

THOUGHTS ON THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Holy Spirit is a divine person, a member of the godhead. It is erroneous to think of him as merely a power, influence or feeling. Masculine pronouns are applied to the Spirit (John 14:26). Attributes of person hood are given him. He speaks (Revelation 2:29); he leads (Romans 8:14); he forbids (Acts 16:6).

The Holy Spirit plays a vital role in our salvation. We are baptized into the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit (Matt. 28:19). He is the seal of our salvation and the *"earnest of our inheritance"* (Ephesians 1:13-14).

Contrary to popular opinion, God's Spirit is not given to alien sinners to convert them. *"Because you are sons, God sent forth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts"* (Galatians 4:6). The Spirit **through the inspired Scripture** works on the minds and hearts of sinners, convicting them (John 16:8; 1 Peter 1:23). When the sinner believes the gospel message, repents and is baptized, he receives remission of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38). Therefore, the Spirit comes, not to **make** us sons, but **because we have become** Sons of God. God's Spirit is only given to those who in faith obey Christ. *"We . . . receive the promise of the Spirit through faith"* (Gal. 3:14).

We should also be reminded that Scripture speaks of a baptism of the Holy Spirit which only the apostles and Cornelius received (Acts 1:5; Acts 11:15-17) and the miraculous gifts of the Spirit given by the hands of the apostles (Acts 8:12-18). (Only the apostles could pass the gifts along to others, the recipients could not.) Today there is but one baptism (Eph. 4:5). This baptism of the Great Commission is in water (Acts 8:37-38). Holy Spirit baptism was **promised** to the apostles, but never **commanded** of the disciples.

It is a remarkable privilege to receive God's Spirit in our lives, but it carries with it heavy responsibilities. *"Know you not that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which you have from God and you are not your own? Glorify God in your body"* (1 Cor. 6:19-20). *"For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God"* (Rom 8:14). The Holy Spirit has given us the Bible to guide our path (2 Peter 1:20-21).

Christians must put away all things in their lives that would grieve the Holy Spirit (Eph. 4:25). In Ephesians 4:17-5:14 the apostle catalogs an ugly list of sins we must put away if we would be pleasing to God. At the same time we must fill the vacuum in our lives by bringing forth the fruit of the Spirit: *"love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control"* (Gal. 5:22-23).

There is a general, literal gift or indwelling of the Spirit which all receive at baptism. However, this does not enable the recipient to perform miracles (Acts 2:38). Although no miraculous power or leading is promised to us today, the blessings bestowed by the indwelling Spirit are many.

When at our baptism we receive the gift of the Spirit (Acts 2:38) it is likened to God's seal or stamp of approval or ownership (2 Cor. 1:22). His presence in our life is the earnest or assurance of our ultimate reward in heaven (Eph. 1:13-14). Our possession of

the Spirit is an assurance of our son-ship: *"hereby we know that we abide in Him and He in us, because He has given us of his Spirit"* (1 John 4:14). Christians are *"strengthened with power through his Spirit in the inward man"* (Eph. 3:16). *"And in like manner the Spirit helps our infirmity"* (Rom. 8:26a).

When we do not know how to pray as we ought, *"the Spirit himself makes intercession for us . . . according to the will of God"* (Rom. 8:26-27). By the Spirit (we) *"put to death the deeds of the body"* (Rom. 8:13); thus we find help to overcome those powerful habits of sin which have attached themselves to us. When we walk in the fear of the Lord we enjoy *"the comfort of the Holy Spirit"* (Acts 9:31). The Holy Spirit leads the Christian in paths of righteousness. *"For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are the sons of God"* (Rom. 8:14), through the instruction of the Scripture He caused to be written. In a similar way *"the Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit, that we are children of God"* (Rom. 8:16). In His word, the Spirit has told us the conditions of salvation; faith (Hebrews 11:6), repentance (Acts 17:30), immersion (Mark 16:16). When our spirit can truthfully say, *"I have met these terms"* then the Spirit's Word says *"he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved"* (Mk. 16:16). Scripture came when *"men spoke from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit"* (2 Pet. 1:21).

Those who have God's Spirit in their hearts will reflect it in their attitude and conduct. They will love the Bible which the Spirit caused to be written. *"I have longed after thy precepts"* (Ps. 119:40). *"I love thy precepts"* (Ps. 119:159). Sinners receive *"not the love of the truth that they might be saved"* (2 Thessalonians 2: 10). Spirit filled men will confess that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh (1 John 4:2). They will mind *"the things of the Spirit"* (Rom. 8:5). With the Spirit's help they will be mortifying the sinful desires and practices of the old life (Rom. 8:13).

The implanted word of God, which the Spirit inspired, is able to save our souls (James 1:21). In every case of conversion recorded in the Acts of Apostles, souls were saved only after hearing the word of God taught and obeying the divine will (Compare Acts 2:1-47).

The Lord today will open your heart even as he did Lydia's by the preaching of the gospel (Acts 16:11-15). He will remove your sins even as he did Saul of Tarsus' when you respond by being baptized (Acts 22:16). Without God's Spirit, you cannot be saved (Rom. 8:9). It is impossible to receive the Spirit apart from baptism (John 3:5). We urge you today to let Christ save you *"through the washing of regeneration (baptism) and the renewing of the Holy Spirit"* (Titus 3:5). In so doing you will find *"righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit"* (Rom. 14:17).

“GOD SPOKE TO ME TODAY”

Jerry W. Carmichael

It is not unusual in our world to hear those who claim to have received a message directly from God. Many so-called preachers make these claims daily. Many who have been near death's door claim to have received a special message from the Father Himself.

The fact is that God speaks to me daily. Today He told me to tell you to *"Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit"* (Acts 2:38). He also said that *"This promise is to you and to your children and to those who are afar off as many as the Lord your God will call"* (Acts 2:39).

To those who have already obeyed the Gospel, God sent you this message. *"I beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace"* (Eph. 4:1-3). (He also wants us to *"Live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age"* (Titus 2:12).

To those who are struggling with their Christianity, God wants me to tell you, *"Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life"* (Rev.2:10).

To those who are feeling anger and hatred toward others God wants you to: *"Be angry, and do not sin": do not let the sun go down on your wrath, nor give place to the devil"* (Eph. 4:26-27). He also wants you to: *"Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men. If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men. Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord. Therefore "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; If he is thirsty, give him a drink; For in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head." Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good"* (Rom.12:17-21).

Yes, God spoke to me today and He wants you to know that He, *"...so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes on Him should not perish but have everlasting life"* (John 3:16).

Would you like for God to speak to you? Just pick up your Bible and read it. Within its pages is the God-breathed message for all of mankind (2Timothy 3:16-17). The scriptures are inspired of God. Holy men of old spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit and we have their messages written down in this fascinating book we call the Bible!

God no longer speaks directly to mankind in an audible voice (Hebrews 1:1-2). The words of the Son and all those inspired by the Holy Spirit to write His message are recorded in the Bible. *"Therefore My people shall know My name; Therefore they shall know in that day That I am He who speaks: 'Behold, it is I'"* (Isaiah 52:6).