

A Study Of The Holy Spirit

Introduction. Perhaps one of the most confusing aspects of the Godhead today is the work of the Holy Spirit. If someone has ever asked you about the work of the Holy Spirit, you may have been able to barely stammer out an answer that really did not deal with the issue. If you have, you can take heart because many Christians cannot rightly answer these questions.

The work of the Godhead is both unified and diversified. The work of each member can be called the work of God, yet there is diversity in the work which each one does. The Father planned. The Son executed the divine plan. The Holy Spirit assisted and revealed to man this divine plan. Why were miracles, wonders, and signs necessary in the first century but not now? How does the Holy Spirit work in the lives of people today?

All these are relevant questions which we can hopefully understand as we examine the work of the Holy Spirit in God's redemptive plan. In order to try and dispel the darkness in the minds of some, we are going to examine how the Holy Spirit truly works in the lives of people today. Perhaps this study will assist you in helping those who are deceived see the truth about the Holy Spirit's work.

I. **Who Is The Holy Spirit?**

A. Uses of the word "Spirit."

1. It sometimes has reference to the human spirit (Matthew 26:41; James 2:26).
2. It sometimes has reference to an attitude (Romans 11:8; Galatians 6:1).
3. It sometimes has reference to the Holy Spirit (John 14:26; Acts 13:2).
 - a) "Spirit" can be named as the cause for its effect, such as miraculous effects (Acts 2:4; Hebrews 2:4).
 - b) The name of an author can represent his writings (Acts 8:28; 15:21; Ephesians 4:21). Thus, "Spirit" sometimes represents His law (John 3:5; Romans 8:2; 1 Peter 1:22).

B. The Holy Spirit is a divine person.

1. He has a mind (Romans 8:27).
2. He expresses love (Romans 15:30).
3. He possesses knowledge (1 Corinthians 2:11).
4. He speaks and teaches (1 Timothy 4:1; John 14:26).
5. He can be insulted (Hebrews 10:29).

C. He is part of the Godhead.

1. The term "Godhead" describes the idea of God being comprised of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The Godhead is specifically

- mentioned in the New Testament (Acts 17:29; Romans 1:20; Colossians 2:9). It is also implied in the language of the Bible (Genesis 1:26-27; 3:22; 11:7; Isaiah 6:8; Matthew 28:19).
2. The Bible shows that the Godhead is a distinct relationship.
 - a) The Father is God (John 20:17). He is distinct from the Son (John 8:16) and the Holy Spirit (John 14:26).
 - b) The Son is God (Hebrews 1:8). He is distinct from the Father (John 8:16) and the Holy Spirit (Acts 10:38).
 - c) The Holy Spirit is God (Acts 5:3-4). He is distinct from the Father (John 14:26) and the Son (Acts 10:38).
 3. Any doctrine that denies that there are three distinct Beings which comprise God is false.

II. ***The Spirit's Work***

A. Creation.

1. He was involved in the creation of the Universe.
 - a) God used the Spirit in the creation of the world (Genesis 1:2; Job 26:13; Psalm 104:30).
 - b) This was clearly in conjunction with the work of the Son (John 1:1-3; Colossians 1:16).
2. He was involved in the creation of man (Genesis 1:26-27; Job 33:4).
3. From the very beginning, the Spirit was at work. His work continued, especially as God began to slowly reveal His plan of redemption for mankind.

B. Revelation.

1. In Old Testament times.
 - a) Men of old spoke by inspiration of the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:20-21; 2 Samuel 23:2).
 - b) The Spirit was in them, testifying of what was to come (Hebrews 1:1; 1 Peter 1:10-11; Isaiah 53:4-6).
 - (1) Enoch (Jude 14).
 - (2) Micaiah (1 Kings 22:14).
 - (3) Elisha (2 Kings 3:11-12).
 - (4) Ezekiel (Ezekiel 1:3).
 - (5) Micah (Micah 1:1).
2. In New Testament times.
 - a) The Spirit was to guide the apostles into all the truth (John 14:26; 15:26; 16:12-13).
 - b) Power was received when the Holy Spirit came on them (Acts 1:8; 2:4).
 - c) Inspired revelation was supernatural, verbal, and final.

- (1) All scripture is inspired by God (Ephesians 3:3-5; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; Revelation 1:1-2).
 - (2) They used the words given by the Spirit (1 Corinthians 2:9-13; 1 Thessalonians 2:13; 1 Timothy 4:1-3).
 - (3) This final revelation cannot be altered (Galatians 1:6-8; Jude 3; Revelation 22:18-19).
3. Thus the Spirit's role in redemption included His work of revealing the will of God.
- C. Confirmation.
1. The Spirit confirmed Jesus as the Christ.
 - a) The Spirit worked with Christ to confirm His work (Matthew 12:28; Luke 4:18-21; Acts 10:38).
 - b) Jesus and the apostles were attested through the miracles, wonders, and signs they performed (Mark 16:20; John 3:2; 20:30-31; Acts 2:22; Romans 15:19; 2 Corinthians 12:12; Hebrews 2:3-4).
 - (1) They proved that these men were sent by God.
 - (a) "Miracles" pointed to their superhuman source.
 - (b) "Signs" were proof of a divine mission.
 - (c) "Wonders" was the effect of the miracle on those who witnessed it.
 - i) They would convince unbelievers (1 Corinthians 14:22).
 - ii) They would edify believers (1 Corinthians 14:26).
 - (2) As the Bible was being revealed and confirmed, it was the Spirit of God at work! But as the word was preached, the Spirit was at work on those who listened with honest hearts.
 2. Miracles, wonders, and signs have ceased because no further need exists for either revelation or confirmation.
 - a) This period of time was predicted (1 Corinthians 13:8-10).
 - (1) "Now concerning" in 1 Corinthians 12:1 recalls 7:1 ("Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me").
 - (2) The variety of spiritual gifts may be organized into three groups (1 Corinthians 12:8-10).
 - (a) Mental powers: wisdom, knowledge, faith.
 - (b) Evidential powers: healing, general miracles, prophecy, discerning of spirits.
 - (c) Language powers: tongues, interpretation.
 - (3) These gifts work in the one body. The members differ, but each member has its place, leaving no room for arrogance or jealousy. Not all Christians had miraculous powers.
 - (4) The Corinthians were to seek a better way: love (1 Corinthians 13:1-13). True love is not sentimentality, but

obedience to Lord's will (John 14:15). There are three divisions in 1 Corinthians 13.

(a) The importance of love (vss. 1-3).

(b) The characteristics of love (vss. 4-7).

(c) The permanence of love (vss. 8-13).

(5) No matter how great the gifts, without love they were nothing. The Corinthians desperately needed the instruction in vss. 4-7. Jealousy and arrogance are incompatible with love. Pentecostals say we need miraculous gifts to reach the highest level of maturity; they should look at Corinth (1:7)!

(6) The last several verses emphasizes the eternal; they were to make the permanent their priority.

(a) Love is permanent, but spiritual gifts were not permanent. To support his argument, Paul selects one spiritual gift from each category in the previous chapter. This is an example of synecdoche (a part for the whole): prophecy (12:10; 13:2); tongues (12:10; 13:1); knowledge (12:8; 13:2).

(b) Paul said that we "know" in part, and we "prophecy" in part. However, when the "perfect" comes, what is "in part" will be done away.

i) "Perfect" means "complete."

(1) After the New Testament books were complete, prophecy ceased!

(2) Do we need Paul to come and teach us? Would we read along in the Bible? How ludicrous!

ii) Whatever "in part" is, the "perfect" is also.

(1) There was not one place in New Testament times to find all truth (Colossians 4:16). There was part here and part there.

(2) After Paul sent the first letter to the Corinthians, there was no need for prophets to repeat it (James 1:25). This, of course, was also true of the completed New Testament.

iii) The incomplete method of revelation (prophecy, tongues, knowledge) and the complete method of revelation (the revealed New Testament) must be of the same nature.

(1) If love is what is "perfect," it confuses the figures: "in part" revelation and "complete" love?

(2) If the coming of Christ is what is "perfect," it confuses the figures and claims we have His partial coming now!

- iv) The word for "be done away" is *katargethesetai* which means "to cease, pass away, be done away." In a religious sense it means "to make completely inoperative." This is easily seen by the different uses of this word.
 - (1) The Old Covenant was "done away" by Christ (2 Corinthians 3:13-14; Ephesians 2:15).
 - (2) The devil was "destroyed" by Christ's death on the cross (Hebrews 2:14).
 - (3) Our body of sin is "destroyed" when we obey Christ (Romans 6:6).
 - (4) Death will be "abolished" (2 Timothy 1:10; 1 Corinthians 15:26).
- v) Paul further illustrates his point by the comparison of when he was a child and when he was a man.
 - (1) The gospel was revealed a part at a time, like a child who learns one small lesson at a time.
 - (2) Childhood is necessary, but not permanent. Spiritual gifts existed in the immature period of the church; they were not permanent.
 - (3) The church had a beginning (Acts 11:15). As Paul passed from childhood to manhood on earth, so did the church.
- vi) Paul also illustrates his point by using the analogy of the dim mirror versus seeing something in person.
 - (1) Corinth was famous for its bronze mirror, which was a polished piece of metal on a table.
 - (a) If "mirror" is a figure of speech, so is "face to face."
 - (b) If "mirror" equals incomplete knowledge, then "face to face" equals complete knowledge.
 - (2) Paul does not describe what he would see, but how.
 - (a) The mirror image gives an imperfect view of one's face; the complete view is the way others know us.
 - (b) In Acts 2-10, Christians did not understand the relationship of the Gentiles to the New Covenant. In Acts 11, Peter had to explain Acts 10, but we now know (Ephesians 3:3-6).
- vii) Faith, hope, love abide on earth in a more excellent way. However, the "in part" method of revelation does

not abide. These verses highlight the supremacy of love.

(7) Paul's contrasts:

(8) Tongues must cease before Christ comes again.

(a) Tongues would cease because they were no longer needed after the completed New Testament.

(b) Faith and hope will abide until the Lord comes (Hebrews 11:1; Romans 8:24).

(c) Love never fails, so it will be with us in eternity.

i) If that which is "perfect" equals the second coming, there is no period for faith and hope to abide after gifts cease.

ii) Faith and hope must abide longer than tongues, but they will cease at the second coming.

(d) The typical Pentecostal position on 1 Corinthians 13.

i) Tongues will cease when the Lord comes.

ii) Faith and hope will cease when the Lord comes.

iii) Love never fails, so it will be with us in eternity.

iv) But this argumentation contradicts vss. 8 and 13.

Faith, hope, and love abide, but they are not spiritual gifts. Where does it say spiritual gifts will abide?

(e) If someone could prove that 1 Corinthians 13 says nothing concerning the duration of spiritual gifts, it would not prove they still exist; it would simply prove one argument wrong. We know that spiritual gifts have ceased.

i) Gifts have fulfilled their purpose (1 Kings 17:24; Mark 16:20; Hebrews 2:3-4). Can any new truth be revealed today? What existing truth needs more confirmation from God?

ii) The manner of receiving the gifts is no longer in force (Acts 8:14-18). When the apostles died, the full revelation and confirmation of the New Testament was complete, therefore this special work of the Holy Spirit came to an end.

iii) If spiritual gifts continue, so does new revelation, and the New Testament is not complete (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

iv) If spiritual gifts continue, then all one has to do is demonstrate it (2 Corinthians 12:12).

3. To say miracles have ceased does not argue that the Holy Spirit is no longer active. Although we say Christ has completed His personal ministry on the earth, we understand that He continues to

be actively involved in man's salvation. The Holy Spirit continues to work in converting the lost and giving power to the saved.

4. What about Holy Spirit baptism?

a) Matthew 3:9-12 does not tell who will receive Holy Spirit baptism, but who will dispense it.

(1) God could raise up children to Abraham from stones. Does He? If He does, we need names and addresses. God does not do everything He has power to do. Why is this important?

(a) If we deny that someone can raise the dead, he says, "You're denying the power of God!"

(b) Do you believe God is making people out of stones? If not, are you denying His power?

(2) Vs. 10 clearly refers to enemies of God, and explains how Jesus uses "fire." The word is used three times in vss. 10-12.

(a) "Axe" ... "root" ... "hewn down" ... "fire." Is this a blessing?

(b) "Chaff" ... "unquenchable fire." Is this a blessing (cf. Psalm 1:4)?

i) Jesus has power to do everything. He can baptize in the Holy Spirit and baptize with fire.

ii) Both statements speak of the administrator, not the recipients of these baptisms.

b) Holy Spirit baptism was promised (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4-5).

(1) The apostles received it on Pentecost (Acts 1:26-2:4).

(2) Cornelius is the only other example recorded (Acts 10:44-48).

(a) It reminded Peter of "the beginning" which had been at least seven years earlier on the day of Pentecost (Acts 11:15-17).

(b) Why would it remind him of a "like gift" which was received seven years earlier if all converts had been receiving the gift all along?

c) Holy Spirit baptism was received directly from heaven.

(1) No person intervened or assisted (Acts 2:1-4).

(2) It was accompanied by speaking in tongues (Acts 2:8-11).

d) Holy Spirit baptism served as God's witness.

(1) It proved the apostles were God's spokesmen (Acts 2:14-16; Hebrews 2:3-4).

(2) It proved that the Gentiles could be saved by faith (Acts 15:7-9).

(a) Holy Spirit baptism did as much for you and me as it did for Cornelius because it established the fact that the Gentiles could be saved just like the Jews.

- (b) If we were saved only by the Holy Spirit, why was water commanded (1 Peter 3:20-21; Acts 10:47-48)?
- e) Holy Spirit baptism ceased by A.D. 64.
 - (1) The book of Ephesians was written by this date, but Ephesians 4:5 says there is "one baptism."
 - (2) Which baptism ceased? Water or Holy Spirit?
 - (a) If water, then no one can practice it today with God's approval. If Holy Spirit, then those who claim its baptism today are false.
 - (b) If we practice both, then we have two baptisms and deny Paul's statement in Ephesians 4:5. Which one is it?
- f) Where is Holy Spirit baptism promised for Christians today?
 - (1) The promise cannot be found in John 14-16.
 - (a) The promise was given only to the apostles.
 - (b) The Holy Spirit would remind the apostles of the teaching of Jesus (John 14:26; 15:26-27).
 - (2) The promise cannot be found in Acts 1:2-8.
 - (a) If you carefully follow the pronouns throughout the paragraph, you will see that the promise was not given to all, but simply to the apostles.
 - (b) Luke goes back to Luke 24:46-49 to show that the ones being spoken to were the apostles. To think otherwise and believe that it was referring to Christians now would be disregarding the rules of grammar.
 - (c) Holy Spirit baptism is known by other names in the New Testament.
 - i) "Endued with power from on high" (Luke 24:49).
 - ii) "Filled" (Acts 2:4). This term does not always refer to Holy Spirit baptism.
 - (1) In Luke 1:15, John was "filled" with the Spirit from his mother's womb. Is this Holy Spirit baptism?
 - (2) In Ephesians 5:18, being "filled" with the Spirit equals letting the "word of Christ dwell in you richly" (Colossians 3:16). When the Spirit's law directs our heart and life, we are filled with the Spirit.
 - (3) The promise cannot be found in Acts 2:38-39.
 - (a) The gift of the Holy Spirit is not the Spirit Himself. He cannot be the gift and the giver at the same time.
 - i) The gift of God (John 4:10).
 - ii) The gift of Christ (Ephesians 4:7).

- (b) Peter told them what to do to be saved (vs. 38). He then said they would receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, not the Holy Spirit Himself. They would receive the gift because it was promised to them in vs. 39.
- (c) The promise has to do with the promise of salvation involved in the text (cf. Luke 1:77). The promise is stated in Acts 2:21.
 - i) "Calling on the name of the Lord" does not mean prayer. It means invoking God's blessing by doing what He says (cf. Romans 10:9-10).
 - ii) The Holy Spirit will give one all spiritual blessings in Christ when they comply with God's commands (Ephesians 1:3).
- (d) In respect to salvation, the Holy Spirit prophesied it, revealed it, and verified it.
- g) Holy Spirit baptism is a matter for demonstration, not speculation.
 - (1) The apostles had fantastic power.
 - (a) They could speak without taking thought (Matthew 10:19).
 - (b) They could speak languages they had never studied (Acts 2:4-8).
 - (c) They could heal a lame man who had no faith (Acts 3:6-8).
 - (d) They could strike a person dead (Acts 5:5, 10).
 - (e) They could impart miraculous gifts (Acts 8:14-18).
 - (f) They could raise the dead (Acts 9:36-41; 20:9-12).
 - (g) They could strike a man blind (Acts 13:11).
 - (h) They could cast out demons (Acts 19:12).
 - (i) They could be bitten and not be harmed (Acts 28:3-6).
 - (2) Those who have what the apostles had will do what they did.
 - (a) Ray Dodd Hembree is an interesting case. Hembree is a faith healer who had returned to his home town, and a school teacher, Inez Pickett, came to him with a kidney disorder. Following his prayer, she began to jump around the platform, rejoicing over her "cure."
 - (b) She became so excited that she fell off the platform and broke her leg. When someone suggested that an ambulance be called, another remarked, "No need for that, just get brother Ray Dodd to heal her." When they turned to him, his reply was, "I don't do broken bones, just vital organs."

D. Conviction.

1. The world needs convicting of sin, righteousness, and judgment.
 - a) The Holy Spirit was the advocate, or one who argued in favor of Christ. He would convict the world of sin (John 16:7-8).
 - b) As the advocate of Christ, He would be furnished with sufficient evidence and competent arguments to accomplish this task (John 16:13).
2. He would argue the case from three vantage points.
 - a) The world stands condemned because of unbelief in Jesus as God's Son.
 - b) Righteousness or justification may be obtained through faith because Jesus as Christ has gone to heaven.
 - c) Judgment is sure because the prince of this world has been judged.
3. The work continues through the revealed word of truth.
 - a) The testimony to establish these points and convince the world was revealed and confirmed by the Holy Spirit, recorded by inspired writers, and stands today with the same force and power.
 - b) If mankind is convinced today, it will be by the gospel.
 - (1) Sin (John 8:24; Romans 3:23-26).
 - (2) Righteousness (Romans 1:16-17; Titus 2:11-12).
 - (3) Judgment (Acts 17:30-31; John 12:48).
4. Wrong responses to the conviction of the Holy Spirit.
 - a) We can grieve Him (Ephesians 4:30). The context shows this to be personal conduct (cf. Genesis 6:5-6).
 - b) We can resist Him (Acts 7:51). They had never been willing to yield to the Holy Spirit. Their problem was not a lack of knowledge but a lack of will (John 7:17).
 - c) We can quench Him (1 Thessalonians 5:19). We must choose between Satan and the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 6:16; cf. Matthew 12:20; 25:8). If the flame of the one burns brightly in us, we will quench the flame of the other.
 - d) We can insult Him (Hebrews 10:29). Madalyn Murray O'Hair used to call the Holy Spirit "the Spook." Now she knows better! You do not have to be this brazen to insult the Holy Spirit; simply ignore His words!
 - e) We can blaspheme Him (Matthew 12:31-32).
 - (1) Paul blasphemed, but received forgiveness (1 Timothy 1:13). These would not be forgiven. Why?
 - (2) It must be due to something that pertains to the blasphemer.
 - (a) The punishment is eternal because the sin is continuous. They are set in their ways.

- (b) The punishment is eternal because of the circumstance in which the sin was committed. To reject the Holy Spirit is to spurn the final means of our salvation (John 16:8). Those who reject the New Testament have no other source of salvation.

E. Conversion.

1. Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.
 - a) Jesus described the new birth as "of the Spirit" (John 3:3-8).
 - b) This new birth is also described as "by the word of God" (1 Peter 1:23).
2. We are born of the Spirit as we respond to the word.
 - a) The Holy Spirit converts men, but He can only do it through the use of His sword, which is the word of God (Ephesians 6:17).
 - (1) The word was preached.
 - (a) The Spirit was doing His work of convicting the world (John 16:8).
 - (b) Consider the events on the day of Pentecost.
 - i) The Spirit gave the apostles utterance and Peter preached Christ (Acts 2:4, 22-24, 36).
 - ii) People in the audience were convicted of their sins (Acts 2:37).
 - iii) They were encouraged to repent and be baptized (Acts 2:38-39).
 - iv) They received the word gladly (Acts 2:40-41).
 - (c) Thus the Spirit convicts the world through His revealed and confirmed word whenever it is preached; those with honest hearts will bear the proper fruit.
 - (2) The word was obeyed.
 - (a) Those who obeyed the Spirit's word were baptized (Acts 2:38-41).
 - (b) In their baptism, they experienced a "washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost" (Titus 3:5-7; 1 Corinthians 6:11). Thus they were born again (regenerated) not of water only, but of water and the Spirit (John 3:5).
 - b) The word is able to save and purify us (James 1:21; 1 Peter 1:22).
 - (1) We are begotten by the gospel (James 1:18; 1 Corinthians 4:15).
 - (2) The begetting is necessary to physical birth. Although only the woman is present at actual birth, the new baby is of both man and woman.

- (3) In the same way, a spiritual birth is not of water only, but is of both water and Spirit.
3. Therefore, conversion is accomplished by the power of the gospel.
 - a) There is not a need the sinner has in being saved but that his need is supplied by the gospel.
 - b) There is not an influence wielded by the Spirit in conversion where the same influence is attributed to the word of the gospel.
 - c) What can the Holy Spirit do that is not accomplished by the word of God? What can the word accomplish in our lives?
 - (1) Gives us wisdom (Psalm 19:7).
 - (2) Converts us (Psalm 19:7).
 - (3) Gives us light (Psalm 119:130).
 - (4) Gives understanding (Psalm 119:104).
 - (5) Spiritually makes us alive (Psalm 119:50).
 - (6) Bears witness and testifies (John 5:39; 1 John 5:6).
 - (7) Gives life to us (John 6:63).
 - (8) Cleanses us (John 15:3).
 - (9) Sanctifies us (John 17:17).
 - (10) Builds us up (Acts 20:32).
 - (11) Justifies us (Romans 5:1).
 - (12) Makes us free from sin (Romans 6:17-18).
 - (13) Gives us faith (Romans 10:17).
 - (14) Begets us (1 Corinthians 4:15).
 - (15) Reconciles us to God (2 Corinthians 5:19).
 - (16) Washes us (Ephesians 5:26).
 - (17) Establishes or strengthens us (Colossians 2:7).
 - (18) Works in us (1 Thessalonians 2:13).
 - (19) Comforts us (1 Thessalonians 4:18).
 - (20) Calls us (2 Thessalonians 2:14).
 - (21) Saves us (James 1:21).
 - (22) Purifies us (1 Peter 1:22).
 - (23) Gives us the new birth (1 Peter 1:23).
 - (24) Causes us to grow (1 Peter 2:2).
 - d) There is not a case of conversion recorded that was not accomplished through the preaching of the gospel.
 - e) Everything necessary to move people to accept Christ and be saved is set forth in the gospel: love of God, sacrifice of Christ, forgiveness of sins, hope of heaven, eternal inheritance, fear of hell, and certainty of judgment.
 4. We cannot know that we are sons of God unless God tells us (Romans 8:16).
 - a) Paul is speaking to Christians. He is not telling them how to become children of God, but how to continue as His children. The

one who grows in righteousness and diminishes in sin can know that he is God's child (2 Peter 1:5-11).

- b) This fact necessarily involves the issue of how we become children of God. If we have not first become His children, the Holy Spirit cannot later testify that we are His children.
5. Those who seek additional experiences underestimate the importance of God's word.
- a) The word has power to produce faith (Romans 10:17); we can see the power of the word by its use and by people's reaction to it.
 - (1) God spoke to the Sadducees through His word (Matthew 22:31).
 - (2) The centurion understood the power of the word (Matthew 8:5-10).
 - (3) The rich man underestimated the value of the word, while Abraham understood its power (Luke 16:27-31).
 - b) Dr. David Steele wrote, "In vain do I study my Bible for relief. It discloses the conditions of forgiveness, but I can rest only in the certified fact. This fact must constitute a personal revelation to me. It must be certified that I have been taken out of the class of the wicked, on whom God frowns, and that I have been classified with the righteous, on whom He smiles. This fact I cannot derive from any process of reasoning upon the general truths of the scriptures. Inference in respect to a point this vital is not sufficient. A criminal awaiting the hour of his execution on the scaffold cannot infer his pardon from a study of the general statutes of the State. This must be specially revealed by the governor. A certificate, signed and sealed, must be put into the prisoner's hands before he can enjoy the bliss of undoubted assurance."
 - (1) His point is that we must have a personal revelation to know that we are saved. Did he learn this from scripture or from personal revelation? If by scripture, then it is worthless because he needs personal revelation; if it is by personal revelation, then why should we accept his personal revelation and reject the Mormons?
 - (2) The Spirit does not contradict Himself, but those who claim personal revelation contradict one another.
 - (a) For example, a prisoner on death row receives letter from governor offering him a pardon, but refuses to believe it because the governor did not come personally with the message.

- (b) Is it not amazing that so many who claim to be saved by faith actually demand sight?
- (3) In the New Testament, those who received revelation from God also received miraculous confirmation for the benefit of those who did not receive the revelation (Hebrews 2:3-4). Without this miraculous confirmation, why should we believe their claim?
- c) John Wesley, founder of Methodist Church, illustrates the typical view. In his journal he wrote, "In the evening I went very unwillingly to the society in Aldersgate Street, where one was reading Luther's Preface to the Epistle to the Romans. About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone for salvation ... assurance was given me that He had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death; and I testified openly to all there what I now first felt in my heart."
 - (1) Where does God tell us how we should feel in order to know that we have experienced the forgiveness of sins?
 - (2) The Methodists state, "Faith only is a most wholesome doctrine and full of comfort." But that contradicts James 2:24! Which one do we believe?
- 6. Many claim that their conversion comes from a still, small voice.
 - a) The only time the expression occurs is in 1 Kings 19:12. This was God's instruction to Elijah who was already a child of God; the message did not pertain to his salvation, but to his service.
 - b) Those who claim that they have heard God's voice contradict others who make the same claim. The Spirit cannot contradict Himself.
 - (1) In the 1800s in New York, there was an outpouring of the Spirit in a neighborhood; they reported 1000 converts. One third went to each of the three leading denominations -- Presbyterian, Methodist, and Baptist.
 - (a) Did the Holy Spirit at one outpouring make three hundred Presbyterians, Methodists, and Baptists? This makes the Holy Spirit at war against Himself!
 - (b) The Presbyterians oppose the Methodists, and they oppose the Baptists by the same "divine illumination." It would be easy to conclude that there is delusion!
 - (2) The operation of the Holy Spirit in days of the New Testament made nothing but Christians!
 - c) Those who claim to hear His voice contradict the New Testament plan of salvation. Those who claim some witness of the Spirit

besides the word of God will sooner or later contradict the word of God.

- d) Those who claim to hear His voice contradict themselves. They depend on feelings, emotions, or impulses, but these change with circumstances.
 - (1) For example, a man runs five miles before breakfast; after three miles, he consults his feelings and concludes that he should stop. How does he decide this question?
 - (2) He does not do it by feeling, but by some objective standard of measurement (e.g., highway signs), coupled with an accurate account in his own mind of the distance he ran (starting-stopping point).
- e) We are "called" by the gospel (2 Thessalonians 2:14). Sinners are drawn by the Father as they are "taught." Those who have "heard" and "learned" come to Christ (John 6:44-45).

F. Sanctification.

- 1. God's people are called to a pure life.
 - a) Sanctification involves the idea of being "set apart" or "consecrated." If we are led by the Spirit, then commitment to Christ is obvious (1 Corinthians 6:9-11; 1 Peter 2:9; Romans 8:12-17).
 - b) There are many people today who believe in a mystical "better felt than told" indwelling of the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:9-11). However, the Spirit indwells in us in just the same way that Christ (Colossians 1:27; Galatians 2:20) and the Father (2 Corinthians 6:16; 1 John 4:12-15) dwell in us.
 - c) We are under the control and influence of God revealed in the word, thus it can be said that God, Christ, and the Spirit are "in" us. If you can understand how the Father and Christ can be in us, you should also understand how the Holy Spirit can "dwell in you richly" and how we can be "filled with the Spirit" (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16).
- 2. Sanctification is made possible today through the word.
 - a) We know we are saved when we obey (2 Thessalonians 2:13-14; 1 John 2:3-4).
 - (1) Sanctification begins in conjunction with our washing (1 Corinthians 6:11). This washing, sanctification, and justification occurred "by the Spirit of our God." In obedience to the word of God, we are sanctified by the Spirit.
 - (2) Hearing and believing are essential to being sealed (or given assurance) with the Holy Spirit of promise (Ephesians 1:13-14; 2 Corinthians 1:22).

- (3) The concept of being sealed is used in several connections in scripture.
- (a) To be sealed indicates completion. A finished transaction is sealed. We sometimes use the phrase, "signed, sealed, and delivered," to indicate that a deal is completed (Jeremiah 32:9-10).
 - (b) To be sealed indicates authentication. When it is established that a commodity or document is truly what it claims to be, it is sealed. In education, official transcripts of courses completed at a college or university are signed by the registrar and then stamped with the official college seal over the signature. That guarantees to the receiving institution (educational or corporate) that the document is authentic. God authenticated Jesus as the One who would come in His name (John 6:27).
 - i) Christians are authenticated to be God's people by the Holy Spirit who identifies them by those characteristics which He has taught them and which they have integrated into their character through response to the gospel (cf. Ephesians 4:30).
 - ii) The king of the Medes and Persians sealed documents to authenticate that the government by the king's word stood behind that which was declared in those documents (Esther 8:8; Daniel 6:17).
 - (c) To be sealed indicates appropriation. Seals establish ownership. Documentary seals on titles to property not only establish that the taxes have been paid, but also that the deed has officially been transferred to the persons named on the revised certificate (Jeremiah 32:11-12). No more was needed to establish ownership than the evidence of the seal on the document.
 - (d) To be sealed indicates security. When it is established that a commodity is safe for public use or consumption, it is sealed by appropriate agencies of government. Seals are also placed on certain items (aspirin, tobacco products -- alcohol bottles, etc.) to establish physical security. If the seal is not broken, the bottle has not been opened. Public trust is thereby verified.
 - (e) To be sealed indicates confirmation. Major companies have copyrighted seals or stamps which appear on their products to identify them with their rigid standards approved by years of proven quality and bearing

corporate guarantee. Seals establish approval. The "Good Housekeeping Seal of Approval" certifies acceptable levels of quality (cf. John 3:33-34; Revelation 7:3).

(4) What is meant by saying that the Gentiles were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise? The best commentary is always other scripture which uses the same terminology and sets forth the same idea.

(a) Scripturally, being sealed does not entail supernatural intervention by the Holy Spirit.

i) We are marked or certified by the Spirit as children of God when our character and attitudes are changed by our response to the word delivered through the Spirit. We are sealed by the Holy Spirit when we put away evil and become kind, tenderhearted, and forgiving.

ii) All this occurs through the instruction of the Spirit, not through some miraculous or supernatural indwelling or special activity of the Spirit.

(b) Scripturally, being sealed involves absolute faith in the promises of God.

i) However many promises God makes, in Christ is the "Amen" (the final or last word of absolute confirmation) that those promises shall come to pass.

ii) We are then sealed by the Spirit who as a personage of deity Himself, has spoken those promises to us and made them sure by His word (2 Corinthians 1:20-22).

(c) Being "sealed with the Holy Spirit" is being marked by the words and promises which the Spirit has spoken.

i) These are true and unalterable and when appropriated to my life mark me as belonging to God. The Holy Spirit is identified as "the Holy Spirit of promise" in this passage to link the "sealing" with the "promises" of God.

ii) Acceptance of these promises authenticates one as God's possession (2 Timothy 2:19). The commitment is firm and the Christian has certification that redemption is his because God has promised it to him contingent upon his faithfulness.

b) Our guarantee of salvation is the faithfulness of God's word (1 Peter 1:23-25).

3. Sanctification continues after we become Christians.

a) Sanctification is an ongoing work (Hebrews 2:11; 10:14).

(1) We do not need further redemption (Hebrews 10:10).

- (2) We do need help in living holy lives (1 Thessalonians 4:3-4; 5:23).
- b) The Spirit plays an important role in this objective.
 - (1) God strengthens us by His Spirit in our inner man (Ephesians 3:16, 20).
 - (a) Many believe that the Holy Spirit "illuminates" us in our study of the Bible. If He does this, then we must be as infallible in our conclusions as the apostles and others were in revealing the message!
 - i) If an illuminated Christian ever changes his mind about a passage, was he not really illuminated? Or did the Holy Spirit contribute to his error? This shows another danger inherent in the doctrine -- it discourages spiritual growth.
 - ii) Since the Spirit would not contradict Himself, then every illuminated Christian must agree with every other illuminated Christian on every point of doctrine! Is this the case?
 - (b) If the Holy Spirit illuminates men today, why do denominational preachers write books instructing their people about the proper methods of Bible study? Such a book would not help an unbeliever because he lacks the spiritual capacity for welcoming and appropriating spiritual truths, and it would not help a believer because he has the illumination of the Spirit.
 - (2) It is with the aid of the Spirit that we put to death the deeds of the body (Romans 8:11-13; Colossians 3:5-9). This is why we need to be "led by the Spirit" and "walk in the Spirit" (Romans 8:14; Galatians 5:16-18).
 - (a) In Romans 8:2, the "law of the Spirit" gives direction. This is in contrast to the "law of sin and death" which is the controlling influence of sin.
 - (b) In Romans 8:5, those who follow "after the Spirit," or who are spiritually minded, submit to that law.
 - (c) Therefore, they are "led by the Spirit." This is the only way that the Spirit indwells the Christian.

III. *Objections To The Direct Operation Of The Holy Spirit*

- A. It is based on false concepts.
 - 1. Total hereditary depravity.
 - a) They say that man's heart is so depraved that it requires a direct operation of the Holy Spirit to reach him.

- b) Most now say, "God spoke to me." If we can show this doctrine to be false, the entire structure collapses.
 - (1) The word reacts to the honest and good heart, not the totally depraved heart (Luke 8:15).
 - (2) Cornelius was a devout, just, God-fearing man before the Spirit did anything to him (Acts 10:2, 22).
- 2. The Calvinistic doctrine of the sovereignty of God.
 - a) God is sovereign, but not in the way Calvinism demands (they insist that if man does one thing in obedience to God's commands to be saved, he has robbed God of His sovereignty).
 - b) Since God must do it all, their doctrine makes God responsible for all who are lost!
 - (1) God's direct power is irresistible.
 - (a) Balaam and the donkey (Numbers 22-24).
 - (b) Saul (1 Samuel 19:18-24).
 - (2) If one could resist the direct power of God, he would be more powerful than God! But one may resist His instructions and admonitions without proving himself stronger than God.
 - (3) God is impartial (Acts 10:34-35; 2 Peter 3:9). If one received God's direct power, all would, resulting in universal salvation. Their theory demands either universal salvation or a partial God.
- B. Direct power never changed a person's character.
 - 1. Pharaoh (Genesis 41).
 - 2. Balaam and his donkey (Numbers 22-24).
 - 3. Saul (1 Samuel 19).
 - 4. Judas (Matthew 10).
 - 5. Caiaphas (John 11).
- C. No heathen ever enjoyed salvation from his sins apart from the preached word.
 - 1. God was interested in the Gentiles, but did not send the Holy Spirit directly upon each individual Ninevite; He sent Jonah, a preacher who spoke the word of God to them (Matthew 12:41).
 - 2. God is still interested in the Gentiles, and has chosen the same means of reaching them (Matthew 28:18-20).
- D. The direct operation theory would make the devil more powerful than God. In Genesis 3:1-7, he persuaded Eve to fall without using direct operation.
 - 1. Adam and Eve were born totally hereditarily righteous. They had never sinned, therefore they were totally righteous.
 - 2. If we are born totally depraved, and we need a direct operation of Holy Spirit to be saved, why did Satan not need a direct operation to bring them into sin?

3. How did Satan get to them? He did it through words, enticements, and motives. She believed him, and left her state of total hereditary righteousness.
 4. Is the word of Satan more powerful than the word of God? Or, is it that God cannot use words to save, but Satan can use them to condemn? If God cannot bring us back the same way, then the devil is more powerful than God!
- E. It denies the all-sufficiency of the word (2 Peter 1:3). What can the word do?
1. Produce certainty of the Lord's actions and teachings (Luke 1:3-4).
 2. Show all the necessary actions of Jesus, producing belief in Him and life (John 20:30-31).
 3. Show all the necessary teachings of Jesus (Acts 1:1-2).
 4. Reveal the mystery of Christ (Romans 16:25-26; Ephesians 3:3-5).
 5. Give us the commandments of the Lord (1 Corinthians 14:37).
 6. Furnish us with everything we need for every good work (2 Timothy 3:16-17).
 7. Record the teaching of the apostles and prophets through the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:15, 21).
 8. Bestow joy that is full (1 John 1:4).
 9. Protect against sin (1 John 2:1).
 10. Provide the criterion for recognizing true prophets (2 John 9-11).
 11. Reveal what will come to pass (Revelation 1:1).
 12. Impart the blessings of God (Revelation 1:3).

Conclusion. The Holy Spirit continues to work through a confirmed revelation to produce conviction, conversion, and sanctification. The Holy Spirit does the work, but He does it through the means of teaching and the medium of the gospel, not through miraculous intervention.

Sadly, many people resist the work of the Spirit in their lives, and refuse to obey the word of God that was revealed and confirmed by the Spirit (Acts 7:51-53). How much better to obey the truth and be born again by the Spirit working through that "incorruptible seed" (1 Peter 1:22-23).