifts were considered “elementary”; even the early church was encouraged to “move on” from focusing on them – Hebrews 6:2

e. These gifts were not to be given lightly, less they contribute to sinful behavior – 1 Timothy 5:22 – which is exactly what happened in Corinth! (1 Corinthians chapters 12-14)

f. Those who had received the spiritual gifts from an Apostle were unable to pass them on to others, making them naturally extinct after the Apostles passed:

i. Acts 8:13 – Philip the Evangelist had received the spiritual gifts of the Holy Spirit, but could not pass them on. That took an Apostle: Acts 8:17-18

ii. Acts 8:19 (Simon the Sorcerer was wrong that he could pass on the gifts if he had been given it, which he wasn’t)

iii. 1 Corinthians 13:8-10 – the gifts were predicted to cease by Paul Himself

5. Paul says there are greater things than spiritual gifts that also outlive them – 1 Corinthians 13:8-13 (especially vs. 13)

a. If we doubt this truth, then we do not understand Biblical faith, hope, and love!

b. 1 Corinthians 12:29-31

c. 1 Corinthians 14:19

d. We are told to pursue these things instead in the above verses!

Author’s Notes: There is a major misconception that a deep spiritual life (or to even be saved) requires a person to be baptized of the Holy Spirit but this is Scripturally false.

This preacher has never been baptized by the Holy Spirit. According to Scripture, no one after Acts 10 (and its retelling by Peter in Acts 11) has either.

And there is no need. The indwelling Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38, Ephesians 1:13, 4:30, etc.) is our guide and our comforter and so many more things the Scripture says. To say we need “more” is pretentious (even if unintentionally so).

Our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 3:16, 6:19-20). What more could we really ask to be? He is building us to be a more beautiful and suitable place for Him to dwell. Does He need also cover us? Does not a dwelling already have a roof? 😊

There are many good scholars and preachers who simply have this fact wrong.

It is this preacher’s encouragement that you learn the richness of the Holy Spirit dwelling inside of you according to Scripture and regard His leading and comfort as infinitely wonderful, sufficient to anything.

As well, consider what the Holy Spirit does: He is guiding, comforting, indwelling, etc. but also consider what He is not doing anymore – i.e., providing any more virgin born babies or speaking out loud in the weekly worship services. These are good things!

If God has stated that the Holy Spirit has ceased certain operations, do not think this a terrible thing! It is good! It is part of His plan. He knows best.

CHAPTER FOUR – What Does the Holy Spirit Do Today?

NASB 1995 update used throughout unless otherwise specified.

I. Scripture speaks of the “indwelling” Holy Spirit being substantially different than “the baptism of/coming down/coming upon/falling on” of the Holy Spirit[[10]](#footnote-10)

a. First, Scripture tells us specific things about the indwelling Holy Spirit:

i. The Holy Spirit indwells God’s “better” temple – us – replacing the shadow that was the physical, temporary temple:

1. 1 Corinthians 3:16 – “Do you not know that you are a temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?”

a. This is written to the Corinthian church. These are already immersed believers in need of further instruction and correction.

b. John’s disciples did not know this when they were baptized by John – Acts 19:2 – so they were then baptized in “the name of the Lord Jesus” (i.e. Acts 2:38).

2. 1 Corinthians 6:19 – “Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own?”

a. Paul is specifically referencing sexual sin in this passage – vs. 15-18.

b. Also, the doctrine that Jesus’ sacrifice “paid a price” for us has its root here and in Scriptures like Romans 3:25, Hebrews 2:17, 1 John 2:2, & 4:10

ii. As God’s temple – the Holy Spirit’s dwelling place – sexual immorality and idolatry have no place.

1. 2 Corinthians 6:16 – “Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; just as God said, "I WILL DWELL IN THEM AND WALK AMONG THEM; AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD, AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE.”

2. Paul is quoting Ezekiel 37:27, which foretold the indwelling gift of the Holy Spirit.[[11]](#footnote-11)

iii. 2 Timothy 1:14 – “Guard, through the Holy Spirit who dwells in us, the treasure which has been entrusted to you.”

1. The treasure spoken here is not the Holy Spirit – but salvation itself. The Holy Spirit is God’s seal and assists in guarding that treasure.

2. Verse 13 – “Retain the standard of sound words which you have heard from me” – many want to disregard Paul today, yet no preacher can be faithful who does![[12]](#footnote-12)

iv. Romans 8:11 – “But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.”

1. We know the Holy Spirit is our “seal unto salvation” – Ephesians 1:13, 4:30

2. But this verse tells us why – we need the Holy Spirit to resurrect our bodies to glory (see also verse 23)

v. Romans 8:9 – “However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him.”

1. This verse tells us that we MUST have the indwelling Holy Spirit to be saved!

2. Otherwise, if our hope is only “in the flesh”, then there is no way that ends well! (Romans 7:5, 8:8)

vi. Romans 8:15 – “For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a Holy Spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, "Abba! Father!"

1. Mark 14:36 and Galatians 4:6 also use the term, “Abba” (Galatians 4:6 also speaking of the Holy Spirit)

2. “Abba” is a term for God helping us understand that our relationship with God is one that is both sacred and personal:

3. Hebrews 4:16 – “Boldly approach the throne of grace”

4. Romans 8:26 – “But the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groans too deep for words.”

b. The Holy Spirit’s Indwelling was Foreshadowed in the Old Testament. Some examples are the following:

i. Ezekiel 36:27 – prophecy about the future indwelling Holy Spirit (quoted as fulfilled prophecy in 2 Corinthians 6:16)

ii. There are some references in the Old Testament to “the Spirit” being “in” some, like Joshua in Numbers 27:18. Is this the exact same “Indwelling Holy Spirit” we see in the New Testament? No. Here’s why:

1. “Holy” never precedes “Spirit” in these Old Testament passages. Why? “Holy” means “separate”, “unique”, or “distinct.” The “Holy Spirit” in the New Testament specifically given at baptism is “separate” from the Holy Spirit’s nature and operation in the Old Testament, “unique” in its place only in an immersed believer’s life, and “distinct” in that the indwelling Holy Spirit operates distinctly from its former operations under the Law of Moses.

2. “The Spirit” in the Old Testament was still the Holy Spirit, but not designated as such and did not yet operate the same way. Ezekiel 36:27 tells us that “the Holy Spirit” in its intended nature and operation was coming, but was not yet in the Old Testament. Prophecy is not prophecy if it is already happening! (Romans 8:24)

II. Scripture tells us about the Indwelling Holy Spirit’s Role with regards to Salvation

a. Two VERY different present views exist:

i. The most popular view today: The Holy Spirit regenerates a person either to faith or upon their faith unto salvation

ii. Yet, Scripture does not speak to the above scenario at any point!

iii. Scripture’s view is that the Holy Spirit comes after a person hears the Gospel, comes to faith, repents, and is immersed for the forgiveness of sins, and is the “seal” unto their salvation.

1. Acts 2:38 – “Peter said to them, “Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”

a. The indwelling Holy Spirit is given at our baptism; He does not play a role in our salvation before our baptism here or anywhere in Scripture!

b. The Holy Spirit is given at the same time as the forgiveness of sins.

c. If one must repent and be baptized to receive the forgiveness of sins and the indwelling gift of the Holy Spirit which is our seal unto salvation (Ephesians 1:13, 4:30), should we repent? Yes! Should we be baptized? Yes! This was not a question until about 500 years ago![[13]](#footnote-13)

2. Acts 5:32 – “And we are witnesses of these things; and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey Him.”

a. How have we been told up to this point in Acts to obey God to receive the Holy Spirit? To repent and be baptized ala Acts 2:38!

3. Acts 8:12-18a – “But when they believed Philip preaching the good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were being baptized, men and women alike. Even Simon himself believed; and after being baptized, he continued on with Philip, and as he observed signs and great miracles taking place, he was constantly amazed. Now when the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent them Peter and John, who came down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit. For He had not yet fallen upon any of them; they had simply been baptized]in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they began laying their hands on them, and they were receiving the Holy Spirit. Now when Simon saw that the Spirit was bestowed through the laying on of the apostles’ hands…”

a. The people first heard preaching, believed it, and were baptized. They received the indwelling gift of the Holy Spirit then, if we believe Acts 2:38 and 5:32!

b. For the Holy Spirit to “come upon” or “fall upon” them, that specifically required the Apostles to lay hands on them (Acts 8:18). If we are to believe that the “falling on” or “coming upon” of the Holy Spirit is required for salvation, then we better have some Apostles around to do so!!

c. No, Scripture makes the distinction and therefore we must too – the Spirit that “indwells” is not the same operation as the Spirit “upon” – and we only need the former, not the latter.

4. Acts 8:38-39 – “And he ordered the chariot to stop; and they both went down into the water, Philip as well as the eunuch, and he baptized him. When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away; and the eunuch no longer saw him, but went on his way rejoicing.”

a. Again, if we are to believe Acts 2:38 and 5:32, the eunech received the “indwelling” Holy Spirit upon his immersion.

b. The “Spirit of the Lord’ that transported Philip was not operating similarly as either the Holy Spirit “within” or the Holy Spirit “upon”. Do we see the Holy Spirit transporting Christians today? I wish! 😊All the same, do we see the Holy Spirit conceiving more virgin born babies? No.

c. Therefore, we must see how Scripture portrays the nature and operation of the Holy Spirit.

5. Acts 9:3-6, 17-18 - “As he [Saul] was traveling, it happened that he was approaching Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him; and he fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?”And he said, “Who are You, Lord?” And He said, “I am Jesus whom you are persecuting, but get up and enter the city, and it will be told you what you must do… [17] So Ananias departed and entered the house, and after laying his hands on him said, “Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road by which you were coming, has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.” And immediately there fell from his eyes something like scales, and he regained his sight, and he got up and was baptized.”

a. It was Christ who had blinded Saul, and the Holy Spirit who restored His physical sight. If that’s all that would have happened, Paul would NOT have received salvation!

b. Then he was baptized, receiving the indwelling gift of the Holy Spirit (i.e., Acts 22:16 and again, if we are to believe Acts 2:38 and 5:32, taking all things in context!).

6. Acts 10:44-48 – “While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who were listening to the message. All the [ah]circumcised believers who came with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also. For they were hearing them speaking with tongues and exalting God. Then Peter answered, “Surely no one can refuse the water for these to be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we did, can he?” And he ordered them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked him to stay on for a few days.”

a. Look at Peter’s testimony – the Holy Spirit that “fell upon” Cornelius and his family was the same one the Apostles had received at Pentecost (see also his same testimony in 11:15-16). Were the Apostles saved at Pentecost? No.

b. So this did not negate the need for water baptism at all, but rather confirmed its necessity! – “Surely no one can refuse the water” – vs. 47

c. After they were baptized, we can safely assume, based on Acts 2:38 and 5:32, they then received the gift of the indwelling Holy Spirit.

i. Notice how the Holy Spirit that fell on them let them speak in tongues as a one-time sign to Peter that they too could receive salvation (as he himself testifies in Acts 11:15-16) but how much more useful to even them the indwelling Holy Spirit that sealed their salvation!

ii. After John the Baptist’s and Jesus’ prophecy (Matthew 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; John 1:33) was fulfilled as testified by Peter in Acts 11:16, the Holy Spirit never “falls upon” anyone else in Scripture without the Apostles’ laying on of hands after this point. The prophecy of both John the Baptist and Jesus was fulfilled. Spiritual gifts of the Holy Spirit like tongues were only granted by the laying on hands by an Apostle after this point in Scripture (see Acts 19:6 for yet another an example).

7. When Lydia and her household (Acts 16:15) and the Corinthians were baptized (Acts 18:8), they received the Holy Spirit after their baptism as Acts 2:38 and Acts 5:32 confirms. The Holy Spirit did not “fall upon” them; in fact, He never did after Acts 10 (Cornelius and his family).

b. Romans 8:9 – “However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him.”

i. Let’s look at Acts 19:1-7 for an example of the above doctrine:

ii. Acts 19:1-7 – “It happened that while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul passed through the upper country and came to Ephesus, and found some disciples. He said to them, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?” And they said to him, “No, we have not even heard whether [a]there is a Holy Spirit.” And he said, “Into what then were you baptized?” And they said, “Into John’s baptism.” Paul said, “John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in Him who was coming after him, that is, in Jesus.” When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they began speaking with tongues and prophesying. There were in all about twelve men.”

1. Notice how Paul equates “believed” with “baptized” in verses 2 and 3. The only “faith” Scripture recognizes is an obedient one!

2. Notice how these men had been baptized by John but have not received the indwelling Holy Spirit. Therefore, Paul points out that they need baptized with the right understanding to receive this essential gift. So, they were! (vs. 5)

3. Then notice that when Paul laid hands on them, they received the gift of tongues, separate and distinct from their baptism, after they had received the indwelling gift of the Holy Spirit. We know from Acts 10:45-46, that these gifts were immaterial and separate from both their immersion and the indwelling gift of the Holy Spirit.

4. Their obedient faith led them to being baptized with the right understanding which gave them the indwelling gift of the Holy Spirit by Paul’s own testimony. This is what is relevant to us even today!

Author’s Notes: I will admit any day the previous chapter was “a mouth full”.

The main point is this: The Spirit “upon” is Scripturally-different than the Spirit “within”, and the one you have within is all-sufficient to your needs as a Christian.

Also, how one receives the Spirit within is through repentance and baptism – not prayer, not being “elected” by God (as the Calvinists would say), not through any other method – only repentance and baptism.

The rest is simply evidence piled on top of evidence from the Scriptures to help the reader understand this is not just an opinion – it is Scriptural fact – and also very helpful for the reader to understand.[[14]](#footnote-14)

Many believers spend a great deal of time wondering when their “baptism of the Holy Spirit” is going to come when all along, there is so much richness from the Spirit within, and so many divinely-appointed, blessed things to do!

Don’t get caught up in the mystical or charismatic understanding of the Holy Spirit – it is like seeing the inside of a pumpkin for the first time:

Pumpkins are giant fruits, but they are mostly hollow inside. This is a lot like the new mysticism that is (once again) creeping into modern preaching, or the now-getting-long-in the-tooth charismatic movement – it is a hollow theology.

How do we get truth from something that is, by definition, subjectively derived, if even derived at all?

Stick with Scripture.

I have “felt” my foundation getting stronger the more Scripture I absorb about not only the Holy Spirit but about every subject in which it speaks.

My feelings are not evidence of anything, but they also do not need to be. They are, however, a comfort. My truth is in God’s Word. And I relish in its warmth.

CHAPTER FIVE – What does the indwelling Holy Spirit do in the lives of Christians today?

NASB 1995 update used throughout unless otherwise specified.

I. What does the indwelling Holy Spirit do in the lives of Christians today?

A. He consecrates/sanctifies a Christian:

a. 1 Corinthians 3:16 – “Do you not know that you are a temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?”

i. In becoming a temple of the Holy Spirit, we move from being common to uncommon – a sinner to a temple, a common person to a priest:

1. Titus 2:14 (KJV) – “Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.”

2. 1 Peter 2:9 (KJV) – “But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light;”

3. Therefore, the above understanding of the Holy Spirit by the Christian provides MOTIVATION to obey God and PERSERVANCE to endure the hard times:

a. James 1:27 – “Pure and undefiled religion in the sight of our God and Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world.”

b. 1 Peter 1:1-2 – “Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who reside as aliens, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, who are chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, [a]to obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with His blood: May grace and peace [b]be yours in the fullest measure.”

b. 1 Corinthians 6:19 – “Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own?”

i. The indwelling Holy Spirit provides INNATE VALUE and AN UNBREAKABLE UNDERSTANDING OF SELF WORTH to the Christian:

1. 1 Corinthians 6:20 – “For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.”

2. 1 Corinthians 7:23 – “You were bought with a price; do not become slaves of men.”

3. A person does not buy something without seeing value in it. God has perfect knowledge, knew exactly what He was purchasing with His Son’s blood, and thought YOU AND I WERE WORTHY OF THAT PRICE.

4. Luke 12:7 – “Indeed, the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Do not fear; you are more valuable than many sparrows.”

5. Luke 12:24 – “Consider the ravens, for they neither sow nor reap; they have no storeroom nor barn, and yet God feeds them; how much more valuable you are than the birds!”

6. Only Satan devalues us and our service! God the Father valued us so much to send His Son to die for us and His Holy Spirit to dwell in us!

c. 2 Corinthians 6:16 – “Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; just as God said, "I WILL DWELL IN THEM AND WALK AMONG THEM; AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD, AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE.”

i. The Holy Spirt provides sufficient UNDERSTANDING of God’s Word through God’s Word.

ii. This verse talks about how – if we have the Spirit – we will reason to know that both the Spirit and idols cannot be worshipped at the same temple. Compare this to the world!!

Author’s Notes:

This chapter is obviously shorter than any before (or after) it.

I want the reader to pick up one simple but very profound point:

You and I were worth the price God paid for our salvation!

I am appalled (even angered, for what it has done to world’s youth) at the world’s messaging that we are animals, evolved from primordial ooze.

God says we are made in His image! God says we are worth His own suffering and dying for our redemption. Now that is VALUE and LOVE!

CHAPTER SIX – Making Sense of Various Descriptions of the Holy Spirit

NASB 1995 update used throughout unless otherwise specified.

I. What is the “Law of the Spirit” in contrast to the Law of Moses? – Romans 7:24-8:8 – “Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, on the one hand I myself with my mind am serving the law of God, but on the other, with my flesh the law of sin. Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death. For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God did: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh, so that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace, because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so, and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.”

a. There is “the law of faith” – Romans 3:27

b. There is “the law of the Spirit of life in Christ” – Romans 8:2

c. There is “the law of sin and death” = the Law of Moses (2 Corinthians 3:7 – “But if the ministry of death, in letters engraved on stones, came with glory, so that the sons of Israel could not look intently at the face of Moses because of the glory of his face, fading as it was,”

d. The entire Protestant Reformation is based on a faulty interpretation of Romans 3:27-30 – “Where then is boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? Of works? No, but by a law of faith. For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law. Or is God the God of Jews only? Is He not the God of Gentiles also? Yes, of Gentiles also, since indeed God who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith is one.”

i. Vs. 27 – The KEY question: what is the law of works?

ii. Vs. 28 answers it – “the Law” – the Law of Moses!

iii. Vs. 29 confirms – “Or is God the God of Jews only?” Why would Paul mention Jews if we weren’t talking about the Law of Moses?

iv. Vs. 29b-30 continues the confirmation – God can justify both Jew and Gentile through faith[fulness], but not through the Law.

e. What are the implications?

i. To this day, the Protestants argue fiercely among themselves about how far to take their “faith alone” doctrine.

ii. They argue about it because there is no way to agree about a false doctrine.

iii. The ONLY verse in the ENTIRE Bible to say “faith alone” says “not by faith alone” in James 2:24 – “24 You see that a man is justified by works and not by faith alone.”

iv. To give you an idea how confusing this false doctrine has become (this would be like us arguing if 2+2 = 5 or 5.5, neither of which is true and all arguments would be spurious):

v. There is a Calvinistic faith-alone, a hyper-Calvinistic faith-alone, a dispensational faith-alone, a Lordship-salvation faith-alone, a non-Lordship-salvation faith-alone, a Reformed faith-alone (which is usually some undefined mix of the above), etc.:

vi. https://www.livingwaters.com/witnessingtool/isrepentancenecessaryforsalvation.shtml - Ray Comfort’s ministry, Calvinistic, says repentance is necessary (but is a work of God through the Holy Spirit, not by the will of man – Calvinism’s typical twist on this)

vii. https://bible.org/question/repentance-necessary-salvation - hugely popular ecumenical website argues that faith and repentance are synonyms (the error here is confusing synonyms and merely compatible concepts – such as arguing an engine and gasoline are the same – instead of merely compatible concepts)

viii. https://www.gty.org/library/questions/qa79 - this quote is killer from the bottom of John MacArthur’s treatise on baptism – “Water baptism is certainly important, and required of every believer. However, the New Testament does not teach that baptism is necessary for salvation.” (How can something be required but not necessary? Talk about a confusion of synonyms!)

ix. https://www.backtothebible.org/is-water-baptism-necessary-for-salvation-in-christ - The Good News Broadcasting Association, another ecumenical faith-only group, argues that “repentant faith” is all that is necessary for salvation. No other group in this list uses this term.

x. http://www.jesus-is-savior.com/salvation\_webpages/31-repentance.htm - David J. Stewart’s long-time running and popular website contends that all of the above are heretics (literally) because they preach anybody has to do anything at all other than “believe” (faith only, literally speaking) – He literally teaches there are “no conditions for salvation – quoting Charles Spurgeon.

xi. https://www.evangelicaloutreach.org/hereticDavidJStewart.htm - then here is Dan Corner labeling David J. Stewart above a heretic because they disagree about everything from repentance to holiness to necromancy (yes, necromancy)

xii. https://carm.org/repentance-necessary-salvation - Matt Slick’s popular apologetics website (that actually does have a lot of good apologetic information) says that repentance is both required and not required (wrap your head around that one)

xiii. https://www.monergism.com/thethreshold/articles/onsite/repentance.html – John Hendryx argues that repentance is necessary, but God does it through us automatically through “Holy Spirit regeneration” (a concept that is non-existence in the Bible with regards to salvation), so if we truly believe, we automatically repent (see Simon the Sorcerer in Acts 8 if genuine belief led to penitence!).

xiv. https://www.gotquestions.org/repentance.html - a popular question-and-answer religious website, argues that salvation is through “grace alone, faith alone, Christ alone.” Repentance is a part of these things, even though they are alone. This is like saying that I want pizza with “pepperoni alone, crust alone, and cheese alone.” Does the word “alone” have any meaning then?

f. I hope you can see that when you embrace a false doctrine, it is impossible to agree on it – because it is false!

g. Compare this to merely stating and believing that we must OBEY God (and stop this silly talk that anything God commands isn’t necessary) – that faith, repentance, confession, baptism, and faithfulness are all commanded, required, and necessary, no confusion necessary!

i. Doug Hardman one time said the Bible says that twelve things “save” in the New Testament:

ii. Jesus saves – Matthew 1:21, 8:25, 14:30, John 3:17, 10:9, 12:47, Acts 2:47, Acts 4:12, Romans 5:9+10, 1 Timothy 1:15, 2 Timothy 1:9, Titus 3:5, Hebrews 5:7, 7:25, James 4:12, Philippians 1:28 (“God”)

iii. Grace saves: Acts 15:11, Ephesians 2:5+8

iv. The Gospel saves: 1 Corinthians 15:2

v. We save ourselves: Matthew 16:25, Mark 8:35, 13:13, Luke 9:24, Acts 2:40, 1 Timothy 4:16, 2 Thessalonians 2:10

vi. We save others: Jude 1:22, 1 Corinthians 9:22, 1 Timothy 4:16, James 5:20

vii. Faith saves: Mark 16:16, Luke 7:50, John 3:16, Acts 16:31, Romans 10:9, 1 Corinthians 1:21, 2 Thessalonians 2:13, James 1:21

viii. Confession saves: Acts 2:21, Romans 10:9, Romans 10:13

ix. Baptism saves: Mark 16:16, Acts 2:38-40, 1 Peter 3:21

x. Obedience/Faithfulness saves: 2 Thessalonians 2:10, 1 Timothy 2:15, 1 Timothy 4:16

xi. The Sanctifying Work of the Spirit saves: 2 Thessalonians 2:13

xii. Words save: Acts 11:14, 1 Corinthians 1:18

xiii. Hope saves: Romans 8:24

xiv. So do you know which one is the most important? The one we leave out because if God said it saves, then it’s necessary/required/essential!

xv. Faith and Obedience are synonyms in the New Testament:

xvi. Acts 6:7 – “a great many… were becoming obedient to the faith.” Acts 14:22 – “…continue in the faith”, Rom. 1:5 – “the obedience of faith…” Rom 3:27 - “law of faith”, Rom. 16:26 - “obedience of faith”, 2 Cor. 5:7 – “walk by faith”, 2 Cor. 8:7, “in faith…abound in this righteous work”, Gal 2:20 – “live by faith”, Gal. 3:11, “live by faith”, Gal. 5:6, “faith working”, Gal. 6:10, “do good… by faith”, Eph. 6:16 – “taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish…”, Col. 1:23 – “continue in the faith”, 1 Thess. 1:3 – “work of faith”, 2 Thess. 1:7 – “work of faith”, 1 Tim. 1:19 – “keeping faith”, 1 Tim. 2:15 – “continue in faith”, 1 Tim. 3:13 – “served well… in the faith”, 1 Tim. 5:8 – “does not provide… has denied the faith”, 1 Tim. 6:12 – “the good fight of faith”, 2 Tim. 2:22 – “pursue… faith”, 2 Tim. 4:7 – “kept the faith”, Heb. 6:11-12 – “same diligence… not be sluggish, but be imitators of those who through faith…”, Heb. 10:22 – “full assurance of faith… our bodies washed with pure water…”, Heb. 10:38 – “live by faith”, Heb. 11:3 – “by faith… the worlds were prepared…”, Jam. 1:3 – “faith produces endurance”, 1 Pet. 1:7 – “your faith…tested by fire”, 1 Pet. 5:9 – “resist him [the devil]… in your faith”, 2 Pet. 1:5 – “applying all diligence, in your faith supply…”, 1 John 5:4 – “whatever is born of God overcomes the world… our faith”, Jude 1:3 – “contend… for the faith”, Jude 1:20 – “…building yourselves up on your most holy faith”, Rev. 2:13 – “did not deny My faith…”, Rev. 2:19 – “I know your faith…that your deeds of late are greater…”, Rev. 13:10 –“the perseverance and the faith”, Rev. 14:12 – “who keep the commandments of God and their faith in Jesus.”

xvii. WHAT does this have to do with the Holy Spirit?

1. The God through the Holy Spirit does NOT confuse – “faith only” is obviously, hopelessly confused (1 Corinthians 14:33 – see KJV rendering for an especially helpful understanding)

2. Acts 2:38 and 5:32 tell us that the Holy Spirit is given to those who OBEY God and no one else:

a. There is nothing in the Bible supporting “faith only” in any form

b. The only verse about “faith only” condemns the very concept! (James 2:24)

c. We should also consider that James wrote his book FIRST in the New Testament – James and Paul were never at odds in their understandings. James laid the inspired, Scriptural groundwork of the New Testament that Paul and the other Apostles continued to flesh out with their Gospels and letters.

3. Romans 8:2 – tells us that the Holy Spirit is so intimately connected to obeying God that the very new “law” is named after Him!

4. Let’s realize that God the Father, Jesus the Son, and the Holy Spirit fiercely reject false doctrine because it leaves people in their sins, in their confused state of minds, bickering and tearing each other part. No good comes from it!

Author’s Notes:

This chapter focuses on two simple truths, backed by a lot of Scriptural evidence:

Paul in particular uses some unique terms to describe the nature and operation of the Holy Spirit, so I attempted to flesh these out Scripturally so these deeper concepts could be understood in the context of all of Scripture.

Second, to juxtapose the simple “repent and be baptized” formula of New Testament salvation versus the limitless others regularly peddled:

The moment you get away from a New Testament way of receiving salvation, you are going to be lost in a sea of nonsense. I wish, I genuinely do, that I could find a way to say that nicer and still get my point across, but I can’t.

CHAPTER SEVEN – The Holy Spirit in the Life & Work of John the Baptist

I. Luke 3:2-3 – “Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip was tetrarch of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias was tetrarch of Abilene, in the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John, the son of Zacharias, in the wilderness. And he came into all the district around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.”

a. Don’t miss that the Word of God came to John!

b. This is very significant because John did not make up his testimony or the commandments he espoused!

c. John never performed a miracle. He might have been the most “preacher-esque preacher” ever, because most of his ministry was simply preaching and baptizing. And that was enough. No miracles needed!

d. He preached “a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins”

i. In simple English grammar, it breaks down like this:

ii. A baptism is described by both the infinitive “of” AND the preposition “for”

iii. This is a conjunctive, altogether sentence!

iv. Therefore, these ideas are not separable:

II. Vs. 15-18 – “15 Now while the people were in a state of expectation and all were wondering in their hearts about John, as to whether he was the Christ, John answered and said to them all, “As for me, I baptize you with water; but One is coming who is mightier than I, and I am not fit to untie the thong of His sandals; He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fork is in His hand to thoroughly clear His threshing floor, and to gather the wheat into His barn; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.” So with many other exhortations he preached the gospel to the people.”

a. John the Baptist was not just a great preacher, and once praised by Jesus’ Himself, but extraordinarily humble.

b. In his preaching, he said Jesus would baptize with “the Holy Spirit and fire.” (see iii below)

i. After Jesus ascended and became Head of His church and High Priest in heaven, Jesus immediately went to work in His church.

ii. The first thing He did was work with the Holy Spirit to start the church in Acts 2:1-4, and added people to His church in Acts 2:41-47

iii. This prophecy of John’s was fulfilled in its completion in Acts 11:16

iv. No “baptism of the Holy Spirit” was ever recorded after this point. Its fulfillment was its completion.

III. John 1:6-8 – “There came a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness, to testify about the Light, so that all might believe through him. He was not the Light, but he came to testify about the Light.”

a. The Apostle John testifies with Luke that John the Baptist was sent from God. This is remarkable because John’s Gospel came after Matthew, Mark, and Luke, and includes substantially different (but not contradictory) material.

b. John the Baptist fulfilled prophecy. John the Baptist gave prophecy. All were fulfilled.

IV. John 1:14-17 – “14 And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth. John testified about Him and cried out, saying, “This was He of whom I said, ‘He who comes after me has a higher rank than I, for He existed before me.’” For of His fullness we have all received, and grace upon grace. For the Law was given through Moses; grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ.”

a. John the Baptist testifies that Jesus existed before Him! Jesus is pre-existent! (see vs. 1; then, compare to the New World Translation of the Jehovah Witnesses vs. 1-2 – “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God,+ and the Word was a god. This one was in the beginning with God.”) The Jehovah Witness doctrine/translation do match the rest of Scripture.

b. Biblegateway.com, which liberally includes just about every translation you can think of (including some off-the-wall ones, like “the Message” – which isn’t even a translation in any consistent sense of the word), but even they will not include the NWT. Only the Jehovah Witnesses translates John chapter 1 this way!

c. Don’t let anyone fool you into thinking that Jesus is anything less than God. Jesus is not a created being; Jesus is not Michael the Archangel (another doctrine of the Jehovah Witnesses); Jesus is God, the Son of God, God in the flesh!

V. John 1:29-34 – “The next day he saw Jesus coming to him and \*said, “Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! This is He on behalf of whom I said, ‘After me comes a Man who has a higher rank than I, for He existed before me.’ I did not recognize Him, but so that He might be manifested to Israel, I came baptizing in water.” John testified saying, “I have seen the Spirit descending as a dove out of heaven, and He remained upon Him. I did not recognize Him, but He who sent me to baptize in water said to me, ‘He upon whom you see the Spirit descending and remaining upon Him, this is the One who baptizes in the Holy Spirit.’ I myself have seen, and have testified that this is the Son of God.”

a. John’s declaration was important because it:

i. Fulfilled prophecy

ii. Informed the populace

iii. Obeyed God

iv. Gave a consistent testimony with the rest of Scripture

Author’s Notes:

Seeing the Holy Spirit work closely in John’s life makes it personal – and powerfully evident – that the Holy Spirit wants to work powerfully in us too.

One untouched concept in this lesson because it didn’t directly have to do with the Holy Spirit and John is the concept of Jesus being the “Word” from John 1:1. This is the Greek word, “logos”, which means logic, sense, and reason. In the context of Jesus, Jesus is the ultimate man, the summation of logic, sense, and reason and – don’t miss this – the summation of grace, forgiveness, mercy, understanding, and love too. Only Jesus is all these things.

This cannot be overstated in its importance:

Nietzsche, one of the West’s most prominent and influential philosophers to this day, sought an “ubermensch” – a superman, an overman – to arise from humanity to lead it (or a race of them).

He dismissed Jesus, as the Jews did in the New Testament, because although Jesus is both the “ubermensch” (and the only one for that matter) and the promised Messiah, He did not fit the human-mold that Nietzsche and the Jews at the time had made for Him.

And this makes sense – if Jesus is God, and He is – we do not make the mold He fits into – He does.

The true overman – superman – “ubermensch” – is not subject to our understanding or expectations of him: instead, we derive those things from him.

That is the key difference in Christian thought and living versus all others – the “logos” came down to us – and loved us first. We accept His grace, and obey Him. He is the Head, the High Priest, the Last Prophet, the King – and paradoxically we are His brothers, friends, subjects, and priests to God unto ourselves.

I hope you don’t get lost in those thoughts – unless that lostness for a time simply leaves you in awe of the God we serve.

For He is awe-some, worthy of worship, worthy of our submission and praise.

CHAPTER EIGHT – The Holy Spirit in the Parables of Jesus

Luke 15:8-10 – “The Lost Coin/Silver”

“Or what woman, if she has ten silver coins and loses one coin, does not light a lamp and sweep the house and search carefully until she finds it? When she has found it, she calls together her friends and neighbors, saying, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found the coin which I had lost!’ In the same way, I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.”

I. This parable is one of three in Luke 15 – the lost sheep, the lost coin/silver, and the lost/prodigal son

a. Jesus gave these parables in the context of the Pharisees and scribes (religious lawyers of the day) who were accusing him of befriending and eating with “sinners” (thereby, in their minds, making Himself a sinner/sinning/associated with sin)

b. These parables, as a group, teach us that all people are valuable[[15]](#footnote-15), that all people are worth our time to evangelize, and that we should hope and pray that all repent, as God Himself desires (Acts 17:30; 2 Peter 3:9).

c. Ezekiel 18:23 – God does not even celebrate the death of the wicked – for to him we are all His sheep and any surely lost is a loss indeed.

d. Parenthood taught this preacher that all people are valuable: if I would defend my own children at any cost – who are imperfect human beings themselves – then I should not wish harm on anyone else either.

II. The Lost Coin/Silver has two genuinely-possible interpretations and both are worth understanding:

a. The Holy Spirit seeking after backsliding believers in danger of falling from grace

i. This is a theme throughout the New Testament: Matthew 7:21-23, 24:13; John 3:36, 8:31-32, 9:4; Romans 8:24, 11:22; Colossians 1:21-23; 1 Corinthians 1:18, 10:6, Philippians 1:28; Hebrews 2:1-4, 4:12-13, 6:4-8, 10:26-31, 12:25-29; 1 Timothy 3:6, 4:16; 2 Timothy 2:11-12; 1 John 2:3-4; 2 Peter 1:9-10, 2:20-22; Revelation 2:4-7, 3:1-6

ii. Examples in the New Testament include Demas (Colossians 4:14, Philemon 1:24 to 2 Timothy 4:10) and Simon the Sorcerer (Acts 8:13 to Acts 8:20-23)

iii. Others include:

1. Judas fell from grace (Acts 1:25)

2. Ananias and Sapphira fell from grace (Acts 5:1-11)

3. The Apostle Paul (yes, the Apostle Paul!) feared being castaway if he were to be unfaithful (1 Corinthians 9:27)

4. The lukewarm Laodiceans were in danger of being spewed out (Revelation 3:16)

iv. Other verses warning of the possibility of falling from grace:

1) If we abuse our freedom in Christ to have our brother stumble, he can be destroyed by our action! (Romans 14:15)

2) Paul warns the Corinthian church – full of division, gossip, immorality, abuse, and disobedience – that if they did not take heed, they would fall (1 Corinthians 10:12)

3) Paul warns the Galatians that if they follow the false gospel of the Judaizers, they could fall from grace (Galatians 1:6)

4) Paul warns the young evangelist Timothy whom he personally trained that some would fall away (1 Timothy 4:1-3) and that some had already turned to Satan (1 Timothy 5:15)

5) The author of Hebrews (likely Paul) gives the reader the warning that if they have received salvation, and then neglected it to the point of falling from grace, how shall we escape judgment? (Hebrews 2:3)

6) Peter, like Paul, gives warning to take heed of God’s commands by repentance and obedience or be cast away (2 Peter 3:17)

7) If the Bible says, and it did happen to actual characters in the Bible, what is hard to believe about the fact that a Christian can indeed lose their salvation?

b. The Lord seeking after lost sheep/coins/children through His church

i. This is definitely the more contextual interpretation of this parable, but surprisingly not held by the majority of conservative commentators. Nonetheless, this interpretation has legitimacy because it emphasizes the grand value God places on each person and the importance to be faithful to this right way of living.

ii. This interpretation also fits with the accusation Jesus was answering in Luke 15:1-2 and to the first parable in verses 3-7

iii. Also, in this interpretation, there is no significance that Jesus used 100 sheep or 10 coins; they are both referring to the lost in general.

III. The Potential Role of the Holy Spirit in Luke 15:8-10

a. Many reputable, conservative, Christian-church scholars say that the Holy Spirit is being represented by the woman in this parable:

i. This does NOT mean – in anyway – that the gender of the Holy Spirit is female

ii. The Holy Spirit is universally referred to as a “he” when being referenced literally in Scripture (same with the Father and the Son)

iii. However, just like “the bride of Christ” does not mean every male Christian is a woman, so in this parable a woman can symbolize the Holy Spirit without changing the literal understanding of the Holy Spirit at all

b. We know from Scripture that the Holy Spirit does not play a role in salvation until after faith, repentance, confession, and baptism:

i. The forgiveness of sins and the gift of the indwelling Holy Spirit is not given to the believer until their immersion (Acts 2:38, 5:32)

ii. We know that the “baptism of the Holy Spirit” in Scripture universally does not save: it only fulfills a temporary purpose of God in a person’s life.

1. It does not make a person more moral.

2. It does not make a person more trustworthy.

3. It does not make a person a better person.

4. It does not even stop a person from continuing in sin.

iii. Therefore, how could the Holy Spirit be represented in Luke 15:8-10, a parable about a woman seeking after a lost coin?

1. The first parable may be referring to lost souls

2. The second parable – the lost coin/silver – may be referring to backsliding believers

a. Think about this: the Holy Spirit has an inherent interest in seeing that the temple (person) in which He inhabits is not corrupted or destroyed!

b. All the same, the Holy Spirit – being God Himself – values the person and desires them to be saved from their sins.

c. Acts 15:28 – the Holy Spirit plays an active role in trying to keep the earthly burden of faithfulness to a minimum

d. Romans 5:5 – the Holy Spirit wants us to know the love of God

e. Romans 14:17 – the Holy Spirit wants to bring righteousness, peace, and joy into our lives

f. Romans 15:13 – the Holy Spirit wants to bring us hope

g. Romans 15:16 – the Holy Spirit helps set us apart from the world and to the work of God

h. 2 Corinthians 6:6 – the Holy Spirit is compatible with purity, godly knowledge, patience, kindness, love but not those things which are opposite/sinful

3. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit all play a role in trying to save the backsliding believer:

a. God the Father – 1 John 1:9

b. Jesus the Son – Revelation 2:1-5 (and really all of chapters 2 and 3 of Revelation)

c. The Holy Spirit – see verses above

Author’s Notes:

This study was very rewarding. The Holy Spirit tries to keep the earthly burden of faithfulness to a minimum – Acts 15:28. He wants us to know the breadth and the width of the love of God – Romans 5:5.

And so many other comforting truths about the God within each faithful believer.

Also, the truth from the parable (no matter how you ultimately interpret it) that God is deeply concerned for and goes to great lengths for his lost children.

It is hard not to get aggravated at the lost world trying hopelessly to find and enforce their empty meaning and purpose on people through the world’s various mediums for doing so. But God loves them, so will I.

CHAPTER NINE – The Holy Spirit – Our Comforter, Our Guide

I. He helps faithful believers

a. He guides/help train our thoughts and emotions – 2 Corinthians 3:18

i. This does not remove one iota of self-responsibility.

ii. This is not auto-pilot!

iii. God never violates our free will.

iv. Rather, a “guide” does not “force” – but leads the way! (1 Peter 1:22)

b. He comforts us – Acts 9:31 (as a church), Romans 8:26 (individually)

i. He strengthens us inwardly during hard times – Ephesians 3:16

ii. He brings joy, over time, out of despair – 1 Thessalonians 1:6 (even during persecution)

iii. He encourages freedom from the captive thoughts of the world – 2 Corinthians 3:17, Romans 8:2

c. He seals us unto salvation! (Ephesians 1:13, 4:30; Titus 3:5)

i. Paul himself emphasizes the importance of having the Holy Spirit in Acts 19:1-5 to the disciples of John

ii. The disciples of John had been baptized but had not received the Holy Spirit because they had “not even heard of the Holy Spirit”

iii. How were you baptized? With that understanding or not? Did you know that really matters, Scripturally? This is not commonly taught (very, very unfortunately).

iv. See Acts 5:32 – to whom is the Holy Spirit given?

v. See Acts 2:38 – what were the instructions given and obeyed to receive that Holy Spirit?

vi. Need I really say more? Genuinely, consider this!

II. He multiplies what we can do on our own – Galatians 5:22-23

a. The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

b. These are fruits of the Spirit – not necessarily of us! These are the goals of the Spirit within us! This is what He is encouraging us to do, but we must learn and practice them!

c. He encourages unity among believers – Ephesians 4:3-4

i. There is only ONE Spirit, ONE body, ONE Lord, ONE faith, ONE baptism, ONE God, ONE Father, ONE hope!

ii. These divisions are un-Biblical. We should be un-denominational both as a church and in our minds. There is nothing good about division, by any name, by any intent.

d. He grants us access to the Father by Christ’s sacrifice – Ephesians 2:18

i. We received this access at our baptism – Acts 2:38, 5:32; Ephesians 1:13, 4:30

ii. We are to petition our Father regularly (Luke 18:1ff), with confidence (Hebrews 4:16), as faithful children (James 5:16)

e. He gives us reserves of patience – Galatians 5:5

i. It’s hard to wait for Jesus’ return! The early church longed for it as we do. 2,000 years seems like a long time in our eyes.

ii. But Peter already knew people would be thinking that way – 2 Peter 3:8-9

III. The Holy Spirit convicts the world of its sin – John 16:8

a. Again, this was/is not auto-pilot! But God influenced and persuaded (and still does) every way He can to convince people to believe and do what is right.

b. The Holy Spirit can guide towards righteousness and guide away towards sin but it’s still our call, our choice.

c. When we do repent, He sanctifies us (2 Thessalonians 2:13) – which means He can and will set us apart for God’s work. We are never just “saved” and left to do nothing! This is absurd, common, yet modern thinking![[16]](#footnote-16)

IV. He helped all come to know the Word of God through the Apostles

a. John 16:30 – Jesus prophesied the Apostles would be able to teach “all the truth” pertaining to salvation

b. John 17:20 – Jesus’ prayer the Apostles’ teaching would be sufficient for the church

c. Acts 2:42 – Jesus’ prayer was answered!

d. Acts 2:47 – Jesus added to His church!

Author’s Notes:

This was another comforting study for me.

The Holy Spirit gives us reserves of patience (Galatians 5:5). He is still working in the world (John 16:8) and so on.

Something I have come to learn is that God keeps working when we quit. He is still faithful when we are faithless. He still causes the sun to rise when we think life could not get any darker.

So, when we don’t quit, He is working within us, and this means He can and does use us. When we are faithful, He equips us with the armor of God to withstand all the fiery arrows of the evil one. When life is dark, when we are surrounded by shadows, when there is no light to be seen, and no comforting sound to be heard – there divine light shines in the darkness. It is not by human strength that this light dawns – it is the very touch and breath of God – and His power always quenches the dark night!

CHAPTER TEN – The Holy Spirit’s Work in the World

I. The Holy Spirit convicts the world of its sin – John 16:8

a. God has always influenced and continues to attempt to persuade every way He can to convince people to believe and obey Him:

i. Romans 1:20 – “For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.”

ii. Psalm 14:1 – “The fool has said in his heart, “There is no God.” They are corrupt, they have committed abominable deeds; There is no one who does good.”

iii. Psalm 53:1 – “The fool has said in his heart, “There is no God,” They are corrupt, and have committed abominable injustice; There is no one who does good.”

iv. Present, famous atheists the Holy Spirit continues to try to convict:

1. Richard Dawkins (primarily advocates for evolution & atheism)

2. Sam Harris (critical of all religion, especially Islam)

3. Christopher Hitchens (primarily argues good is evil and evil is good)

4. Daniel Dennett (materialistic atheism)

5. Stephen Hawking (seems to struggle with whether God exists)

v. Deceased (and now correctly-informed) famous atheists:

1. Epicurus (his followers are in Acts 17:18ff)

2. Voltaire (another evil is good and good is evil type)

3. Thomas Paine (influenced greatly by French atheism)

4. Percy Shelley (famous poet and novelist whose wife wrote Frankenstein, he wrote many novels arguing for atheism through his characters)

5. Edgar Allen Poe (famous poet, considered the father of the horror genre of literature)

6. Karl Marx (considered the grandfather of communism)

7. Friedrich Nietzsche (father of nihilism)

8. Sigmund Freud (considered grandfather of psychology)

9. Vladimir Lenin (Russian revolutionary, brought communism to that nation)

10. Bertrand Russell (famous philosopher and mathematician)

b. The Holy Spirit does guide towards righteousness and guide away towards sin but it’s still our call, our choice:

i. John 7:17 – “If anyone is willing to do His will, he will know of the teaching, whether it is of God or whether I speak from Myself.”

ii. Joshua 24:15 – “If it is disagreeable in your sight to serve the Lord, choose for yourselves today whom you will serve: whether the gods which your fathers served which were beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living; but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.”

iii. Isaiah 55:6-7 – “Seek the Lord while He may be found; Call upon Him while He is near. Let the wicked forsake his way

And the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return to the Lord, and He will have compassion on him, and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon.”

c. When we do repent, He sanctifies us (2 Thessalonians 2:13) – which means He can and will set us apart for God’s work. We are never just “saved” and left to do nothing! This is absurd but common thinking!

i. John 9:4 – “We must work the works of Him who sent Me as long as it is day; night is coming when no one can work.”

ii. Acts 6:7 – “The word of God kept on spreading; and the number of the disciples continued to increase greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were becoming obedient to the faith.”

II. He helped all come to know the Word of God through the Apostles

a. John 16:30 – Jesus prophesied the Apostles would be able to teach “all the truth” pertaining to salvation

b. John 17:20 – Jesus’ prayer the Apostles’ teaching would be sufficient for the church

i. All along, Jesus planned on “the Apostles’ teaching” (Acts 2:42) being the primary learning of the church.

ii. What we learn from Jesus Himself in the Scriptures is essential but He Himself intended the revelation of God to be completed through them (the rest of the New Testament).

iii. The inspired words of Jesus and the Apostles are equal in their authority and application to our lives.

Author’s Notes:

This study helped me look at how the Holy Spirit works to influence man towards God vs. the world’s ways to influence man away from God.

It might be tempting to think man has been more successful than God at influence, seeing as how our world is presently.

Yet, look at longevity, durability, reliability, and strength of God’s Word through the centuries. While the greatest of man’s philosophers die, the Word of God lives on. While the greatest of man’s kingdoms and empires come and go, Jesus reigns.

There is simply no comparison of the influence of God’s Word on the world versus any one of man’s schemes. Even man’s schemes combined do not save man from hopelessness or death. Only the Gospel, only the Good News of Jesus Christ, can and continues to do that!

CHAPTER ELEVEN – The Miraculous Gifts of the Holy Spirit

I. It is massively unfortunate that the Holy Spirit, in today’s world, is mostly known for this subject.

a. The miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit are not the main focus of His person or operation in the Bible, New or Old Testament.

b. Never once are the miraculous gifts sought after by anyone faithful in Scripture.

i. In fact, the only story in the Bible where an individual sought after the gifts of the Holy Spirit was about Simon the Sorcerer, and it nearly resulted in his condemnation! (Acts 8:18-24)

ii. Many people at the church of Corinth were abusing the miraculous gifts they had (1 Corinthians chs. 12-14).

1. In fact, there were many who had the gifts who were abusing them so Paul sets them straight (1 Corinthians 14:26-33).

2. This shows us that even if a person was to have a miraculous gift like prophesy (the foretelling kind), tongues (and/or interpretation), or healing, it does not:

a. Make them a moral person

b. Make them a wiser person

c. Make them saved

d. Keep them saved

e. Really, anything other than having the gift itself.

3. This is simply in direct contrast to typical charismatic [false] doctrine:

a. The charismatic says that the more righteous receive more gifts

b. The Scripture says the “greatest man born among women” (Matthew 11:11; Luke 7:27) – John the Baptist – never rendered a miracle (John 10:41).

c. The charismatic says to seek out the miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirt

d. The Scripture never encourages this – in fact – it encourages seeking the “greater gifts” of faith, hope and love (1 Corinthians 12:31, 13:13).

e. The charismatic centers his church around the person and work of the Holy Spirit (and a false understanding of Him at that)

f. The Scripture puts the focus of Christ’s church on Jesus Christ Himself; HE is the Head of His church!

iii. We already know from past studies that actually any form or function of the Holy Spirit upon mankind other than the indwelling gift given to all believers at their immersion has actually zero effect on any man’s faithfulness, state of salvation, or moral character.

a. Throughout Scripture – Old and New Testament – the baptism of the Holy Spirit or the Holy Spirit coming “upon” someone was simply and only to fulfill God’s purpose through a person for a temporary time.

b. This action was never sought by the person; God initiated this action on His own every time. (1 Corinthians 12:11)

c. This action never made the recipient more moral or automatically saved. In fact, many recipients of this action of the Holy Spirit were amoral men in general (like Samson and Balaam).

d. So much more could be said on this subject but we have already studied this in-depth. The point is that the Holy Spirit does what He wills when He wills, man cannot obtain these things himself, and it does not benefit man anyway.

II. What were the gifts of the Holy Spirit in Scripture and do they exist today?

a. Paul spells them out in 1 Corinthians 12:4-11:

i. Word of Wisdom (vs. 8) – probably the supernatural ability to discern truth from falsehood

1. This was helpful at the time because true and false Gospels, letters, and books about Jesus, the Apostles, their work, and their teaching were spread abundantly. It was necessary to supernaturally discern the difference with little other knowledge or evidence to work with.

2. However, since the Bible was completed, this gift no longer serves any purpose and is therefore obsolete (1 Corinthians 13:8-12).

ii. Work of Knowledge (vs. 8) – supernaturally ability to receive revelation (effectively Scripture) from God

1. This was helpful at the time as the first century church did not have the full New Testament available to them yet. Many churches just had one Gospel, or one letter, or a handful. This gift “filled the gap” of missing knowledge (2 Peter 1:21 tells us every New Testament writer had this gift).

2. Again, since the Bible was complete, this no longer serves any purpose and is therefore obsolete (1 Corinthians 13:8-12).

iii. Faith (vs. 9) – among the most undescribed “gifts” in Scripture in a specific sense, we assume this gift was like wisdom above but in the sense of the spoken vs. written word, like knowing who to believe (Faith) versus what to believe (Words of Wisdom).

iv. Gifts of Healing (vs. 9) – supernatural ability to heal infirmities

1. James 5:14-18 may give us an example of 1 century elders who received this gift (James was the first book written of the New Testament, only about 15 years into the church’s existence, when all these things would have been around in full force)

2. Miracles of all kinds existed to confirm the Word of God; this gift confirmed what the Apostles and inspired teachers were saying was true (Mark 16:20).

3. Again, the Bible’s completion renders this gift obsolete (1 Corinthians 13:8-12) in that Scripture needs no confirmation. It is truth incarnate!

v. Effecting of Miracles (vs. 10) – miracles other than healing, again to confirm the Word preached (the purpose of all miracles – Mark 16:20. Same reason given above as to its present obsolescence.

vi. Prophecy (vs. 10) – inspired preaching (similar to the gift of knowledge above) or supernatural foretelling: predicting the future (Agabus was one gifted as such – Acts 11:28ff). Same reason given above as to its obsolescence.

vii. Distinguishing of Spirits (vs. 10) – supernatural ability to tell whether a spirit inside of someone was from God or not (referenced again in 1 Corinthians 14:32, 1 Timothy 4:1, and 1 John 4:1).

1. This too was a gift in Old Testament times until the Law was completed (Deuteronomy 13:1-5).

2. So too, this gift was present until the New Testament was completed and now all, utilizing Scripture, can exercise the benefits of this gift by comparing the words and actions of anyone to Scripture.

viii. Various kinds of tongues (vs. 10) – the supernatural ability to speak in another language(s) so someone who spoke that language could understand the Gospel message

1. The first incarnation of this gift was upon the Apostles for this very purpose (Acts 2:3, 4, 11)

2. The second incarnation was to prove to Peter that the Gentiles could receive the same salvation through Jesus that the Jews could (Acts 10:46)

3. The third incarnation was to John’s disciples after Paul laid his hands on them (Acts 19:1-6)

4. The gift of tongues is then taught by Paul in detail in 1 Corinthians 12:10, 28, 30, 13:1, 8, 14:5, 6, 18, 21, 22, 23, 39

a. We learn this was a gift like the others (12:10)

b. We learn that the true gift of tongues is always interpreted/understood by its hearer (12:10, 30, 14:5, 6; also see Acts 2:11)

c. We learn that NOT ALL SPEAK IN TONGUES (12:10, 28, especially 30 and 14:5); in fact, no one has all gifts, some have one, others none (12:14-26, 29-30), and it makes NO difference as to the faithfulness or salvation-state of a believer (12:22-25).

d. We learn that having the gift of tongues but without love – like all things without love – is meaningless (13:1).

e. We learn that tongues, like the other gifts, will cease (13:8).

f. We learn that Paul desired the church at Corinth to have more preaching (prophesying – 14:5) than tongue-speaking (14:5).

g. We learn that he who prophesied (preached) had a gift more valuable to the service of the church than the tongue-speaker’s gift (14:5).

h. We learn that tongues, when genuinely present, also genuinely needed right preaching to accompany it to be useful (14:6). However, notice that right preaching does NOT require tongues! Remember John the Baptist who never worked a sign (John 10:41) and yet was incredibly successful in his preaching! (Matthew 3:5; Mark 1:5) This pattern of preaching without tongues was in fact the norm; preaching with tongues was the exception that eventually was heard about no more.

i. We learn that the Apostle Paul spoke in tongues more than any so gifted in Corinth (14:18) and yet he did not elevate it as they did.

j. We learn that tongues were a tool to reach unbelievers (14:22-23; like in Acts 2:3, 4, 11), not to blabber unintelligently in the assembly or for private communication with divine beings (that was gnostic thought that still prevails in charismatic thinking to this day!).

k. We learn that while Paul put the gift of tongues in perspective, he did not forbid its genuine practice (14:39). However, this verse was written directly to and for the sake of the Corinthian church who had some among them with this gift. It is silly to “cut and paste” this verse and blindly apply it to the church today, where the evidences of tongue speaking Paul describes are obviously absent.

ix. Interpretation of tongues (vs. 10) –

b. It is important to understand that Paul immediately informs that even when these gifts were present, they did not elevate one Christian above another, even against one who was not “gifted”: 1 Corinthians 12:14-26.

Author’s Notes:

I only want to say one more thing here – the gifts like tongues, prophecy, words of wisdom, etc. – are the lesser gifts of the New Testament!

Even if they were not temporary (and there is every reason to believe they were – see the end of 1 Corinthians ch. 13) – there are greater gifts!

Faith (in the sense of faithfulness), hope, and love are the greater gifts!

Seek the greater gifts!

CHAPTER TWELVE – The Holy Spirit & Tongues in Scripture

I. 1 Corinthians 14:10 – “Various kinds of tongues” (vs. 10) – the supernatural ability to speak in another language(s) so a person who speaks a different language could still understand the Gospel message.

a. The first incarnation of this gift was upon the Apostles for this very purpose (Acts 2:3, 4, 11)

b. The second incarnation was to prove to Peter that the Gentiles could receive the same salvation through Jesus that the Jews could (Acts 10:46)

c. The third incarnation was to John’s disciples after Paul laid his hands on them (Acts 19:1-6)

d. The gift of tongues is then taught by Paul in detail in 1 Corinthians 12:10, 28, 30, 13:1, 8, 14:5, 6, 18, 21, 22, 23, 39. This would the fourth and last mention of tongues in Scripture.

a. We learn this was a gift like the other gifts (12:10) – see summary at the end of this lesson

b. We learn that the true gift of tongues is ALWAYS interpreted/understood by its hearer (12:10, 30, 14:5, 6; also see Acts 2:11)

c. We learn that NOT ALL SPEAK IN TONGUES (12:10, 28, especially 30 and 14:5); in fact, no one has all gifts, some have one, others none (12:14-26, 29-30), and it makes NO difference as to the faithfulness or salvation-state of a believer (12:22-25).

d. We learn that having the gift of tongues but without love – like all things without love – is meaningless (13:1).

e. We learn that tongues, like all the other gifts, will cease (13:8).

f. We learn that Paul desired the church at Corinth to have more preaching (prophesying – 14:5) than tongue-speaking (14:5).

g. We learn that he who prophesied (preached) had a gift more valuable to the service of the church than the tongue-speaker’s gift (14:5).

i. Acts 2:42 – the foundation of the weekly worship is first communion, then the Apostles’ teaching (prophesying as Paul puts it above) along with fellowship and prayer.

ii. Notice what is left out: tongues, miracles, signs, wonders, etc.

iii. The charismatic church would have us believe that these lesser/temporary gifts are greater than these! They are in fact, in Scripture labeled as less.

h. We learn that tongues, when actually present, genuinely needed right preaching to accompany it to be useful (14:6).

i. However, notice that right preaching does NOT require tongues!

ii. Remember John the Baptist who never worked a sign (John 10:41) and yet was incredibly successful in his preaching! (Matthew 3:5; Mark 1:5)

iii. This pattern of preaching without tongues was the norm; preaching with tongues was the exception that eventually was heard about no more (only 4 times in Scripture total; there are 20 sermons in Acts alone).

iv. How many times is tongues mentioned with preaching (or at all) in Acts? 3 times. How many sermons are there in Acts? Again, 20 times!

i. We learn that the Apostle Paul spoke in tongues more than any so gifted in Corinth (14:18) and yet he did not elevate it as they did.

j. We learn that tongues were a tool to reach unbelievers (14:22-23; like in Acts 2:3, 4, 11), not to blabber unintelligently in the assembly or for private communication with divine beings (that was gnostic thought that still prevails in charismatic thinking to this day!).

i. Whenever someone says they have “the private gift of tongues” (to talk to God or whoever), this is simply not present in Scripture. It. Does. Not. Exist.

ii. I do NOT deny anybody potentially “could” have an experience/dream/vision – Scripture never denies these possibilities. HOWEVER (and this must be emphasized) Scripture DOES vehemently warn against dreams, visions, angels, or anything that contradicts the Word of God. Even miracle-working false prophets are condemned! (Ezekiel 13:9)

1. More verses warning about false dreams/visions/experiences:

2. Jeremiah 23:16

3. Matthew 24:24

4. 2 Timothy 4:3-4

5. 1 John 4:1-6

iii. Now how could tongues help reach unbelievers? The same way it did in Acts 2 – to reach those who spoke another language (i.e. tongue).

k. We learn that while Paul put the gift of tongues in perspective, he did not forbid its genuine, orderly practice (14:39).

i. However, this verse was written directly to and for the sake of the Corinthian church who had some among them with this gift. Notice how tongues are never mentioned in any other church in Scripture.

ii. It is silly to “cut and paste” this verse and blindly apply it to the church today (or even other churches back then), where the evidences of tongue speaking Paul describes are evidently absent.

e. This is the last mention of tongues in Scripture.

a. In total, tongues has three occurrences in the book of Acts, and this text in parts from 1 Corinthians chapters 12-14.

b. That does not mean it is insignificant (anything in the Bible is significant). But we can say that tongues were never Scripturally spoken of regarding:

i. Daily living

ii. An essential part of worship (or even a regular part of it)

iii. Private communication with divine beings

iv. A sign of salvation

v. A sign of faithfulness

vi. So what immediacy does it play in the life of the Christian today? None that we have been informed of by Scripture.

vii. These miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit are like the Mosaic law – useful for learning all things God has revealed and how He has worked among His people – but not necessarily applicable to us.

f. In summary:

a. In Scripture, the gift of tongues came upon the Apostles, Cornelius’ family, the disciples of John the Baptist, and at the Corinthian church.

b. In Scripture, each of these occurrences had a purpose:

i. Acts 2 w/ the Apostles – to share the Gospel with the diverse assembly present

ii. Acts 10 w/ Cornelius’ family – to finally convince Peter that the Gentiles could have salvation same as the Jews

iii. Acts 19 w/ the Disciples of John the Baptist – to demonstrate an Apostle’s ability to pass on the gifts and also to give the gifts to those who would use them to continue spreading the Gospel around the world

iv. The Corinthian Church – to instruct on orderly worship when the gifts were present

c. Tongues was a gift, like any other:

i. Temporary

ii. Lesser than faith, hope, or love

iii. Not sought after by anyone faithful in Scripture

iv. Rare (even only occurred 3 times in the thirty years of history that was Acts and only in one other New Testament book)

v. Only passed on by the hands of an Apostle

vi. Not necessary to the weekly worship

vii. Not essential to daily Christian living

viii. Not for communication with divine beings

ix. Not indicative of salvation or faithfulness

x. Most certainly not a command of God we must obey, seek, find, or experience

Author’s Notes:

As someone who grew up in charismatic churches before leaving them for the Christian Churches/Churches of Christ, I have a particular pity for those so ignorant of this subject from the perspective of the Scripture.

Tongues was a good and wonderful thing in its proper context. But, like sex, it quickly becomes a warped and destructive thing outside of anything but that original context.

Modern “tongues” are not tongues, Biblically-speaking.

Just as we should not pollute the marriage bed, let us work not to pollute this doctrine either.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN – The Lesser Gifts & The Greater Gifts of the Holy Spirit

I. Scripture clearly states the lesser gifts of the Spirit will cease:

1 Corinthians 13:8-12 – “Love never fails; but if there are gifts of prophecy, they will be done away; if there are tongues, they will cease; if there is knowledge, it will be done away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part; but when the perfect comes, the partial will be done away. When I was a child, I used to speak like a child, think like a child, reason like a child; when I became a man, I did away with childish things. For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I will know fully just as I also have been fully known.”

A. Paul repeats five times in these verses above that the lesser gifts will cease. So, these lesser gifts are not only lesser but also temporary.

B. We are never taught to seek out these gifts and no faithful person in Scripture ever sought them, prayed for them, or could “prepare” to receive them.

II. Also, that the greater gifts will stay:

1 Corinthians 13:13 – “But now faith, hope, love, abide these three; but the greatest of these is love.”

III. So could any of these lesser gifts exist today?

A. The original form of the gifts was that an Apostle could exercise them or pass them on by the laying on of hands

a. Mark 8:23; Luke 4:40 – Jesus healed this way

b. Mark 16:8 – Jesus said the Apostles would do the same

c. Acts 8:17, 18; Acts 9:12, 17; Romans 1:11; 1 Timothy 4:14; 2 Timothy 1:6 – This is how the Apostles passed on the gifts

d. We know from Acts 8 and Romans 11 that non-Apostles who had the received the gift could not pass them on

e. So, when the Apostles died out, and the generation following them who had hands laid on them died out, the gifts died out. This also matches history (we have no reasonable historical record of these same gifts manifesting themselves in the 2nd century church and beyond).

f. The early church fathers did not pray for, seek, practice, or feign use of these lesser, temporary gifts. They were understood to have ceased.

B. So what, if any form, could the gifts exist today?

a. It is important to note the distinction that the lesser gifts (tongues, knowledge, working of miracles, word of wisdom, healing, etc.) were in control of the person possessing them:

i. The church in Corinth had many people with the gifts (chs. 12-14) who were misusing them.

1. Examples include:

2. Tongues without interpretation – 1 Corinthians 14:13-19

3. Mixing up the purpose of tongues and prophecy – 1 Corinthians 14:22-25

4. Too many tongue speakers in the assembly – 1 Corinthians 14:27

5. Too many speaking prophets in the assembly – 1 Corinthians 14:29

6. Too many people speaking at once – 1 Corinthians 14:31

7. The abuse of the gifts is also spoken about in other forms in 1 Corinthians chs. 12, 13

8. Simon desired to abuse the gifts in Acts 8:18-19

ii. So the gifts do not make one automatically more likely to be more faithful or only use the gifts faithfully. They were, at least to some degree, under the control of man.

iii. And this is the primary difference of any manifestation of the gifts today!

C. Does God still work miracles? Yes! However, the difference is does any man today, like they did then, have the same ability? Evidently not.

a. Looking back at this preacher’s youth and remembering many discussions of he or she having this spiritual gift or that, they were always the “invisible” ones:

i. One would claim to have the gift of knowledge

ii. Another prophecy

iii. Another tongues

iv. Another knowledge, and so on.

v. But no one claimed to be able to heal a person immediately of an amputated limb or other physical abnormality. This gift was always somehow suspiciously absent!

vi. Seriously, all the gifts in their original form are present or none of them are. They are spoken of ceasing at the same time (1 Corinthians 13:8-12), not separately.

vii. It is evident from both Scripture and our known present circumstance that the lesser gifts, exercised by the hands of men, have ceased.

b. Yet, could God potentially render these gifts? Does he?

i. If God were to utilize miracles like the lesser gifts of old, they would only be:

1. Manifest by His will, not by the will of man (which already makes them not the lesser gifts of old).

2. Most certainly the gifts would NOT be expected of any faithful believer to:

a. Seek them

b. Pray for them

c. Necessarily receive them

d. Or practice them at all.

3. With regards to a faithful Christian today, the lesser gifts are for all Scriptural purposes irrelevant to today’s believer.

4. If the lesser gifts exist in any form today, they are exercised by the hand of God alone, and so it really has nothing to do with anything we are to be or do. For today’s Christian, the lesser gifts of old are largely an academic “what if?” than anything else.

c. Personal Anecdote: the most credible, potential example this preacher has heard for a manifestation of these gifts in modern times is on the mission field, where many missionaries have told stories of wanting to share the Gospel with a foreigner and suddenly being able to speak their language for that purpose.

d. These stories fit the Scriptural criteria for the lesser gifts in a potentially modern context in at least some areas:

i. If it happened, it happened by the will of God; they did not seek or ask for the gift.

ii. It was for sharing the Gospel.

iii. There was an interpreter (the hearer of the Gospel message).

iv. There was no babbling or supposedly private conversations with divine beings before, during, or afterwards.

v. The missionary gave glory to God and did not claim to possess the gift or be able to replicate it under their own control.

e. However, this does not necessarily mean this happened either – there is never proof any provided – only a story that happens to fit the requirements (and arguably, only partially).

D. The minimal frequency of miracles in Scripture also helps us understand how these things do not happen often:

i. It is important to study miracles in Scripture in the context of not only who did them and who did they help but also how often they happened.

ii. In the 1600 years of history that the Bible covers, only about 200 miracles in total are recorded. This is one miracle, happening to usually one person, every 8 years, in total.

iii. Also, not these miracles were positive! These miracles include devastations like the ten plagues of Egypt, or Saul being blinded on the Damascus road! So be careful about seeking out, praying for, or hoping for “any” miracle of God! You may not like the result!

iv. Some point to John 20:30 that many miracles of Jesus were not recorded so there were many more:

1. Yes, but these were by Jesus, in the time He was on earth. And many of the miracles of Jesus were never repeated by anyone else in Scripture, including by Him since He ascended. An example would be calming the storm – Matthew 8:23-27; Mark 4:37-41; Luke 8:22-25

i. Paul, an Apostle, with obviously many spiritual gifts and the author of half of the New Testament, could not calm the storm which caused his shipwreck in Acts 27.

ii. If anyone else had the gift of calming storms, somebody should rush to the gulf right now![[17]](#footnote-17)

b. Feeding 5,000/4,000 – Matthew 14:14-21; Mark 6:30-44; Luke 9:10-17; John 6:1-14

i. If someone had the gift of multiplying food like Jesus, why would I give any money to these supposedly “Christian”/charismatic feed-the-hungry organizations? Shouldn’t they be able to lift a basket to heaven and feed all of them with their supernatural gift?

ii. No, instead we give to responsible organizations precisely because this gift has not and does not exist in the hands of men.

c. Walking on water, fish with the coin in its mouth, fig tree withering, huge catch of fish, water into wine, resurrecting one’s self!

d. It is clear the miracles of Jesus were and are largely unique to Him.

E. Scripture does not deny the possibility of having an experience/dream/vision, even today. These are not manifestations of the lesser gifts, necessarily.

F. However (and this must be emphasized) Scripture does vehemently warn against dreams, visions, angels, or anything that contradicts the Word of God. Even miracle-working false prophets are condemned! (Ezekiel 13:9)

1. More verses warning about false dreams/visions/experiences:

2. Jeremiah 23:16 – “Thus says the LORD of hosts, “Do not listen to the words of the prophets who are prophesying to you. They are leading you into futility; They speak a vision of their own imagination, Not from the mouth of the LORD.”

 Otherwise, there could be prophets, with visions, but they are not from the Lord!

3. Matthew 24:24 – “For false Christs and false prophets will arise and will show great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect.”

 Again, there could be self-proclaimed prophets who really CAN do miracles but they are NOT from the Lord!

4. 1 John 4:1-6 – “Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God; and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God; this is the spirit of the antichrist, of which you have heard that it is coming, and now it is already in the world. You are from God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world. They are from the world; therefore, they speak as from the world, and the world listens to them. We are from God; he who knows God listens to us; he who is not from God does not listen to us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.”

God has given us the tool to test both spirits and self-proclaimed prophets – the Word of God!

Because of the contemporary prevalence of self-proclaimed tongue speakers, some final notes on that subject:

1) Paul speaks that tongues were for unbelievers (1 Corinthians 14:22-25). How could tongues help reach unbelievers? The same way it did in Acts 2:4,6 – to reach those who spoke another language (i.e. tongue).

2) We learn that while Paul put the gift of tongues in perspective, he did not forbid its genuine, orderly practice (14:39). All other forms are forbidden.

3) However, this verse was written directly to and for the sake of the Corinthian church who had some among them with this gift. Notice how tongues are never mentioned in any other church in Scripture, and only occurred three times in the book of Acts total while the Gospel was preached twenty times in total in Acts.

4) It is silly to “cut and paste” this verse and blindly apply it to the church today (or even other churches back then), where the required evidences of tongue speaking Paul describes are evidently absent.

5) That does not mean tongues is insignificant (anything in the Bible is significant). But we can say that tongues were never Scripturally spoken of regarding:

1. Daily living

2. An essential part of worship (or even a regular part of it)

3. Private communication with divine beings

4. A sign of salvation

5. A sign of faithfulness

6. So what immediacy does it play in the life of the Christian today? None that we have been informed of by Scripture.

6. These miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit are like the Mosaic law – useful for learning all things God has revealed and how He has worked among His people – but not necessarily applicable to us.

In summary:

a. In Scripture, the gift of tongues came upon the Apostles, Cornelius’ family, the disciples of John the Baptist, and at the Corinthian church.

b. In Scripture, each of these occurrences had a purpose:

1. Acts 2 w/ the Apostles – to share the Gospel with the diverse assembly present

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c. Tongues was a gift, like any other:

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2. Lesser than faith, hope, or love

3. Not sought after by anyone faithful in Scripture

4. Rare (even only occurred 3 times in the thirty years of history that was Acts and only in one other New Testament book)

5. Only passed on by the hands of an Apostle

6. Not necessary in the weekly worship

7. Not essential to daily Christian living

8. Not for communication with divine beings

9. Not indicative of salvation or faithfulness

10. Most certainly not a command of God we must obey, seek, find, or experience. Let us focus on those things that God has commanded of all believers, not on a handful of people who were unique to their time, circumstance, and purpose!

Author’s Notes:

This chapter was just a glimpse how miracles have been made manifest since their inception: they are all supernatural, but not all positive! Some were negative, like the plagues and blindness! Others exceeded any hope, like being healed of internal bleeding or even Lazarus from the dead!

It is the worthy of the reader’s time to understand miracles further. This study just touched on the subject with their relation to the work of the Holy Spirit.

It has been a journey of wonder to study the Holy Spirit in this kind of depth.

It is this author’s hope that some insight was gained by the reader to encourage deeper study and greater appreciation for God and His Word.

I am convinced there is no greater use of the mind God has given us than to put as much Scripture into it as possible.

APPENDIX – Final Thoughts

To say I felt unworthy to this task is an understatement.

To be honest, writing books on Biblical subjects is frightening. It is inevitable that I will fail at some point (perhaps many points!). Of course, great care is taken not to lead anyone astray, but that does not mean the possibility does not exist. Any writer should constantly keep this in mind – at no point is any human above criticism.

Nonetheless, I am compelled to try to continue to teach all I can about the Bible.

It is quite a thing, therefore, to elevate your writing to where you might speak on the very subject of God Himself – in this case – the third member of the Godhead, the Holy Spirit Himself. I have not in any previous book put more effort into organization, content, editing, or review than I have this subject.

James 3:1 says not many of us should aspire to be teachers, so we will be held accountable for what we teach.

So, I humbly this volume for review, but most of all, by review of God, and that any error in it be corrected swiftly.

To Him be the Glory and the credit due.

READER’S NOTES

1. This debate has many forms, many views, and many reasons given for each of those views held by many respectable preachers, teachers, and scholars. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Some argue the Holy Spirit indwells but only symbolically. This author rejects this position for the reasons given above and more; the reader is encouraged to request a free paper from the author entitled, “Moses Lard vs, Dr. Hyram Christopher” who debated this subject extensively. The author gives an 8-page summary of their debate. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. This author admits he is having a bit of fun here. Nonetheless, the detractor must logically explain how the Word of God could even symbolically do some of the things He is attributed to literally doing in Scripture if He does not, in fact, literally do all the things He is said to do in Scripture. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. The reader is encouraged to use the extra “white space” in the margins here and elsewhere in this book to take notes. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. This question may not be exactly phrased this way, but lots of people ask it one way or the other. Notice the number of Scriptural responses! [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. This author tends to lean on the pro-tradition side of many debates; nonetheless, each tradition is worthy of fair, objective scrutiny by Scripture. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Look, more space to take notes! 😊 [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Socrates, at the trial which condemned him to death. As recorded by Plato in his “Apology”. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Aristotle’s original quote was, “One swallow does not summer make” [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. See this author’s chart comparing the indwelling Holy Spirit with “the baptism of/coming down/coming upon/falling on” of the Holy Spirit in Scripture. It is eye-opening to see the difference in the Scripture itself. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. It is important to note that the Holy Spirit did not indwell the faithful in the Old Testament. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. The more this preacher studies Paul and his writings (especially when comparing him and his writings to his opponents, both ancient and modern), the wisdom Christ had in appointing him the Apostle to the Gentiles and to have him write nearly ½ of the New Testament is made more and more evident. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Seriously, even the earliest extra-Scriptural “creeds” from the early church all espoused a baptism for the remission of sins. This understanding was not changed until the Reformation – for the worse. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. My inner spiritual life has been greatly enriched by removing ignorance about the Spirit through this study. Confidence in prayer beats subjective experiences and random emotions any day! [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Compare this to any non-religious philosophies that struggle to find any worth in man at all! [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. I have come to understand that the false doctrine of “once saved, always saved” (and the rest of Calvinism) has gained great momentum not because of Biblical conviction, but from an intermingling of Biblical terminology and the equal-but-opposite reactive doctrine of the Reformation. The most recent form of influence on denominationalism is postmodernism, which is quietly rotting it out from the inside (as all terminal-cynicism ultimately does). [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. As of the time of this writing, Hurricane Harvey is devastating the south coast of the United States. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)