

Part Two: WHAT IS THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT?

Introduction:

1. The functioning of Deity is both unified and diversified.
 - a. The work of each person of the Godhead is unified as all three work as one. They have a common goal, purpose and aim. There is no division in the plan of Deity. See John 17:20-21.
 - b. On the other hand, the work of each person of the Godhead is diversified. The Father planned the great scheme of redemption; the Son executed it; the Spirit revealed it. Each member of the Godhead had a specific work to do to make the unified whole a success.
2. As we focus on the Spirit's functioning in God's plan, questions about miracles and spiritual gifts come to the forefront. Why were miracles necessary in the first century but not now? How does the Holy Spirit work in the lives of people today?

The Lesson:

I. The work of revelation.

- A. The Old Testament scriptures were given by revelation of the Holy Spirit. Note what the following verses say about the Old Testament prophets.
 1. 2 Peter 1:19-21 Moved by the Spirit.
 2. Hebrews 1:1 God spoke by the prophets.
 3. 1 Peter 1:9-11 The prophets inquired, searched.
- B. The New Testament scriptures were also revealed by the Holy Spirit. Note what these passages say about the scriptures.
 1. 2 Timothy 3:16-17 Inspired by God.
 2. Ephesians 3:3-5 Revealed by the Spirit.
- C. God used apostles and prophets, guided by the Holy Spirit, to speak and write His will.
 1. Christ promised His apostles that the Holy Spirit would teach them all things, bring all things to their remembrance, testify of Christ, and guide them into all truth, John 14:26; 15:26; 16:13-14.
 2. According to 1 John 1:1-4 and Ephesians 3:3-5, the apostles wrote down the things revealed to them.
 3. The Holy Spirit's words were used in inspiration, 1 Corinthians 2:9-13.
 4. Man is not to alter God's revelation, Galatians 1:6-9, Revelation 22:18-19; Deuteronomy 4:2.



II. The work of confirmation.

- A. Miracles were used by God to bear witness that He was speaking.
 1. Miracles proved men were sent by God.
 - a. This was true of Christ, Acts 2:22; John 3:2; 20:30-31.
 - b. This was true of Christ's apostles, Mark 16:20; Hebrews 2:3-4; 2 Corinthians 12:12.
 2. In the first century, miracles were necessary because new revelation and confirmation were both necessary. Today, neither is necessary, for both are completed. How do you answer the following questions? Circle the correct word in each sentence that is in accord with the verse:
 - a. Is God's revelation complete or incomplete? 2 Peter 1:3.
 - b. Is God's revelation unchanging or is it to be changed? Galatians 1:8.

- c. Is God's revelation permanent or is it to be replaced? Revelation 14:6.
 - d. Is God's revelation given only once or is it to be given again? Jude 3.
 - e. Is God's revelation enduring or is part of it lost? 1 Peter 1:23-25.
 - f. If you answered these questions according to the teachings in the scriptures, then you know why no more revelation is being given today.
- B. Miraculous spiritual gifts have ceased because no need exists today for new revelation or confirmation.
- 1. The Bible foretold that miracles would cease, 1 Corinthians 13:8-10.
 - 2. The means by which miraculous powers were transmitted has ceased.
 - a. Some received power directly by an outpouring from heaven, Acts 1:8; 2:1-4; 10:44-48. This means of giving the Spirit was never promised to all believers and may be found only in the cases of the apostles and Cornelius.
 - b. Some received gifts of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of the apostles' hands, Acts 8:12-23. There are no more apostles on earth, thus there are no persons today who have received gifts by this means.
 - 3. To say that miracles have ceased does not say the Holy Spirit is no longer active; it only means that miracles given by the Spirit are no longer operative, because the Spirit did this work in a perfect and complete way in the first century.
 - a. Some object to this. But, consider this illustration: Christ has completed His personal ministry on earth. He did His work in a perfect and complete way in the first century. We understand that Christ is no longer on earth, He is no longer on the cross or in the tomb, but He is still actively involved in man's salvation.
 - b. Even so, the Holy Spirit continues to work in converting the lost and in giving power to the saved. Neither Christ nor the Holy Spirit are defamed by advocating that they have completed a part of their work!

III. The work of conviction.

- A. The world must be convicted of sin, righteousness and judgment to come, John 16:7-8.
- 1. The Holy Spirit was the one used by Christ to do this work. As the Advocate (*paraclete* - Comforter) sent by Christ, He would be furnished with sufficient evidence and arguments to accomplish His assigned tasks, John 16:13. Truth is the means by which the Holy Spirit convicts.
 - 2. The Spirit would argue the case from three premises, John 16:7-11.
 - a. The world stands condemned because of unbelief toward Jesus Christ.
 - b. Righteousness (justification) can be obtained through faith because Jesus the Christ has gone into heaven.
 - c. Judgment is sure because the ruler of this world has been judged.
- B. The work of conviction continues today through the revealed word of the Holy Spirit.
- 1. The Holy Spirit used words—testimony—to establish the three points of conviction. These words were revealed and confirmed by the Spirit; they were recorded by inspired writers; they stand today with the same force and power as in the first century.
 - 2. Men today are convicted in the same way as in the first century—by the gospel!
 - a. Convicted of sin, John 8:24; Romans 3:23-26.
 - b. Convicted of righteousness, Romans 1:16-17; Titus 2:11-12.
 - c. Convicted of judgment, Acts 17:30-31; John 12:48.
 - 3. In the first century, men were convicted of none of these things in a miraculous way. The Holy Spirit did not convict men by working miracles on their hearts to cause them to believe. They

were convicted by words! Miracles were used to reveal these truths and to confirm these truths, but the miracles reached no further than the point of confirmation. The miracles did not reach into the hearts of unbelievers. The word of the Spirit was the thing that reached the heart. It is still reaching the hearts of men today.

IV. The work of conversion.

- A. Without the new birth, one cannot enjoy the blessings of the kingdom, John 3:3.
 - 1. Jesus said, "Except a man be born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God", John 3:5.
 - 2. The new birth is described as being accomplished by the "word of God," 1 Peter 1:23.
- B. We are born of the Spirit as we respond to the word given by the Spirit.
 - 1. The Holy Spirit converts men, but He does it through the use of His word which is the sword of the Spirit, Ephesians 6:17. Can you find a passage in Acts 2 where this instrument of the Spirit was used? _____
 - 2. The word given by the Holy Spirit is able to "save your soul," James 1:21.
 - 3. The Spirit's truth will purify your soul when you obey it, 1 Peter 1:22.
- C. It is at the point of baptism that the new birth takes place.
 - 1. 1 Corinthians 12:13, "By one Spirit we are all baptized into one body."
 - 2. According to Ephesians 5:26, we are sanctified and cleansed with "the washing of water by the word."
- D. Conversion is accomplished by the power of the gospel, Romans 1:16-17; 10:12-17.
 - 1. There is no need the sinner has in being saved that is not supplied in the gospel.
 - 2. There is no influence employed by the Spirit in conversion that is not attributed to the gospel.
 - 3. There is not a case of conversion recorded by the Spirit that was not accomplished by the preaching of the gospel.
 - 4. Everything necessary to move men to become Christians and thus be saved is set forth in the gospel: God's love for man, Christ's sacrifice, the things required of man to be saved, the forgiveness of sins, the hope of heaven, the fear of hell, and the certainty of judgment.

V. The work of sanctification.

- A. God's people are called upon to live a separated life, 1 Corinthians 6:9-11; Galatians 5:19-21; 1 Peter 1:13-16.
 - 1. If we are led by the Holy Spirit, our commitment to Christ will be apparent, Romans 8:12-17.
 - a. God, the Father, will be found in us, 2 Corinthians 6:16-18; 1 John 4:12-15.
 - b. Another who will be found in us is Christ, Colossians 1:27; Galatians 2:20.
 - c. The Holy Spirit will be found in us, 1 Corinthians 6:19-20; Romans 8:9.
 - 2. We are assured of salvation; the Holy Spirit bears witness with our spirit that we are God's children, Romans 8:16.
 - a. This witness is neither found in the form of a voice speaking to us, nor by some feeling, but rather by knowing that we have done what the Holy Spirit directs.
 - b. It is significant to note that the text says the "Spirit bears witness *with* our Spirit;" it does not say "*to* our spirit." Some misquote and misapply this text and conclude that the Holy Spirit speaks to us personally.
 - c. Witnesses give testimony. In the case of Romans 8:16, we have two witnesses. When the testimonies of the two witnesses agree, then there is certainty that the person is a child of God. When the two agree, then a person can be certain that he is sanctified—set apart as

one of God's children. Look at the two lists which follow. The Holy Spirit has given His testimony. Ask yourself whether the testimony of your spirit agrees with that of the Holy Spirit. Check the correct box.

- | <u>Testimony of the Holy Spirit</u> | <u>Testimony of my spirit</u> | | |
|---|-------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Hear the gospel, <u>Romans 10:17</u> . | I have heard the gospel. | YES <input type="checkbox"/> | NO <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Believe on Christ, <u>John 8:24</u> . | I have believed. | YES <input type="checkbox"/> | NO <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Repent of sin, <u>Acts 3:19</u> . | I have repented. | YES <input type="checkbox"/> | NO <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Confess Christ, <u>Romans 10:9-10</u> . | I have confessed. | YES <input type="checkbox"/> | NO <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Be baptized, <u>Acts 2:38</u> . | I have been baptized. | YES <input type="checkbox"/> | NO <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Be faithful, <u>Revelation 2:10</u> . | I am faithful to Christ. | YES <input type="checkbox"/> | NO <input type="checkbox"/> |
- e. The Holy Spirit does not speak to us directly to give us assurance of salvation. Remember, we walk by faith, 2 Corinthians 5:7. We have confidence in His word.
3. The work of the Holy Spirit in sanctifying us and in giving us assurance of salvation is not a supernatural work. When it is said that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are working in us, that is not to be understood as a supernatural influence. It is simply that each of the persons of Deity influence us and thus we live a holy life. It is through the revealed will of God that this influence is exerted.
- B. Sanctification is accomplished in us by means of the word, John 17:17.
1. We are called by the gospel, 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14. Our calling sets us apart from the world.
 2. We are to be filled with the Spirit, Ephesians 5:18. We are to let the word of Christ dwell in us, Colossians 3:16. These passages are parallel, and show how the Spirit works in us.
 3. Sanctification is accomplished by means of faith, Acts 26:18. Faith comes by hearing God's word, Romans 10:17.
 4. Sanctification is revealed in the will of God, 1 Thessalonians 4:3.

Conclusion:

1. The Holy Spirit continues to work through a confirmed revelation to produce conviction, conversion and sanctification.
2. The Holy Spirit does the work, but He does it through means of teaching. The medium He uses to teach us is the gospel.