

The Blessed Person and Work of God the Holy Spirit



Introduction

One ingredient is essential if we are to learn about the Holy Spirit, His Person and His Work. That one ingredient is the Holy Spirit Himself. Apart from His teaching ministry, we cannot know Him as we should. Apart from His enlightenment, we are blind. "Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the _____ of God" (1 Cor. 2:11). Only the Spirit of God knows the things of God and can reveal them to us (1 Cor. 2:10,12). Every believer has received the Holy Spirit, "that we might _____ the things that are freely given to us of God" (1 Cor. 2:12). Can the unsaved person understand the things of God (1 Cor. 2:14)? _____ [Note: The "natural man" is the man who has not received the Holy Spirit. Literally it means the "soulish man" or the "sensual man" (Jude 19). In Jude 19 the sensual man is defined as the man who does not have the _____.]

As we commence this study of the Holy Spirit, it is of utmost importance that we depend upon Him to be our Teacher. We cannot learn about Him apart from Him. Also we cannot learn about Christ apart from the Holy Spirit. "Spirit of God, my Teacher be, showing the things of Christ to me" (from the Hymn, *More about Jesus*, by Eliza Hewitt). Compare John 15:26 where we are told that the Spirit testifies of Jesus Christ. He does not point to Himself; He points to Jesus Christ.

1) The Study of the Holy Spirit is a Vast Subject.

The Bible has very much to say about the Holy Spirit. Beginning in Genesis 1:2 (first mention) where He plays a key role in creation, and ending in Revelation 22:17 (last mention) where He plays a key role in the new creation (inviting men to come to Christ before it is too late).

2) The Study of the Holy Spirit is an Important Subject.

Sadly, sound Biblical teaching on the Holy Spirit has been neglected in our day. This has brought about much confusion, misunderstanding and outright error. The result of this neglect is manifested in two extremes: 1) **Deadness**. The lives of individual professing Christians and the churches they attend are lacking when it comes to spiritual life, power, evangelistic outreach and experiencing all that God has for them in Christ. 2) **Emotionalism**. This is seen in the confusion of the Pentecostal, Neo-Pentecostal and Charismatic Movement. These movements have become very popular and they are getting many of their converts from dead, liberal churches. Many in the Charismatic Movement believe it is their mission to stay in these dead churches and renew them by their presence within.

In contrast to the spiritual deadness which is found in many churches, those in the Pentecostal/Charismatic movements often display what seems to be a vibrant faith, and many of these people are truly born again (having put their trust in Christ and in Him alone for salvation). In fairness we should recognize that there are some positive aspects of the modern Charismatic Movement. Even though we do not approve of the Charismatic Movement in general because of its doctrinal problems, and even though we cannot participate with Charismatic people in their errors and in their experience-orientated way of living, yet we can still learn from them and recognize some things that are commendable.

For the most part these people have an enthusiasm for the things of God. They have a freedom and a boldness to praise the Lord in public and in private. They are not ashamed to speak of the Lord before both Christians and non-Christians. They are usually excited about spiritual things. They are often enthusiastic about sharing what they have found with others: "My friend, I want you to have what I have."

Often Charismatic people exhibit a type of joy and happiness. They seem to be enjoying what they are doing. Their religion is not a dead ritual. It is personal and real to them. They do what they do because it is meaningful to them and because they enjoy it. They often show a warmth and concern for one another. They are friendly and outgoing and are generally not afraid to talk to others about the Lord and what He has done for them.

Charismatic believers seem to have a spiritual dynamic which is sadly lacking even among some non-Charismatic Bible believers. When you think of Charismatic people you normally do not think of deadness. These people are lively and enthusiastic and excited and emotional and vibrant. They often have a zeal for serving the Lord, though, as we shall see, their zeal is often not according to knowledge. Should not Bible believers be excited and enthused about the things of God? Often this is the way we were when we first came to know Christ as our personal Saviour; however as the years pass by we tend to lose some of this. It is easy to leave our first love. As we grow in knowledge we must be very careful not to lose our zeal for Christ and our enthusiasm to make Him known to others.

The Bible and prayer are important to Charismatic believers. They like to get together in their small prayer groups and Bible study times. They enjoy getting together for fellowship and prayer and praise and singing. All of these things are commendable. The major problem is their misunderstanding concerning the work of the Holy Spirit, especially as this relates to some of the spiritual gifts such as tongues, prophecy, healing, etc. Also they tend to let their subjective personal experiences govern how they interpret the Bible. May God give us much discernment

as we seek to "prove (test) all things" by the Word of God" (1 Thess. 5:21). We are to hold fast to that which is true and right, but to reject anything that does not measure up to the teachings of the Bible. See our detailed study of the Charismatic Movement.

On the one hand we want to avoid an atmosphere of spiritual deadness which knows nothing of the vitality of the Spirit-filled life. On the other hand, we want to avoid a counterfeit spirituality which is not based on sound Biblical teaching.

3) The Study of the Holy Spirit is a Practical, Life-Changing Subject.

Apart from the Holy Spirit, no man can ever be saved (John 3:5; 1 Cor. 6:11). Once we are saved, the key to victory in our daily living depends upon our relationship to God the Holy Spirit. Consider Romans chapter 8. List every verse in this chapter which mentions the Spirit:

List verses from Romans 8:

Likewise do the same for Galatians chapter 5:

List verses from Galatians 5:

The book of Acts has been called by some, "The Acts of the Holy Spirit." The Holy Spirit is mentioned in the book of Acts more than 50 times. His ministry was vital to the early church. Can you find five places in the book of Acts where He is mentioned?

List at least five verses from Acts:

Read Galatians 5:22-23. Do you want your life to be filled with these things? _____ Only God the Holy Spirit can produce these things, so it is vital that we understand how this can happen.

Some questions to think about: If the Holy Spirit were suddenly to leave the world completely, would that make any difference in the way you live day by day? Would it make any difference in your local church if He were no longer there? Would this change anything?

If the Holy Spirit were to leave and if things were to go along in the same way, something would be terribly wrong. If we can operate the same way without Him, then why do we need Him? This study will seek to answer these kinds of questions.

