

# **A STUDY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

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## **INTRODUCTION:**

Much has been written and spoken about the Holy Spirit. The number of books, articles and tapes produced about the Holy Spirit is very large. Yet, in spite of the abundance of material, there is still widespread misunderstanding about the Holy Spirit.

More controversy surrounds the Holy Spirit than any other person of the Godhead. Here are but a few of the areas related to the Spirit where there is misunderstanding: His nature, being, work, relation to revelation, giving of miraculous powers, indwelling, etc. It is difficult to find anything related to the Holy Spirit that is not the subject of controversy.

What is the reason for so much controversy over the Spirit? The problem lies in a failure to understand what the Spirit says about Himself. The sourcebook for learning about the Holy Spirit is the Bible—a book that claims to be authored by the Spirit Himself, 2 Peter 1:20-21. Many people have their minds made up about the Spirit before they ever go to the Bible, and thus their study of the Bible is clouded by preconceptions.

Two major preconceptions that confuse people's thinking on the Holy Spirit are Calvinism and Pentecostalism.

*Calvinism* holds that without special guidance from the Spirit of God, a person cannot read and understand the Bible. It is interesting that persons who hold this view are among the most divided and confused of all on the Spirit—something that would not be the case if they were really guided by the Spirit. Calvinism also claims a direct and personal indwelling where the Holy Spirit is actually inside of a person's body. This view is so widespread that few people even question the validity of this position. This preconception prevents men from understanding the Spirit's relation to the believer. The second major preconception relates to the Pentecostal movement.

*Pentecostalism* is much like Calvinism in that it teaches a direct and personal indwelling of the Spirit, and that this indwelling is necessary to understand the Bible. But, Pentecostalism goes a step further and alleges that all believers have access to the power to work miracles by the Spirit. Pentecostalism argues that miraculous spiritual gifts were possessed by all believers in the first century and are available to all believers today. Pentecostalism errs on both of these assertions. You can readily see that if one goes to the Bible with these preconceptions, his interpretation of Holy Spirit passages will be affected.

Even among those who profess more conservative views on the Spirit, there are still many vague, hazy and ill-defined ideas. When that is the case, it is difficult to teach others the truth; in fact, ill-defined concepts on the Holy Spirit can leave one vulnerable to false teaching.

While the study before us may not answer every question that may be raised on the Holy Spirit, it will set forth a number of concrete truths that every believer can stand on. We will appeal to the Holy Spirit's own testimony concerning Himself in the word of God as the foundation for our understanding. The workbook we have produced will serve to help us study in an orderly manner, but we will appeal to the scriptures as our authority.

Accepting the authority of the Bible is the crux of the issue on the Spirit. If the Bible does not teach the truth on the Holy Spirit, then we have nothing at all to which we may appeal. The experiences and claims of men are not our authority. "What does the Bible say?" is the question we must ask and answer. What somebody saw on a TV program, or what somebody heard about a "faith healer," a fortune teller or psychic is not what this study is about. This study is about what the Bible says. Do you know what the Bible says about the Spirit? If the Bible is not our authority, then we have no defense against the false teacher; we have no way

of protecting our families from those who would lead them into error; we have no means of strengthening the church and preventing apostasy. Should we just listen to anyone who comes along and tells us what he thinks about the Holy Spirit, or should we hear the Spirit's own testimony?

Accepting the authority of the Bible also means that my feelings, opinions, and "I think..." are not the standard for knowing what is right. It is as Paul wrote in Romans 3:4, "...let God be true but every man a liar." Every person has feelings and experiences. The Bible must not be interpreted in the light of our experiences; rather, our experiences must be interpreted in the light of the Bible. The Bible is our standard!

The chapters in our workbook are laid out in a progressive order, beginning with basic and fundamental truths about the Holy Spirit, and progressing to more complex issues. Please take note of the lesson divisions listed below. You will note that each of the lesson titles (with the exception of Appendices A and B) is expressed in the form of a question. We have laid out the study in this way, because these are the very questions that people have problems with in regard to the Holy Spirit.

**INDEX OF LESSONS:**

<i>Part One:</i>	<b>WHO IS THE HOLY SPIRIT?.....</b>	<b>Page 3</b>
	The Holy Spirit is called by many names in the scriptures; The Holy Spirit is a member of the Godhead; The Holy Spirit is a Divine Person; The Holy Spirit cooperates in the work of Deity.	
<i>Part Two:</i>	<b>WHAT IS THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT?.....</b>	<b>Page 6</b>
	The work of revelation; The work of confirmation; The work of conviction; The work of conversion; The work of sanctification.	
<i>Part Three:</i>	<b>WHAT ABOUT THE BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT?.....</b>	<b>Page 10</b>
	Do people receive Holy Spirit baptism today? What is the baptism of the Holy Spirit? Holy Spirit baptism is not water baptism; How are we born of water and the Spirit?	
<i>Part Four:</i>	<b>WHAT ABOUT SPEAKING IN TONGUES?.....</b>	<b>Page 13</b>
	What was speaking in tongues? The gift of tongues was only one of many spiritual gifts; How are the claims to tongues today to be explained?	
<i>Part Five:</i>	<b>HOW DOES THE HOLY SPIRIT DWELL IN CHRISTIANS?.....</b>	<b>Page 16</b>
	What is the real issue on the indwelling of the Holy Spirit? A distinction between the "Person" and "Presence" of Deity; The Holy Spirit Dwells in us by means of His revealed word; When we are obedient to the Spirit's word, fellowship exists between God and man.	
<i>Part Six:</i>	<b>WHAT IS THE GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT?.....</b>	<b>Page 20</b>
	The gift of the Holy Ghost is the salvation promised by the prophets; The earnest of the Spirit is not the gift of the Holy Spirit.	
<i>Appendix A:</i>	<b>IT IS POSSIBLE TO SIN AGAINST THE HOLY SPIRIT.....</b>	<b>Page 23</b>
	The blasphemy against the Holy Spirit; Other sins against the Holy Spirit.	
<i>Appendix B:</i>	<b>ALL SPIRIT PASSAGES DO NOT SPEAK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.....</b>	<b>Page 25</b>
	Some problems men have with the word "spirit;" A study of various "spirit" passages.	