

# ADVANCED BIBLICAL COURSE



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# **GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS**

## **FOR BIBLE STUDY/SCHOOL LECTURERS**

Beforehand preparation and familiarisation with the notes is essential.

Preparation in prayer will turn a lecture into a time of spiritual impartation.

Be at your venue early enough to have everything set up before the study begins.

Time management: for instance begin as close to 7:30pm as possible and end at 8:30, allowing time for questions and responses. Therefore, we will honour those attending by finishing no later than 8:45pm. Please stick to these times, and prepare accordingly.

Make use of visual aids, as they greatly help in the teaching process. E.g. OHP slides, use of a flip-chart or white board, etc (whatever is useful).

In the context of your study, use illustrations and examples to turn your lecture into a time of discipling.

Ensure that your hand-out notes have been timeously prepared and have been proof read for errors.

Remember the idiom: prepare as if there is no Holy Spirit, and teach relying on the Holy Spirit, as if you have not prepared.

# GUIDELINES

## FOR ADVANCED BIBLICAL COURSE

In 1877 Bishop Ryle wrote: *"The Lord Jesus Christ declares, 'I will build My Church'...Ministers may preach, and writers may write, but the Lord Jesus Christ alone can build. And except He builds, the work stands still... Sometimes the work goes on fast, and sometimes it goes on slowly. Man is frequently impatient, and thinks that nothing is doing. But man's time is not God's time. A thousand years in His sight are but as a single day. The great builder makes no mistakes. He knows what He is doing. He sees the end from the beginning. He works by a perfect, unalterable and certain plan."* [J.C. Ryle 'The True Church' in Warnings to the Churches, 1877, pp13-14]

Although, every Christian and every fellowship is able to witness to the gospel, here is a guideline for you to be managing in the Advanced Biblical Course. In fact, many fellowships create their own evangelistic courses under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. However, it should not be necessary to rely on the methods and techniques of another fellowship when we have all the instruction and teaching material we need in Scripture, all the experience we need in each of our relationships with the Lord Jesus and are each empowered by the Holy Spirit to go and do it. But if leaders do decide to use the Advanced Biblical Course they should at least consider the following points in light of the concerns above: -

That they ensure non-believing (even believing, especially newly conversions) participants have fully understood the meaning of the cross and are saved before propelling them into a course on Christian Living.

That they ensure converts are fully aware of their conversion experience and are becoming stable in their daily relationship with the Lord Jesus before thrusting them into the baptism of the holy Spirit, for which they are not yet ready and which could allow into their lives the influence of an alien spirit through ground given, albeit unintentionally.

That they ensure participants understand the different nature of the work of each person in the Trinity.

That they ensure the fruit of the Holy Spirit, and his convicting and sanctifying work in a believer's life is not submerged beneath the gifts and the power of the Holy Spirit.

That they ensure participants are taught to proceed from the Word to experience, not from experience to the Word.

Following from this, that they ensure participants understand that deception regarding doctrine and supernatural phenomena has always been Satan's main weapon against the Church and that knowing and standing fast in the Word is our weapon of defence, as it was for Jesus. (Matthew 4:1-11)

That they ensure participants are taught to become Bereans (Acts 17:11) able to test everything against Scripture for themselves, not relying on leaders, who are not infallible (e.g. Galatians 2:11-14), to do their thinking and living for them.

# SCRIPTURAL VERSES

## PSALMS 1:1-6

*“Blessed is the man who has not walked in the counsel of the ungodly, and has not stood in the way of sinners, and has not sat in the seat of the scornful; but his delight is only in the Law of Jehovah; and in His Law he meditates day and night, and he shall be like a tree planted by the rivulets of water that brings forth its fruit in its seasons, and its leaf shall not wither, and all which he does shall be blessed. The wicked are not so, but are like chaff which the wind drives away. Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. For Jehovah knows the way of the righteous; but the way of the ungodly shall perish.”*

## ACTS 2:42

*“And they were continuing steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine, and in fellowship and in the breaking of the loaves, and in prayers.”*

## ROMANS 16:17-18

*“And I exhort you, brothers, to watch those making divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which you have learned, and avoid them. For they who are such do not serve our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches they deceive the hearts of the simple.”*

## 1 TIMOTHY 4:6 & 16

*“Having suggested these things to the brothers, you shall be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the Words of Faith and by the good doctrine which you have followed. Hold on to yourself and to the doctrine; continue in them, for doing this you shall both save yourself and those who hear you.”*

## 2 TIMOTHY 2:2 & 15; 3:16-17 & 4:1-7

*““And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit the same to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. Study earnestly to present yourself approved to God, a*

*workman that does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth. All Scripture is God-breathed, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfected, thoroughly furnished to every good work. Therefore I solemnly witness before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who is going to judge the living and the dead according to His appearance and His kingdom, preach the Word, be instant in season and out of season, reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine. For a time will be when they will not endure sound doctrine, but they will heap up teachers to themselves according to their own lusts, tickling the ear. And they will turn away their ears from the truth and will be turned to myths. But you watch in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fully carry out your ministry. For I am already being poured out, and the time of my release is here. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith.”*

### TITUS 2:1 & 7

*“But you speak the things which become sound doctrine. In all things having shown yourself a pattern of good works: in the doctrine, purity, sensibleness, without corruption.”*

### 2 JOHN 1:9-11

*“Everyone transgressing and not abiding in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ, he has both the Father and the Son. If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into your house, nor speak a greeting to him. For he who speaks a greeting to him is partaker of his evil deeds.”*

# *What is the New Birth?*

## **JOHN 3:1-21**

Many a brilliant man has been confounded and bewildered by the word of Jesus, “*You must be born again.*” Many good, religious, pious men have wondered at, and sometimes even become agitated by, the words “*Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.*” Some have even become indignant.

Jesus’ words to Nicodemus are staggering when we realise who Nicodemus was – a rich, educated, religious, pious leader who truly admired Christ! These words reveal that Nicodemus was not yet truly satisfied and Jesus was not impressed. He told Nicodemus that he had to experience ‘the new birth’ in order to see the kingdom of God. Somebody once asked John Wesley, “*Why do you keep on preaching that a man must be born again?*” He answered, “*Because ye must be born again.*”

### **I WHAT THE NEW BIRTH IS NOT**

#### ◆ It is not religion.

One of the definitions of ‘religion’ in the dictionary is ‘any system of faith and worship’. A ‘religionist’ is one earnestly devoted to a religion’. To become a ‘religionist’ and dedicate ourselves to a certain religion is not the new birth. We can even change religions or denominations and not experience the new birth.

Christian Digest: “Religion isn’t Salvation,” Pandita Ramabai, the noted Christian leader of India, tells how she followed that religion of her country during her childhood days and right up until after she was married and had grown to womanhood, and of how it never satisfied. One day she heard about Christianity, and she said, “That is what I want. Christianity will satisfy the longings of my heart. I will embrace the Christian religion.” Accepting Christianity, she sailed for England, where she was baptised and later confirmed. She joined the Church of England and for eight years lived a most exemplary Christian life. One night she happened to be listening to a message on the new birth. Never before had she been told that she must be born again, born from above. She was convicted, and right there and then she accepted Jesus Christ as her personal Saviour, and passed out of death into life. This is her testimony in her own words, “I found the Christian religion but did not find the Christ of religion.” She had embraced Christianity, but had not accepted Jesus Christ. In John’s gospel the word “*life*” occurs 44 times, while the word ‘religion’ does not occur once.

#### ◆ It is not reformation.

A drunkard stops drinking, a thief stops stealing, a prostitute becomes respectable. These may be good, but none of them are the new birth. We can reform, turn over a new leaf, change our friends, change our places of entertainment, and even break some of our habits, and still not be 'born again'.

Hyman Appleman tells of a preacher who explains it like this: "Suppose you were to take a pig the best pig that ever won a prize at a country fair. Suppose you were to take him out of the pigpen and put him into the bath-chamber, give him a bath, scrub him with Lifebuoy to take the odour away, apply Palmolive to give him a 'schoolgirl complexion', put fingernail polish on his hoofs, perfume him with fragrant perfume, tie a ribbon round his neck, and bring him into a dainty lady's boudoir. Something would change, but it would not be the pig. The same is true of human nature. You cannot change a pig's nature. He was born a pig, will live a pig, die a pig and make good pork chops. That is about all. It is the same way with a man – exactly the same way."

◆ It is not respectability. 'Good works' (Ephesians 2:8-9)

The new birth is not: -

- joining a church
- having your name placed on a membership roll
- starting to attend services regularly
- starting to pray and read your Bible daily, etc.

They are all good and very important, but you can do all these things and still not be born again.

## **II WHAT THE NEW BIRTH IS**

◆ **The new birth is a new life (2 Corinthians 5:17)**

- I no longer live the way I used to.
- I am changed.
- God changes me completely by His power.
- He makes me alive to Himself.
- I am a new person: same looks, same age, same job, but different person.
- It is not so much me battling to be good – but Christ living His life through me. (Galatians 2:20)
- I don't behave the way I used to or say the things I said, etc.

- It is not because I am not allowed to.
- I don't want to!
- I'm different.
- God has changed me.

◆ **This change involves the whole person.**

- mind
- conscience
- will
- thoughts
- attitude
- behaviour: how can I say I am a Christian and still steal, swear, curse, blaspheme, deceive, etc?

◆ **I must allow God to change me completely.**

- The new birth is new longings.
- A desire to be clean, pure and pleasing to God (obedient).
- New ambitions.
- The new birth is new love.
- The new birth must affect the heart – the seat of the will, intellect and emotions.
- *“Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.”* (Proverbs 4:23)
- The heart determines character. *“For as a man thinketh in his heart, so is he.”* (Proverbs 23:7)
- The heart controls speech. (Luke 6:45)

◆ **God has promised to give us a new heart.** (Ezekiel 36:26-27)

- We receive the divine nature. (2 Peter 1:4)
- We begin to love God (Matthew 23:37) and others (Matthew 22:38).
- This is the proof that we are Christ's disciples. (John 13:35 & 1 John 2:9-11)

### **III WHY MUST YOU BE BORN AGAIN**

◆ **Because Jesus says you must.** (John 3:7)

- He brought the Kingdom of God to earth.
- He is God and He knows what you need and why.

◆ **Because of what you are by nature.**

- According to Romans 5, all are sinners by nature, see also Romans 3:23.

- ◆ **Because you cannot change yourself.** (Ephesians 2:8-9)
- ◆ **Otherwise you cannot truly enjoy life here.**
  - God made man for Himself and you will never be truly happy without God. (1 John 5:11-12)
- ◆ **Otherwise you cannot go to heaven.**

#### IV HOW TO BE BORN AGAIN (John 3:14-18)

- ◆ **Make a confession.**
  - of sin (1 John 1:9)
  - of Christ (Romans 10:9-10)
- ◆ **Repent.** (Acts 3:9)
  - it is not enough to acknowledge that you are a sinner
  - you must turn from your sin to the Saviour
- ◆ **Ask Jesus.**
  - to forgive you
  - to come into your heart and change you (Luke 11:9-10 & 1 John 5:13-15)
- ◆ **Have faith (trust).**
  - having asked, you must trust Him
  - He has promised to do for you what you ask
  - He will never lie to you
- ◆ **(John 1:12; Revelation 3:20 & 1 John 5:11-14)**
- ◆ **Obey.**
  - saving faith involves obedience (Romans 1:5 & 16:26)
  - in order to be happy as a Christian, just keeping **obeying** Him

# *Assurance of Salvation*

## INTRODUCTION

The lack of assurance of salvation is a problem which occurs often in the lives of believers. It may appear to be a relatively simple matter, yet it has vast implications and can in fact affect every area of the Christian's life. It is an extremely valuable tool in the hands of the enemy in undermining the confidence that the believer has. For example, a believer who is not sure that he has eternal life and is genuinely saved will lack the confidence to come to his God in prayer, he will lack faith, he will constantly be plagued by a feeling of inadequacy and inability, and therefore be very reluctant to get involved in serving the Lord. The very faith that one needs to trust God for supernatural resources and help in serving Him, will be missing where the assurance of salvation is lacking. In counseling men and women, it is found that very often this is a basic matter that has to be settled before they can be led into other areas.

### I GOALS

There are four main goals that the counsellor must have in mind in presenting this truth module to his counselee, or disciple. These are as follows: -

- ◆ To reject emotions and feelings as unimportant.
- ◆ To substitute feelings and emotions with the infallible Word of God.
- ◆ To exercise faith in the Word of God.
- ◆ To expect feelings and emotions which are **the result of faith in the word of God.**

### II THE ASSURANCE OF SALVATION CHAIN

#### 1 JOHN 5:13

*“These things I have written to you who believe in the Name of the Son of God, in order that you may know that you have Eternal Life.”*

In this verse we find the basis for the assurance of salvation. It is clear that it is what is “*written*” that is the basis whereby we may “*know*” that we have Eternal Life. Here is a principle that it is not my feelings that become the basis of my assurance, but rather “*what is written.*”

The question is then asked, “What did the apostle John write?” The answer is found in the following scriptures: -

◆ JOHN 1:12

*“But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His Name.”* Here again, the emphasis is that God *“has given”* eternal life to those who have received Jesus Christ, nothing is said about feelings, it is a fact recorded in the Word of God, a fact accepted and believed and to base one’s life upon.

◆ JOHN 3:36

*“He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides in Him.”* Again, *this verse emphasises the fact that God “has” given eternal life. It is not in the future, it is something that has been done and is completed.*

◆ JOHN 5:24

*“Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My Word, and believes Him who sent Me has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life.”* *The same applies to this verse, which clearly, together with the following one, emphasises the fact that it “has” been done.*

◆ JOHN 6:47

*“Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes has eternal life.”* Again, *as above.*

◆ ROMANS 1:17

*“For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, “But the righteous man shall live by faith.”* Even though it is written in the Word of God, it does not mean that it has any effect on my life unless I am prepared to exercise my faith and believe what God has said is true and applies to my position.

The story is a classic and well known one, of the tight-rope walker who crossed the Niagara Falls in the U.S.A. pushing a wheelbarrow containing a heavy sack along the rope across the falls. He then proceeded to ask the crowd whether they believed he could push a man across in the wheelbarrow. The crowd readily agreed that he was able, that was ‘belief’ (merely a mental assent). He then proceeded to ask the nearest bystander whether he would be prepared to sit in the wheelbarrow. Although the man had been one of those who had readily agreed he was able, now facing the prospect of being the individual to sit in the wheelbarrow, he showed fear and reluctance. The point is that he had simply ‘believed’ with his head, but he did not have the ‘faith’ and the confidence to entrust his life in the hands of the tight-rope walker. Another example is that of a certain woman who ‘believes in’ the washing machine detergent, ‘Surf.’ You will find her using Surf, and it will be in her laundry. However, a visitor may tell

her how good ‘Omo’ is as a soap. She may agree, and even believe it (with her head) but you will not find her using Omo. Although she would be happy to believe that Omo was a good soap, it is Surf in which she has faith and therefore uses it!

From these two examples we need to realise that exercising one’s faith in the Word of God is not simply saying ‘yes’ with the head, but rather acting upon one’s faith and confidence in the truth. This in fact is a principle which applies to every area of Christian living. We must believe what God says and act upon it.

◆ ROMANS 8:16

*“The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God.”* Here we see that the Christian life is not all just exercising faith with no ‘experience.’ The believer can expect to feel and experience emotions which assure him that he is in fact a child of God. This verse clearly points out that the Holy Spirit can bear witness with our spirit that we are the children of God. This experience will involve the emotions. However, we must clearly emphasise that these emotions and feelings are not, firstly, continuous and permanent, and secondly, they are the **result** of faith in the Word of God and acting upon that truth. There are times when a Christian does not feel saved. There are times when our emotions are affected by many things around us, and we may in fact feel very alone, and at times even deserted by God. These are the times when we do not resort to our feelings, but with maturity tell ourselves that **our feelings are not important** and that we are to believe the Word of God! The emotions and feelings, which are the product of faith, are in fact a bonus, an extra and the cream on the pudding. They are not to become the basis of our faith; they are not to become our main objective and goals. They come as we seek to obey the Word of God, but they **will** come, and we can expect to experience them from time to time.

# *Water Baptism*

## INTRODUCTION

The subject of water baptism has been one of much misunderstanding, much difference of opinion and much division among Christians through the years. We must be careful when dealing with this subject not to condemn or criticise others for their convictions, but rather share what we believe the Scriptures present in terms of this truth. We must also bear in mind that today baptism is not something as clearly understood as in the times of Jesus. In early New Testament times baptism was something that was practised by many different religious groups, etc. For example, the proselytes to Judaism were required to stand in a bath of water up to their necks, and after having heard the law read to them, they could immerse themselves beneath the water as an indication of acceptance of the law and the initiation into the Judaistic religion.

Jesus then came along and took something well known and familiar to the people and vested in it the great unchanging truths of the Christian faith. We have a specific problem because through the years the subject of baptism has undergone many changes and revisions in the religious world and in the minds of men and women. It is therefore extremely important that we clearly explain the meaning of baptism and its necessity to those who believe in Jesus Christ.

### I THE BIBLE CHAIN ON WATER BAPTISM

We begin in presenting this truth with the following chain of verses: -

◆ Matthew 3:13-15

*“Then Jesus arrived from Galilee at the Jordan coming to John, to be baptised by Him. But John tried to prevent Him, saying, ‘I need to be baptised by You, and do You come to me?’ But Jesus answering said to him, ‘Permit it at this time; for in this way it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.’ Then he permitted Him.”* (NASV)

The first point we make is that even though it was unnecessary for Jesus to be baptised, He considered it important enough and proper as our example, to be baptised by John; *“Permit it at this time, for in this way it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.”* (NASV)

Jesus is at all times the example for us as believers and although there are certain things in the life of Jesus which are impossible for His disciple to do (such as die on the cross for the sins of the whole world). His life and example certainly must be followed as far as possible. Because

of this, then, it is important for every disciple of Jesus to consider baptism as an important aspect, seeing that the Master did so too.

◆ **Matthew 28:19-20**

*“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptising them in the Name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I command you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of age.”* (NASV)

The second important aspect concerning baptism is that Jesus commanded that His disciples should be baptised. Even though it may not appear important to certain individuals to undergo believer’s baptism, yet if one considers the question whether it is important to obey Jesus, then baptism becomes a must for every true disciple of Jesus Christ.

From these two verses we in turn see that the process of making disciples involves two major matters; one, baptising them in the Name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, and two, teaching them to observe all that Jesus commanded us.

If Jesus considered baptising as an essential part of producing His disciples, the logical conclusion is that every individual who seeks to become a disciple of the Master should consider baptism as an essential.

◆ **Romans 6:36**

*“Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptised into Christ Jesus have been baptised into His death? Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, in order that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.”* (NASV)

From these verses we draw the following conclusions: -

- Baptism symbolises the death and resurrection of Jesus. When one considers the matter there is really no other symbol that can so adequately symbolise death and resurrection. As one is immersed beneath the water, it symbolises burial, and as one rises from the water, it symbolises resurrection.
- By means of this ceremony the believer is in fact united with Jesus in His death and also united with Him in His resurrection. According to this Scripture it is clear that water baptism is the means whereby the death and resurrection of Jesus becomes a reality in the life of the believer, and the power of both His death and of His resurrected life becomes available to the believer and ready to be practically applied in his life.

- The believer's baptism then becomes, in a sense, a point in his experience to which he can turn again and again when faced with temptation, and tell himself, "I do not need to yield to this temptation because my old nature was crucified with Jesus when His death became mine through the act of baptism." On the positive side, again the believer looks back to the point of baptism and tells himself that he can rise up and live with power and victory because through his baptism the new life of Jesus became his very own.
- However, misunderstandings can arise from the previous points raised. It would appear at first that the power lies in the baptism, that the actual water does something to the individual. This cannot be accepted for the simple reason that the Bible clearly teaches that the power lies in the actual death and resurrection of Jesus and not in the water in the baptismal pool. This distinction must clearly be made. It is not purely the water that affects the individual, but the "faith action" expressed through the ceremony of baptism by the one who believes in Jesus. We are **not saved by baptism**; we are saved by the death of Jesus which He died for us in our place. Therefore the next matter of great importance in the issue of baptism is the "faith" of the believer in Jesus Christ and what He has done.

◆ **Colossians 2:12**

*"Having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised with Him, through faith in the working of God Who raised Him from the dead." (NASV)*

Baptism is an action of faith. Water baptism in the New Testament is not the baptism of adults, but is "*believer's baptism*". The power of baptism is released by the faith the individual has in what our Lord Jesus has done for us on the cross, which is symbolised by baptism. It is faith that makes baptism significant and releases the power from the death and resurrection of Jesus.

*"Now faith is the assurance (reality, substance) of things hoped for and the conviction (proof) of things not seen." (NASV Hebrews 11:1)*

It is faith that makes the great truths of the Word of God become a reality in our lives. It is faith that releases the power inherent in those truths. Thus the power that becomes a reality in the life of the believer through baptism is not in the ceremony, but in the truth it symbolises, and the ceremony carried out by faith becomes the action whereby the believer expresses his faith in that truth and therefore then experiences the power of his life. These points must be understood very clearly for it is because of the confusion of these issues that 'baptismal regeneration' has developed, i.e. the idea that by purely baptising an individual without faith

would result in the new birth and a uniting with Christ in His death and resurrection. There can be no salvation without repentance of faith.

At this point a choice must be made whether to proceed with the other implications of baptism or to press on with the “*faith*” idea. If the individual shows that he or she has difficulties with the idea of personal faith, then it might be important at this point to continue with the chain that is taken up a little later in the study on the examples of believer’s baptism in the New Testament. If, on the other hand, the individual does not show that he or she has this particular problem one can now proceed with other implications inherent in baptism.

## II FURTHER MEANING OF BAPTISM

- ◆ Baptism indicates a turning away from the old life and an intention to live a new life in Christ. This must be clearly emphasised to the individual. Here is the idea of repentance, the ‘turning around’ of one’s course in life to going in the opposite direction and living the new life in Jesus Christ. As one is baptised by faith one is declaring to the congregation who are watching that one has turned around from the old ways and is now going to follow Jesus Christ as Master and Lord.
- ◆ Baptism means the individual has been washed and cleansed from his sin. The idea of washing and cleansing is also found in the ceremony of baptism in New Testament items. This has also come through and has been taken up in Christian baptism. The individual who is baptised by faith is clearly declaring that the past has been forgiven, that they have been completely cleansed and are starting a new walk with Jesus. This automatically places a responsibility upon those who witness this baptism, to also in turn forget the past of the individual with which they might be familiar, and to accept such a person as a “new creature in Jesus Christ.”
- ◆ Baptism also indicates that the individual has received eternal life. It is through the death and resurrection of Jesus that we receive eternal life. This eternal life is the same as the “resurrection life” and also the “newness of life” mentioned in Romans 6:4. As the individual is baptised by faith he or she declares to the congregation that they have received this eternal life in Jesus Christ.
- ◆ Baptism declares that the individual identifies totally with Jesus Christ. Baptism is the ceremony which symbolises the central work of Jesus Christ, namely His death and resurrection. As one is baptised by faith one declares one’s public identity with Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour of their lives. In early New Testament times this was equivalent to signing

one's own death warrant. As Christians publicly proclaimed their identity with Jesus Christ they became marked men and women and were often subsequently persecuted and killed. A further implication of such a declaration is that the individual also proclaims that he or she has a new Master and Lord. 2 Corinthians 5:15 reads: *“And He died for all that they who live should no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf.”*

- ◆ Baptism indicates an identity with the “body of Christ.” As the individual is baptised by faith he or she proclaims to the body of Christ present that he or she identifies with that body. They are declaring their total allegiance to the local body of Christ, their commitment to the body of Christ and their willingness to serve, care for, love and minister to that particular body. By implication they are also calling upon that local body to in turn accept and receive them as a brother or sister and in turn to help them along the path, pray for them, care for them, minister to them, correct them and encourage them in the future. One can understand why so often churches require believer's baptism therefore they will accept someone into membership. This baptism is not something that becoming a member of a church, such 'so-called' denomination, but rather an already member of a Body of Christ through saving faith. It is because by the act of believer's baptism that individual has publicly proclaimed their commitment to the body. One can also understand how such an act of baptism would be a mockery if that individual was not genuine in their faith in Jesus Christ and in their commitment to the body of Christ.

### **III NEW TESTAMENT EXAMPLE OF BELIEVER'S BAPTISM**

- ◆ **Acts 2:41**

*“So then those who had received his word were baptised and there were added that day about three thousand souls.”*

Here we clearly understand that the people baptised and “*received*” the word of Peter. This indicates that first of all they were old enough and intelligent enough to understand the word that was preached, and secondly, that they received the word in the sense that they believed the word. The actual Greek word for “*received*” has in it the thought of gladly “welcoming” the word of God. Thus we conclude that these people exercised their faith and believed in Jesus Christ.

- ◆ **Acts 8:12**

*“But when they believed Philip preaching the good news about the Kingdom of God and the Name of Jesus Christ they were being baptised, men and women alike.”* (NASV)

It is clear in this passage that the people of Samaria “*believed*” the good news about the Kingdom preached by Philip. It is self-explanatory that they were both old enough to do that as they were “*men*” and “*women*” and that they put their faith in Jesus Christ.

◆ **Acts 8:36-38**

*“And as they went along the road they came to some water and the Eunuch said, ‘Look! Water! What prevents me from being baptised?’ And Philip said ‘If you believe with all your heart, you may.’ And he answered and said, ‘I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.’ And he ordered the chariot to stop and they both went down into the water, Philip as well as Eunuch; and he baptised him.” (NASV)*

Here again we have a passage that has been left out of many new translations of the Bible, namely verse 37. The reason again is that many original manuscripts do not contain this verse. However, again, this is an extremely important verse and I personally believe it should be inserted as it clearly indicates by implication that the Eunuch in fact believed with all his heart on the Lord Jesus Christ.

◆ **Acts 9:18**

*“And immediately there fell from his (Paul’s) eyes, something like scales and he regained his sight and he arose and was baptised.” (NASV)*

Here we have the account of the baptism of the apostle Paul. From the entire passage in chapter 9 it is clear that Paul had come to an encounter with Jesus Christ and a conversion experience. The moment he rose from the ground where he had fallen he was a different man. His submission to Jesus Christ as Lord is found in the words in verse 5, “*And he, trembling and astonished, said ‘What wilt Thou have me to do?’*”

Unfortunately this passage has been left out of many modern translations as it does not have sufficient manuscript support in the minds of the translators. However, it is an extremely important passage as it indicates the dramatic change that had come over the apostle Paul on the Damascus road. One moment he was on a path of persecution, attack and an enemy of Jesus Christ. The next moment he is found a servant in submission to the same One Whom he persecuted.

◆ **Acts 19:1-6**

*“And when they heard this they were baptised in the Name of the Lord Jesus.”* (Verse 5, NASV)

Here we have the account of some Ephesian disciples who had not been born again. From this passage we find that firstly, these people were old enough to understand what they were doing and to discuss their faith with Paul. Secondly, Paul made it clear to them that they were to leave the baptism of John, which was a baptism of repentance, and he told *“the people to believe in Him Who was coming after him, that is in Jesus.”* Thus it was in response to this teaching that they were baptised in the Name of the Lord Jesus. Here again we find that it was ‘believer’s baptism’ that took place.

◆ **1 Corinthians 1:14**

*“I thank God that I baptised none of you except Crispus and Gaius.”* (NASV)

Here we have a casual remark of two individuals who had been baptised by Paul. Nothing is said whether they were believers or not. However, when we turn to Acts 19:29 we find that Gaius was a ‘travelling companion’ with Paul from Macedonia. This obviously indicates, together with the way they were treated by the Ephesians in that passage, that Gaius was a strong believer and a worker with Paul. Although this does not give us conclusive evidence that Gaius believed when he was baptised, it certainly indicates strongly that he was, and in the light of the previous five examples that we have, we can happily conclude that the New Testament believers never practised anything but ‘believer’s baptism.’ They would never baptise anyone who had not put their faith in Jesus Christ.

The ‘Household’ Baptisms: those who believe in infant baptism often point to what is known as the ‘household’ baptisms in the New Testament. The argument is that where these entire households were baptised, surely there should have been some babies present. Let us examine them.

◆ **Acts 10:24,44-46**

*“And on the following day he entered Caesarea. Now Cornelius was waiting for them and had called together his relatives and close friends.”* (NASV)

The argument here is that there must have been entire families with babies present. Verse 44-46 on the other hand shows us that these were people *“listening to the message,”* a feat

impossible for babies! Furthermore, it was because *“the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who were listening to the message”* that the disciples proceeded to baptise these people. According to the Scriptures we find that it requires the faith of the believer in Jesus Christ before the Spirit of God is given to that individual. This is clear from Acts 2:38-39. In these two verses it is clear that repentance is necessary before one can receive the Holy Spirit.

◆ **Acts 16:14-15**

*“And when she and her household had been baptised....”*

Here we have another “household baptism.” Although we cannot speak for Lydia’s household, it is clear that she herself believed as verse 14 reads, *“A certain woman named Lydia...a worshipper of God, was listening, and the Lord opened her heart to respond to the things spoken by Paul.”* (NASV)

◆ **Acts 16:25-34**

*“And he took them that very hour of night and washed their wounds and immediately he was baptised and all his household.”* (NASV)

Here is the story of the Philippian jailer who after an earthquake which opened the doors of the prison where Paul and Silas were kept prisoner, went through a dramatic experience.

Again, the argument is given that surely there must have been babies in this household. However, verse 34 clearly tells us that, *“he brought them into his house and set food before them and rejoiced greatly, having believed in God with his whole household.”* In other words, this man and his entire household believed on God. Therefore it is clear that there were no babies present and that it was a case of believer’s baptism.

◆ **Acts 18:8**

*“And Crispus, the leader of the Synagogue, believed in the Lord with all his household, and many of the Corinthians when they heard were believing and being baptised.”*

Here again, it is quite clear that this man believed with his entire household and that those *“who were believing”* were the ones who were baptised.

◆ **1 Corinthians 1:16**

*“Now I did baptise also the household of Stephanus...”*

Here we have no indication as to whether there were any babies or children present. However, when we turn to 1 Corinthians 16:15 we discover that the household of Stephanus “*were the firstfruits of Achaia, and that they have devoted themselves for the ministry of the saints.*” Babies could hardly be “*firstfruits*” referring to converts, and also be quite unable to “*devote themselves for the ministry to the saints.*” In this verse we find every indication that the household of Stephanus were in fact the first converts of Achaia and devoted Christians who were committed to ministering to other believers.

As we examine the eleven examples and references in the New Testament to water baptisms, we find that in 10 out of the 11 cases there is every evidence that they were believers who were baptised and that there were no babies present. The only exception is the household of Lydia, where we find no indication whatsoever. It would be in keeping with common logic to conclude that in the light of the fact that the New Testament teaches faith in connection with water baptism and in turn gives 10 out of 11 examples indication faith present, that we should conclude that the New Testament teaches “believer’s baptism” and that faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and what He has accomplished is an essential ingredient in that ceremony.

#### **IV THE METHOD OF BAPTISM IN THE NEW TESTAMENT**

There may still be a problem in the minds of some as to how baptism should be carried out. From the previous study we have seen that in the New Testament examples there is no indication of how the baptism was carried out other than the two incidents of Jesus and the Ethiopian Eunuch, where it is recorded that they “*went down....*” And “*came up*” out of the water.

Now the obvious question is, “How do we arrive at the conclusion that immersion is the way it is to be done?” Could it not have been possible that the candidate went down into the water and there stood in it while water was either poured on his head or sprinkled over him?

- ◆ First, from the fact that the New Testament writers chose to use the word ‘baptiso.’ In order to see the real meaning of ‘baptiso’ let us first see what words are used in Greek for: -
  - Sprinkle: Hebrews 9:13 – ‘rantiso’  
Hebrews 12:24 – ‘rantismos’  
Exodus 29:21 – ‘raneis’  
Numbers 8:7 – ‘peri-raneis’

All the above words are derived from ‘raino,’ to sprinkle. It can be seen here that our word ‘rain’ has link with this Greek word. Furthermore there is only one other word used in the New Testament, and that is in Hebrews 11:28, ‘proschusis.’ The same is used in 1 Peter 1:2. (The above are all the references to sprinkling in the New Testament.)

- Pour: Revelation 16:2 – ‘ekcheo’ derived from ‘cheo,’ the same word is used on other occasions such as Acts 10:45 with reference to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.
- Dip: There are three references in the New Testament: -  
John 13:26 – ‘bapto’  
Luke 16:24 – ‘bapto’  
Revelation 19:13 – ‘bapto’
- Baptiso: Now we come to the word chosen by the writers to describe the action we are in the process of studying. It is significant that none of the other words were chosen, always this word.

First of all we find that according to the grammatical rules of Greek, this word is an ‘intensive’ form. It is easy to see that it is similar to the word for ‘dip’ above, i.e. ‘bapto.’ If ‘bapto’ then means to dip, ‘baptiso’ being a more intensive form means to completely dip.

Secondly, in Jewish proselyte baptism, also called ‘baptiso’ by the Greeks, the candidate stood in a pool of water up to his neck while the commandments of the law were read to him. He then indicated his acceptance by plunging beneath the surface.

Thirdly, in Judaism, the Jewish religion of the day, all objects were ceremonially cleansed by immersing them in a bath of water; this was practised before and after the time of Christ, and was also called ‘baptiso’ by the Greeks.

Fourthly, such sects as the Essenes or Qumran practised immersion and called it ‘baptiso.’ In fact there is a baptismal pool preserved in one of their caves. (The Qumran caves, where the Dead Sea scrolls were discovered).

Fifthly, the word was used in Greek plays, such as that of Homer, where he describes the sinking of a ship as being ‘baptised by the waves’!

Although the meaning of these various baptisms of that era are all different from the Christian baptism of believers, it is the mode that is indicated by the word ‘baptiso’ that is important to us, and thus we find what it meant to those of that day, not what we would like it to mean today!

- ◆ The second reason why we are sure that immersion is meant in the New Testament is because of the meaning of Baptism. Romans 6:3-4 indicates that baptism signifies death and burial, and also resurrection. It is hardly possible to signify burial with sprinkling or pouring – we don’t bury a person by sprinkling sand on them, or even pouring sand on them in small quantities, but we put them completely under or inside as the case may be. Even the burial of Jesus, Whose death this signifies, was that placing Him entirely in the tomb, a hole in the ground or rock, horizontal or vertical, whatever the case may have been, and there He was covered by the great stone.

# *Baptism of Believers*

## I THE IMPORTANCE OF BAPTISM

### ◆ **Baptism is commanded**

- It is the first command of our Lord to the church.
- *“Therefore go and make disciples...baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.” (Matthew 28:19-20 (NIV)) “And He said unto them, Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every living creature. He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved: but he that believeth not shall be damned.” (Mark 16:15-16)*
- Peter commanded Cornelius and his household to be baptised.
- *“Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptised, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptised in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days.” (Acts 10:47-48)*

### ◆ **Baptism was practiced in the Book of Acts: every believer was baptised.**

- Repentance and faith (conversion) before baptism.
  - The Day of Pentecost  
*“Then Peter said unto them, ‘Repent and be baptised every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.’ Then they that gladly received his word were baptised: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.” (Acts 2:34-41)*
  - Philip baptised the believers in Samaria.  
*“But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptised, both men and women. Then Simon himself believed also: and when he was baptised, he continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs that were done.” (Acts 8:12-13)*
  - Paul was baptised.  
*“And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptised.” (Acts 9:18)*
  - Cornelius and his household  
(Acts 10:47-48, see 1b above)
  - Lydia  
*“And when she was baptised, and her household, she besought us, ‘If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there.’ And she constrained us.” (Acts 16:15)*

- The Philippian jailor and his family  
*“And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes, and was baptised, he and all his, straightaway”* (Acts 16:33)
- Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, and his family  
*“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 baptised.”* (Acts 18:8)
- Nowhere in the Bible do you read of babies being baptised. Only believers.  
*“... He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved...”* (Mark 16:16) *“Repent and be baptised...”* (Acts 2:38)
- There is no time factor between conversion and baptism.  
 They did not wait for a period of time before being baptised. They were never told to prove themselves.

## **II THE MODE OF BAPTISM**

Baptism means to immerse, dip, plunge into or bury. Romans 6:3-4 says, *“Know ye not, that as many of us were baptised into Jesus Christ were baptised into His death? Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism...”* Here baptism is linked with burying. (See also Colossians 2:12)

- ◆ Jesus baptism *“...and Jesus, when He was baptised, went straightaway out of the water...”* (Matthew 3:13-16). John baptised in the Jordan *“because there was much water there”* (John 3:23). Why do you need *“much water”* if you are only sprinkling?
- ◆ The Ethiopian eunuch’s baptism *“... and they both down into the water”* (Acts 9:38)

## **III THE MEANING OF BAPTISM**

Baptism is a public and open profession of an inward change. Romans 6:3-5 shows that the new convert goes down into a watery grave, symbolically enacting his own death to the old life. When he arises he symbolises that he has risen and is ‘walking in newness of life’. As John Rice says *“At baptism, then, one professes that he believes in that old, old story that Christ died for our sins, was buried and rose again. He professes that he has had a change in his heart, that he now belongs to Christ, that he means henceforth to live for Christ.”*

#### **IV WHAT MUST A CHRISTIAN DO ABOUT BAPTISM?**

*“Arise and be baptised” (Acts 22:16). In Acts 22:16 (NIV) Ananias says to Paul, “And now what are you waiting for? Get up, and be baptised...”*

The alternatives are: -

- ◆ To accept that man can change God’s Word to please himself, in order to accept sprinkling or pouring as the mode of baptism!
- ◆ To follow the modernists and just ignore baptism and leave it our altogether!

#### **V THERE ARE THREE OTHER BAPTISMS IN THE SCRIPTURES**

##### ◆ **Spiritual Baptism**

Where the Holy Spirit baptised you into the body of Christ. (Galatians 3:27 & 1 Corinthians 12:13)

##### ◆ **The Baptism of the Holy Spirit**

Where Christ baptises you ‘with’ or ‘in’ the Holy Spirit. (John 1:33 & Mark 1:8)

##### ◆ **The Baptism of Suffering**

(Mark 10:38-39 & Luke 12:50)

# *Being a Worshipper*

## **I BEING A WORSHIPPER**

I want to tell you something that may surprise you. The Scriptures do not say that God is looking for worship. *“But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him”* (John 4:23).

The Lord is seeking people who *“will worship”* – not just worship itself. Why? Because He has had worship ever since angels, cherubim and seraphim were created. He does not have a great vacuum inside Himself that can only be filled with worship. He is not insecure. He is self-sufficient and in need of nothing. But He is our Father, and He desires an interactive relationship with His children.

The Greek word that is translated as *“seeking”* in John 4:23 is ‘zeteo’. In this context it has the added connotation of ‘require’ or ‘demand’. Our Father is requiring or demanding those who will worship Him in spirit and truth. He seeks after them and pursues them. What does He find when He finds you?

## **II A LIFESTYLE OF WORSHIP**

Do you know if you are a worshipper? How can you tell if you are a worshipper in spirit and in truth? Going to church for a few hours a week does not make someone a worshipper. Being a worshipper is more than doing the right things. It is an attitude of life.

Worship is to be continual. It is not to start and stop as songs do, but it is a constant attitude that results in interactive communion with our heavenly Father.

- ◆ David wrote: *“I will bless the Lord at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth.”* (Psalms 34:1)
- ◆ Paul said: *“Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name.”* (Hebrews 13:15)

Worshippers spend the entire day with their spirits on the Lord, conscious of giving Him praise. *“My tongue shall speak of Your righteousness and of Your praise all the day long.”* (Psalms 35:28) *“I will extol You, my God, O King; and I will bless Your name forever and ever. Every day I will bless You, and I will praise Your name forever and ever.”* (Psalms 145:1-2) Sometimes we make the mistake of thinking that the only time we can worship the Lord is when we are with a group of believers. On the

contrary, praise is to be private as well as public. One psalm says: “*Let the saints...sing aloud on their beds*” (Psalms 149:5). You can worship in your bedroom, in the living room or in your car.

The issue is not where or when but who and how. Any time or place is suitable for worshipping the Father “*in spirit and truth.*” (John 4:23)

### **III A HUMAN DESIRE**

Every human being created by God has an innate desire to worship. From the Eskimo Indian to the Aztec Indian, all have worshipped something. We are only satisfied when we come to Christ and learn to be wholehearted worshippers. Then we are fulfilling the purpose for which we were created – to worship Him forever.

Just as you would avoid being a “Sunday morning Christian” don’t let yourself become a “Sunday morning worshipper.” Let today be the first day of a lifestyle of worship for you.

### **IV DEFINING WORSHIP**

The worship of God is the primary activity of the church and needs no reason beyond itself. According to the Westminster Shorter Catechism, an historic Protestant statement of faith written in 1647, the chief purpose of man is “to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever.”

Worship, like love, is hard to define. How can we capture in words the attitude, the passion and the expression of our worship to our champion Saviour?

Worship, in the verb form, means the paying of homage or respect. In the Christian world, the term is used for the reverent devotion, service or honour – whether public or individual – that is paid to God. Webster’s New World Thesaurus lists the following words as either synonyms or analogous words for worship; adore, admire, celebrate, esteem, exalt, glorify, love, magnify, praise, revere, reverence and venerate.

Worship is totally concerned with the *worthiness* of God and not the *worthiness* of the worshipper.

W.E. Vine defines Christian worship as – “... the direct acknowledgement to God, of His nature, attributes, ways and claims, whether by the outgoing of the heart in praise and thanksgiving, or by

deed done in such acknowledgement.” – “Vine’s Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words,” page 1248.

- ◆ Ascribing worth to God
- ◆ Putting our focus on Him
- ◆ Giving Him all the credit
- ◆ Bringing honour to His Name

## V ATTITUDE TOWARDS WORSHIP

Worship is more an attitude than an outward expression, form or passing emotion. Many times these things get mistaken as worship. Just because people are lifting their hands does not mean they are worshipping.

The outward acts of worship are the least important parts of its expression. They can assist the worshipping heart in expressing its love and adoration, but the acts of worship cannot make a non-worshipping heart into a worshipping one. Worship begins in the heart. The danger is that often acts of worship give a non-worshipping heart the sense of having worshipped.

The critical element is the state of the hearts of the people and not the form of worship. The genesis of worship is the heart of the believer. If it does not begin there, then no matter what the believer does, it is not worship. It may have the look of worship, but it is void of the attitude necessary to be worship.

It is not the performance of the act that makes worship. It is the attitude of love. It is not dancing, bowing or lifting hands that makes worship, but the presence of love. Worship is more an attitude than an action.

## VI WORSHIP QUALITIES

Worship involves prayer. Prayer births and matures a relationship with the Lord, and out of that relationship we worship the Lord.

Worship is expressing admiration to the One we adore. Worship is an attitude that recognises the superiority of Christ and acknowledges our dependence on Him.

Worship is varied expressions of different individuals loving and reverencing God all at the same time. Therefore, each one can express worship in his or her own manner. Sameness is not our goal in worship services. We are to be ourselves and communicate our own individual expressions of worship.

## **VII THE LORD HIMSELF CALLS US TO WORSHIP HIM**

Worship is the first commandment God gave to Moses for the people of Israel. *“And God spoke all these words, saying: I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. You shall have no other gods before Me”* (Exodus 20:1-3).

God’s second commandment dealt with worship too. *“You shall have no other gods before or besides Me. You shall not make yourself any graven image (to worship it)... You shall not bow down yourself to them or serve them; for I the Lord your God am a jealous God.”* (Exodus 20:3-5, Amplified Bible).

Not only does God claim the first place, but also He reveals His intolerance of everything that would deprive Him of the highest position. Many things in our lives attempt to draw our hearts away from God as the supreme object of our affection. The apostle John warned: *“Little children, keep yourselves from idols.”* (1 John 5:21)

Jesus showed the primary importance that worship should have in prayer. *“When you pray, say (Our) Father, (Who is in heaven) hallowed be Your name”* (Luke 11:2, Amplified Bible). When we pray, worship is the first order of business. Exaltation of Him is primary. Then we can make petitions.

## **VIII WHOLEHEARTED WORSHIP**

When I fell in love with my wife, I spent every moment of the day thinking about and planning for her. When we were together, it seemed as if we were the only two people on earth.

I wasn’t savvy enough to give away part of my heart and keep part of myself. I gave it all to her. She had my focus, my attention, and my heart. We hugged and held hands as often as we could. We spent as much time as we could together. Our expressions of affection were not mechanical or dutiful but packed with feeling and meaning. We were focused intensely on each other.

Jesus described this kind of love when the scribe asked Him, “*What is the foremost commandment?*” Jesus answered with a question: “*What does the law say?*” The lawyer replied: “*You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.*” (Mark 12:30) Jesus told the lawyer he was correct. That’s all-ways kind of love. It is not long, ongoing love, but all-total-complete love. It’s the first commandment of the old covenant and the greatest commandment of the new covenant.

◆ **Four ways we can show the Lord our love: -**

- with all our heart.
- whole-soul worship.
- whole-mind worship.
- whole-strength worship.

## **IX WORSHIP IS A TWO-FOLD CONCEPT**

A. The assembled body of believers

B. Our way of life and conduct – not limited to meetings

Both are necessary! ‘A’ without ‘B’ is dead, formal and seemingly unattractive, because it is incomplete. ‘B’ without ‘A’ is empty, pure noise. It is shallow and false (of Matthew 15:8-9 & Amos 5:21). In ‘A’ we acknowledge God with our lips. In ‘B’ we acknowledge God with our actions, thoughts and attitudes.

## **X HOW SHOULD WE WORSHIP THE LORD**

Many times praise is a function of the will. We must will and determine to praise the Lord, even when we do not feel like it. Praise is not contingent upon our feelings – it is based upon God’s greatness, and that never changes!

Notice how David spoke to his own soul: “*Praise the Lord, O my soul; all my inmost being, praise His holy name.*” (Psalms 103:1). Sometimes we are ‘down in the dumps’ or dry spiritually, and it is at those times that we must serve notice to our soul and say, “*Soul! Bless the Lord!*” Praise must function according to our will and not our emotions.

“But how can I praise,” you may ask, “when I feel completely deflated emotionally?” We can find an answer in the Psalms, for they were written by men who, like us, experienced deep emotional valleys. One psalmist described his feelings in this way: *“My soul is downcast within me.”* So he asked himself, *“Why are you downcast, O my soul? Why so disturbed within me?”* Then he proceeded to get tough on himself: “Put your hope in God.” His next statement so beautifully shows the discipline of praise: *“For I will yet praise Him”* (Psalms 42:5-6). The Lord wants all of us to come to that same point where we determine to praise Him regardless of our feelings and circumstances. *“I will bless the Lord.”*

## **XI WHY SHOULD WE WORSHIP THE LORD?**

**First of all**, we praise Him because we are commanded in His word to do so. *“Praise ye the LORD”* (Psalms 150:1, KJV). Have you noticed that God has not asked us to praise him? That is because kings do not ask – they command! “Why does God demand our praise?” you may ask. “Is He some sort of egomaniac who feeds off our adulation?” No, it is not that God needs our praises, but He knows that we need to praise him! Ultimately, praise does not benefit God (He is God, whether we choose to praise Him or not) – God has commanded praise for our own good. Not until we praise Him are we able to come into proper relationship with Him. Without a thankful and praising heart, we will never grow in the grace of Christ Jesus.

**A second** reason for praising is because God is enthroned in our praise (see Psalms 22:3, NASB). He loves our praise! He is so pleased with our praise that He literally surrounds Himself with and bathes in our praise. We praise Him because He loves it! In this connection I want to focus on a verse that is foundational to much that will be said later in this book. Isaiah 60:18 contains a key that will unlock many passages for us as we study this subject of praise. This verse says, *“But you will call your walls Salvation and your gates Praise.”* The key is this; in many passages that speak of gates we will find a principle relating to praise. Let us fit this key into a related verse: *“The LORD loves the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob”* (Psalms 87:2). The Lord loves the praises (gates) of Zion more than He loves all the abodes of Jacob. There is no doubt that God responds to us when we praise him!

**Third**, there is power in praise. When we stop trying to fight our battles and simply begin to praise the God who has said He will fight for us, God is free to release His power and provision on our behalf. We will expand this thought in the section on praise as a weapon in spiritual warfare and will see how praise brings victory, power, deliverance and blessing.

**Fourth**, we also praise God because it is a good thing to praise the Lord (see Psalms 92:1). It is a pleasant thing for the upright to praise Him (see Psalms 135:5). It is fitting for His holy ones to bless Him.

**A fifth** reason for praising God is simply because He is worthy of our praise. *“Great is the Lord, and most worthy of praise”* (Psalms 48:1). *“Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power; for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created”* (Revelations 4:11, KJV). Consider these beautiful words of Martin Luther: “A person cannot praise God only, unless he understands that there is nothing in himself worthy of praise, but that all that is worthy of praise is of God and from God. But since God is eternally praiseworthy, because He is the infinite God and can never be exhausted, therefore they will praise Him for ever and ever.”

**Sixth**, we were created to praise Him. The Shorter Catechism expresses this, as “Man’s chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy Him forever.” This is clearly brought out in the Scriptures. Jeremiah 13:11 shows us that God called the house of Israel unto Himself specifically for His praise, renown and honour. This is echoed in 1 Peter 2:9, which tells us, *“But you are chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His wonderful light.”*

We have been chosen of God for the express purpose of declaring His praises! Isaiah capsulised this so beautifully: *“The people I formed for myself that they may proclaim my praise.”* (Isaiah 43:21) Many people in the world today are longing for fulfillment and are searching desperately for it in all the wrong places. They will never find complete fulfillment in their innermost beings until they come into proper relationship with God through praise. A.W. Tozer has so aptly said, “The purpose of God in sending His Son to die and live and be at the right hand of God the Father was that He might restore to us the missing jewel, the jewel of worship; that we might come back and learn to do again that which we were created to do in the first place – worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.” Praise should not be a difficult and arduous task to master, but it should flow from our lives in a most natural way, for it is in fact a normal tendency inherent within our very fibre, placed there purposely by our Creator/Father. Praise is one of the most natural things we can do!

## **XII WHEN SHOULD WE WORSHIP THE LORD**

The Old Testament prophet Habakkuk gave his remedy for times when everything is going wrong: *“Though the fig tree does not bud and there are no grapes on the vines, though the olive crop fails and the fields produce no food, though there are no sheep in the pen and no cattle in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will be joyful in God my Saviour.”* (Habakkuk 3:17-18)

A modern rendition of this passage might read like this; “Though the economy is unstable, and unemployment is rising, though lawlessness may be growing, and terrorism is rampant, though the car

is broken down and my wife is stranded in town, though my kid just broke his arm and the medical insurance is gone, yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will be joyful in God my Saviour!” It is not hypocritical to praise to Lord in hard times; that is precisely the time we need to lift our voices in praise to God! It is God’s will that we offer up thanks in every situation in which we find ourselves.

### **XIII SOME WORD STUDIES**

#### ◆ **Old Testament**

- **Halal:** Used ± 100 times. To shine, boast, celebrate, commend, sing loud. (2 Chronicles 31:12; Psalms 23:30; Nehemiah 5:13 & Psalms 107:32.)
- **Yadah:** Used ± 90 times. Thankful expression of praise, from root word meaning to ‘throw out the hand.’ The lifting of hands is one of the most meaningful expressions of praise. (Psalms 134:2; 63:4; 9:1 & 52:9 & 2 Chronicles 20:21)
- **Barak:** Used ± 70 times. To kneel, bless, salute, praise – infers some kind of silence.

#### ◆ **New Testament**

- **Proskuneo:** To come toward, to kiss (the hand of...) an act of reverence. (Matthews 4:10; John 4:21-40 & Revelations 4:10)
- **Latreuo:** To serve, render religious service or homage. (Philippians 3:3)

### **XIV WHY WORSHIP?**

- ◆ It is a command and it’s a fitting response to the presence of our awesome God and Father: -  
Psalm 95:6-7  
Psalm 18:3  
Psalm 67:3-4  
Psalm 102:18  
Psalm 89:5-6
- ◆ We worship God the Father because of Who He is: -  
John 17:11 & 25  
Ephesians 1:17  
John 1:5  
2 Corinthians 1:3
- ◆ And because of what He has done: -  
John 3:16

Jeremiah 31:3

Ephesians 1:3-4

Colossians 1:12-13

1 Timothy 3:16

◆ We worship the Son, Jesus Christ: -

John 1:1

Colossians 1:16

John 1:3

John 1:19

1 Timothy 3:16

## **XI HOW ARE WE TO WORSHIP?**

Participation, getting involved in the key – ‘chores’

- ◆ Guidance of Scripture – see Psalms
- ◆ Your personality, cultural background
- ◆ Context
- ◆ Creativity – stemming from your new life

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# *The Baptism of the Holy Spirit*

## I BACKGROUND

◆ **This is the “*promise of the father*”**

*“I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.”* (Luke 24:49) Also Acts 1:4 & 2:33.

◆ **This promise was not restricted to those believers but is for all believers**

*“The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off - for all whom the Lord our God will call.”* (Acts 2:39)

◆ **The use of terms**

- ‘Baptism’ means to immerse, dip, plunge into or bury.
- The word ‘en’ means ‘with’ or ‘in’.

◆ **At conversion the Spirit baptises you into Jesus**

*“For all of you who were baptised into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.”*

(Galatians 3:27) *“For we were all baptised by one Spirit into one body...”* (1 Corinthians 12:13)

◆ **Jesus baptises into the Holy Spirit**

*“I baptise you with water for repentance. But after me will come One who is more powerful than I, one whose sandals I am not fit to carry. He will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.”* (Matthew 3:11) *“...the one who sent me to baptise you with water told me, ‘The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is He who will baptise with the Holy Spirit.’”* (John 1:33)

◆ **People are only baptised in the Spirit after they are saved**

This is verified by both Scripture and experience.

- The disciples were saved the Old Testament way before Calvary. (John 17:6-12) They were saved the New Testament way on the day of the Resurrection and they received the Spirit in regeneration, John 20:22. Romans 8:10 – New Birth). Jesus commanded them to wait in Jerusalem until they received a mighty inducement of power. (Acts 1:4-8)
- They were baptised in the Spirit on the day of Pentecost. (Acts 2:16, 33)
- Paul was saved on the Damascus road. (Acts 9:1-6, 17) He was baptised in the Spirit three days later. (Acts 9:17)
- There is only one account in the Bible where someone was baptised in the Spirit at conversion. (Acts 10:44) Acts 11:13-14 shows us that he was not saved previously.

◆ **The baptism in the Holy Spirit has a two-fold outworking**

- **Outworking of power:** -

*“I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.”* (Luke 24:49) This is a command for equipping us for the task Jesus has for us. It is a two-fold equipping: -

• **Equipping us to be witnesses**

*“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses...”* (Acts 1:8)

- all through the book of Acts we see the disciples witnessing for Jesus *“in the power of the Spirit”*.
- Paul’s witnessing (1 Corinthians 2:4-5 & 4:19-20 & 1 Thessalonians 1:5)

• **Equipping us to perform (gifts)**

Everywhere the disciples went *“signs followed”* (healing) Acts 2:43. (Acts 3:11, 4:33, 5:12, 6:8, 8:6, 14:3 & 15:12 & Romans 15:1-9) When people were baptised in the Spirit the gifts began to operate.

- disciples in the Upper Room: tongues (Acts 2:4)
- Cornelius and his household: tongues (Acts 10:44-46)
- Converts at Ephesus: tongues and prophecy (Acts 19:6)
- Paul (Acts 9:17 & 1 Corinthians 14:18)
- 4000 new converts (Acts 4:31)
- Believers in Samaria *“Astonished by the great signs and miracles he saw”* (Acts 8:12-19)

- **Out working of purity (cleansing):** -

*“Holy Ghost and fire”* (Luke 3:16) *“Cloven tongues of fire”* (Acts 2:2-3)

- Purifying their hearts. Paul compares the Day of Pentecost with Cornelius baptism in the Spirit (Acts 15:8-9)
- Refreshing: *“Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him.”* (John 7:38)
- The fruit of the Spirit displays the purifying works of the Spirit in our lives. (Ephesians 5:24)
- *“The love of God is shed abroad in your heart by the Holy Ghost...”* (Romans 5:5, Galatians 5:22-23 & 1 Corinthians 13:1-3) The fruit of the Spirit, and primarily love, is going to draw people to Christ.

◆ **The baptism in the Holy Spirit is received by faith**

- It was by faith that the disciples were baptised in the Spirit on the Day of Pentecost.  
*“Purifying their hearts by faith.”* (Acts 15:8-9) *“That we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.”* (Galatians 3:14)
- It involves: -
  - confession (1 John. 1:9)
  - consecration (Romans 12:1-2)
  - claiming (Luke 11:13)

◆ **The baptism in the Holy Spirit is maintained by obedience**

As we *“walk in the light”* we are kept clean and filled (1 John. 1:7). *“Be being filled with the Spirit...”* (Ephesian 5:18)

## **II HOW TO BE SURE THAT YOU ARE BAPTISED IN THE SPIRIT**

◆ **You must be converted**

- Although Calvary is one complete work, most people are only baptised in the Spirit after they are saved. This is verified by both Scripture and experience.
  - The disciples were saved before Pentecost.
    - the Old Testament way (John 17:6-12)
    - the New Testament way when they received the Spirit in regeneration (John 20:22)
  - They were baptised in the Spirit 40 days later on the Day of Pentecost.
    - *“tarry”* (Acts 1:4-8)
    - *“filled”* (Acts 2:1-4)
  - Paul was saved on the Damascus road, Acts 9:5-17. He was baptised in the Spirit three days later (verse 9, 17 & 18).
  - Cornelius and his household received salvation and the baptism in the Spirit at the same time (Acts 10:44). In Acts 11:13-14 we are told that Cornelius was not saved previously.
- At conversion the Spirit baptises into Jesus (Galatians 3:27 & 1 Corinthians 12:13)
- After this, Jesus baptises into the Spirit (Matthew 3:11 & John 1:33)

◆ **You must be clean (confession of all sin)**

*“Forgive sins – cleanse unrighteousness.”* (1 John.1:9)

◆ **You must be consecrated (committed)**

*“...do not be conformed to this world...”* (Romans 12:1-2)

◆ **You must claim the baptism**

This involves faith (Luke 11:13, Acts 15:8-9 & Galatians 3:14)

◆ **You must co-operate**

Once we have asked Jesus to baptise us in His Spirit we must stop asking Him and begin to thank Him that He has baptised us. Begin to praise Him, worship and exalt Him. We often have to help people to overcome their fears or prejudices regarding ‘speaking in tongues’ by encouraging them to speak out in faith, expecting the Holy Spirit to give them the words.

Show people that this is one of the signs Jesus said would “*follow them that believe*” (Mark 16:17) and that in the book of Acts, people normally spoke in tongues when they were ‘baptised in the Spirit’ (Acts 2:4, 10:44-46 & 19:6)

◆ **You must continue: -**

- to obey (1 John 1:7)
- to know (Romans 6:6)
- to reckon (Romans 6:11)
- to yield (Romans 6:13)
- to be filled (Ephesians 5:18)

◆ **The Holy Spirit does a number of things**

- He sets us free (Romans 8:2 & 2 Corinthians 3:17)
- He helps us to witness without fear (Acts 1:8 & 2 Timothy 1:7)
- He teaches us (John 16:13)
- He glorifies Christ (John 16:14)

◆ **The Holy Spirit is a Person**

- “*He*” (John.14:16)
- He is co-equal with the Son (2 Corinthians 13:14)
- He teaches (John 14:26)
- He speaks (Galatians 4:6)
- He leads (Galatians 5:18 & Romans 8:14)
- He pleads with God (Romans 8:26)
- He becomes sad (Ephesians 4:30)

# *Gifts of the Spirit*

## I BACKGROUND

### JOHN 16: 7-8

He convicts us of our true state before God and the awful consequences.

### JOHN 3:5

He brings about the “New Birth” when we believe in Jesus Christ (see 1 Peter 1:3). We must realise that the Spirit uses the Word of God (for it is His sword – Ephesians 6:17) to bring about this “New Birth.” In order to come to a place where we realise our need of Jesus as Saviour, the truth about our sin and our separation from God has to break into our minds and hearts. This calls for the supernatural work of “*revelation*.” We need to emphasise that like human physical birth, this is a one time work that the Spirit does once and for all, and places us into a relationship with our Creator that He will never break.

### ROMANS 8:15-16

He confirms our salvation in our hearts reassuring us that we are God’s children and “*adopted*” us into His family.

### 1 CORINTHIANS 6:19

The Holy Spirit comes to live within us permanently. Jesus promised this (John 14:16), for a dwelling place of God (Ephesians 2:22).

### ROMANS 8:9

Every “*born again*” Christian has the Holy Spirit dwelling within him.

### 1 CORINTHIANS 12:13

He “*baptises*” us into the “*body*” of Christ, by which we become a member of the “*true universal*” church of Jesus Christ.

### EPHESIANS 1:13-14

We are “*sealed*” by the indwelling Holy Spirit, “*for the day of redemption*” (Ephesians 4:30).

### JOHN 14:16

He is the “*Helper*,” helps us along in the Christian life. He is the One ‘called alongside.’

### JOHN 14:26

He “*comforts*” the believer. The word “*comforter*” (A.V.) or “*Helper*” (NASV) comes from the Greek work ‘Parakletos’, which in turn is made up of two word, ‘para’ (alongside) and ‘kaleo’ (called), hence He is the “called-alongside’ One (of Acts 9:31) – to help the believer. He “*reminds*” us of past things we have heard.

### JOHN 16:13

He will “*guide*” us into **all** truth. We need this spiritual revelation in order to grasp Truth, as the “*natural man*” does not discern the things of the Spirit. (1 Corinthians 2:7-14) He “*declares*” to us the “things to come” (which He has already done to a great measure through Paul and John and others). Many things about the last times were revealed e.g. the Rapture, Revelation, etc. He “*glorifies*” Jesus to us, in us and as we will see later, through us (verse 14).

### ROMANS 15:16

He “*sanctifies*” the believer (2 Thessalonians 2:13, Titus 3:5 & Ephesians 5:25-26). This is often a slow and long process, done by revelation, conviction, and then empowering us to be victorious.

### ROMANS 8:2-13

He enables us to “*overpower*” the old nature within us. This is of course linked with the empowering of the Spirit in order to enable us to live as (be) good witnesses for Christ, which we will discuss later.

### EPHESIANS 3:16

He “*strengthens*” us in the inner being, very much as David said in the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm, “*He restoreth my soul...*”

### ROMANS 8:11

He also “*strengthens*” (quickens) our physical bodies in the struggle of life.

### ROMANS 8:14

We are “*led,*” guided in our daily lives, by the Spirit (of Acts 16:6-7).

### ROMANS 8:26

He “*helps us in our weaknesses*” our human weaknesses.

## ROMANS 8:27

He “*intercedes*”... prays for us.

## EPHESIANS 5: 18-20

He helps us to: -

- ◆ “*praise*” God in song
- ◆ “*minister*” to each other in song
- ◆ “*give thanks*” to God everything

## EPHESIANS 2:18

He provides a means of “*access*” for us to the Father. He is our means of direct spiritual communication with the Father from our side to Him in prayer, and from His side to us in leading, revelation, inspiration, etc.

## ISAIAH 11:3

The Spirit enables us to see with the eyes of faith.

## 1 THESSALONIANS 4:16 (ROMAN 8:11 & 2 CORINTHIANS 4:14)

The last final work of the Spirit in the life of the believer is to resurrect our bodies from the grave at the last trumpet or “*translate*” us from the “*corruptible to the incorruptible*” state, in order to stand before our God, and enjoy His Presence forever more!

## **II THE “GIFTS” OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

We have considered the “*Promise of the Father*” ... the great work of the Holy Spirit in and through the believer, which the Father promised would be a permanent thing in the life of the believer. Part of this great work is that of supernatural “*manifestations*” through the believer, for the benefit of those around him. Paul explains about these “*manifestations*” or “*gifts*” as they are also called in the following passages: -

### **They are called “Gifts” (1 Corinthians 12:4)**

Here the word in the Greek is ‘Charisma,’ meaning a ‘free favour’ or ‘gift.’ It is tied up with the word ‘charis,’ meaning ‘grace’ or God’s ‘loving favour’ which is undeserved by man. Thus, these Gifts are “*free gifts of God which we do not deserve, to us.*” (Cf verses 1 Corinthians 12:28-31).

The idea of grace – undeserved...

Romans 6:23 - salvation  
Romans 5:15-16 - salvation & justification  
2 Corinthians 1:11 - blessings and answers to prayer  
Romans 1:11-12 - spiritual encouragement or ministry  
1 Timothy 4:14 & 2 Timothy 1:6-7 - the Holy Spirit Himself

... without this broad view, we get trouble.

### **They are called “manifestations” (1 Corinthians 12:7)**

Because the Holy Spirit, Who is invisible to the naked eye, shows Himself to us by doing these things through people. Therefore, they are supernatural and not natural. Just as Jesus manifested the Father, so if Jesus were here, He would pray for the sick and they would be healed. For those who were demon-possessed, He would command them to leave. Now, he is not here in person, so He manifests through His people, via the Gifts, and carries on His ministry!

We must take note of certain things about these Gifts: -

- ◆ 1 Corinthians 12:4, there are varieties of Gifts, but only one Holy Spirit Who makes them work in everybody.

From the two passages above, we can conclude that the Holy Spirit gives to each believer some manifestation. (Cf 1 Corinthians 7:7 & 1 Peter 4:10 each)

### **How do we get these Gifts?**

Some say we must seek (1 Corinthians 12:11), but this answer is not found anywhere else in the Word.

1 Corinthians 12:11, it is the Holy Spirit Who inspires these Gifts, and it will always be according to the will of God, and should never be for the person's own glory, or for him to “play around with”. Nor is it to make the person a permanent “*tongues*” speaker or prophet in that church. That leads to pride, stagnation and limits God’s Gifts to that person! The Spirit is free and gives as He wills. We should never go around claiming boastfully, “I have ‘this’ or ‘that’ Gift.” It is in terms of the body, for them not me! However, I must be ready to be the ‘channel’ at any time. I must learn to listen to God, and be in tune at all times, praying “Lord, You be in control of my life and manifest whatever You wish, when You wish.”

## **In the context of over emphasis on tongues**

Paul says to the Corinthians: “*You are imbalanced – look out for and recognise and appropriate the higher gifts too!*”

## **The Gifts are not given as a result of spirituality – it is a grace gift – free!**

Look at the 1 Corinthians – Paul had to write chapter 13 to them!

1 Corinthians 12:7, the purpose of these Gifts is for the common good of all the other believers in the Church. Not just for the individual himself! 1 Peter 4:10 tell us “*As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.*”

1 Corinthians 13:1-3, the operation of these Gifts must always be accomplished with the love of God, thus they will always bring good to the person to whom they minister. Our love to the body should be “*strong affection towards – ardently devoted – to an object of warm regard and devotion.*”

## **The Gifts of the Holy Spirit**

Four separate lists of spiritual Gifts are found in the New Testament. The most famous occurs in 1 Corinthians 12. Equally important is Romans 12:3-8. Shorter lists are found in Ephesians 4:7-12 and in 1 Peter 4:10-11.

## **The nature of spiritual Gifts**

1 Corinthians 12-14 is not only a description of spiritual Gifts in general and of some Gifts in particular, it is also a practical manual about using the Gifts in the church. Paul’s purpose in 1 Corinthians 12:4-6 is to emphasise that, although the gifts are diverse, there is only one Giver. He states this truth three times, each time relating the Gifts to a different Person of the Trinity (“*the same Spirit*”, “*the same Lord*”, “*the same God*”). He also uses three different words to denote the Gifts themselves: -

- ◆ Charismata (verse 4) - Gifts of God’s grace.
- ◆ Diakonai (verse 5) - forms of service, or ministries.
- ◆ Energemata (verse 6) - energies, effects, activities or powers, which the same God “*energises*” or “*inspires*” in everyone.

When the three words are put together spiritual Gifts may perhaps be defined as “certain capacities, bestowed by God’s grace and power, which equip people for specific and corresponding service

(mutually supportive).”

In 1 Corinthians 12-14 Paul states the following important facts: -

◆ **Christians need to be informed about the Gifts: (1 Corinthians 12:1)**

Fear, misunderstanding, wrong impressions, suspicions and pride or arrogance etc. all arise out of ignorance about the nature, purpose and use of spiritual Gifts in the local church. It is therefore imperative that Christians are informed about and understand the Gifts.

◆ **Jesus must be Lord: (1 Corinthians 12:3)**

Jesus needs to be at the center of the church (local Body), and He needs to be Lord of the individual. As the Lord of our lives Jesus needs to be obeyed. The exercising of the Gifts must always center around the Lordship of Christ. Jesus Christ must always be the one who receives the glory!

◆ **The Gifts are for the common good (1 Corinthians 12:3)**

The Gifts of the Spirit are **not** to be paraded as some mark of spiritual status in the Christian life. They are **not** to be seen as a mark for progress in the Christian life. They are **not** given as a result of having attained a certain level of spirituality. Rather, the Gifts **are** for the common good and the edification of the Body (1 Corinthians 14:26). The Gifts **are** to be used to encourage and build up individual Christians, **not** cause them confusion and perplexity.

◆ **The exercise of the Gifts is the work of the Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:11)**

Spiritual Gifts will emerge and flourish in an atmosphere of faith and obedient submission to the Lord Jesus Christ.

◆ **Don't feel inferior and belittle the Gift that you have (1 Corinthians 12:14-20)**

There is the danger of assuming that we can't be used of God, or of thinking that the Gift we have is insignificant. The Gifts of the Spirit are the work of God's grace (charis). 'Charis' means grace or God's 'loving favour,' it is undeserved by man. The Gifts are freely given by God and therefore we ought not to feel inferior about the Gift He has chosen to bestow on us. He gives as He sees fit and knows best. The effectiveness of the Gifts does not depend on our attaining a sufficient level of maturity or spiritual experience. God can use whoever He chooses. Paul points out that no one should act as if a certain Gift was insignificant. On the other hand believers must be careful not to reject the Gifts because in doing so they are rejecting what God is using for the effective ministry of His Body.

◆ **Don't exult the Gifts of the Spirit through fleshly pride (1 Corinthians 12:21-26)**

Paul was very much aware of the danger to exult some Gifts to the detriment of others. The Corinthian church seemed to think that tongues and knowledge were the most important Gifts.

Their use was causing a spirit of competition and a sense of pride, which Paul sought to correct. God is the author and distributor of Gifts and therefore they are to be treated with humility rather than reacting with pride and arrogance.

◆ **We are not to restrict the Gifts to the spectacular (1 Corinthians 12:28)**

All the Gifts are important and all have their proper place.

◆ **Desire the Gifts (1 Corinthians 12:31 & 14:1)**

Paul uses two words here to speak about spiritual Gifts: *charismata* (Gifts of grace) and *pneumatika* (Gifts of the spirit). In both instances the word “*desire*” is the same; it means to have a zeal for, or be zealous towards. Christians should not have the attitude “if God wants to give me such and such a Gift then I’m willing to accept it,” but should be zealous to receive from God. There must be an attitude of anticipation of receiving what God wants to give us.

◆ **Follow the way of love (1 Corinthians 13:1-13)**

The operation of the Gifts must always be accompanied by the love of God, thus they will always bring good to the person to whom they minister. Whenever the New Testament speaks of the Gifts, it is always in the context of love in the fellowship (Romans 12; Ephesians 4 & 1 Peter 4). Paul points out that all the Gifts will one day pass away but that love is eternal. It outlasts even faith and hope.

◆ **Aim at edifying the church (1 Corinthians 14:3-5, 12, 17 & 26)**

This is the reason that God gives these Gifts. He is at work by His Holy Spirit to build up the church and to bring unbelievers into the kingdom of God. Thus in weighing prophecy, testing interpretation, or allowing tongues in public worship, we have to ask whether such use builds up the body, or does it produce confusion and division?

◆ **Everything must be done in an orderly manner (1 Corinthians 14:33 & 40)**

## **II THE VARIOUS GIFTS**

◆ **Manifestational Gifts**

- Gifts of Revelation

- Utterance of Wisdom (1 Corinthians 12:8)
- Utterance of Knowledge (1 Corinthians 12:8)
- Discerning of Spirits (1 Corinthians 12:10)

- Power Gifts

- Faith (1 Corinthians 12:10)
- Healing (1 Corinthians 12:10)

- Working of Miracles (1 Corinthians 12:10)
- Proclamation
  - Prophecy (1 Corinthians 12:10)
  - Kinds of Tongues (1 Corinthians 12:10)
  - Interpretation of Tongues (1 Corinthians 12:10)
- ◆ **Ministry Gifts**
  - Apostles (Ephesians 4:11)
  - Prophets (Ephesians 4:11)
  - Evangelists (Ephesians 4:11)
  - Pastor / Teacher (Ephesians 4:11)
- ◆ **Motivational Gifts**
  - Serving (ministering) (Romans 12:7)
  - Teaching (Romans 12:7)
  - Exhorting (Romans 12:8)
  - Giving (Greek = sharing) (Romans 1:8)
  - Ruling or leading (Romans 12:8)
  - Mercy (Romans 12:8)
- ◆ **The Manifestational Gifts**

### **III GIFTS OF REVELATION OR PERCEPTION**

#### ◆ **Word of Wisdom: (1 Corinthians 12:8)**

The word of wisdom is supernatural revelation of the mind and purpose of God communicated by the Holy Spirit. This enables one to make God's will known to men. It is the capacity to apply spiritual principles to contemporary problems. It must be emphasised that the wisdom in question is not fleshly or worldly wisdom, but the wisdom of God. Examples: Joseph's interpretation of the dreams, (Genesis 41:39-40) and Solomon: The two women with the baby, (1 King 3:25 ff).

#### ◆ **The Word of Knowledge: (1 Corinthians 12:8)**

This is the ability to understand truth that is unknown by natural means, or that has not been previously learned. It is a supernatural revelation of the existence or nature of a person, or a thing, or the knowledge of some event, given to us by the Holy Spirit for a specific purpose. Examples: Nathan and David after David's sin, (2 Samuel 12:1-14) and Peter's confession of who Christ is, (Matthew 16:14-17).

◆ **Discerning Of Spirits: (1 Corinthians 12:10)**

This is the Gift of being able to discern whether a spirit is from God or not. Examples: Mark 1:23 ff & 5:7 ff & Acts 16:17.

#### **IV POWER GIFTS**

◆ **Faith (1 Corinthians 12:9)**

This is not faith for salvation by which a man believes in Christ. Paul is referring to the special ability to trust God in a situation, which appears totally impossible from a human point of view; the ability to hold on to God in prayer (over many years if necessary). Example: Noah had this Gift of faith in believing God that there would be a flood and acting on that belief against all the odds and the laughter of his fellow men he built the ark. Abraham believed and trusted God until eventually after 25 years the promise of God came to fruition. It is obvious why this Gift is mentioned alongside healing and miracles. The latter two cannot be effected unless accompanied by faith in God.

◆ **Gifts of Healings (1 Corinthians 12:9)**

These Gifts are for the supernatural healing of diseases and infirmities without natural means of any sort. They are the miraculous manifestation of the Spirit for the banishment of all human illnesses whether organic, functional or nervous; acute or chronic. Healings through these Gifts are wrought through the power of Christ. Examples: This Gift was operational in the life of Jesus. Peter and John healing the Man at the gate called Beautiful. (Acts 3:1-10)

◆ **Working of Miracles (1 Corinthians 12:10)**

A miracle is a supernatural intervention in the ordinary course of nature; a temporary suspension of the accustomed order; an interruption of the system, as we know it. The working of miracles operates by the energy or dynamic force of the Spirit in reversals or suspensions of natural laws. A miracle is a sovereign act of the Spirit of God irrespective of laws or systems. Examples: The crossing of the Israelites of the Sea of Reeds, (Exodus 14:16 ff), the crossing of the Jordan River, (Joshua 3:14 ff) and the many miracles performed by Jesus.

#### **V PROCLAMATION OR INSPIRATIONAL GIFTS**

◆ **Prophecy (1 Corinthians 14:4; 24 ff)**

Prophecy was valued by the people in both the Old and New Testaments because through it

God spoke directly to His people. He had done so through the prophets and prophetesses of the Old Testament, He had done so through Jesus “*that prophet like Moses*” and continued to do it through inspired individuals or groups bearing testimony to Jesus in words they themselves had not thought up.

It is not easy to be precisely clear what early Christian prophecy was but two things are very clear: -

- It was a direct word from God for the situation on hand through the mouth of one of His people.
- It was clear speech, which didn't need any interpretation.

Prophecy contributed to the edification of the whole Christian body assembled for worship. It struck to the heart of unbelievers present who were amazed at the directness and relevance of what was said. It showed that God was indeed present in the congregation. (1 Corinthians 14:4 & 24 ff) Prophecy can't be described as simply preaching or teaching.

#### ◆ **Tongues**

This is the ability to speak in a language that the speaker has not learned, does not understand and that is incomprehensible to the hearer. Tongues enable a person to speak to God in prayer (1 Corinthians 14:2 & 14). It releases a genuine liberty in Prayer. It also enables a person to praise God at a depth unknown previously (Acts 2:4 & 10:46; Ephesians 5:10 7 Colossians 3:16). Those who have received this Gift of tongues find themselves free to praise, thank, adore and glorify their heavenly Father as never before. There is a new dimension of praise and worship that is experienced.

The Gift of tongues edifies the person himself (1 Corinthians 14:4) as opposed to all the other Gifts, which are said to be for the edification of the Body. Tongues is given, unlike the other manifestations of the Spirit, for our profit, 1 Corinthians 12:7, as it allows the human spirit to pray, even when the mind is unfruitful because it cannot understand (1 Corinthians 14:14).

It appears that there are two ‘dimensions’ to the Gift of tongues: -

- It is the one Gift, which seems to be available to **all** believers (for personal edification). My reason for concluding this is based on Jesus statement (Mark 16:17) and Paul's teaching (1 Corinthians 12-14) especially the particular term, “*various kinds of tongues*” which Paul uses (1 Corinthians 12:10 & 28). This Gift also seems to be the one “*common evidence*” which usually follows when a person is filled with the Spirit.

- It is a Gift, which is given (like the others) to certain individuals to be exercised in a public gathering of God's people. When, however, this Gift is exercised in public, it must be accompanied by the Gift of interpretation (1 Corinthians 14:13, 27 & 28) and then it is for the edification of the Body, (1 Corinthians 14:5). On the day of Pentecost the languages spoken by the disciples in the upper room were understood by outsiders. Tongues may be a recognised language, or it may not be, depending on circumstances and the particular Gift of God to the individual.

◆ **The Gift of Interpretation**

This Gift is the ability to give the sense of what has been said in an unknown tongue that has been exercised in the congregation. The Gift of interpretation is a requirement when the Gift of tongues is exercised in a public gathering. Just as the Spirit leads one person to speak in a tongue he does not understand, so the same Spirit leads someone else present to interpret what has been said or sung. The interpreter feels the Spirit impelling him to speak. It is not a direct translation, but an interpretation – an act of faith. Those who have the Gift of tongues are exhorted by Paul to pray for the Gift of interpretation (1 Corinthians 14:13). It is very unusual to find someone having the Gift of interpretation who cannot themselves speak in tongues.

## **VI THE MINISTRY GIFTS**

◆ **Apostles (Ephesians 4:11 & 1 Corinthians 12:28)**

The word “*apostle*” comes from a Greek word meaning, ‘sent one.’ The apostle has a strong sense of mission. Apostles are generally itinerated who plant and then ‘parent’ churches.

◆ **Prophets (Ephesians 4:11 & 1 Corinthians 12:28)**

They proclaim God's truth in a way that reveals flaws in the foundation of, and sin in a church.

◆ **Evangelists (Ephesians 4:11)**

They have a special ability and anointing to proclaim God's truth to the unsaved. The Evangelist also prepares God's people to evangelise.

◆ **Pastor/Teacher (Ephesians 4:11)**

These men oversee the church, caring for the needs of God's people and teaching them God's truth.

The above persons are gifted by God and are God's Gifts to the church to equip the saints to do the work of ministry.

## VII MOTIVATIONAL GIFTS

### ◆ **Service/Helps (Romans 12:7 & 1 Corinthians 12:28)**

This Gift enables the individual Christian to serve the needs of others in a way that blesses both parties and glorifies Christ. It can be manifested in any area (physical, financial, social or spiritual). This Gift brings strength and encouragement to others.

### ◆ **Teaching (Romans 12:8)**

This is the ability to acquire and communicate (impart) truth so effectively that people are able to learn, resulting in changed lives.

### ◆ **Exhortation (Romans 12:8)**

The word is derived from two Greek words, ‘para’ (alongside) and ‘kaleo’ (to call). This Gift enables a person to help others by coming alongside him and motivating, encouraging and up building him.

### ◆ **Giving (Romans 12:8)**

The Gift of giving is the ability to share money and / or other material resources with the rest of the body with no thought of return or gain for self in any way (see Acts 4:36, 37)

### ◆ **Leading/Ruling/Administering (Romans 12:8 & 1 Corinthians 12:28)**

The word translated “*lead*” is from two Greek word meaning ‘before’ and ‘stand.’ A leader is one who stands before others directing them toward a common objective. Although the word used here “to lead” is different from the word “*administer*” in 1 Corinthians 12:28, the Gift refers to the same general function of leading.

### ◆ **Mercy (Romans 12:8)**

The person with this Gift has the supernatural ability to identify with and comfort those in distress. He/she is able to empathise with those who suffer misfortune and to mentally and emotionally relate to their need and give them support.

There is an overlapping of the various Gifts. Also it must be noted that the Gifts cannot be limited to those mentioned above. There are others, such as those mentioned by Paul in 1 Corinthians 7:7.

We must also be very careful not to limit the Gifts to just those mentioned in these lists in Romans and Corinthians. There are others, such as mentioned by Paul in 1 Corinthians 7:7, where he calls his special God-given ability to remain a bachelor as a ‘Charisma’ ... a Gift of ‘grace.’ The above however are the general ones, which are used in the setting of the church. We must never limit God or His Spirit, in fact any supernatural Gifts and ministries given by God to His people are the result of

His grace (His loving favour to us which is undeserved by us.) They are ‘grace Gifts’, and are thus ‘Charisma.’ The Gift of the Spirit Himself is a ‘Charisma,’ and so is the gift of salvation. (See Romans 1:11-12 & 5:15-16 & 2 Corinthians 1:11)

Therefore... it is your responsibility to find out what Gift God has given to you, learn how to use it according to the Word of God, and exercise that Gift in love, for the benefit of others, and always to God’s glory!

We must also then take great care to learn how to use the Gifts properly – and back them with a clean life – so that we will be good stewards of God’s grace. We can be good stewards as in 1 Peter 4:10 already quoted.

## **VII HOW TO DISCOVER YOUR SPIRITUAL GIFT/S**

- ◆ Believe God and His Word.
- ◆ Pray for God to give wisdom and understanding.
- ◆ Know what the different Gifts are.
- ◆ Experiment with those you can. Look around to see what needs there are and try to do something meeting them.
- ◆ Examine your feelings. What do you enjoy doing? What are you good at?
- ◆ Evaluate your effectiveness.
- ◆ Seek confirmation.

# *The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit*

## **INTRODUCTION**

In spite of a great deal of emphasis being placed on the Holy Spirit in recent years, in particular on His power and gifts, He remains to be the least understood Person of the Godhead. A proper understanding of who is the Holy Spirit is both essential and basic to many doctrines of Scripture and facets of the Christian life.

The Holy Spirit is perceived by many as being merely an influence or a force. Some believe “Holy Spirit” to be just another name for God. The terms used concerning the Holy Spirit imply a vagueness of thought (understanding) and a lack of appreciation of the unique blessings to be derived from our Lord’s gift of His Spirit. Part of the reason why many people seem to have a rather vague idea of who the Holy Spirit is can be explained by the difficulty of forming a mental picture of Him.

Among the reasons for this is that we have less explicit revelation in the Bible regarding the Holy Spirit, as compared to what we find about either the Father or the Son. Perhaps this is due in part to the fact that a large share of the Holy Spirit’s ministry is to declare and glorify the Son. (John 16:14)

### **I THE MEANING OF “SPIRIT”**

The Hebrew word translated “spirit” is ruach. The Greek word translated “spirit” is pneuma. Both words are used prolifically in the Bible – ruach 378 times and pneuma 379 times. Both have a similar meaning: Breath, wind, or spirit. In John 3:8, the English words “wind” and “spirit” are both translations of pneuma. Both words convey the idea of “air in motion” – “breath,” “wind,” “breeze,” “blowing,” or “spirit.” “...*The Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.*” (Genesis 1:2) “*Hovering*” is also used in Deuteronomy 32:11 to describe an eagle soaring over a nest and spreading its wings to protect and carry its young. It denotes controlled, but powerful, movement.

Both the Hebrew and Greek words show us that the Holy Spirit is vibrant, active and alive. There also is unpredictability about Him. As Jesus put it, He is like the wind, whose origin, destination and direction are not easily determined but whose power is very plain and real. (John 3:8)

### **II THE PERSONALITY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

The Holy Spirit is not an impersonal force. This point is especially important at a time in which pantheistic tendencies are entering our culture through the influence of Eastern religions.

The Bible makes clear in several ways that the Holy Spirit is a Person and possesses all the qualities implied.

◆ The use of the masculine pronoun

It has sometimes been argued that the Holy Spirit is neuter or inanimate because the gender of the Greek word ‘pneuma’ is neuter. However, although the noun ‘pneuma’ is neuter, Jesus uses the masculine name of Counsellor (parakletos) when talking of the Spirit (John 14:16 & 26). He also employs specific masculine personal pronouns where grammatically neuter pronouns would be expected (John 14:26, 15:26 & 16:13-14). Jesus does not say, “*It will teach you...*” but “*He will teach you...*”

There is no question about the fact that Jesus thought of the Holy Spirit as a Person.

◆ The use of the name “*comforter*”

John 14:16, 26 – Jesus uses the word “*another comforter.*”

There are two Greek words translated into English as “*another*”: -

- “Allos” – another of the same kind/one more of the same kind.
- “Heteros” – another of a different kind.

Jesus used “allos” (John 14:16) meaning that the Holy Spirit is another of the same kind/one more of the same kind. The Holy Spirit is of the same kind as Jesus – which implies (when taken in the context of the rest of Scripture) that He is Person and also God.

The Greek word for “*comforter*” is “parakletos” and means “one called to the side of another.”

A parakletos might be: -

- A person called in to give witness in a court of Law in someone’s favour.
- A person called in to plead the cause of someone under charge. (1 John 2:1)
- Someone called in to put new courage into a company of soldiers who are depressed and dispirited.
- Someone called in to help carry a heavy load.

Parakletos was exclusively applied to persons and conveys the idea of someone called in or alongside in order to help (assist) one in need.

◆ The characteristics of personality

There are three basic elements in personality. These are the mind (knowledge and intelligence), emotions (feelings) and volition (will). A person (personal being) must possess these three characteristics. It can be clearly shown from Scripture that these three elements are present in the actions of the Holy Spirit.

- **Intelligence (mind, knowing)**

- There are many references to the Spirit's knowing.
- He is called the Spirit of wisdom, understanding and knowledge. (Isaiah 11:2)
- The first two gifts of the Spirit are words of wisdom and knowledge. (1 Corinthians 12:8)
- He searches the heart. (Romans 8:27)
- He is intelligent. (1 Corinthians 2:10-11)
- He decides. (1 Corinthians 12:11)
- He teaches. (Luke 12:12 & John 14:26)
- He guides. (John 16:13)
- He knows. (1 Corinthians 2:11)
- The story of Ananias and Sapphira clearly illustrates not only that the Holy Spirit knows, but also that He knows what people normally don't know. (Acts 5:1 ff)

- **Emotions (feelings)**

- The Holy Spirit can be grieved (Ephesians 4:30) and insulted (Hebrews 10:29).
- Love is a special quality of the Spirit. It develops as the result of the Spirit's presence (Galatians 5:22) and is poured out into our lives by the Spirit (Romans 5:5).

- **Volition (will)**

- The Holy Spirit is sovereign. What He wills He does and performs.
- He chooses what gifts He bestows "just as He determines." (1 Corinthians 12:11)
- He controls the life submitted to Him. (Romans 8:9)
- He decides that Paul and Barnabas should be sent out in missionary endeavour (Acts 13:2) and later leads them to Phrygia, having prevented them from ministering in Asia (Acts 16:6). He also forbids them from going to Mysia (Acts 16:7).
- The Holy Spirit oversaw the writing, gathering and compilation of the Scriptures. (2 Peter 1:21)

Furthermore the Holy Spirit performs miracles (Acts 8:39), prays for us (Romans 8:26) and speaks to us (Revelation 2:7).

A basic attribute of personality is language. In biological terms, this is the one thing that distinguishes humans from animals. Our ability to communicate rationally is a key factor in enabling us to fulfil the Genesis mandate to exercise mastery over the earth. The many biblical references to the Holy Spirit speaking, teaching, leading, guiding and the like are further clear evidence of His personhood.

◆ Relationship with other persons

The Holy Spirit's name is used in juxtaposition with the names of the Father and the Son. (Matthew 28:19 & 2 Corinthians 13:14) The baptismal formula does not refer to two persons and one "thing" but to three persons.

The Spirit relates to people, as another person would do. He can be lied to (Acts 5:3), blasphemed (Matthew 12:31), grieved (Ephesians 4:30), insulted (Hebrews 10:29) and resisted (Acts 7:51). The use of this terminology would make no sense if the Spirit were not a Person.

◆ The use of non-personal terms

The question may be asked "But what about those places where the Spirit is spoken of in non-personal terms – as being poured out (Acts 2:33) or given as a gift (Acts 2:38)?"

People are said to be "baptised" in the Spirit. (Acts 1:5) The Spirit can be quenched. (1 Thessalonians 5:19) Other symbols used of the Spirit are not suggestive of personality e.g. oil, fire, wind, etc.

It is clear that in these cases the statements are metaphorical. They are of the same kind as the phrases Jesus used when He described Himself as bread, light, gate or a road. (John 6:35, 8:12, 10:17 & 14:6)

Similarly, Paul wrote of being poured out. (2 Timothy 4:6) Sometimes we speak of someone in terms of a particular person being a gift to us, or of someone being crushed/shattered.

### **III THE DEITY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

The "proof" of the personality of the Spirit does not, of course, include the proof that He is God. The reverse is true, however, for if He is God He must also be a person as God is. The denial of deity and

personality usually go together, though some believe He is a person without believing that He is divine. In Acts 5:3-4 the Holy Spirit is called God.

◆ He possesses divine attributes

- He is omnipresent. (Psalm 139:7-10)
- He is omniscient. (John 14:26 & 16:12 & 13 & 1Corinthians 2:10-12)
- He is omnipotent. (Job 33:4; Luke 1:35 & Acts 1:8)
- He is eternal. (Hebrews 9:14)

◆ He does divine works

Certain works, which only God can do and which the Holy Spirit does, show that He must be God: -

- Creation. (Job 33:4 & Psalm 104:30)
- Caused Mary to conceive. (Luke 1:35)
- Regeneration. (John 3:5-6)
- Imparts life. (John 6:63)
- Inspires prophecy. (2 Peter 1:21)

◆ He is associated on an equal plane with the Father and the Son

Evidence for the equal association of the Holy Spirit with the Father and the Son is seen in the baptismal formula prescribed in the Great Commission. (Matthew 28:19)

The Pauline benediction in 2 Corinthians 13:14 is further evidence and Peter also sees Father, Son and Holy Spirit to be on an equal plane of deity. (1 Peter 1:2)

In passages where the Old Testament records that Yahweh said something and the New Testament quotation of that same passage is attributed to the Spirit as the Speaker, it is seen that the Holy Spirit is equal to the Father. (Isaiah 6:1-13; Acts 28:25-27; Jeremiah 31:31-34 & Hebrews 10:15-17)

Jesus speaks of an “*unpardonable sin*,” which consists of dishonouring, and blasphemy spoken against, the Holy Spirit. It is asserted that this is an even worse form of blasphemy than “*blasphemy against the Son of man*,” a strong evidence that it is regarded as the act of discrediting a divine Person. (Matthew 12:31-32 & Acts 5:3-4)

The New Testament references to the Spirit would be equally befitting of the other Persons of the Trinity. For example, He is the source of enlightenment, the teacher, the sanctifier and the object of worship. The Christian's body is described as a “*temple*” for the Spirit. (1 Corinthians 6:19)

◆ He is distinct from the Father and the Son

Could the name “Holy Spirit” be just another name for the Father or the Son?

The answer is no because: -

- The three persons are referred to together. (Matthew 28:19 & 2 Corinthians 13:14)
- The Son prays to the Father to send the Spirit. (John 14:16)
- The Father and Son together send the Spirit. (John 14:26 & 15:26)

The Holy Spirit is God in the same fashion and to the same degree as is the Father and the Son. He is distinct from the Father and the Son but is in no way inferior to either the Father or the Son. He is God – the Third Person of the Trinity, equal to the Father and the Son in every respect.

#### **IV IMPLICATIONS OF THE PERSONALITY AND DEITY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

A correct understanding of who and what the Holy Spirit is carries certain implications: -

- ◆ The Holy Spirit is a person, not a vague force. Thus, he is someone with whom we can have a personal relationship, someone to whom we can and should pray.
- ◆ The Holy Spirit, being fully divine, is to be accorded the same honour and respect that we give to the Father and the Son. It is appropriate to worship God – Father, Son and Holy Spirit. He should not be thought of as in any sense inferior in essence to them, although his role may sometimes be subordinated to theirs.
- ◆ The Holy Spirit is one with the Father and the Son; His work is the expression and execution of what the three of them have planned together. There is no tension among their persons and activities.
- ◆ God is not far off. In the Holy Spirit, the Triune God comes close, so close as to actually enter into each believer: He is even more intimate with us now than in the incarnation. Through the operation of the Spirit he has truly become Immanuel, “God with us” – Christian Theology, M.J. Erickson P 862.

## V THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

The work of the Holy Spirit is of special interest to Christians for it is particularly through this work that God is personally involved and active in the life of the believer.

### ◆ The work of the Holy Spirit in the old testament

It is often difficult to identify the Holy Spirit within the Old Testament, for it reflects the earliest stages of progressive revelation. In fact, the term “Holy Spirit” is rarely employed in the Old Testament. The usual expression is “the Spirit of God” and this term is synonymous with the Holy Spirit.

#### - **His work in creation**

In the creation account we find a reference to the presence and activity of the Spirit of God. (Genesis 1:2) God's continued working with the creation is attributed to the Holy Spirit. (Job 26:13) God gave man the gift of life by His Spirit. The maintenance and renewal of all life is through the Spirit of God. (Job 33:4 & Psalm 104:29-30)

#### - **His work in revelation**

One of the greatest wonders of all time is the remarkable way in which God revealed Himself to His prize creation – man. The chief human instrument that God used to give His message to man was the prophet, but behind the prophet was the Holy Spirit moving and guiding so that the writer communicated exactly what God wanted man to know.

The Old Testament prophets testified that their speaking and writing were a result of the Spirit's coming upon them. (Ezekiel 2:2 & 11:24; Numbers 24:2 & 1 Samuel 10:10)

Peter confirmed the testimony of the prophets regarding their experience: “*no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.*” (2 Peter 1:21)

The book of Acts gives witness that the Holy Spirit spoke by the mouth of David. (Acts 1:16 & 4:25) Since the Holy Spirit produced the Scriptures, they can be referred to as “God-breathed.” (Theopneustos - 2 Timothy 3:16)

#### - **His work in enabling and indwelling people**

- These men received wisdom, authority, and gifts for leadership from, and were indwelt by, the Holy Spirit: -

- Joseph (Genesis 41:38-39)
- Joshua (Numbers 27:18)
- Saul (1 Samuel 10:6)
- David (1 Samuel 16:13)
- These men are enabled and indwelt by Holy Spirit at the following: -
  - Othniel (Judges 3:9-10) had the ability to judge wisely.
  - Gideon (Judges 6:34) was endowed with military might and ability.
  - Samson (Judges 13:25, 14:6 & 15:14) was granted physical strength.
  - Bezalel (Exodus 31:1-7) received understanding, knowledge and craftsmanship.

There is within the Old Testament witness to the Spirit in anticipation of a coming time when the ministry of the Spirit is to be more complete. Part of this relates to the coming Messiah, upon whom the Spirit is to rest in an unusual degree and fashion. (Isaiah 11:1-5, 42:1-4 & 61:1-3) Jesus quotes the opening verses of Isaiah 61 and indicates that they are now being fulfilled in Him. (Luke 4:18-21) There is a more generalised promise, however; one which is not restricted to the Messiah. (Joel 2:28-29) At Pentecost Peter quoted this prophecy, indicating that it had now been fulfilled.

◆ The work of the Holy Spirit in the life of Jesus

When we examine Jesus' life, we find a pervasive and powerful presence and activity of the Spirit throughout.

- Jesus was conceived by the Spirit. (Luke 1:35 & Matthew 1:18, 20)
- The Spirit is present in dramatic form from the very beginning of Jesus' public ministry. (Matthew 3:16; Mark 1:10; Luke 3:22 & John 1:32)
- Jesus was led and guided by the Holy Spirit. (Matthew 4:1 & Luke 4:1-2)
- He was empowered by the Spirit to do miracles and drive out demons. (Matthew 12:25-32)
- Jesus preached in the power of the Spirit. (Luke 4:18)
- He rejoiced in the Holy Spirit. (Luke 10:21)

There is no aspect of Jesus' life or His ministry that was conducted apart from the anointing and help of the Holy Spirit.

◆ The work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer

- **The Holy Spirit convicts** the individual of his true state before God and places the truth of the Gospel in a clear light. (John 16:7-11)

- **He regenerates.** Regeneration is the miraculous transformation of the individual and implantation of spiritual energy. It is God's supernatural act of imparting eternal life. (Titus 3:5) The Holy Spirit is the One who brings about this “new birth.” (John 3:3-8)
- **He lives in us.** (Romans 8:9) He comforts, teaches, reminds, helps and guides those He indwells. (John 14:13-18 & 26 & Romans 8:14)
- **We are sealed** by the indwelling Holy Spirit. (Ephesians 1:13-14 & 4:30)
- **He baptises** us into the Body of Christ. (1 Corinthians 12:13)
- **He sanctifies** us. By sanctification is meant the continued transformation of moral and spiritual character so that the life of the believer actually comes to mirror the standing, which he/she already has in God's sight. (Romans 15:16; 2 Thessalonians 2:13 & Titus 3:5)
- **He bears witness** to the fact that we are the children of God. (Romans 8:16)
- **He enables** the believer to: -
  - be victorious over the old nature. (Romans 8: 2 & 13)
  - overcome our weaknesses. (Romans 8:26)
  - worship God. (Ephesians 5:18-20 & Philippians 3:3)
- **He empowers** the children of God. (Acts 1:8)
- **He strengthens** us. (Romans 8:11 & Ephesians 3:16)
- **He bestows gifts.** (1Corinthians 12:8-11)

## **VI THE BAPTISM AND FULLNESS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

The Christian life is life in the Spirit. Every Christian believer has an experience of the Holy Spirit from the very first moments of his Christian life. The Christian life begins with a new birth and the new birth is a birth “of the Spirit.” (John 3:3-8) He is “the Spirit of life,” and it is He who imparts life to our dead souls. More than this, He, Himself comes to dwell within. The indwelling of the Holy Spirit is the common possession of all God's children. (1Corinthians 6:19-20) It is impossible to have the Spirit without being a child of God or to be a child of God without having the Holy Spirit. (Romans 8:9, 11, 15 & 16 & Galatians 4:6) Most Christians are agreed on this. But when the question “Is this promised ‘gift’ of the Spirit the same as the ‘baptism’ of the Spirit?” is asked, convictions differ.

## **VII THE BAPTISM OF THE SPIRIT**

There are seven direct references to the baptism with the Spirit in the New Testament: Matthew 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; John 1:33; Acts 1:5 & 11:16 and 1 Corinthians 12:13.

The term “Baptism of the Spirit” is an exclusively New Testament expression. It is however a fulfilment of the Old Testament expectation. This expectation was usually expressed in terms of God's promise to “*pour out*” His Spirit. (Isaiah 32:15 & 44:3-5 & Joel 2:28-31)

John the Baptist, the last prophet of the old order, summarised this expectation in his familiar saying which ascribed the outpouring of the Spirit to the Messiah Himself: “*I have baptised with water, but He will baptise you with the Holy Spirit.*” (Mark 1:8)

From the Old Testament prophecies and the statement by John the Baptist, it becomes evident that the “*outpouring*” of God's Spirit is a promise of distinctive blessing, which inaugurates the age of the Spirit. This baptism of God's Spirit is a universal blessing. It will be available to all, not only a select few. It is the birthright of all God's children and will be accompanied by supernatural manifestations.

◆ The day of Pentecost

In Acts 1:5-8 Jesus tells the disciples to wait for the baptism with the Holy Spirit. As a result of the Spirit coming upon them they would receive power to be witnesses for Him. Two distinct groups of people experienced the fulfilment of this promise on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2) and it seems to have differed in each case.

The first group, comprising the 120 in the Upper Room, were believers already. For them the promise of the Holy Spirit's baptism and outpouring became a reality on this day. (Acts 2:1-4) These people were baptised and filled with the Holy Spirit at the same time, although subsequent to their “conversion.” This does not imply, however, that this pattern is to be the norm for today as shall be seen. The fact that their experience was in two distinct stages was due simply to historical circumstances. They could not have received the Pentecostal gift before Pentecost. Their experience was accompanied by the manifestation of Tongues.

The second group were the 3000 who heard Peter's message and were convicted of their sin. They were told to “*repent and let each one of you be baptised in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit...*” (Acts 2:38) “*So then those who had received his word were baptised...*” (Acts 2:41) Although we are not specifically told that they received the remission of sins and the gift of the Spirit, it is

strongly presumed that they did. This is not an argument from silence but is based on the unequivocal promise of Peter that they would receive these gifts if they repented, believed and were baptised. Since they thus fulfilled the conditions (verse 41), God must have fulfilled His promise and they were born again and baptised with the Holy Spirit. This second group do not seem to have experienced the same miraculous phenomena or manifestations as the 120 (the rushing mighty wind and the tongues of fire) At least nothing is said about these things.

The 120 were regenerated already and received the baptism of the Spirit only after waiting upon God for ten days. The 3000 on the other hand were unbelievers who when having repented, received the forgiveness of their sins and the gift of the Spirit simultaneously – and it happened immediately. They repented and believed, without any need to wait. “Baptism and Fullness” – John Stott, page 29.

It must be noted that the Promise of the Father is not optional and is essential in order to be effective witnesses. There are two passages of Scripture in the Acts of the Apostles in which we meet people who appear to have become Christians without receiving the Holy Spirit. But a closer look at these passages will soon show that there is something unusual – something irregular – about both situations.

◆ The Samaritan believers – Acts 8:5-17 (no mention of tongues)

Philip the evangelist preached the gospel in Samaria resulting in many having believed and being baptised. That they were soundly born again is proved by the fact that they were immediately baptised. No indication is given that their response was not genuine (Simon, the magician was the only exception).

The first sign that there is something unusual about this incident is that “*when the apostles at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent them Peter and John.*” (verse 14) There is no evidence that on any other occasion evangelistic work had to be inspected or vetted by two apostles. Why, then, did God withhold His Holy Spirit (or perhaps the manifestations of the Holy Spirit?) on this unique occasion? Some are of the opinion that these Samaritans were not yet born-again. Some use this incident to “prove” that the baptism in the Spirit must (and can only be) an experience subsequent to conversion. This is however not the norm. The most probable answer lies in the fact that these converts were Samaritans.

For centuries there had been bitter rivalry between Jews and Samaritans. The Jews had no dealings with Samaritans. (John 4:9) But now not only had a Jew preached to Samaritans, but Samaritans had accepted the Jews' message. The question was whether these Samaritans would now be acceptable to the Jewish believers or not. Or would the ancient-Jewish Samaritan schism survive in the church. In order for Jews to accept the Samaritan's experience they would have to be present as "witnesses."

"If the Holy Spirit had been given immediately upon profession of faith and baptism by the Samaritans this ancient schism might have continued and there would have been two churches, out of fellowship with each other. Acts 15 shows how carefully a decisive split between Jewish and Gentile Christianity was avoided by the early Christians. Acts 8 seems to stress that a similarly disastrous split was avoided at Samaria. God did not give his Holy Spirit (or, perhaps, the supernatural manifestations of the Spirit in tongues and prophecy?) to the Samaritans immediately: not until representatives from Jerusalem came down and expressed their solidarity with the converts by praying for them and laying their hands on them. Then they received the Holy Spirit; indeed, the use of the imperfect tense, "elambonon," may be significant; they received repeated manifestations of the Holy Spirit. It was not so much an authorisation from Jerusalem or an extension of the Jerusalem church, as a divine veto on schism in the infant Church, a schism which could have slipped away almost unnoticed into the Christian fellowship, as converts from the two sides of the "Samaritan curtain" found Christ without finding each other. That would have been the denial of the one baptism and all it stood for. It was for this reason, I believe, that God made delay on this occasion. Acts 8 is recorded precisely to show the abnormality of a baptism, which does not lead to reception of the Holy Spirit. This passage (and the rest of the New Testament states explicitly) implies the two belong together." "I believe in the Holy Spirit." – Michael Green.

◆ The Ephesian disciples – Acts 19:1-7 (accompanied by tongues and prophecies)

In this story it is evident that these people had not yet been born again. Paul asked them if they had received the Holy Spirit when they believed to which they replied, "No, we have not even heard whether there is a Holy Spirit." He immediately questioned them about their conversion, which he put right and to which they readily responded. Having heard the Gospel and having put their faith in Jesus Christ, he baptised them (verse 5) and laid his hands on them, with the result that "the Holy Spirit came on them" with accompanying signs (tongues and prophecy) as visible and audible evidence.

◆ Paul's conversion – Acts 9:1-19 (no mention of accompanying signs such as tongues)

It would be very precarious to found a doctrine of two-stage initiation on the three-day delay in Paul's conversion experience.

After Paul's conversion on the Damascus Road, God sent Ananias to him to pray for the restoration of his sight and for him to be filled with the Spirit. There is no doubt that Paul did receive the Promise of the Holy Spirit at this point because of the evidence in the verses which follow, showing that he was definitely empowered to serve the Lord.

However, there was no specific manifestation at this point. We cannot of course argue from silence, but the whole passage seems to be carefully detailed (the scales falling from his eyes, taking food and being strengthened). It is therefore to be expected that such an important matter as some manifestation of the Spirit would also have been recorded.

It seems possible, therefore, to receive the Holy Spirit or the Promise of the Father without any noticeable manifestation. We do know however that Paul did speak in tongues later on. It is not the manifestations or the experience that are of primary importance but the receiving of the Promise of the Father by faith.

◆ Cornelius – Acts 10:44-48 (manifestation of tongues evident)

Here we have the story of Peter preaching the Gospel to the Gentiles in the house of Cornelius. It was the Holy Spirit Who “fell upon all those who were listening to the message” which appears to be in fulfilment of Joel's prophecy. The manifestation of “*tongues and exalting God*” is evident (verse 46).

Evidence from Scripture indicates that the “baptism” of the Spirit and the “gift” of the Spirit are identical. It is that which takes place when a person responds positively to the gospel message (Acts 2:38 ff). The repentant sinner is baptised into the realm of the Spirit and receives the gift of the Spirit. The Lord Jesus, the Mediator of the New Covenant and the Bestower of its blessings, gives both the forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Spirit to all who enter His covenant.

All Christians are described in the letter to the Hebrews as being “*partakers of the Holy Spirit,*” who have “*tasted the good word of God the powers of the age to come.*” (Hebrews 6:4-5)

After this initial conversion and “baptism” experience, believers are to continue to be filled with the Spirit and manifest this fullness in holiness of life and boldness of testimony. The emphasis of the New Testament is not to urge Christians to seek some entirely new and distinct (or subsequent) blessing (or blessings), but to remind us of what by grace we are and to urge us to live by it.

It cannot be maintained from Scripture that “tongues” always follow the reception of the Spirit. Of all the groups who received the Spirit in the book of Acts only three are said to have “*spoken in tongues.*” (Acts 2:1-4, 10:44-46 & 19:1-16) Since the other people and groups who received the Spirit are not said to have spoken in tongues, it would be arbitrary to assert that they did.

I do, however, believe that the gift of tongues is a gift to be sincerely desired by every believer. More on this when I deal with the “Gifts of the Spirit.”

### **VIII THE FULLNESS OF THE SPIRIT**

“Baptism of the Spirit” refers to an initial once-for-all gift. When speaking of the “*fullness of the Spirit*” we acknowledge that this gift needs to be continuously and increasingly appropriated.

The fullness of the Spirit is the consequence of the baptism of the Spirit (Acts 2:4). John Stott says that the baptism is what Jesus did (pouring out the Spirit); the fullness is what the people experienced. The fullness is intended to be continuous, the permanent result of the Baptism of the Spirit.

The New Testament texts, which speak of “*being filled with the Spirit,*” imply that it is to be a normal characteristic of every dedicated Christian. It is given for the purpose of service (witness-bearing). (Acts 1:5, 4:8 & 31, 6:3-5, 11:24 & 13:52 & Luke 1:15-17, 41 & 67)

In addition to these varied descriptions of people being filled with the Spirit, either as a constant experience or for a specific purpose, Ephesians 5:18 contains the well-known command to all Christian people to be filled with the Spirit.

There are no similar statements or injunctions in the New Testament about the baptism of the Spirit.

## EPHESIANS 5:18

◆ It is a Command.

Paul uses a two-fold command, “*do not get drunk with wine... but be filled with the Spirit.*” The two verbs are in the imperative - commanding Christians to be filled with the Spirit so that they may fulfil their light-bearing function in society. To be filled with the Spirit is not optional and is vital in order to be effective in mission. To be filled with the Spirit means to allow Jesus to have the fullest control in our lives that we are conscious of.

◆ Continuous appropriation

The verb is in the present continuous tense which means that we are to be continuously filled with the Spirit.

◆ It is for **all** Believers

The verb is in the plural form. The fullness of the Holy Spirit is to be the continual state of all Christians. No one is exempt or excluded. It is not only for the “elite.”

◆ Be filled

The passive use of the verb implies that we cannot fill ourselves but that we are to be filled. We are to allow Jesus to fill us with the Holy Spirit.

In order to be obedient to the command to be filled with the Spirit we are to come to the Saviour in faith and drink and drink and drink. (John 7:37-39) We are to yield to the Spirit's control, submit to His direction, surrender to His will and be totally influenced, motivated and empowered by Him.