

# Measures of the Spirit John 3:34

*By Frazier Conley*

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In biblical language, especially in the OT and in the Gospels and Acts, often when the Spirit is said to come upon someone, the meaning is that the Spirit comes upon that one to bestow a gift of power. The angel said to Mary, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you" (Luke 1:35). This is typical phraseology in Holy Scripture (Num. 11:29; Judges 3:10; 6:34; 11:29; 14:6; 15:14; 1 Sam. 19:20, 23; 1 Chron. 12:18, etc.). It is hardly correct to say that the Spirit himself is not present when he comes to bestow a measure of power. It is more accurate to seek to determine what role or office the Spirit chooses to take when he comes upon someone.

Further, it is entirely correct to speak of "measures" of the Spirit.

In Numbers 11 the text tells how God took "some of the Spirit" which he had given to Moses and put it on the seventy elders. Since the text (Num. 11:17, 25) speaks of taking "some of" the Spirit it is implied that they received a lesser measure of the Spirit than that possessed by Moses. The text says, "And when the Spirit rested upon them, they prophesied. But they did so no more" (Num. 11:25). Again it seems to be indicating that their gift of the Spirit was limited when compared to that of Moses.

It is related in Numbers 27:18ff that Joshua became vested with "some" of the authority of Moses, a measure of it. In the same way that Joshua was vested with some of his authority (Num. 27:18-20), so he was possessed of a measure of the Spirit: "And Joshua the son of Nun was full of the Spirit of

wisdom, for Moses had laid his hands upon him [presumably in the events of Num. 11]; so the people of Israel obeyed him, and did as the Lord had commanded Moses" (Deut. 34:9). The text is careful to say however that though Israel followed the Spirit-endowed Joshua, yet there had not at any time, "arisen a prophet ... in Israel like Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face, none like him for all the signs and the wonders which the Lord sent him to do in the land of Egypt, to Pharaoh and to all his servants and to all his land, and for all the mighty power and all the great and terrible deeds which Moses wrought in the sight of all Israel" (Deut. 34:10-12). Certainly it is implied that Moses had a greater measure of the Spirit than Joshua or any other prophet of the Old Testament.

In 2 Kings 2:9-15, the text gives an account of the passing from Elijah to Elisha of a double portion of his spirit. Although the translators use a lower case "s" for spirit, there should be little doubt that the reference is to the prophetic Spirit of God as it, or he, resided in Elijah to empower prophetic gifts. Elisha received a "double portion," implying again that greater or lesser measures of the Spirit dwelt in the prophets of the Old Testament.

In 1 Samuel 10:6 a promise was given to Saul, "the Spirit of the Lord will come mightily upon you, and you shall prophesy with them and be turned into another man." It would appear that in saying "mightily" the conception is that the Spirit sometimes came less, and sometimes more powerfully upon recipients. It might again be noted that the text does not say that Saul received the prophetic gift of the Spirit, but that he received the Spirit himself for the purpose of being endowed with the gift of prophecy.

For the preparation of the tabernacle, the Lord bestowed the Spirit upon certain ones. The Lord said to Moses, "See, I have called by name Bezalel the son of Uri, son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah: and I have filled him with the Spirit of God, with

ability and intelligence, with knowledge and all craftsmanship, to devise artistic designs, to work in gold, silver, and bronze" (Ex. 31:1-4). It should be noted that Bezalel did not receive the Spirit so that he might have unlimited powers. The gifts were limited and measured and specific.

In the Old Testament, the Spirit came upon some to bestow gifts for conducting war (Judges 3:10) and on some to bestow physical strength (Judges 14:6, 19; 15:14).

The ancient Jewish rabbis also noted the existence of measures of the Spirit in the OT prophets. Rabbi Acha said, "The Holy Spirit, who rests on the prophets, rests [on them] only by weight ... [by measure]."

The early Christians also were limited in the gifts of the Spirit, "But grace was given to each of us according to the measure of Christ's gift" (Eph. 4:7). As the context shows, the gifts were not all equal and certainly not without measure, but by measure. This merely confirms what is said of the gifts of the Spirit in I Corinthians 12:4ff. and Romans 12:3ff.

Again in Hebrews 2:4 the gospel affirms, "God also bore witness by signs and wonders and various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his own will." There is no indication here that the Spirit came on the early Christians in fullness of power, but that the role he played in them was limited and varied.

An interesting expression occurs in Acts 2:18. Peter quotes Joel 2, "On my menservants and my maidservants in those days I will pour out of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy" (Acts 2:18). When the text says "out of" it implies that the Spirit was not coming upon the recipients in its entirety, but in measure.

As Moses had laid his hands on Joshua (Deut. 34:9; and

presumably in this way he had also conferred a measure of the Spirit to the seventy elders) so at Samaria Peter and John bestow (with prayer as well as hands) the Spirit in a measure upon the Samaritan converts (Acts 8:14-17). Although Simon was also surely a recipient of the same Holy Spirit empowerment as the other Samaritan believers, he perceived that the apostles had a greater measure, the power to confer the Spirit, and he coveted it, "Now when Simon saw that the Spirit was given through the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money, saying, "Give me also this power [taking *houtos* as emphatic], that any one on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit" (Acts 8:18-19).

The Holy Spirit had also come upon Paul for this same office, and he too could confer the Holy Spirit so that early Christians could be empowered in a measure (Acts 19:1-7).

This brings us to the case of our Lord, Jesus. The author of Hebrews implies that while the Spirit-inspired prophets of the Old Testament did speak God's Word in various ways, their gifts could not compare to the revelatory gifts of the Son of God (Heb. 1:1-3).

The famous prophecy of Christ in Isaiah 11:1-3 implies a great fullness of the Spirit, not a limited measure: "There shall come forth a shoot' from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots. And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord."

In John 3:32-35, the text speaks of Jesus, "And what he hath seen and heard, that he testifieth; and no man receiveth his testimony. He that hath received his testimony hath set to his seal that God is true. For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him. The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand" (KJV). Or, as Goodspeed renders: "For he whom God

has sent speak God's words, for God gives him his Spirit without measure."

It is true that a number of translators have taken a text and an interpretation which leaves ambiguous who gives the Spirit to whom, rendering the passage: "for he giveth not the Spirit by measure" (ASV, NKJV; NASB, NIV, RSV). Some will say that the passage is affirming that Jesus (not God) gives the Spirit. And it is also affirmed that in any case the Spirit as a general rule is never given in a measure, that is, always in fullness to believers. But a number of translators remain in agreement with the KJV that it is grammatically sound to supply "to him" that is, to the Son, (see Goodspeed, the New Living Translation, Today's English Version, Williams, Phillips, NIV, Beck, Moffatt, the Jerusalem Bible, the Jewish New Testament, Contemporary English Version, Amplified, and Barclay's translation. Further many of the most erudite commentators on John also affirm this rendering: Bengel, Olshausen, Godet, Alford, McGarvey, Lipscomb, Barclay, Morris, Pack, Deissner in Kittel's TDNT, iv, 634, etc. Of course, luminaries are also to be found taking the opposing view: Meyer; Westcott, Brown, etc.). No simplistic interpretation holds the day unquestioned.

At any rate, in the context of the passage, the argument is that Jesus is able to bear witness to God in truth. Jesus has seen and heard, having been with the Father (John 1:18). Further, he is able to speak the exact words of God because God gave the Spirit to him. John 1:32 says that John "saw the Spirit descend as a dove from heaven, and it remained on him." This was no temporary or limited office. Jesus possessed all the fullness, John 1:16, "And from his fullness have we all received, grace upon grace." Verse 3:35 continues the thought, "the Father loves the Son, and has given all things into his hand."

Who is it that is receiving from the Father? The Son (see also John 3:27). Whose words are being validated? Jesus' words.

From whence does Jesus get his words? From God through the Spirit.

Also it seems reasonable, given their proximity, to correlate the word give in verse 34 to the word give in verse 35. In both cases God is giving to the Son.

Therefore, regardless of the variant textual readings, and the ellipsis to be supplied ("to him," that is, to Jesus), the context indicates that the force of the passage is that God is giving the Spirit without measure to the Son.

As we saw above, all the rest of God's revelation indicates that in the Spirit's role in empowering those on earth, no one had the fullness of the Spirit in the limitless measure of our Lord. Believers then received from his bounty: "But each one of us has been given his gift, his due portion of Christ's bounty" (Eph. 4:7 NEB)

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## **The Indwelling of the Spirit – a Figure of Speech**

*By Jerry Moffitt*

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For many years our brotherhood has disagreed on the mode of the indwelling of the Spirit. We have never divided over the issue because there have not only been good, sound men on both sides, but we have wise men on both sides of the issue.

As with many others, I have never felt that acceptance of the personal indwelling was a step toward the dangerous error of a special leading of the Spirit. And some of the best warriors against the charismatic movement and against a direct

operation of the Spirit have been those who believe in the personal indwelling of the Spirit.

For more than 26 years I have puzzled over the mode of the indwelling and have felt that there was insufficient scriptural evidence to settle the issue. God doesn't answer every question (Deut. 29:29). Still, in teaching on sanctification, from time to time, I felt I was being led by Scripture in a natural way toward what might be called an indwelling of the Spirit through the Word. Finally, I decided to put the Scriptures and such thoughts into a simple monograph.

Following are those Scriptures and thoughts.

## Transformation

Paul told the Roman Christians to "be not fashioned according to this world: but be ye *transformed by the renewing of your mind*, that ye may prove what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God" (Rom. 12:2). Truly a transformation is to take place; other passages which seem to indicate the same thing in various figures are presented for your contemplation:

"For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he should instruct him? *But we have the mind of Christ*" (1 Cor. 2:16).

"Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 2:5).

"I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I that live, *but Christ liveth in me*" (Gal. 2:20).

"My little children, of whom I am again in travail until *Christ be formed in you*" (Gal. 4:19).

"To whom God was pleased to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is *Christ in you*, the hope of glory" (Col. 1:27).

“But we all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, *are transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord the Spirit*” (2 Cor. 3:18).

“And we have the word of prophecy made more sure; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawn, *and the day-star arise in your hearts*” (2 Pet. 1:19).

As we have seen, some of the verses (Gal. 2:20; Col. 1:27) talk of Christ dwelling in us. Others talk of God dwelling in us or his Word dwelling in us.

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

“And for this cause we also thank God without ceasing, that, when ye received from us the word of the message, even the word of God, ye accepted it not as the word of men, but, as it is in truth, the word of God, *which also worketh in you that believe*” (1 Thess. 2:13).

“For *it is God who worketh in you both to will and to work, for his good pleasure*” (Phil. 2:13).

“I know that ye are Abraham’s seed; yet ye seek to kill me, because *my word hath not free course in you*” (John 8:37).

“In whom ye also are builded together for a habitation of God in the Spirit” (Eph. 2:22).

“Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my word: and my Father will love him, and *we will come unto him, and make our abode with him*” (John 14:23).

Now, I believe all this is talking basically about sanctification. Paul said, “Having therefore these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, *perfecting holiness in the fear of God*” (2 Cor. 7:1).



I believe all these things happen much this way. A person hears the Word of God and of his free will and by obedience puts away bad traits and takes on good traits and holy characteristics. In doing so he resembles Christ more.

It can be said, figuratively, that Christ dwells in him. Christ is formed in him (Gal. 4:19). God has his abode with him (John 14:23).

The Word has free course in him (John 8:37).

It could be said he is full of the Spirit (Acts 6:3). It comes through obedience to the Word so the Bible attributes sanctification to the Word (John 17:17).

Now notice another passage. Paul said, "But ye are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you. But if any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin" (Rom. 8:9-10).

Would not the concept of the Spirit dwelling in us fit well with all the passages above? Is it another way, by a figure of speech, of describing the transformation called sanctification which occurs in our lives by obedience to God's Word? Why would the dwelling of the Spirit be literal and all the other indwellings be figurative? And if the "indwelling of the Spirit" is a figure which describes the reality of sanctification, like all the rest, what figure is it?

## Metonymy

There is what is called the "metonymy of the cause" where the "cause" is put for the "effect." Sometimes a person is put for an activity of that person. For example, in 1 Thessalonians 5:19 Paul says, "Quench not the Spirit," when he seems to have in mind the gifts of the Spirit, especially in context "prophecyings" (Gal. 5:20). Acts 7:51 says, "Ye do always

resist the Holy Spirit.” Bullinger says:

*The testimony of the Holy Spirit as given by the prophets. Their fathers resisted the prophets and would not hear the Spirit’s voice in them and now they, like their fathers, were resisting the same testimony at Pentecost, and since then culminating in Stephen (see pp. 542-543 in Figures of Speech Used in the Bible, by E.W. Bullinger, published by Baker Book House in Grand Rapids, Mich.).*

Under “metonymy of the cause” and under “the person acting for the thing done” Bullinger has several whole categories involving the Holy Spirit. One is called the “Spirit for the gifts and operations of the Spirit” (p. 540). All examples he gives are worth considering. Could not the Holy Spirit (the Person) stand in the place of the thing he does (sanctification which comes through obedience to the truth [John 17:17])?

Could not the indwelling Spirit by “metonymy of the subject” stand for the fruit he bears in our life when we obey his Word? Metonymy of the Subject is where the subject is put for something pertaining to it, so it seems so to me. For example, notice 2 Corinthians 3:6: “Who also made us sufficient as ministers of a new covenant; not of the letter, but *of the spirit*.” Bullinger says *spirit* stands for “the ministration of the Spirit, verse 8: the New Covenant as contained in the Gospel” (p. 543).

It seems clear there is a “metonymy of the cause” where sometimes the person acting is put for the thing done.

Again, I do not find the doctrine of the personal, literal indwelling of the Spirit distasteful, in and of itself, as long as one does not teach he does something to us separate and apart from the Word. That notion can contradict truth regarding free will and lead to the error of Calvinism. Too, so far I cannot prove the two concepts on the mode of the

indwelling are mutually exclusive.

Some Scriptures might speak of one mode of indwelling while other Scriptures speak of another mode of indwelling. Yet, I still have not seen a personal indwelling proved, though I desire to continue to study it with an open mind.

## **A Personal Opinion**

All good sound brethren I have spoken to agree that the mode of the indwelling does not affect salvation and must never divide us. We have good and sound brethren on both sides of this issue. Our dispute must be with those who suppose the Spirit in you works on you or does something to you separate and apart from the power of God's Word. To save us, God chose the persuasive power of his Word. That leaves our free will intact. The error of a mysterious working on us apart from the Word of God cripples personal choice, weakens human responsibility, and violates the Word of God.

In an age when the denominational world says, "Christ paid it all," and "God does it all," and "You can't save yourself," those who teach direct leading of the Spirit without the Word are enemies of truth and in our battle with them we cannot take prisoners. Some of our best fighters in the fray, however, are those who differ with my indwelling and who believe in a direct personal indwelling. It is an honor to fight alongside them.

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## **The Seal and Earnest of the**

# Spirit (J. C. Brewer)

By Jerry C. Brewer

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The application of the terms *earnest* and *seal* to the Holy Spirit's work belong to the apostolic period when the gospel was being revealed in parts and portions and define two necessary aspects of the gospel scheme of redemption – revelation and confirmation. Purposed from eternity and hidden beneath the types and shadows of the old covenant, the scheme of redemption was a mystery that is now revealed.

*...how that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ,) which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit. (Eph. 3:3-4).*

The word *mystery* in the above passage does not mean “mysterious” or “mystical.” It means unknowable through human reasoning and wisdom.

*The word mystery in Revelation comports with the same meaning of the word as used elsewhere in the New Testament – that is, the spiritual truths not discoverable by human reason; understandable, but hidden from human knowledge until revealed. The word has the connotation of secret doctrine, hence prior to revelation it was a hidden thing; but when revealed, it was brought within human intelligence and understanding. ...The word mystery did not mean mysterious. It meant that which could not be known until it was made known, or revealed, and it meant the gospel plan of salvation. The doctrine of the New Testament is, in this sense, called a mystery. (Foy E. Wallace Jr., The Book of Revelation, Sec. II, Part IV, p. 82).*

Undiscoverable by human wisdom, God's plan could be known only by revelation, which requires inspiration. Inspiration requires confirmation. The scheme of redemption was revealed in words, (1 Cor. 2:10-13), and confirmed by signs and wonders (Heb. 2:1-4). Inspiration was the means God used to reveal his plan. Miraculous gifts of the Spirit confirmed that those through whom it was spoke the word of God. This was the function of the Holy Spirit whose work of revelation and confirmation is expressed in the terms "seal" and "earnest."

The earnest of the Spirit relates to those gifts of partial revelation of which Paul spoke in 1 Corinthians 13 and is used only in 2 Corinthians 1:22; 5:5 and Ephesians 1:14. From the Greek word *arrhabon*, defined as, "a pledge, i.e. part of the purchase-money or property given in advance as security for the rest: – earnest." (James Strong, Exhaustive Concordance of The Bible, "Greek Dictionary of The New Testament," p. 16).

That which was given as an "earnest" was not the Holy Spirit, but that which the Spirit gave – partial knowledge of God's word, which blossomed into the perfect (complete) revelation of His will. The earnest of the Spirit constituted a partial revelation until the "redemption of the purchased possession" which was the completion of divine revelation.

*Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail whether there be tongues, they shall cease, whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away (1 Cor. 13:8-10).*

The partial revelation of the gospel, imparted to Christians in the first century, was an earnest or pledge of the full revelation to come. That partial knowledge would cease when those parts were gathered into the whole, which Paul styled "that which is perfect." The revelation we now possess in the

New Testament is the sum of the parts extant in the apostolic age. (The word *perfect* in 1 Corinthians 13:10 means “completeness” and when the parts of the mystery were gathered into the whole, the full price was paid of which the earnest was a pledge.)

The Holy Spirit was not the earnest in the hearts of men in the first century, except in a metonymical sense where the cause was put for the effect. When Paul said God had “given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts,” he referred to that which the Spirit revealed, not the Spirit himself. Neither is the Holy Spirit an earnest in the hearts of Christians today. Many who so teach contend that the Spirit constitutes a “down payment” or “pledge” from God of eternal salvation. But the full purchase price of anything is paid in the same currency as the down payment. If the Holy Spirit is the pledge or earnest of salvation, then God is making his down payment with a currency other than that which he will issue as the balance of the purchase. Besides, to say that God must make a “down-payment” on salvation is tantamount to saying we cannot trust him to fulfill his pledge to us!

When Paul said God had “given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts,” (2 Cor. 1:21-22), he distinguished between himself and the Corinthians. The pronoun “you” in this passage refers to the Corinthians and the pronouns “us” and “our” refer to Paul and the other apostles. The anointing of the Holy Spirit was Holy Spirit baptism, which the apostles received. He made the same distinction in the Ephesians’ epistle.

*In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: that we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ. In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption*

*of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory (Eph. 1:11-14).*

The Ephesians were sealed with the gift of tongues and given the earnest of prophecy when Paul laid hands on them after they were baptized (Acts 19:1-6). Paul explains the purpose of the earnest and seal of the Spirit in the Ephesians in the following statement:

*Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: the eyes of your understanding being enlightened (Eph. 1:15-18).*

The earnest of the Spirit was revelation, which came through Holy Spirit baptism, and the seal of the Spirit was the confirmation of that revelation. When gifts of revelation were imparted through the laying on of the apostles' hands, they were accompanied by miraculous powers for confirmation.

The genuineness of the earnest of the Spirit, or the gospel that resided in inspired men, was attested by the Spirit's seal of "signs and wonders and divers miracles" upon them. From the Greek *sphragizo*, the word *seal* is defined as, "to stamp (with a signet or private mark) for security or preservation ...to keep secret, to attest. ... The stamp impressed (as a mark of privacy or genuineness), lit, or fig. seal." (Strong, p. 70). This seal or sign of genuineness was a visible attestation of the authority by which inspired men spoke.

Those who claim this seal for Christians today cannot produce any visible sign of such seal. Their argument is the same one made for the direct indwelling of the Holy Spirit – "I know it

because the Bible says I have it.” But what is the purpose of a seal of authority? The great seal of a state attests to and confirms the genuineness of documents issued by the state’s authority and is visible to all who read them. The seal of the Spirit was composed of the signs worked by inspired men of the first century and visibly attested to their authority from God. The seal of the Spirit wasn’t some invisible thing placed upon them for God’s benefit. Why would God have to attest ownership of Christians to himself? Does he not know them that are his without having some sort of mark placed upon them? The visible seal of the earnest of the Spirit was what Paul called “the signs of an apostle” (2 Cor. 12:12). That was the sign or seal of his apostleship and of all who had the earnest of the Spirit in the first century.

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# Holy Spirit in the New Testament

*By H. A. (Buster) Dobbs*  
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- I. Introduction
  - A. The writers of the Old Testament looked for a time when the Holy Spirit would do a greater work than was done in their day.
  - B. They stressed the importance of words that would be spoken and written because of the work of the Holy Spirit. Consider the importance of the words of revelation.
    - 1. “The Spirit of the Lord Jehovah is upon me; because Jehovah hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath



sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the year of Jehovah's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them a garland for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they may be called trees of righteousness, the planting of Jehovah, that he may be glorified" (Isa. 61:1-3).

- 2. The context of this passage shows these words were spoken to Judah before the Babylonian captivity and refer to the restoration and rebuilding of Jerusalem and the temple but have a second and ultimate fulfillment in Jesus (See Luke 4:16-21). The message was from "the Spirit of the Lord Jehovah."
- C. The power and importance of the revealed word is emphasized. The word heard, revealed, preached, believed and obeyed is dominant.
  - 1. Matthew 4:12-17 and Isaiah 9:1-2— Jesus began to preach.
  - 2. Matthew 11:2-6; Isaiah 35:5-10—gospel is preached.
  - 3. Matthew 12:15-21 and Isaiah 42:1-4—Jehovah's servant shall declare judgment.
  - 4. Matthew 13:14-17 and Isaiah 6:9-10— see, hear, believe.
  - 5. Matthew 13:35 and Psalms 78:1-3— teach and reveal.
  - 6. Luke 4:16-21 and Isaiah 61:1-3—preach good tidings.
  - 7. John 12:37-41 and Isaiah 53:1; Isaiah

6:9-10—a message is to be believed.

- D. The Bible deals with the message more than the messenger. The real messenger was the Holy Spirit, and, being God, he is deep, inscrutable, and incomprehensible, but we can grasp the words the Holy Spirit revealed.
- II. The Holy Spirit and the Word in the New Testament
  - A. John the Baptist was a forerunner.
    - 1. He was filled with the Holy Spirit from birth (Luke 1:15).
    - 2. He was to prepare the way for Messiah (Isaiah 40:3).
    - 3. He would turn the hearts of the people to God (Malachi 4:5-6).
    - 4. He did his work by exhortation and preaching (Luke 3:18)
  - B. The work of Jesus was planned by God.
    - 1. "He that hath received his witness hath set his seal to this, that God is true. For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for he giveth not the Spirit by measure. The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand. He that believeth on the Son hath eternal life; but he that obeyeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him" (John 3:34-36).
      - a) Note: Jesus is the one God sent. Jesus spoke the words of God: for (the reason is) he (God) giveth not the Spirit by measure. Obviously, the one who spoke the words of God, is the one who received the Spirit without measure—Jesus received the spirit without measure.
      - b) Others must have received the Spirit by measure; otherwise it does

not make sense to say Jesus had an immeasurable measure of the Spirit.

- 2. Emphasis was put on the teaching (the words) of Jesus: "Never man so spake" (John 7:46).
  - a) "The multitudes were astonished at his teaching" (Matt. 7:28).
  - b) "Hear ye him" (Matt. 17:5).
  - c) "Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" (Luke 6:46).
  - d) "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me in that y, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy by thy name, and by thy name cast out demons, and by thy name do many mighty works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity. Every one therefore that heareth these words of mine, and doeth them, shall be likened unto a wise man, who built his house upon the rock" (Matt. 7:21-24).
  - e) "It is the spirit that giveth life; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I have spoken unto you are spirit, and they are life" (John 6:63).
  - f) "No man can come to me, except the Father that sent me draw him: and I will raise him up in the last day. It is written in the prophets, And they shall all be taught of God. Every one that hath heard from the

Father, and hath learned, cometh unto me. Not that any man hath seen the Father, save he that is from God, he hath seen the Father" (John 6:44-46).

- g) "Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I came forth and am come from God; for neither have I come of myself, but he sent me. Why do ye not understand my speech? Even because ye cannot hear my word. Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father it is your will to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and standeth not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father thereof. But because I say the truth, ye believe me not. Which of you convicteth me of sin? If I say truth, why do ye not believe me? He that is of God heareth the words of God: for this cause ye hear them not, because ye are not of God" (John 8:42-47)
- h) "If ye had known me, ye would have known my Father also: from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him. Philip saith unto him, Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and dost thou not know me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; how sayest thou, Show us the Father? Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? The words that I say unto you I

“speak not from myself: but the Father abiding in me doeth his works” (John 14:7-10; Amos 1:1). Daniel said, ‘ ‘heard I the voice of his words” (Dan. 10:9). Balaam said, ‘ ‘The word that God putteth in my mouth, that shall I speak” (Num. 22:38).

## Comments on the Outline

God instructs the people of earth through the medium of words. The Holy Spirit used words in instructing chosen leaders who repeated the words to the public. The words would sometimes come to the receiver through the eye, at other times through the ear, and occasionally the words were put in the mouth, but the message always came in the signs and symbols of ideas and was communicated to the people in words.

“The words of Amos, who was among the herdsmen of Tekoa, which he saw concerning Israel....” (Amos 1:1). Daniel said, “heard I the voice of his words” (Dan. 10:9). Balaam said, “The word that God putteth in my mouth, that shall I speak” (Num. 22:38).

The Bible stresses the importance of inspired writings. The New Testament says the Holy Spirit influences human minds through a medium, except in some miracles—*miracles confined to the first century*.

God made the world by the creative power of his spoken word. God said, “Let there be light, and there was light.” God said, “Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters.” God said, “Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together unto one place.” God said, “Let the earth put forth grass, herbs yielding seed, and fruit trees bearing fruit after their kind, wherein is the seed thereof, upon the earth: and it was so.” God spoke, and it was done. “By faith we understand that the worlds have been framed by the word of God” (Heb. 11:3).

"... It is God, that said, Light shall shine out of darkness, who shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. 4:6). Paul's argument is that the same God who called light out of darkness in the beginning, demonstrated how weighty and mighty his word is, by giving the revelation of his gospel of salvation. We dare not ignore nor belittle it.

The force of God's word is well documented in the Bible. The gospel is God's power to save (Rom. 1:16). Still, some misguided souls call it "the mere word" and "the dead letter." Those who faithfully follow the teaching of the Bible are called strict constructionists and legalists. These terms are used in derision and are not unlike the Jews' calling Jesus a Samaritan to disgrace him. Jesus set the proper response pattern for us when he discounted their slap by saying they dishonored him and pointed out that he was doing his Father's will, but they were not so disposed. The apostle argues we do not handle the word of God deceitfully. ..The gods of this world blind the minds of the unbelieving to prevent them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ...We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the exceeding greatness of the power may be of God" (2 Cor. 4:1-7). He calls the scriptures "the word of God...the gospel of the glory of Christ...a treasure...an exceeding great power."

We do not war according to the flesh, but "casting down imaginations, and every high thing that is exalted against the knowledge of God, and bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ; and being in readiness to avenge all disobedience, when your obedience shall be made full" (2 Cor. 10:5-6).

Our obedience is to be full, complete, perfect. It is the Comforter—the Holy Spirit—who gives to us divine revelation. "Wherefore, even as the Holy Spirit saith, Today if ye shall hear his voice" (Heb. 3:7). "Brethren, it was needful that the scripture should be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit spake

before by the mouth of David concerning Judas" (Acts 1:16). "The Spirit of Jehovah spake by me, And his word was upon my tongue" (2 Sam. 23:2). "But the Spirit saith expressly, that in later times some shall fall away from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of demons" (1 Tim. 4:1).

The word of truth revealed by the Holy Spirit is sufficient and adequate to make sinners acceptable to God. We are not to follow the ambiguous leadings of doubtful feelings but are to submit to the absolute standard of scripture inspired of God.

"Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matt. 4:4).

"Thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth" (Matt. 6:10).

"The law of Jehovah is perfect, restoring the soul: The testimony of Jehovah is sure, making wise the simple" (Psalms 19:7).

"For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that through patience and through comfort of the scriptures we might have hope" (Rom. 15:4).

"And that from a babe thou hast known the sacred writings which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. Every scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness. That the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work" (2 Tim. 3:15-17)

"It is the spirit that giveth life; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I have spoken unto you are spirit, are life" (John 6:63).

"For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus made me free from the law of sin and of death" (Rom. 8:2).

“But he that looketh into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and so continueth, being not a hearer that forgetteth but a doer that worketh, this man shall be blessed in his doing” (James 1:25).

“For the word of God is living, and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and quick to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart” (Heb. 4:12).

“But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deluding your own selves” (James 1:22).

“Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures” (James 1:18).

“Seeing ye have purified your souls in your obedience to the truth unto unfeigned love of the brethren, love one another from the heart fervently: having been begotten again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, through the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever, For, all flesh is as grass, and all the glory thereof as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower falleth: But the word of the Lord abideth for ever. And this is the word of good tidings which was preached unto you” (1 Peter 1:22-25).

“For seeing that in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom knew not God, it was God’s good pleasure through the foolishness of the preaching to save them that believe” (1 Cor. 1:21).

“Wherefore putting away all filthiness and overflowing of wickedness, receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls” (James 1:21).

John the Baptist and Jesus of Nazareth finished their God-given assignments through the power of words. The overriding importance of the message is prominent in the God-given



scriptures (writings). As we look at the work of the Holy Spirit in the lives of the apostles of Jesus, certain disciples in the first century, and all the saved, we will understand more fully the Spirit's work of revealing, confirming, and protecting the plan of salvation as given in the new covenant.

"Now I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give {you} the inheritance among all them that are sanctified" (Acts 20:32).

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## Do We Know God?

*By Carl G. Hecker*  
Vol. 107, No. 02

A basic understanding of the true nature of our God can come only from the Bible. Our ideas of him develop over years of spiritual growth. If our fundamental understanding is wrong, we will never come to an adequate appreciation of what he requires of us. The following simple thoughts seem helpful in searching for deeper insight from the scriptures. See if you agree.

## The Godhead

A clear, simple concept of the God of the Bible is essential to the proper faith and practice of the religion of Christ. The Hebrew word translated God (*Elohim*) in Genesis 1:1 is plural in number. It shows plurality in the persons of God. The New Testament also presents the same idea (John 1:1-14).

We ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold or silver or stone, graven by art and man's device (Acts 17:29).

Material representations of the Divine Being are idolatry (Exodus 20:4-6). God is spirit and we must not allow ourselves to think otherwise (John 4:24).

God (*Elohim*) has revealed himself as three persons. Each one in the Godhead is a distinct person but always one in action, thought, and purpose with the other two in the Godhead. These three persons always moved in perfect unity, with each having a specific identity and work apart from the others.

The Father is the designer. The Son, (also designated the Word) is the executor. The Holy Ghost is the organizer. When we read of God in the Bible, it always helps to have these basic thoughts in mind: God, the Father, as Designer; God, the Son, as Executor; God, the Holy Ghost, as Organizer.

We see these three in the redemption of mankind. A proper understanding of their individual roles in this divine plan is essential to overcoming the often confusing and always conflicting denominational doctrines so prevalent today.

## **Our God in Redemption**

We would expect to see the same unity of purpose and the definite assigned work in the revelation and enforcing of the scheme of redemption. The Father is the designer, the planner (Eph. 3:11; II Tim. 1:9). It was his eternal purpose. It was his grace and it was to be expressed in his gospel (Titus 2:11).

The Son is the one who executes by taking the form of a man (John 1:14) and dying on the cross to save all mankind (I Tim. 1:15). The Holy Ghost then did his divine part by revealing the reasonable and orderly plan in the New Testament. He did this by inspiring the apostles of Jesus.

Jesus gave the promise of the Father (infallible guidance) to his chosen apostles just before returning to the Father (John

14:25-26; Acts 1:4-9). The Comforter was to guide them into all truth. This he did. He then confirmed the word with gifts of signs and wonders and with divers miracles (Hebrews 2:1-4). The person of the Holy Ghost is always in the masculine gender (he or him). He is always singular in number. He revealed the word of God but he is not that word. The Holy Ghost has great influence but he is not merely an influence. The Holy Spirit is not some sort of "glorified it."

The Holy Spirit possesses all the divine attributes equally with God, the Father and God, the Son. He is co-eternal, omnipresent, omnipotent, and omniscient. He is a person of the Godhead.

The term *Holy Ghost* equates with the expression *Holy Spirit*. They mean the same. The two English words translate one Greek word. He is a person and always functions as a person. He can be grieved (Eph. 4:30). The Holy Ghost or Holy Spirit is one person the same as God, the Father, and Jesus Christ, the Son are individual persons (Eph. 4:1-4).

Just as one individual cannot dwell literally within another person, so neither God the Father, Christ the Son, nor the Holy Spirit dwells in us personally. Such divine indwelling is a beautiful expression pointing to the closeness of our relationship to them. When one misapplies these scriptures by making them literal, he not only comes up with conflicting and confusing denominational doctrines but deprives himself of the real beauty of the revelation! The indwelling of the Godhead can only be effected by the words of the Eternal One. When this word is in the heart of the sincere individual it is God dwelling in us and we in him!

God dwells in us. Christ dwells in us. The Holy Spirit dwells in us. We dwell in them, that close! Such a close relationship is described by this beautiful and satisfying figure of speech. Other figures express the close relationship, such as we walk with him; he leads us; we are his sons and daughters.

These physical, worldly images are descriptive of the spiritual. Our God is spirit (John 4:24). If any one of them is taken literally, that conveys an unreasonable idea leading to confusion and often unwholesome superstition. Do not allow this to happen to you.

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## Be Filled with the Spirit

*By Earl Trimble*

Vol. 106, No. 08

“And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit” (Eph. 5:18). Paul gives two commands in this verse. (1) Be not drunk with wine and (2) be filled with the Spirit. The first command demands a life of sobriety. The second command is generally misunderstood.

There are two possible explanations of the meaning of, “be filled with the Spirit.” (1) It is a command to be filled with the actual Person of the Holy Spirit, or (2) It is a command to be filled with the Spirit’s teaching. Let us consider these views:

If the Spirit actually lives personally in the believer beginning at baptism (Acts 2:38), why would Paul command Christians to be “filled” with the Spirit? If the Spirit personally dwells in the saved person from the time of baptism, what role would the Christian have, then, in being filled with the Spirit?

If the Holy Spirit personally lives in the child of God personally at baptism, are there degrees or measures of the personal Holy Spirit abiding personally in the Christian? Is each individual Christian commanded to increase this initial

measure of the Spirit until he becomes “filled” with the Spirit?

Brother Guy N. Woods’ chart graphically shows the parallel between Eph. 5:18-19 and Col. 3:16:

### ***Ephesians 5:18***

“Be filled with the Spirit.. ..speaking in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs...”

**“Be filled” present imperative. Keep on being filled! Daily filling—not a one-time experience following baptism.**

### ***Colossians 3:16***

“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly. ...teaching in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs...”

### **How filled!**

Fill (*Pleero*)—Bagster: to pervade with an influence fully, possesses fully (Eph. 5:18).

Please note Bagster’s definition of the Greek *Pleero* (Fill) is to be filled with an influence. For one to “let the word of Christ dwell in” him “richly” is for him to “be filled with the Spirit.”

It is true that the Spirit is not a mere influence. Still, the Bible frequently uses a figure of speech (synecdoche) where a part is put for the whole, or where the whole is put for a part. Here, the word *Spirit* is used for the Spirit’s influence through the teaching of the word of Christ.

This rich dwelling of the Spirit through the word results in “speaking in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs” or “teaching and admonishing one another.” One does not speak in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs as the result of being filled with the literal Person of the Holy Spirit. If so, then such

singing would be the work of the Spirit, and all such teaching would be inspired. The Spirit influences people today only through the once-for-all delivered faith—the Word of Truth.

Which agrees with sound reason and with Scripture, to say (1) that being filled with the personal Spirit results from a command to do so, or (2) that being filled with the Spirit results from being obedient to commands of the Spirit and thus being filled with the Spirit's teaching?

A study of Colossians 3:16 and Ephesians 5:18-19 shows that the singing of psalms, hymns and spiritual songs is the result of being "filled with the teaching of the Spirit," or letting "the word of Christ dwell in you richly; in all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts unto God."

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## The Spirit in Man

*By Earl Trimble*

Vol. 110, No. 09

Ye adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore would be a friend of the world maketh himself an enemy of God. Or think ye that the scripture speaketh in vain? Doth the spirit which he made to dwell in us long unto envying? (James 4:4-5 ASV).

Many denominational commentators consider the word *spirit* in verse five refers to the Holy Spirit. However, there are serious problems with this view.

The context shows that James was writing about "jealous envying and contentions" on the part of the Jewish converts

(James 1:1). An evil disposition is under consideration. He stipulates "bitter envy and strife" (James 3:14). He speaks of "lusts that war in your members" ... killing ... praying for wrong things ... friendship with a sinful world ... unclean hands and impure hearts ... evil speaking against each other and the law (James 4:1-12).

In his commentary on the book of James, brother Guy N. Woods gives the sense of this verse as: "The spirit which is in you is a covetous and envious one" (p. 217). Brother Woods makes this observation:

*It is incredible to us that the writer would affirm of deity that which he had earlier so severely condemned in men! If, as indeed it is, envy and jealousy are wrong in man, we cannot believe that James intended to assert that such are characteristic of God (p. 218).*

Not that it carries much weight, but the translators of the KJV, ASV, NIV, and the RSV all rendered "spirit" in James chapter 4, verse five, with a small s to indicate the human spirit.

The ASV (1901) has it, "The spirit which he made to dwell in us"; the KJV has, "The spirit that dwelleth in us." God appointed the spirit to dwell in and quicken the human body. He created the body and gave the spirit. The spirit is in the image and likeness of its giver. Today, of course, God makes the human body through the process of his law of procreation, and he still imparts the human spirit for the fleshly body, which gives it life. God is the "father of spirits" (Heb. 12:9). "Father of spirits" is used in contradiction with "fathers of the flesh." There is but one father of all spirits. There are many fleshly fathers.

The spirit which comes from God the Father into the bodies of babies is pure and innocent and is not depraved. Calvinists mistakenly teach that every baby's spirit is corrupt and vile.

If the spirits within humans are depraved at birth, God is the Father of those sinful spirits and the source of an imperfect and filthy gift. In the nature of God, this cannot be the case; the spirit God gives is perfect and good. It is sinless at the time it is given. Otherwise, God is not God (good).

The innocent spirit arrives in a sin-cursed world in the body of a baby. It is a free moral agent in the image of God, and, therefore, has the power of free choice. It does not have infinite attributes, but is limited. The spirit is susceptible to the influence of flesh. Therefore, without discipline, and under the improper influence of the body and the world, it becomes depraved. It is not born depraved but becomes sinful by its own choice. The Jewish disciples to whom James wrote acquired spirits “lusting to envy.” James rebukes their jealousy and thereby demonstrates they owned the fault, and had not inherited it from the Father of their spirits.

We must be careful not to read into this “spirit” passage a literal indwelling of the person of the Holy Spirit, as this would be an indictment of God.

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## Cotham's Comments on the Holy Spirit

*By Perry B. Cotham*  
Vol. 108, No. 08

A misconception of the Holy Spirit and his work for man's salvation leads to all kinds of religious errors. All that we can ever know about the Spirit and his work comes from the Scriptures. It is tragic to see some turn away from what the Bible teaches in favor of an inner, mystical longing, which



they mistake for information about God.

The Holy Spirit is a person. There are three beings in one Godhead (Acts 17:29; Matt. 28:19; 2 Cor. 13:14). There is only one God (Deut. 6:4), but three beings possess the divine nature.

The Holy Spirit gave us the Holy Scripture (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:21; Eph. 6:17). The apostles were guided by the Spirit into all of the truth (John 16:13; 2 Pet. 1:3; Jude 1:3). In conviction, conversion, and edification the Holy Spirit operates on the heart of man only through the inspired Word of God (Psa. 19:7; Psa. 73:24; Psa. 119:50, Psa. 119:93, Psa. 119:105, Psa. 119:130). "The Gospel ... is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth" (Rom. 1:16). The Spirit operates through the words of revelation, which are spirit and life (John 6:63).

The Bible plainly says that the Holy Spirit dwells within Christians. Paul wrote, "Know ye not that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which ye have from God? and ye are not your own?" (1 Cor. 6:19).

How does the Spirit indwell the child of God? He indwells directly or indirectly. There is a difference in stating the fact and in stating the method (the how) of the Spirit's indwelling. The Bible does not teach that the Spirit dwells in Christians apart from the inspired Word. Many religionists have the idea of a personal, direct indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the child of God. They think the Spirit gives the believer extra help besides the Word of God. This, of course, denies the all-sufficiency of God-breathed writing to make the man of God complete. Of course, this belief leads to all kinds of "experiences" and "feelings."

Let us note some things: (1) God dwells in Christians (2 Cor. 6:16; 1 John 4:12-16). Does God dwell in his children directly or indirectly? It is indirect, through obedience to the word:

“He that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him” (1 John 3:24). (2) Christ dwells in Christians (Col. 1:27). But how does Christ dwell in us? Paul explains, “That Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith” (Eph. 3:17). “Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Rom. 10:17). (3) The Holy Spirit dwells in Christians. The Spirit is in each faithful member of the church the same way that God and Christ are in the saved. Neither God, Christ, nor the Holy Spirit dwells directly, personally, in Christians. As the Christian obeys the Spirit’s message, the Spirit’s influences are in him, and he brings forth the fruit of the Spirit in his life: “Love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control” (Gal. 5:22-23).

Comparing Ephesians 5:17-19 with Colossians 3:16 shows how the Spirit is in the child of God. To be “filled with the Spirit” is to let the “word of Christ” dwell in you richly. There is no statement of Scripture saying the Holy Spirit dwells literally, directly, and personally in the child of God. If Jehovah the Father and Jesus the Son can indwell Christians indirectly and figuratively, the Holy Spirit can do the same.

Children of God cherish the Spirit’s message and live by it, and in this way the Holy Spirit dwells in them and in the church. The teaching that the Spirit works directly – separate and apart from the Word of God in the heart of the alien sinner or the child of God, is contrary to the teaching of the Bible. “All scripture is given by inspiration of God ... that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works” (2 Tim. 3:16-17). We have the Bible and it is sufficient to make us what God wants us to be.

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# The Seal and Earnest of the Spirit (E. Trimble)

By Earl Trimble

Vol. 107, No. 12

In its noun form the word *earnest* appears only three times in the New Testament (2 Cor. 1:22; 2 Cor. 5:5; Eph. 1:14). In both of the Second Corinthian verses the word is used in the phrase, *earnest of the Spirit*. In the Ephesians verse it appears in the phrase, *earnest Of our inheritance*.

Thayer defines the Greek *arrabon* (*translated earnest* in these three passages) as “a foretaste and a pledge of future blessedness” (p. 75). Interestingly, Thayer likens *foretaste* to “tasted” as found in Hebrews 6:4 (“tasted of the heavenly gift”), in Hebrews 6:5 (“tasted the good word of God”), and I Peter 2:3 (“tasted that the Lord is gracious”). The idea of *tasting* is “to partake of, to enjoy, to experience.”

An analysis of these three verses reveals the contextual usage of the word *earnest*.

2 Corinthians 1:21-22; 2 Corinthians 5:5

“Now he that establisheth us with you in Christ, and anointed us, is God; who also sealed us, and gave us the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.”

“Now he that wrought us for this very thing is God, who gave unto us the earnest of the Spirit.”

Attention is called to three words used in these two verses as defined by Thayer:

1. Anointing (*chrisma*): “a miraculous gift”
2. Seal (*sphragidzo*): “to mark with a seal”
3. Earnest (*arrabon*): “foretaste and pledge of future blessedness”

Notice also the usage of the expression, an *anointing*, as referring to a miraculous gift in I John 2:20, I John 2:27:

“And ye have an anointing from the Holy One, and ye know all things ... his anointing teacheth you concerning all things.”

Brother Guy N. Woods (in his chart #20, used in his debate with Given O. Blakely on the subject of the Holy Spirit) says (regarding the word *earnest*),

*The word is used three times in the New Testament, but always in a figurative sense: in the first (2 Cor. 1:22) it is applied to the gifts of the Holy Spirit which God bestowed upon the apostles, and by which he might be said to have hired them to be the servants of his Son; and which were the earnest, assurance, and commencement of those far superior blessings which he would bestow on them in the life to come as the wages of their faithful services: in the two latter (2 Cor. 5:5; Eph. 1:13-14), it is applied to the gifts bestowed on Christians generally upon whom, after baptism, the apostles laid their hands, and which were to them an earnest of obtaining a heavenly habitation and inheritance, upon the supposition of their fidelity.*

The contextual setting wherein the words (*anointing*, *seal*, and *earnest*) are used, show their relativity to the Holy Spirit as being the miraculous gifts that God bestowed upon the apostles and early Christians through agency of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, their primary application was to those of that age and not to us today. The word *anointing* is not applicable to us in any sense, who live in the post-miraculous era. The words *seal* and *earnest* could be said to apply to us today only in a secondary sense.

Ephesians 1:13-14

“... ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, which is an earnest of our inheritance, unto the redemption of

God's. own possession. . . ."

In commenting on Ephesians 1:13, J. W. Shepherd says, "They [the Ephesians] received the gift of the Spirit in its miraculous manifestation. We do not; but we receive it in our hearts and bring them in subjection to it" (*Gospel Advocate Commentary*, p. 27). Commenting on verse 14 (p. 28), he uses the meaning of Romans 8:16-17 to illustrate the meaning of the *earnest of our inheritance*. He says, "It is rather the very work of the Spirit himself." Then he explains how the Christian's godly life, as the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23), is the assurance of God's approval. David Lipscomb adds: "So much of real spiritual blessings as he enjoys is heaven already in his heart; what he has in the work and fruits of the Spirit is for him alike pledge and foretaste."

Is it reasonable that the Spirit, himself, given to Christians as a seal and earnest for confirming God's approval and guarantee (as some contend) would himself be dependent upon "outside evidence" (i.e., God's word) to confirm his indwelling? It is the result of the indwelling, and not the indwelling itself, that serves as the seal and earnest. Testimony and confirmation by the Spirit is dependent upon action and not passivity on his part unless there was an effect, the cause would serve no purpose. Some, in contending for a direct, personal indwelling, are ready to admit to direct operations (miraculous manifestations) of the Spirit in the Christian's life today.

Actually the Spirit proves his indirect indwelling, not in being passive, but rather by being active in producing fruit in the Christian as the result of his teaching. This work performed by the Spirit in today's Christian is accomplished indirectly through the medium of the all-sufficient, Spirit-empowered word (John 6:63, John 6:68; Acts 20:32; 1 Thess. 2:13; Heb. 4:12, et al).

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# A Habitation of God Through the Spirit

*By Earl Trimble*

Vol. 106, No. 06

Ephesians 2:22 is sometimes cited to support the view that the Holy Spirit personally indwells the Christian in a direct and in-Person manner. Often the question will be asked: "How can God dwell in us through the Spirit if the Spirit does not indwell us?" The phrase, "through the Spirit," in this Ephesians verse, is thought by some to mean that God, being in the Spirit, indwells us indirectly, figuratively, or representatively through (by means of) the Holy Spirit who is literally in us in his own Person.

Does this verse in the Ephesian letter, in fact, teach that the Spirit indwells one literally and immediately, as some affirm? This phrase, "through the Spirit," occurs at least four times in the New Testament (Acts 21:4; Rom. 8:13; Eph. 2:22; 1 Peter 1:22, KJV). An examination of the other three references will show that this phrase, through the Spirit does not refer to an indwelling of the Spirit. Notice the similar usages of these four references:

- 1) "...who said to Paul through the Spirit..." (Acts 21:4)
- 2) "...through the Spirit do mortify the deeds..." (Rom. 8:13)
- 3) "...a habitation of God through the Spirit" (Eph. 2:22)
- 4) "...obeying the truth through the Spirit..." (1 Peter 1:22)

Notice the similar meanings of this phrase, "through the Spirit" in these four references:

“And finding disciples, we tarried there seven days: who said to Paul through the Spirit, that he should not go up to Jerusalem” (Acts 21:4). The Holy Spirit made known to the disciples at Tyre that Paul would be in danger of his life if he returned to Jerusalem (see also Acts 21:10-14). Here “through the Spirit” means “by the Spirit” (ASV). That is, the Spirit had warned the brethren of the danger that awaited Paul at Jerusalem. This information given the disciples by the Spirit was inspired revelation.

“For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live” (Rom. 8:13). Who would argue this means if those Roman Christians would mortify the deeds of the body “through the Spirit” that indwelt them, they would live? It is apparent Paul was telling them if they would mortify the deeds of the body through the Spirit’s teaching, that is, according to what the Spirit taught, they would live.

“In whom ye also are built together for an habitation of God through the Spirit” (Eph. 2:22). How are Christians built together for a habitation of God? Is our being built together accomplished by the Spirit as he literally indwells us? If so, then would our being built together not be a direct operation of the Holy Spirit? Again, in this Ephesians 2:22 reference, the phrase “through the Spirit” could have been rendered “by the Spirit.” Our obedience to the Spirit’s teaching builds together as “a spiritual house” (1 Peter 2:5). This verse does not allude to a direct, personal, immediate indwelling of the Spirit. It is a misapplication of Ephesians 2:22 to use it to teach that the Spirit indwells us literally in his own Person.

“Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love on another fervently” (1 Peter 1:22). Who would affirm that one’s “obeying the truth” is effected “through the Spirit” that literally indwells him? We know that one obeys the truth through, or by, the Spirit’s influence exerted

through, or by, the inspired Word of God. The Spirit's only influence upon the human heart or conscience is through the message of the inspired Word of God, and never by direct operation. In like manner we are built together for a habitation of God, Christ and the Holy Spirit through the influence exerted by the Spirit in the inspired Word of life (John 6:63-68).

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# Miracles

*by Alstone L. Tabor*

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Do miracles occur today? If they do, who performs them? Perhaps most important, what is a miracle?

Most of us believe that God performs "miracles" daily as we consider the worlds in orbit and development of a tiny seed into a great plant. But this usage of the word "miracle" means "an unfathomable wonder" not a direct sign from God given as some special confirmation of His will. Our bodies are a miraculous creation! In this sense God continues miracles, and "miracles" is used, in this sense, by many writers in a poetic way. "To me, every hour of the day and night is an unspeakable, perfect miracle" (Walt Whitman).

A speaker recently declared that he believed in miracles. He told of his heart transplant and that his heart stopped beating twice and that the doctors and nurses started it again with electrical shocks. He said that he had died twice and came back to life.

This event was, understandably, a miracle to the speaker. By this definition, nearly everyone believes in miracles. But his



wonderful experience is in no way comparable to the miracles of the New Testament. Those miracles were signs of a special sort which God used to confirm the inspired word. Marvelous medical advancements are different; they do not defy explanation, as do Biblical miracles, but are merely wonderful examples of human achievement.

Biblical miracles were real miracles. When Christ healed the sick, raised the dead, and gave sight to the blind, He never declared, "I will perform this miracle provided you go to the hospital and let the surgeons operate on you." His miracles did not depend, even in part on the skill of earthly physicians or technology.

Miracles, such as the restarting of a stopped heart, do depend upon man and his skills. Such "miracles" do not have the same force upon those who witness them. When Jesus performed a miracle, no one could doubt that God had intervened in the natural world. God may, or may not have intervened in the heart transplant case, but doubt exists. Jesus' signs left no doubt, to the observer, that God had suspended natural laws to do His will.

One denominational Houston preacher who has a large following declares that he believes miracles happen today in the same way as Christ and the Apostles performed them. He says that he prayed for his young daughter, and she was healed. The daughter is now grown, and a few weeks ago, was opening the mail for him when a bomb went off in her lap. Does he rush in and pray that God will heal her? He claims his prayer was answered before. Does he rely on a miracle now? No sir! He rushed her to the emergency hospital and implored the surgeons to do their work. If God miraculously heals today, why not pray for her right there in the office and let God do the healing, without benefit of surgeon or nurse?

Would this sort of "miracle," say the rushing of Bartimaeus to the emergency room in Jericho, have confirmed Christ or his

word? Certainly not! Christ did not perform miracles in this fashion.

God is all powerful and one day will perform the miracle of miracles by resurrecting all that are in the grave (John 5:28-29). He will also instantaneously change those then living (1 Cor. 15:51-52). But today He does not give the spiritual gifts of healing, tongues, prophecy, miraculous knowledge or any of the other gifts mentioned in 1 Cor. 12:6-10. God Himself told us that miraculous gifts would cease. "Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part, But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away" (1 Cor. 13:8-10).

He tells us plainly that faith, hope and love (these three shall abide or continue) not the eleven gifts which included the miraculous and healing gifts of the twelfth chapter. Only three were to abide! "And now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love" (1 Cor. 13:13).

What is that which is perfect? David declared in Psalm 19:7, "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul." James calls the New Testament "the perfect law of liberty" (James 1:25). So when the law of God was completed (made perfect), then miraculous gifts ceased. God said they would fail, cease, vanish away! I believe God rather than Oral Roberts, Pat Robinson or John Osteen. God no longer performs miraculous feats such as raising the dead, walking on water, the gift of prophecy, healing or speaking in tongues.

We believe in prayer, but we do not believe prayer will cause God to grant us the miracle-working power that He gave in the first century. Some people believe that God has to perform a miracle for prayer to be answered. That position is not supported by scripture. God's hands are not tied, nor his

power limited. God does move in our world. God provides many things in answer to prayer. Prayer accomplishes much, but God has not promised miracles in our age of the same kind that He performed through Christ and the inspired apostles.

Consider Heb 2:3-4:

*“How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to His own will?”*

Consider also Mark 16:17 and Mark 16:20:

*“And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; They shall take up serpents; And if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.” Did this occur? Read verse 20. “And they went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following.”*

The miracles or signs described in the preceding passages were to confirm the word. In that time without a written New Testament early Christians could know that God inspired certain messages because God confirmed the word by His miracles. He has confirmed His word: He does not need to continue the confirmation.

“Wherefore he saith, When he ascended on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men... And he gave some Apostles; and some prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of

Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and the knowledge of the Son of God unto a perfect man... That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine..." The first century church needed all these miraculously inspired people as they had no written New Testament then. Later the word was committed to writing. Obviously we no longer have Apostles or Prophets, nor do we have inspired evangelists, pastors or teachers. The inspired people were to continue "Till we all come in the unity of the Faith" (Eph 4:8).

We now have that faith, in the unified form, in the New Testament. Jude declared that we should "earnestly contend for the faith" (Jude 3). This is not our personal faith, but the system of faith which had been revealed in God's Holy Word. Miraculously endowed gifts were to last "till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God..." (Eph. 4:8). This unity of the faith and knowledge of the Son of God was completed, made perfect, when the last word of inspiration was written.

Now instead of all these miraculously endowed individuals, we have the "perfect law of liberty" completely given to mankind. God said supernatural things were to cease (1 Cor. 13:8), so His word being true, we have none of these today.

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