

UPON THE ROCK

Sept 2001

Volume 4 Issue 9



THE NATURE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Larry G. Reynolds

Perhaps there is no subject in the Bible so grossly misunderstood as that of the Holy Spirit. Ignorance of the Bible teaching on this most important theme has caused true Christianity to be exchanged for a feel-good religion. It has caused people to reject the Holy Scriptures as the final authority. Many honest and sincere people have been misinformed. The purpose of this article is to discuss the nature of the Holy Spirit. It is important to understand that the Holy Spirit is not an incomprehensible influence, or glorified "it", but that He is the third person of the Godhead (Acts 17:29; Colossians 2:9).

When God, the Father, and the Son had performed Their first works in creation the Holy Spirit came to fill his mission in creation. The Bible says, "And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters (Genesis 1:2). The six days of creation were six days of organizational work under the ministry of the Holy Spirit, as an accomplishment of the Godhead. The Godhead is made up of three divine persons: God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit (Genesis 1:1; Matthew 6:9; John 1:1-3; Acts 5:3-4), working together to bring us a perfect world and a perfect revelation.

PERSON OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

The personality of the Holy Spirit is evidenced by the work of the Spirit. The Holy Spirit is said to do things that only a person can do:

- (1) The Holy Spirit teaches. Jesus said, 'And He shall teach you all things...' (John 14:26).
- (2) The Holy Spirit reproves. When Jesus promised to send the Holy Spirit to the apostles, He said, "And when He is come, He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment" (John 16:8).
- (3) The Holy Spirit is a guide. In giving this promise Jesus told the apostles, "He will guide you into all truth" (John 16:13).
- (4) The Holy Spirit speaks. Continuing His promise of send the Holy Spirit, Christ declared: "For He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak" (John 16:13).
- (5) The Holy Spirit is one who is affected as a person. He may be grieved (Ephesians 4:30).
- (6) The Holy Spirit as a person, appointed and directed God's chosen men. It is revealed that: The Holy Spirit said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them" (Acts 12:2).
- (7) The Holy Spirit makes intercessions for the saints of God. "Likewise the Sprit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought but the Spirit itself maketh intercessions for us with groaning which cannot be uttered" (Romans 8:26).

THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Holy Spirit revealed both Old and New Testament Scriptures, "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (II Peter 1:21). The Holy Spirit, as a divine agency, has spoken from Almighty God through the prophets, through Christ and His apostles. The apostles were the last ones on earth to receive such divine revelations. The Holy Spirit guided the apostles into all truth: "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and shall show it unto you" (John 16:13). If the Holy Spirit guided the apostles into ALL truth, then there is none from that hence to be revealed to any man.

The work of Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit are so distinct that Christ and the Holy Spirit were not on earth at the same time in their distinct personalities. It is recorded in John 7:39: "But this spake he

THE HOLY SPIRIT

UPON THE ROCK

PAGE 3

The Nature of the Holy Spirit — Page 1

The Indwelling of the Holy Spirit — Page 3

How The Holy Spirit Wiolds An Influence In Our Lives—Page 7

The Holy Spirit and Miraculous Gifts — Page 13

Revelations From Romans — Page 19

Why This Issue—Page 22

Upon The Rock
Mark E. Reynolds, editor
2411 E. Riggjn Road
Muncie, IN. 47303

of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.” According to John 16:7, Jesus declared to His disciples, “Nevertheless I tell you the truth; it is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.”

The mission of the Holy Spirit was to guide the apostles into all the truth and to bring to their remembrance the things He had taught them. The Holy Spirit began His work revealing the message of the Son to lost humanity after the Son returned to the Father in heaven. The Spirit was subject to the Son and the Son was subject to the Father. The message of the Spirit was the message of Christ. The message of Christ was the message of the Father. It was the Son who declared, “My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work” (John 4:34). Furthermore, He admonished, “If ye love me, keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not neither knoweth him; but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you” (John 14:26).

Just as the Father and Son are perfect, the Holy Spirit did His work perfectly. The setting in order and operations and development of the material world is perfect. The revelation of the Word of God is perfect. The Holy Spirit did His work perfectly and completely when He guided the apostles into “ALL TRUTH” (John 16: 13-16).

Larry G. Reynolds may be reached at 6600 W. Kilgore Ave. Yorktown, IN. 47396, or by email at reynconnie@iquest.net

THE INDWELLING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Patrick Morrison

With so much confusion in the religious world regarding the Holy Spirit—His person, work, influence, etc.—these articles in this issue of *Upon The Rock* are greatly needed. The denominations have for years claimed that the Holy Spirit is working among them in any number of

ways, from miraculous healing to occasions of uncontrollable laughter as evidence of His presence to “speaking in tongues,” and on and on the list could go. However, all of these claims are merely accusations which have absolutely no basis in fact. Such false accusations display a great misunderstanding of the purpose and duration of miracles, the nature of miraculous healing, and quite simply a gross misconception of the person and work of the Holy Spirit in general. The assertion that the Holy Spirit is working among these denominational groups attracts many who likewise misunderstand the Holy Spirit and His work. The sensationalism and emotionalism which characterize this religious craze has attracted mass numbers of people to these false religions. The thinking among many is that with all these people flocking to hear and see the Holy Spirit working among these groups, then they must be doing something right.

As is the case with all popular false doctrine, these teachings have found their way into the Lord’s church. For years the consensus and established teaching among members of the church of Christ was that the Holy Spirit operated upon the hearts of individuals in conviction and conversion solely through the medium of the word of God. With the onset of “Holy Spirit-mania” sweeping through the denominational world, throngs of people affiliated themselves with all such groups that were teaching the miraculous operation of the Spirit among them. As a result, many preachers and teachers within the Lord’s church began to “reevaluate” their teaching regarding the indwelling and work of the Holy Spirit. It is not uncommon today to find Christians who assert that the Holy Spirit operates upon the human heart by means other than the word of God. This teaching calls for a direct operation of the Holy Spirit upon the human heart, separate and apart from the word of God.

I am convinced that much of the problem we face today in the Lord’s church with such false teaching concerning the Holy Spirit revolves around our teaching concerning the indwelling of the Spirit. Many faithful preachers taught and many more continue to teach, that the Holy Spirit dwells in the Christian representatively, by means of the word. Other faithful preachers taught, and many continue to do so, that the Holy Spirit literally dwells in the child of God, but operates only through the medium of His word. So long as both sides agreed that the Holy Spirit operated only through the word, there was

TENTH ANNUAL PALMETTO BIBLE LECTURESHIP

GREER CHURCH OF CHRIST

1215 South Highway 14
PO Box 625
Greer, SC. 29652-0625

THEME:
**THINGS WHICH ARE MOST SURELY
BELIEVED AMONG US (LUKE 1:1)**
DATE: OCTOBER 14-18, 2001

SPEAKERS:

Ben Wright, William Woodson, Skip Andrews, Dennis Curd, Bobby Wood, Jerry Pence, Charles Cochran, Gary Pollard, Stewart Schnur, John Grubb, Mark Mosher, Rod Rutherford, Charles Clark, Jim Dearman, Perry Cotham, David Smith, J.C. Watkins, Melvin Sapp, Curtis Cates, Barry Gilreath, David Pharr, Ken Chumbley, Glen Hitchcock, Neal Pollard, Jeff Trotter

SUBJECTS

The Bible—The Infallible Word of God, The Existence and Nature of God, Jehovah and Clemency, There Is A Pattern in the NT To Be Followed, Christ Is The Head Of His Body—His Church, The Qualifications And Work Of Elders, The Qualifications And Work Of Deacons, The Qualifications And Work OF Evangelism, Women’s Role In The Church, Men’s Responsibilities In The Church, Authorized Fellowship, The Bible Pattern For Missions, Church Cooperation, The Mission Of The Church—Evangelism, The Mission Of The Church—Teaching, The Mission Of The Church— Benevolence, Jesus Our Example To Follow, Marriage-Divorce-Remarriage, Discipline According To The Bible, The Home-The Foundation Of Christian Training, We Can Know That We Are Saved, The Mission Of The Holy Spirit Biblical Music, The Second Coming Of Christ, The Reality Of Hell, The Reality Of Heaven, The Victory In Christ

people who have lost them; they cannot make someone walk, when it has been confirmed they have been lame since birth.

There are many other things that we hope you gain from this edition of UPON THE ROCK, but these are some things we hope you will continue to study

Mark E. Reynolds may be reached at 2411 E. Riggin Rd., Muncie, IN. 47303, or by email at mreyn8391@aol.com.

UPON THE ROCK is published monthly for the purpose of setting forth sound biblical material concerning first principles and evangelism. We strive to print articles that are informative for Christians and non-Christians.

Mark E. Reynolds, Editor
Larry G. Reynolds, Co-Editor
Jim Witty, Printer

Email us at mreyn8391@aol.com

**FREE
BIBLE STUDY COURSE
SEND YOUR REQUEST TO:**

Bible Study
6600 W. Kilgore Ave.
Yorktown, IN. 47396

harmony and peace among brethren. However, some came along with the question, "If the Holy Spirit literally dwells in the child of God, then what is He doing?" The idea that the Spirit was in the Christian, but not doing anything that the word of God could not accomplish, seemed to favor those who taught a representative indwelling. Not willing to give up the idea that the Spirit literally indwells the child of God, some began teaching that the Holy Spirit indeed was doing something separate from His word. This is not an indictment against all who hold to the literal, personal indwelling of the Spirit, but against those who would create division among brethren by claiming and teaching that the Spirit works apart from the word upon the human heart. To claim this is to denigrate the word of God. Claiming that the Christian must have a direct operation of the Holy Spirit in order to overcome sin is contradictory to the words of David in Psalm 199:11, "*Thy **word** have I hid in mine heart, **that I might not sin against thee***" (emphasis mine, SPM).

The Bible is replete with passages that state or imply that the Holy Spirit dwells in the child of God. However, as is the case with any passage of scripture, one must examine the context and the audience to whom the text was written, as well as any circumstances which might have warranted the writing of the passage under consideration. If one carefully considers all texts which state that the Holy Spirit indwells the Christian, one will find that none of these passages has reference to a non-miraculous indwelling. All such passages are written to persons or groups of people who were endowed with miraculous gifts of the Spirit. The miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit were given to those in the first century who obeyed the gospel (Acts 2:38). The ability to perform miracles ceased when God's revelation to man was complete, when His word was completed in written form (I Corinthians 13; Ephesians 4:7-14). See the article concerning miracles for a more thorough treatment of the discussion above. Those who would advocate a literal, personal, non-miraculous indwelling of the Spirit today must find a passage of scripture that does not show a miraculous indwelling of the Holy Spirit in a child of God. Those who would advocate a direct operation of the Holy Spirit upon the heart of man have no basis for such teaching, for the Holy Spirit has never operated directly upon any person's heart, whether saint or sinner.

Does the Holy Spirit dwell literally and personally within the Christian? Again, all passages which deal with the indwelling of the Holy Spirit are miraculous in nature, and confined to the saints of the first century. Aside from these passages, there is not one passage of scripture which teaches the indwelling of the Spirit, whether literally or representatively. The Bible does teach that God the Father and Jesus Christ dwell in the Christian. Listen to the words of John, “No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us” (I John 4:12). Why is it that the religious world does not claim to have a literal, personal indwelling of God the Father? Paul would write, I am crucified with Christ nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me” (Galatians 2:20). Paul stated that Christ lives in him. Why then do not men claim a literal, personal indwelling of Jesus Christ? Because the Bible teaches how Christ dwells in us—”That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith” (Ephesians 3:17). The Bible is also clear as to how the Father dwells in His children. “Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son” (2 John 9). Both God and Christ dwell in the Christian by faith, in the hearts of those who live according to the word of God. Based upon these Bible teachings, I believe it would be safe to assume that the Holy Spirit dwells in the Christian in the same manner both God and Christ dwell in the Christian—by faith. Other passages of scripture teach that we dwell in Christ and in God. “He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him” (John 6:56). “But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him” (I John 2:5). Christians dwell both in Christ and in God, but are we to assume that we dwell in them in a literal, personal way? Certainly we understand that we dwell in God and Christ figuratively. We often speak of departed loved ones who live within us. Do they live within us in a literal, personal way? We understand that they live on within us by the things they taught us, and the life they lived before us. The same can be said for the indwelling of God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit within the Christian. They do not dwell in us in a literal, personal way. They dwell in us when we store up in our hearts the precious word of God, and allow our lives to be shaped by those things that are taught within.

we did hope that some common misconceptions would be corrected as you, dear reader, read this issue.

First, a common misconception is that the Holy Spirit is some mystical type of feeling one receives. As shown in the first article, the Holy Spirit is a Being, just as God the Father and Jesus Christ are Beings. The Holy Spirit spoke and revealed the Word of God to the apostles (John 16:13). A feeling cannot speak, but a Being can.

Second, we hope that people can see the problem with various religious groups claiming that the Holy Spirit leads them directly in their religious beliefs and practices. Many denominations claim that the Holy Spirit is telling them what to say and do and practice, but the various denominations that claim this do not agree with one another. Paul wrote: “For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints” (I Corinthians 14:33). Would the Holy Spirit tell one group of people to follow one path, and another group to follow a completely different path in religious matters? If He would, then He would be the author of confusion. Can you imagine being told two different things regarding important issues, such as, salvation, the church, how to be faithful, etc.?

Third, we hope that you, the reader, will pay close attention to the information regarding miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit. Miracles are not being performed today, as they were in the first century. No one today is receiving Holy Spirit baptism (Ephesians 4:5). No apostles are alive today to lay their hands upon another so that they can receive the miraculous power of the Holy Spirit. Third, as seen on page 22 of this issue, there is no longer a need for miracles. We have the complete word of God, something the apostles did not have in their hands to give the people as they took the gospel to the whole world. If people would only stop to think about the “miracles” some claim to perform today, they would realize that they are not occurring today. The apostles enabled those who had been lame since birth to walk, run and jump. Jesus brought people back from the dead! He enabled a man who was blind since birth, to see! Think about the “miracles” people claim to perform today. They cannot bring people back from the dead; they cannot make arms and legs appear on

The greatest story ever told has its boundaries. A lost person cannot be saved apart from faith (Hebrews 11:6). Confession with the mouth is a prerequisite to salvation (Romans 10:9, 10). Repentance is also required. Draw the line where you will, and someone will always charge that God should have gone further, or that we are being narrow-minded when we honor the limits that He established. But God has limited how far He will go by demanding how far we sinners must go. The gospel defines both.

The best way to determine these limits is by the plain example that God gave us when the gospel of the resurrected Savior was first declared. When sinners asked what they should do, Peter responded, “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins” (Acts 2:38). Here’s where God drew the line; that’s how far He would go! The responsibility for accepting God’s offer of pardon then clearly rests upon the shoulders of those convicted by its message.

CONCLUSION

God’s love is great enough to let go while gently and compassionately calling all to salvation through the gospel. In His sovereignty, God limits Himself for the highest good of mankind! The gospel is God’s power unto salvation. Obey it!

Jim Bullington, may be reached by email at: jbullington@home.com. Also look at his website at www.wings-hope.com

WHAT WE HOPE YOU GAIN FROM THIS ISSUE

Mark E. Reynolds, Editor

We realize that there is much, much more that could be said regarding the vast subject of the Holy Spirit, but we feel that this issue will benefit you as it has us. There is so much confusion regarding the work and nature of the Holy Spirit, and there is much material that has been written. We did not intend to give every single answer that one might have regarding the Holy Spirit in this issue, but

How does the Holy Spirit indwell the child of God? Representatively, by means of the word which He gave unto us. How will the world know that the Spirit dwells in us? When we live according to the precepts He has taught us through the precious word of God, then we show to the world that He does dwell in us, and we in Him. When we cease to follow after the will of the Lord, then God, Christ and the Spirit can no longer be said to dwell in us. It is God’s will that we would live in such a way that the world can see Him dwelling in us. May we never wander from His precious will, for to do so is to lose that glorious communion with God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit And may we continue to study the word of God, storing it up in our hearts so that we would always be a welcome dwelling place for Him Who made us, Him Who died for us, and Him Who brought unto us the soul-sustaining words of life.

Patrick Morrison may be reached at 2102 CR 93 Bankston, AL. 35542.

HOW THE HOLY SPIRIT WIELDS AN INFLUENCE IN OUR LIVES

Bobby Duncan, deceased

Editor’s Note: The late Bobby Duncan was one of the finest preachers I have ever been privileged to hear. I have also gained so much from the things that he wrote while on this side of eternity. Following is an outstanding outline that he preached. It is very fitting for this issue of UPON THE ROCK. I know that you, the reader, will gain much from it. We also know that many preachers would like to have it to preach themselves.

That the Holy Spirit (Holy Ghost) wields an influence over the lives of men and women is agreed by all Bible believing people. But a failure to understand how this influence is wielded has led to error and confusion in the religious world. This failure to understand the manner in which the Holy Spirit works is at the root of practically every false religion, including some of the errors among those in the church of Christ.

This failure to understand how the Spirit operates does not come about because the teaching of the Bible on the subject is obscure. It comes about rather for two reasons: (1) a failure to consider carefully all that the Bible teaches about the subject, and (2) listening to the pronouncements of those who are led by their own subjective feelings rather than the word of God.

The purpose of this lesson is to learn from the Bible how the Holy Spirit (Holy Ghost) wields an influence over men and women today.

DISCUSSION

I. THE IDEAS OF MEN

A. Oral Roberts said God told him he would call him home if he did not raise eight million dollars by the end of March 1987. Pat Robertson, according to an article in *Christianity Today* (August 7, 1987), was critical of Oral's pronouncement calling it a "fund raising tactic," evidently doubting that God told Oral that. Pat, on the other hand, claimed he was in the presidential race "in response to the clear and distinct prompting of the Lord's Spirit."

Some questions:

1. When did God become so materialistic, as to demand \$8 million?
2. Why did He not call Oral home?
3. Why would Pat question the authenticity of Oral's communication from God? Could it be he knew God had never really spoken to him in such a way?
4. Why would the Holy Spirit demand that Pat get into the presidential race and then allow him to lose?

B. Why Has God never spoken to me like that?

1. I try to serve Him.
2. I study His word daily, often arriving at my study as early as 5 or 5:30 am.
3. I am a prayerful man. Why has God not spoken to me like that? Or to you?

C. The idea that the Holy Ghost leads us by our feelings, or our urges.

1. David Wilkerson, in his book, *The Cross and the Switchblade*, claimed this kind of guidance.

homosexuality (vv 26 & 27). Not only did they commit such sins, they took pleasure in encouraging others to do the same (v. 32).

But what has this to do with God and His limits? Allow me to suggest that is Paul's purpose in presenting their spiritual condition. He isn't just Gentile bashing for the sake of bashing. He is showing how great the heart of God was in allowing them to continue as a part of humanity. God takes no pleasure in unrighteousness. When His creatures sin, His great heart is grieved. For Him to see the depraved condition of the Gentiles and to have them ridicule the concept of God must have been a terribly difficult thing for Him to watch. In fact, it was so appalling, so repugnant that the text says no less than 3 times that He "gave them up" or "over" to various sinful practices (w 24, 26 & 28). Literally, this means that he allowed them to become enslaved to sin in the same way as the prison bars confine a prisoner.

Can't you see the great heart of God breaking as He gives them the latitude to practice their ungodly deeds? Can you see the great love for them in permitting them to sink to the depths of depravity so that they could eventually see their hopelessness apart from God's righteousness? In a way far beyond human comprehension and comparison, God let them "hit bottom" so they could see the need of addressing their sin problem, or so that sin might appear exceedingly sinful (cf. Romans 7:13).

HOW FAR GOD WILL GO TO RESCUE THOSE WHO SEEK HIS FACE?

Consider this from a slightly different perspective. There are many passages that show that God was and is willing to go to great lengths to save man. However, think about the other side of the coin. He will save man through the gospel, but only through the gospel (Romans 1:16). He has limited Himself to this specific ministration of grace and mercy. It was within His sovereign power to do as He wills, however, once declared, it cannot be changed. He cannot lie (Titus 1:2) and there is no variation or shadow of turning (James 1:17) with Him. God has declared that the salvation of Jews and Gentiles will be effected by means of the Gospel or it won't be effected at all!

wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them.” (Romans 1:16-19). The two limits of God in Romans 1 are presented in reverse order in the discussion that follows.

HOW FAR WILL GOD GO TO DEMONSTRATE THEIR SPIRITUAL DEPRAVITY?

God is love (1 John 4:8, 16), God is good (Psalm 73:1); He is also gracious and merciful (2 Chron. 30:9). He “is not a man, that He should lie...” (Numbers 23:19). And, “The LORD your God is a consuming fire, a jealous God (Deut. 4:24). The character of God is an interesting study in itself. However, just these few references show that God is a God of kindness as well as justice and that He is sovereign in His decisions. There is no court of appeal to which His verdicts may be taken. He may do with man as He pleases.

Had He determined to destroy the Gentile nations because of their unrighteousness, He would have been justified. After all, they could easily know of God by the invisible things of His creation (Romans 1:20); their ignorance was self imposed and could not be used as an excuse. Their spiritual depravity was one of choice. They elected not to retain God in their knowledge (v 28) and their thinking became empty and foolish (v 21). God did not impose darkness on them; nor did He impute the sin of Adam to them. The Gentiles were sinners because, as a whole, they chose to sin.

Briefly notice the extent of their depravity. The list of sins that were characteristic of the Gentiles reads like a who’s who on Satan’s 10 most cherished list! Paul writes that they were “...filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil-mindedness; they are whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, violent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, undiscerning, untrustworthy, unloving, unforgiving, unmerciful...”(vv 29-31). In addition to general “sexual immorality,” their women practice lesbian acts and their men committed depraved acts of

2. A barber in Selma, Alabama was cutting my hair, and telling me he had accepted the “revelations” of Joseph Smith as being inspired. He knew he was right because of the way he felt. “Burning feeling in my chest.”

3. Preacher in a place where I preached in a meeting said when the idea came into his mind to go and make a visit to a certain person, it was actually the Holy Spirit who planted that idea. I asked him if he ever went to make a visit, and found the person not to be at home? He confessed he sometimes did.

D. The idea that the Holy Ghost speaks to us through our experiences. When an unusual thing happens, we sometimes hear someone say, “God must be trying to tell us something.”

E. The idea that the Holy Ghost gives some special guidance to help us understand the Bible.

1. If that were true, then it seems one would never come to misunderstand a single passage, but would have perfect understanding of every passage in the Bible.

2. If that is the case, then how do we account for the fact that different people with the same Holy Spirit leading them in their study will arrive at different interpretations of the same passages?

3. A revelation that requires a revelation to understand is no revelation at all.

F. The idea that the Lord speaks through certain signs, such as the man in Jasper whose son was injured in a go-cart accident and who saw the face of Jesus in the grain of a wooden door in the hospital waiting room. (The next weekend that man won a bass tournament, according to the *Daily Mountain Eagle*.)

G. All of these ideas strike at the basic and fundamental truth that the Bible is the complete and all-sufficient revelation of the will of God to man.

II. THE HOLY SPIRIT IS A SPEAKING SPIRIT.

A. This was true during the early morning of time, the Starlight Age of the earth, the Patriarchal Age.

1. "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison" (I Peter 3:18-19).
2. God did not try to get those people of Noah's day to repent by causing them to have certain feelings, or urges, or experiences, or by seeing visions, but by speaking to them.

B. This was true during the Moonlight Age of the earth, the Mosaical Age.

1. "Yet many years didst thou forbear them, and testifiest against them by thy spirit in thy prophets: yet would they not give ear: therefore gavest thou them into the hand of the people of the lands" (Nehemiah 9:30).
2. The phrase, "the word of the Lord" occurs 153 times in the writings of the Old Testament prophets. God's communication to the people was by speaking.
3. David wrote: "The spirit of the Lord spake by me, and his word was in my tongue" (II Samuel 23:2).
4. Peter said in Acts 1:16: "Men and brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus."

C. It is true during the Sunlight Age, the Christian Age in which we live.

1. I Corinthians 2:10: "But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God...Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual" (Verse 13).
2. Ephesians 3:2-5: "If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: 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 you the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit"
3. I Timothy 4:1: "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter

Third, there is no longer a need for miracles. We are blessed to have the complete word of God, something the apostles did not have in their hands to give people as they took the gospel to the whole world. They did not have that word "which was once and for all delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3). The word has been confirmed and we have a record of its confirmation. There is no need to continue to confirm it with miraculous gifts today.

Many claim to perform and see miracles today. Such claims are false. "Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17). We must live by faith, which comes from what God's word says, and not by sight (2 Corinthians 5:7). Allowing what we have

"seen" to keep us from following what Gods word SAYS is a serious mistake. Will you let the Bible decide?

Tony Choate may be reached at PO Box 2005, Gadsden, AL 35903.

REVELATIONS FROM ROMANS (Part 2)

The Limits of God (Romans 1)

The God of the Bible is not plastic such that He can be twisted and distorted into "god of the day" configurations. The God of the Bible and the God of the book of Romans is a God with well-defined limits. Paul introduces two limits of God in Romans 1. These will be discussed in the remainder of this article. However, let me hasten to add that the limits of God *are* self-imposed. No one told God how to be God nor did threats from His creatures help Him to shape His personality and character. God is God, always was God and always shall be God, or to put it as He did, "I AM WHO I AM" (Exodus 3:14).

The two limits of God contained in the first chapter of Romans are — 1) How far God will go to rescue those who seek His face, and 2) How far He will let men go to demonstrate their spiritual depravity. Paul writes, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, 'The just shall live by faith.' For the

would have to change the definition of the word to make it refer to Christ.

Second, telelos is in the neuter gender and thus cannot refer to Christ who is masculine. The neuter gender refers to a thing, not a man, and the thing it is referring to is the complete word of God. One would have to change the form of the word to make it refer to Christ. The word of God was to be confirmed by signs and when it was completely revealed, there was no more need for it to be confirmed.

ARE MIRACLES BEING PERFORMED TODAY?

No. We can know this is the case for three reasons. First, no one today is receiving Holy Spirit baptism. This baptism was only given twice and is not promised to us today. Today there is but “one baptism” (Ephesians 4:5) and that baptism is water baptism (1 Peter 3:21). No one would argue that the one baptism we receive today is Holy Spirit baptism.

Second, no apostles are alive today, therefore we cannot receive the laying on of the apostle’s hands. If we cannot receive this, then we cannot work miraculous gifts. If someone can work miracles, I would like for them to introduce me to the 2,000 year old apostle that laid hands on him. I am certain he would have great stories to tell.

WHAT MUST I DO TO BE SAVED?

1. HEAR—ROMANS 10:17; MATTHEW 7:24-27
2. BELIEVE—HEBREWS 11:6; MARK 16:15-16
3. REPENT—ACTS 2:38; 17:30; LUKE 13:3
4. CONFESS—MATTHEW 10:32,33; ACTS 8:36
5. BE BAPTIZED—ACTS 2:38; GALATIANS 3:27
6. LIVE FAITHFULLY UNTO DEATH—REVELATION 2:10

Please search these Scriptures and every Scripture regarding salvation and compare the way you were “saved” to what the Bible teaches.

times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils.”

4. Seven letters to seven churches in Revelation 2 & 3 each contain the admonition, “He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.”

III. ALL CONVERSIONS CAME AS A RESULT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT’S SPEAKING.

A. In Acts 2, the word *speak* in all its forms is used eight times, the word *hear* six times, the word *word* four times. In all there are more than 20 references in this one chapter to the speaking, hearing, or receiving the word which was preached. There was no direct operation of the Holy Spirit.

B. Acts 8:4: “Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word.”

C. Acts 8:5: “Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them.”

D. Acts 8:35: “Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus.”

E. Acts 9:6: “And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.” Acts 22:10: “And I said, What shall I do, Lord? And the Lord said unto me, Arise, and go into Damascus; and there it shall be told thee of all things which are appointed for thee to do.”

F. Acts 10:6: “He lodgeth with one Simon a tanner, whose house is by the sea side: he shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do.” Acts 11:14: “Who shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved.”

G. Acts 16:13: “And on the sabbath we went out of the city by a river side, where prayer was wont to be made; and we sat down, and

spake unto the women which restored thither.” Verse 14 says that “she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul.”

H. Acts 16:32: “And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house.”

I. Acts 17:11: “These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.”

J. Acts 18:8: “And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized.”

K. Acts 19:5: “When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.”

L. In the book of Acts alone there are 188 occurrences of some form of the words *speaking*, *preaching*, and *hearing*. There is not one reference to the Holy Spirit’s leading anyone to obey God in any other way than by speaking or preaching.

IV. THE WORD, NOT A DIRECT OPERATION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, IS WHAT SAVES.

A. Psalms 19:7: “The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple.”

B. Psalms 119:105: “Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path.”

C. Psalms 119:130: “The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple.”

D. Romans 1:16: “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.”

which stood up to preach, and thus Peter and the eleven which amazed the crowd with their miraculous gifts received the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

The only other group to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit was Cornelius and his household (Acts 10). They were said by Peter to have received the Holy Ghost like the apostles did (Acts 10:47). The apostles received the Holy Spirit by the baptism of the Holy Spirit and thus Cornelius and his household did as well. The apostles receiving Holy Spirit baptism and Cornelius received Holy Spirit baptism showed the entrance of both Jew and Gentile into God’s kingdom. The second way one was able to perform miracles was by laying on of the hands of an apostle. By receiving such laying on of hands, an individual was able to perform miracles. Only the apostles could impart miraculous gifts. Simon saw that the ability to perform miracles was received in this way and he wanted to pay the apostles to receive it (Acts 8:18). Earlier in the same chapter of Acts, we read the account of Peter and John being sent to Samaria for the very purpose of giving the brethren there the ability to perform miraculous gifts. If these gifts could have been received any other way, why did these two apostles need to make the trip to Samaria for that purpose?

FOR HOW LONG DID MIRACLES OCCUR?

“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 Corinthians 13:8-10). Paul records that miraculous gifts were to cease when “the perfect is come” (13:10). Many have taught that the perfect Paul is referring to is Christ, and thus miracles would not cease until Christ returns, but such cannot be the case. This is true for two reasons.

First, the word “perfect” is translated from the Greek word, *telelos*, which means “having reached completion or the end goal.” The word does not refer to being perfect in the sense of being sinless. One

WHY DID MIRACLES OCCUR?

The two most simple and most important ways to show that miracles no longer occur are by showing why miracles occurred and how a man of God was able to perform a miracle. First we will notice why miracles occurred.

Mark 16:15,16 records the command of Jesus given to the eleven, soon to be twelve, apostles. The command was for them to preach the gospel to every creature throughout the whole world. This was an almost overwhelming assignment for two reasons: the area the message was to cover and the message itself. Certainly preaching to such a large group would have been difficult, but preaching the GOSPEL would have been almost impossible. The gospel message was one of the death, burial and resurrection of Christ (I Corinthians 15:3,4). Today, the idea of a resurrected Christ is readily accepted by most, but some 2,000 years ago it would have NOT been so readily accepted. Paul said, “but we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Gentiles foolishness” (I Corinthians 1:23). The idea of a crucified and resurrected Christ was a stumbling block to the Jews because they were looking for an earthly king and it was foolishness to the Greeks because they believed it foolish to follow a Messiah Who had been killed. Christ knew that preaching such a new, unusual and yet important idea would be difficult without some proof. He, therefore, informs the apostles that miraculous signs would follow their teaching (Mark 16:17) and that these signs would be to confirm their message (Mark 16:20). The miracles were performed by those preaching the gospel in order to confirm their words as being from God.

WHO WERE ABLE TO PERFORM MIRACLES?

The Bible teaches that there were two ways individuals were able to perform miracles. The first was by receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Only twice was the baptism of the Holy Spirit given. Once on the day of Pentecost. In Acts 2:1-4 is recorded the baptism of the ones being referred to in Acts 2:4. The pronoun “they” in verse 4 can be traced back to the antecedent in Acts 1:26, Matthias and the other eleven apostles. Acts 2:14 shows that it was Peter and the eleven

E. That is why Jesus commanded that the gospel be preached to every creature (Mark 16:15).

F. That is why there are no Christians, no believers in Christ, where the word of God has not been preached.

V. THE SPIRIT OPERATES IN CONVICTION AND CONVERSION OF SINNERS.

A. But He operates through the word. The word is the instrument he uses. Ephesians 6:17: “And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.”

B. Whatever the Bible teaches the Holy Spirit supplies to save sinners, the Bible also says the word supplies it. (See passages under IV).

CONCLUSION

If you are not a Christian, a child of God, and you are waiting for the Spirit to move you, then listen to this: Revelation 22:17 says: “And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.”

Editor’s Note: The above outline was taken from a compilation of 81 full-sentence outlines from Bobby Duncan’s personal file. You may order these sermons from Lois Duncan—2809 Madison St. Adamsville, AL. 35005.

MIRACULOUS GIFTS AND THE HOLY SPIRIT

Tony Choate

Few subjects are more often misunderstood and therefore mis-taught than those dealing with miraculous gifts and the Holy Spirit. A study on miraculous gifts and the Holy Spirit can be made quite simple if one will examine the word of God and leave one’s feelings or past

experiences out of the study. With this in mind, let us examine the topic, miraculous gifts and the Holy Spirit.

WHAT ARE MIRACLES?

The term “miracle” is used very loosely today. Individuals refer to such things as the birth of a child or the overcoming of an illness as miracles. Webster defines a miracle as “an extraordinary event manifesting divine intervention in human affairs,” The English word “miracle” is translated from the Greek word *semeion* and is defined by Thayer as “signs or activities which transcend the common course of nature.”

In order for something to be a miracle, it must go beyond the natural order of things. The birth of a baby, as wonderful an event as it is, is not a miracle. It is simply a natural event. When a person has cancer or some other illness and eventually recovers from it through medication, treatment and diet, the individual has not experienced a miracle. One understands that God works today providentially, but there is a difference between providence and a miracle. A study on providence should be done if one does not understand the difference between providence and a miracle. Discussing the difference between them is not the purpose of this article.

HAVE MIRACLES OCCURRED IN TIMES PAST?

Certainly. The Bible is filled with examples of miracles being performed. Miracles were commonplace during Qld Testament times. The parting of the Red Sea (Exodus 14) and the raising of the Shunamite woman’s son (2 Kings 4:18-37) are just two of the great number of miraculous events recorded in the Old Testament. Miracles continued in the New Testament. I Corinthians 12:4-12 lists the miraculous gifts demonstrated during the first century. These gifts were: the word of knowledge, the word of faith, the gifts of healing, working of miracles, prophecy, the discerning of spirit, divers kinds of tongues, and the interpretation of tongues. Obviously, miracles were performed during times past. If not, we might as well toss our Bibles in the trash because it would contain stories of fictitious events claiming they really occurred.

This issue of *Upon the Rock* has been made available to you courtesy of the:

Budola Church of Christ

PO Box 208
Bugiri, Uganda, E. Africa

SERVICES

Sunday Bible Study 9:00 am
Worship 11:00 am
Wednesday Bible Study 3:00 pm
Saturday, Ladies’ Bible Class 2:00

PREACHER

James O. Okumu

Call us at 077-439628 for more information about the church of Christ. We look forward to studying the Bible with you.