

LESSON 15 - BIBLE TEACHING ABOUT THE SPIRIT OF GOD

*“Thou sendest forth Thy Spirit, they are created;
and Thou renewest the face of the earth’ (Psalm
104:30*

THE Spirit of God is very frequently mentioned throughout the Bible, from the first chapter of Genesis to the last of Revelation. It is clear that it fulfils an important function in Divine operations; therefore we must have true views concerning it if we are to fully grasp the fundamentals of the Bible message.

Jesus said,

‘God is a Spirit’ (John 4:24).

-- more correctly, *‘God is Spirit’*. This is His fundamental nature; perfect, unchangeable, indestructible existence.

The Scriptures, however, in describing God’s workings, speak of *‘the Spirit’* as that by which God works & manifests Himself. The Bible speaks of it as *‘God’s Spirit’*, *‘Thy Spirit’*, *‘the Spirit of the Lord’*, etc., as

“Thou testifiedst against them (our fathers) by Thy Spirit IN Thy prophets.” (Nehemiah. 9:30).

GOD AND HIS SPIRIT ARE ONE -- CREATION AND INSPIRATION

God and His Spirit are one, like the sun and its light, a fire and its heat, a magnet and its power. God, as we have seen, has a localized dwelling: He dwells in heaven *‘in unapproachable light’*: By His Spirit He is everywhere present --

“Whither shall I go from Thy Spirit? Or whither shall I flee from Thy Presence?” (Psalm 139:7).

The Spirit is the agency of God’s working. It was very active in the work of Creation, at the very beginning --

“The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters” (Genesis 1:2).

“By His Spirit He hath garnished (made beautiful) the heavens” (Job 26:13).

“Thou sendest forth Thy Spirit: they (all creatures) are created” (Psalm 104:30).

Very often throughout the Bible we read that the *‘Spirit of the Lord’* came upon the prophets and wonderful works were thereby accomplished. It was in this manner that all prophecies came to be uttered and the whole of Scripture written --

“I am full of power by the Spirit of the Lord” (Micah 3:8).

Peter declares --

“Holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.” (2 Peter 1:21).

THE SPIRIT AND ELECTRICAL ENERGY

If the Spirit is the basis of all Creation, of all *‘material’* things, then should we not find some natural evidence of this in all man’s delving?

BibleKEY fact:

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The discoveries concerning electrical energy in modern times constitute a tremendous confirmation of the divinity of the Word. Until recently, mankind has always thought that material substances and energy were two entirely separate things, and that the various material substances themselves were immutably different from each other. In contrast, the Bible has always taught that all things are made by and out of the force, energy, power or 'Spirit' of God.

Man has now discovered that electrical energy is a major component in the formation and substance of all material things: that all 'material' things are simply intensely concentrated energy in various arrangements and patterns. The Spirit of God is of infinite power, unlimited energy. It created the universe, and set the myriads of galaxies in motion. It could freeze the mightiest stellar explosion at the peak of its force. It could stop and reverse a nuclear blast, and in a moment restore everything as it was before the blast. It is infinitely greater than 'electricity' as we know it. Man could never use it or control it: it would destroy him to approach it. But the picture of Creation has been shown to be exactly as the Bible has said, as to its basis of pure power, and the very opposite of what man has always imagined.

'FREE' SPIRIT AND 'HOLY' SPIRIT

The Bible makes reference to two aspects or modes of operation of the Spirit of God:

1. Spirit in general ("free spirit") at the root of everything, operating in the domain of fixed law: the movements of the spheres, the chemical activities of the elements, the life cycle of plants and living creatures
2. Holy Spirit: God's power specifically operating, focused toward the accomplishment of a specific Divine purpose, over-riding natural laws -- in words of wisdom or works of power.

Only a few among mankind have experienced the latter, at certain crisis periods in the working out of the Divine Plan. It is given to none today, though there are multitudes of pretenders (many doubtless sincerely self deceived) who mistake animal mesmerism and excited feelings for a Holy Spirit "experience" -- but which is utterly unrelated to the true and holy operation of the Holy Spirit as revealed in scripture.

POSSESSION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

The apostles were made possessors of the Spirit of God on the day of Pentecost. When it came upon them, the house they were in was greatly shaken. By it they were enabled to perform acts above natural laws. They could immediately be heard in foreign tongues which they had never learned. The hearers said--

"Are not all these which speak, Galileans? And how hear we every man in our own tongue wherein we were born? . . . We do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God" (Acts 2:7 11).

The Spirit opened the understanding of the apostles to things they did not know naturally, as Jesus had promised them --

"When he, the Spirit of Truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth, for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak, and he shall show you things to come." (John 16:13).

By the Spirit, the apostles could cure diseases, heal the sick, even raise the

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“...the Bible has always taught that all things are made by and out of the force, energy, power or 'Spirit' of God. ”

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“By the Spirit of God the apostles were enabled to perform acts above natural laws. ”

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dead. Peter's shadow had the power to cure (Acts 5:15). Jesus had this same power without measure. A diseased woman came secretly in a crowd of people and touched his garment, and was instantly healed. Jesus immediately realized that the Spirit of God had issued from him and healed the woman (Luke 8:43-46). And not only the woman, but --

"As many as touched his garments were made perfectly whole" (Matthew 14:36).

LAYING THE FOUNDATION OF CHRISTIANITY -- THE SPIRIT WITNESS

This power of the Spirit in the hands of the apostles was necessary to the accomplishment of the great work they had to do in witnessing to the resurrection of Jesus, establishing the ecclesial foundation, and completing the Scriptures. While the disciples were natural witnesses for the resurrection, upon which the Faith was to be built, their words would have seemed as the ravings of the mentally deranged, if God had not assisted them by endowing them with power to work miracles by their own hands. It was God's purpose at that time that their work should have a worldwide effect upon society --

"They went forth and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming their words with signs following" (Mark 16:20).

"The Great Salvation . . . first spoken by the Lord . . . was confirmed to us by them that heard him: God bearing them witness with signs, wonders, divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit" (Hebrews 2:4).

Peter declared in his defense before the Jewish Council --

"The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree . . . and we are His witnesses of these things, and so also is the Holy Spirit." (Acts 5:30-32).

THE APOSTLES COULD CONFER IT ON OTHERS

The original apostles (including Paul - 2 Timothy 1:6) were given the power of imparting the Spirit to others. It was their duty to develop and organize the Christian community, and establish it on a sound basis. There is no evidence of any others ever having the power to pass the Spirit on. This distinction is clear in the incident of Philip at Samaria (Acts 8). Philip was one of the 7 helpers chosen as recorded in Acts 6, who had received the Holy Spirit from the apostles. When he had preached to those in Samaria, and they had accepted the truth of the words he spoke, we do not find that he could pass the Holy Spirit on to them. Rather we find the apostles Peter and John sent from Jerusalem to do this --

"Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the Word of God, they sent to them Peter and John; who, when they were come down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit (for as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized into the Name of the Lord Jesus). Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit" (Acts 8:14-15).

There is NO record in Scripture of the Holy Spirit being transmitted from the second person to another person. The gift of the Holy Spirit, as we have seen, was to establish the Word of God in the foundation preaching of the apostles, until the Christian community was a living, organized entity well established, and the Scriptures were completed to guide it. Any pretension on the part of a wide and conflicting variety of people today (all ignorant of the Gospel of the Kingdom) to possession of the Holy Spirit is completely unscriptural. If any have the Spirit, they will be able to give incontrovertible proof. And not just supposed 'cures' based on

BibleKEY definition:

"ecclesial" from the Greek "ekklesia", ek-klay-see'-ah; meaning a calling out, i.e. a religious congregation of "called out ones". Generally translated in the KJV as "church".

BibleKEY fact:

“ The original apostles (including Paul) were given the power of imparting the Spirit to others. There is no evidence of any others ever having the power to pass the Spirit on. ”

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excitement, emotion, mass hysteria and, often, downright deception. Most importantly, they will have the TRUTH --

"To the Law and to the Testimony: if they speak not according to this Word (the Word of God), it is because there is no light in them" (Isaiah 8:20).

If they do not have the Truth, they most certainly do not have the Spirit. Many 'wonderful' things can be done by strong personalities and animal magnetism. Many conflicting groups today claim to have the 'Spirit.' They cannot all have it, for they are in conflict with one another, and the Spirit is unity and truth. So it is incumbent on any who make any such claims to give positive proofs, like the apostles. Without this, such claims should not be given a moment's consideration. It will be noticed that we have throughout changed the word 'ghost' (as it appears in the AV) to 'spirit' (as in the RSV). In the New Testament the original word is 'pneuma', and should in all cases be rendered 'spirit.' 'Ghost' is an obsolete Saxon term the churches use to conceal and mystify the idea expressed by the simple Greek word 'pneuma' and Hebrew 'ruach' -- both meaning 'breath, wind or spirit.'

NOT A PERSON BUT THE POWER OF GOD

A simple reading of the way 'Spirit' is used throughout the Bible shows it to be not a coequal Person of a supposed 'Trinity' (an idea foreign to Scripture, as observed in a previous lesson), but the limitless power and energy issuing forth from God by which He is everywhere present, and by which He does all things. Personification (see definition on next page; also review Lesson 5: Principles of Bible Interpretation) is frequently used in the Scriptures, and so naturally we find some expressions concerning the Spirit which could be taken to indicate actual personality, as is true of wisdom, mammon, sin, etc.

Paul personifies Sin --

"Let not Sin reign . . . Sin shall not have dominion . . . His servants ye are to whom ye obey, whether Sin unto death . . . Ye were servants of Sin . . . Sin deceived me and slew me . . . That Sin might become an exceeding great Sinner (literal translation)" (Romans 6:12, 14, 16, 20;7:13).

The power of God is personified in like manner, as the doer of His will: it is Himself in extension. But the Spirit never appears as an actual person in any scriptural record. God has used His Spirit through the angels, through men, through Christ Jesus. But manifestations of the Spirit have never been in human form. When it came upon Christ, it was in the form of a dove (John 1:32). On Pentecost, it was as cloven tongues of fire (Acts 2:3). This would be a very strange way to manifest a person, but it is a very fitting way to manifest the power of God in its working.

PERSONIFICATION -- THE USE OF 'HE' AND 'IT'.

The following is an interesting comparison as to translations of John 14:16 17--

*AV: "The Father shall give you another Comforter (parakletos: masc.) that he may abide with you . . . even the Spirit of Truth whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him, for he * dwelleth with you."*

DIAGLOTT: "The Father shall give you another Helper, that he may be with you . . . the Spirit of Truth which the world cannot receive, because it beholds it not, nor knows it: but you know it, because it abides with you."*

NESTLE: "The Father will give you another Comforter, that he may be with you . . . the Spirit of Truth which the world cannot receive, because it beholds it not, nor knows: ye know it, because he remains with you."*

BibleKEY fact:

“ Many conflicting groups today claim to have the 'Spirit.' They cannot all have it, for they are in conflict with one another, and the Spirit is unity and truth. ”

BibleKEY Word Search:

"spirit" (N.T.) - from Strong's Greek Dictionary #4151- **pneuma**, pnyoo'-mah; from 4154; a current of air, i.e. breath (blast) or a breeze; by anal. or fig. a spirit, i.e. (human) the rational soul, (by impl.) vital principle, mental disposition, etc., or (superhuman) an angel, doemon, or (divine) God, Christ's spirit, the Holy Spirit

"spirit" (O.T.) - from Strong's Hebrew Dictionary #7307 - **ruwach**, roo'-akh; from 7306; wind; by resemblance breath, i.e. a sensible (or even violent) exhalation; fig. life, anger, unsubstantiality; by extens. a region of the sky; by resemblance spirit, but only of a rational being (includ. its expression and functions)

"comforter" (N.T.) - from Strong's Greek Dictionary #3875 - **parakletos**, par-ak'-lay-tos; an intercessor, consoler:- **Translated in the King James Version "advocate"**,

BibleKEY fact:

“ ...the Spirit never appears as an actual person in any scriptural record. But manifestations of the Spirit have never been in human form. ”

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This is instructive. All three passages have 'he' for the first pronoun, because the word "*parakleetos*" is grammatically masculine in Greek. But, as is clear from the correct rendering in the Diaglott and Nestle translations, the Authorised Version falsely and unjustifiably translates the next 4 pronouns as 'whom, he, he, he.' The original Greek is specifically in the neuter gender -- 'which' and 'it'. The last (asterisked) pronoun can be either 'he' or 'it', and the translators have consequently rendered according to their own judgment and beliefs. This is very often the case where 'he' ('him') or 'it' occur in AV, as when it is the implied but unwritten subject of a verb, or in some cases (not nominative) of the Greek word "*autos*" ('him 'it') or "*ekeinos*" ('that one'). In these cases it can be translated 'he' ('him') or 'it', optionally. Sometimes the Scriptures use 'it' and sometimes 'he' for the Holy Spirit.

This is perfectly understandable of the occasional personification of something that is not inherently personal, but it is incomprehensible in speaking of an actual person -- especially of a divine Person, a Person of the Trinity -- as the Holy Spirit is deemed to be by traditional Christianity! Would we **ever** call God 'it'? It is unthinkable. We speak of a ship or a country as 'she' or 'it' interchangeably, but we never use such terms interchangeably when speaking of a woman. Jesus said, (and it is a very important, foundation statement of Scripture) --

"This is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true God, AND Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent" (John 17:3).

If the Holy Spirit were the third co-equal Person of a Triune Godhead, it would be incomprehensible for it to be omitted from this statement. Obviously the Holy Spirit is not a person in a Trinity. The Bible never mentions such a thing. It does say, however . . .

"There is but ONE God, the Father. . . AND one Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Corinthians 8:6.).

Here again, inexplicably, according to the Trinity theory, no mention of the just as important, co-equal third Person. And even more explicitly to Timothy --

"There is ONLY God, AND one mediator between God and men, the MAN Christ Jesus" (1 Timothy 2:5).

-- still no mention of that mysterious third Person who certainly would not be left out of these enumerations, if he existed. Consider the parallelism of the announcement to Mary:

"The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee" (Luke 1:35).

Note: "*the Holy Spirit . . . the power of the Highest*". This is the consistent picture of Scripture: ***the Holy Spirit is God's power.***

BibleKEY definition:

"personification" - the representation of something as though it were a person.

BibleKEY fact:

“ This is the consistent picture of Scripture: ***the Holy Spirit is God's power*** ”

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Name Mr/Mrs/Miss

Address Postal Code

* You may need an additional sheet for your answers if there is not enough space below. Your answers to the following questions will help you - and us - to determine how much you have discovered about your Bible. Please return this form in the envelope provided even if you are unable to answer all the questions. On receipt of it we will forward a further study, as well as some

1. Are God and His Spirit separate and distinct?
2. Give illustrations of the use of the Spirit of God in Creation.
3. By what means did the Bible come to be written?
4. Define the two aspects or manifestations of the spirit of God.
5. Is the spirit of God as 'Holy Spirit' under the power of any man today?
6. In what way was the Spirit of God used by the apostles in the first century?
7. Who was the spirit of God given to the apostles?
8. Could the apostles pass the Holy Spirit on to other people?
9. Could the second person to receive the Holy Spirit pass it on to others?
10. Is the Holy Spirit a separate and distinct person?
11. Has the Spirit of God ever appeared as a person in the Bible?
12. Mention 2 forms or shapes in which the Spirit of God has appeared.