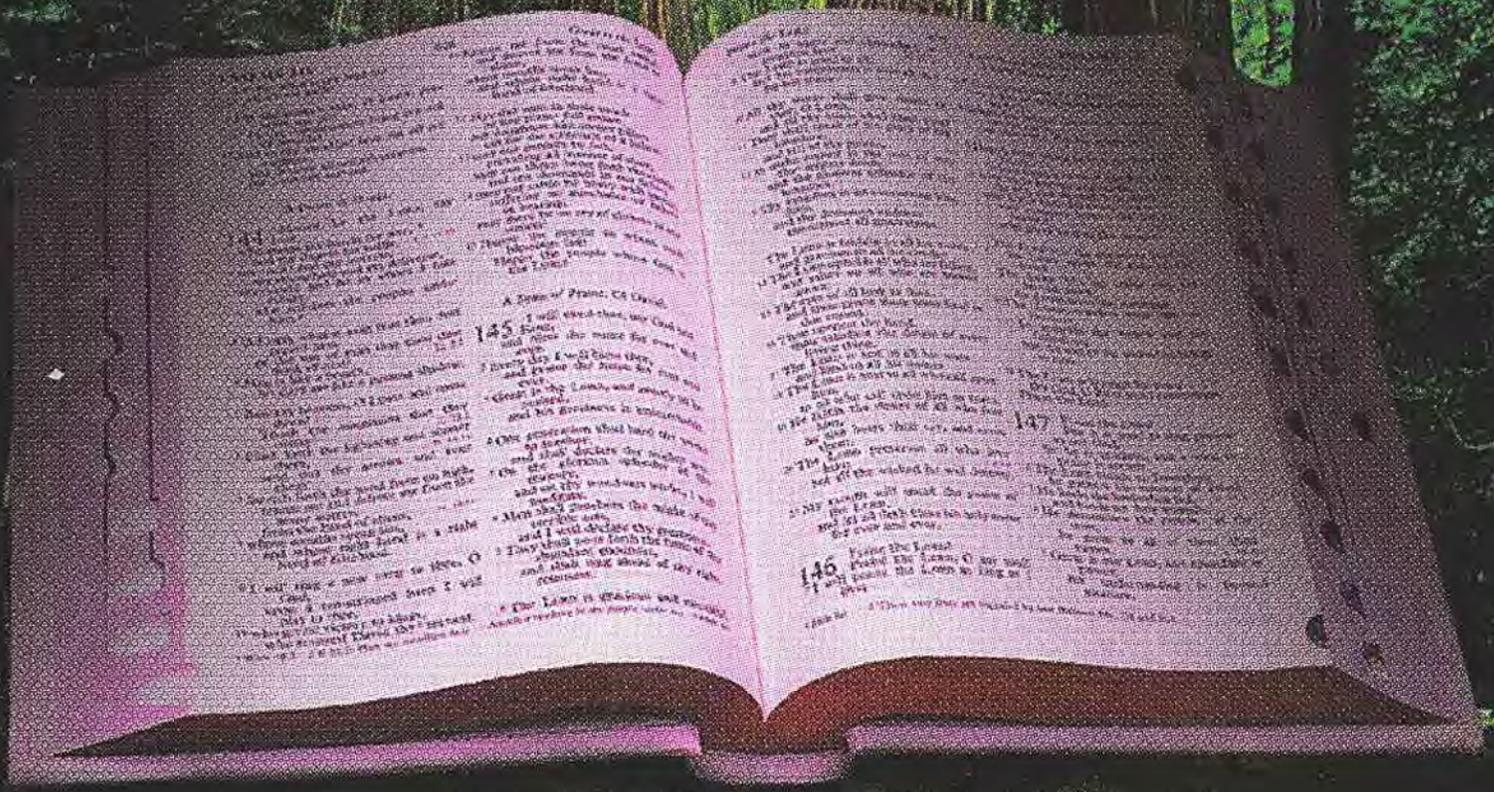


The Holy Spirit

Mack Lyon



SEARCH PROGRAMS

July 1997

Topics subject to change without notice

JULY 06 — THE HOLY SPIRIT

There is much confusion among religionists about the Holy Spirit and His work among men. It is not the purpose of these messages to get people “told off”, but to learn along with them. Who or what is the Holy Spirit? A ghost? A spook? A miracle?

JULY 13 — THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE CHRISTIAN

What did Peter promise the three thousand people who repented and were baptized when He promised “the gift of the Holy Spirit”? Did he promise the baptism of the Holy Spirit? Power to perform miracles? What about the indwelling of the Spirit?

JULY 20 — THE HOLY SPIRIT IN CONVERSION

What is the work of the Holy Spirit in the conversion of the sinner? Is that the “baptism of the Holy Spirit”? How does He accomplish His work in conversion? What did Jesus mean when He said we must be born of water and the Spirit?

JULY 27 — THE HOLY SPIRIT AND MIRACLES

What is a miracle? At the first mention of the Holy Spirit some people immediately conjure up mental images of miracles. But are there really any genuine miracles today? If so, why don't we see that power demonstrated? If not, has God withdrawn His Spirit from us?

TOPICS MAY CHANGE WITHOUT NOTICE.

"The Holy Spirit"
John 16:7-14

John chapters 14, 15, and 16 consist of the longest conversations that Jesus had, or recorded conversation, I should say, that Jesus had with his apostles while he was here. And he has told them now that he is going to make his departure and go to the Father. And in John chapter 16 verse 7 we will begin our reading. "Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you. And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they do not believe in Me; of righteousness, because I go to my Father and you see Me no more; of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged. I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you." And I read through verse 14. Now let's go to God in prayer. Dear God, Father of our spirits, we bow before you now and recognize you as the almighty loving and caring God of the world in which we live, which you have made. And we confess our need of You every hour of every day that we live. We are praying now for You special care on us as we study about Your Holy Spirit. That we may learn and know the truth about Him and things that relate to His ministry. In the name of Christ our Savior and Your Son we pray, Amen.

These studies about the Holy Spirit will be difficult because they're so emotionally charged and often confused in diversity. I mean, there are so many different and often conflicting teachings, so much misunderstanding and misinformation, and those feelings run so deep about them. It's often difficult to reason together about them. Well, it isn't our purpose to get anybody told off or to debate anybody, but to learn what the Bible says about the Holy Spirit. The Bible is the only sure, accurate and valid information source that we have about the Holy Spirit. We just simply cannot appeal to personal experiences, or feelings, or visions or dreams to establish truth on any subject and especially about the Holy Spirit, because there is no way to accurately assess their validity. The same experience stimulates different feelings in different people. For example, a family tragedy will result in different responses from different members of the family. One may become morbid and depressed, and perhaps even commit suicide as a result, while another member of the same family, experiencing the same tragedy, will use it as a stepping stone to a greater faith and hope.

Visions and dreams can be produced artificially, by hypnosis, or with drugs or alcohol or even by emotional hysteria. It's no secret, but admitted reality that feelings can be manipulated by colors, or by sounds such as music, or by imagery--perhaps by the use of pictures. Music is often used to induce a desired feeling, but that feeling can't be used as evidence of truth or reality. For example: at a football game, a team may be trailing on the scoreboard badly. And the next play is a very crucial one. They need to score. So, the band, the home team band, strikes up the school fight song. Every fan rises to his feet, clinches his fist and screams to the top of his voice. The feeling of victory overflows the stadium down to the players in the huddle on the field! But, that feeling can't be used as evidence of winning the game. "We won! We won! Did you see how excited our fans were?" Now that same feeling of excitement is also stirred up in some revival meetings or church meetings and used the music to do it, and it is used as evidence of the presence and the working of the Holy Spirit. No, we can't rely on those things as a source of valid information in our search for truth on any subject. Everything we know about the Holy Spirit is written in the Bible! If it isn't written in the Bible, my friend, you can't know it about the Holy Spirit. And

there will be no other information revealed from Heaven about the Holy Spirit until Jesus comes. The third verse of the one-chapter book of Jude speaks of "the faith" which was "once for all delivered to the saints."

Now, using the Bible as our guide, let's try to identify the Holy Spirit. What are we talking about? Or about whom are we talking? At the very mention of the Holy Spirit, some people shout "a miracle!" Some think of the Holy Spirit as a dove. And some charismatic churches have a dove painted on the sign out in front of their buildings. Other people invariably associate the Holy Spirit with "tongues," or a flame, because on the day of Pentecost "there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit."

However, the Bible ascribes to the Holy Spirit personality--or the qualities of character which distinguish a person from a thing. In our text Jesus said, "It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper (the comforter in the King James Version) will not come to you, but if I depart, I will send Him to you" (John 16:7). First of all, then He gives the Holy Spirit a name. He's the Helper. As a matter of fact, the Bible gives Him a number of proper names, but not as many as it gives to God and to Christ. The Old Testament refers to the Holy Spirit 88 times and uses 18 names for Him. The New Testament refers to him 264 times and uses 39 names. Five names are common to both testaments, which means there were 52 different names for the Holy Spirit given in the Bible.

He's called "The Spirit of God" (Genesis 1:2), "The Spirit of the Lord God" (Isaiah 61:1), "The Spirit" (Revelation 1:7), "The Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:19), "The Spirit of Truth" (John 16:13), and of course, there are many others. This must be said in regards to his names: any effort to make a distinction between "Holy Ghost" and "Holy Spirit" is an absurdity, friend. This is purely a matter of translation. In the King James Version, He is sometimes called "Holy Ghost," and at other times "Holy Spirit,"--sometimes within the same verse as in John chapter 7 verse 39 --And both are translations of the same word. The American Standard Version uniformly translates the word "Holy Spirit." That's all the difference there is to that.

It's also impressive that in our text Jesus speaks of the Comforter, the Holy Spirit using the personal pronoun, "he" ten times!! Let's see: We will begin reading in verse 8. "And when He comes, He will convict the world of sin, of righteousness and of judgment." (Verses 13 and 14) "He will guide into all truth for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. He will glorify Me," said Jesus, "for He will take of what is mine and declare it to you." Ten times Jesus refers to the Holy Spirit as a "He", a person. So, the Holy Spirit is not an impersonal "it," a dove, a ghost, a miracle, a tongue, an experience, or a power. He's a real person, not a mere influence.

Furthermore in that one passage, we learn that the Holy Spirit, one, can come, He can be sent, He will convict the world of sin, of righteousness and judgment, He will and He did guide the Apostles into all truth. And He would hear, and He would speak, and He would show you things to come, He would receive of Christ, and He would glorify Christ, all of which indicates personality. Other passages ascribe to him intellect, emotions and volition, too. He loves (Romans chapter 15 verse 30). He can be grieved by our behavior (Ephesians 4 and 30). And Ananias lied to him (Acts 5 and 3). He is insulted by those who trod under foot the blood of the covenant and do despite the Spirit of grace (Hebrews 10:26). He is blasphemed (Matthew 12:31) or spoken against (verse 32). So, He has all the characteristics or attributes of personality. He should be referred to as a person and never as an object or an influence or a power, or an experience.

But the Holy Spirit is not merely a person, He is a divine person. He possesses all of the attributes and characteristics that are ascribed to deity. In Hebrews 9:13-14, for example, He is said to be eternal.

"If the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh: how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God" And, I'm sure you remember the first two verses of the Bible, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form and void and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." Now: We have ascribed to him the eternal nature which is ascribed only to deity. He transcends time and space, my friend.

He is omniscient or all-knowing. The Bible asks, "What man knows the things of a man, except the spirit of man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God" (I Corinthians 2:11). The Holy Spirit knows everything God knows. God knows all things, and if the spirit of God knows the mind of God, He knows all things too. Doesn't He?

The Holy Spirit is also loving, just as God is. Romans 15:30 The apostle Paul writes: "Now I beg you, brethren, through the Lord Jesus Christ, and through the love of the Spirit, that you strive together with me in prayers to God for me." But these are attributes which we ascribe to God. If God is eternal, all knowing and the spirit possesses the same qualities that He does, doesn't that make Him Deity? Oh, yes!

Well, we don't have the time to discuss it fully here, but the New Testament teaches that "There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Spirit: and these three are one" (I John chapter 5 verse 7). While the Bible teaches one God, it teaches three manifestations of that one God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, and these three are one. There is no schism, no jealousy, no strife among them. They work together as one. They have the same purposes and same motives. So, we can say with full confidence that whatever God and Christ are doing, the Holy Spirit is working in unison with them. God's main objection, objective I should say, is the redemption of lost mankind. Whatever God does, or will do, His main objective is to redeem or reconcile fallen man. Bring him back into fellowship with Himself. When the first man and woman sinned in the Garden of Eden, God devised a plan for their redemption. Well, even before that. In the master plan for creation of all things, He did so. Christ the Son came and procured it and the Holy Spirit knew about it. Christ was brought into the world through the miraculous conception and virgin birth to execute the plan. The Holy Spirit had a part in it, too. It was His part to reveal the plan. That's what Christ promised He would do in the passage we used for our text. Verse 13 says, "When he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you (Apostles) into all truth...and he will show you things to come," --revelation of the plan. That's what it is.

Well, God made the plan, Christ accomplished it and the Holy Spirit revealed it. There's a strong tendency in American religion nowadays to attribute more power and more glory to the Holy Spirit than to Christ, or even to God. His ministry in the conversion or regeneration of the sinner is often given preeminence over the atoning ministry of Christ at Calvary, and almost always over the mediatorial work of our Lord (I Timothy 2:5). Jesus said the Father would send the Holy Spirit in His name or by His authority (John 14:26).

Please notice that Jesus said, "When he, the Spirit of truth, is come..., he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak...He shall glorify me, for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you." And the work of the Holy Spirit in converting the sinner is convicting him of his sin, of righteousness and of judgment, and that's essential, yes, but, the sinner still needs the Savior. It was Christ who came as the Lamb of God slain, to take away the sin of the world. Even the Holy Spirit Himself, says that in all things Christ is to have the preeminence (Colossians 1:18). So, we need to feel no guilt or fear of blasphemy by giving Christ the preeminence. That's what the Holy Spirit said do, and He does it in all His writings. He frequently speaks of the biblical message as the "gospel, or the good news of God" and

even more frequently as the "gospel or the good news of Christ," but never as the "gospel or the good news of the Holy Spirit." Let us pray. Father we pray that in our study of your holy spirit that we are not being misguided or misguide anyone, but we are directing to him as he is and glorifying you in what we say and do. In Jesus' name, Amen.

So, we have learned today that our only source of information about the Holy Spirit is the Bible, and that the Bible is the final revelation from God. Anytime people regard the Bible as anything less than the complete, authoritative and sufficient and final word of God, they open the door to contradictions and chaos. People who feel led by the Holy Spirit to do and to say what the Holy Spirit disapproves in the Scriptures are not being led by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit does not lie or contradict Himself. If a person says he's being led by the Holy Spirit through an unusual experience to do what the Holy Spirit teaches him to do in the Bible, he must admit the experience (the dream or the vision) does not constitute a revelation of anything new. It was already revealed in the Scriptures.

We also learned that the Holy Spirit is a person, a divine person, never a dove, not a ghost, not a miracle, or an experience, or a mere influence or power or tongue, and that He works in complete harmony with God and Christ to redeem man. He's always active in every conversion, convicting the sinner of His word. "The Spirit and the bride say, Come. Let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him drink of the water of life freely." My friend, if you will heed the invitation of the Holy Spirit to come to Christ in loving, and trusting obedience, get your life turned around and Christ will wash away your sins in his blood as you obey him in baptism, rise to walk in newness of life.

"The Holy Spirit and the Christian"
Romans 8:8-11

I can't think of a biblical subject over which there is more confusion than that of the Holy Spirit. And I want you to know as we begin today that I am not putting anybody down when I say that, or I am not claiming for myself a perfect understanding of all things, so as to answer all questions. I am not here to win any debate points or anything like that. I am searching for the truth just as you are. And I do know where the answers are. They are in the word of God, and we will be turning to it for our answers. So, you won't be hearing me say, "God told me to tell you" or "God spoke to me and said thus and so." I will be quoting God as He speak to us in His word.

For those who must have a miracle, the Bible is the most fantastic miracle of all. It is a contradiction to claim to be a Bible-believing Christian while holding to experience, however ecstatic it was, as authority that overrides biblical authority. A Christian experience is not the confirmation of truth. Rather, truth is the basis for a true Christian experience. A Holy Spirit experience is not an alternative to Holy Spirit teaching. Instead, by Bible teaching, a person is led into the life in the Spirit. And after Ken Helterbrand leads the Edmond Church of Christ in a hymn, I will be back for Bible reading and prayer; then the message titled, The Holy Spirit and the Christian.

We will be reading today from the epistle to the Romans. In the eighth chapter we are going to begin reading at verse eight and read down through verse 11. "So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God. But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His. And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of Him who raised up Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you." Now let us go to the Father in prayer. Our heavenly Father, Almighty God, we pray You in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord and Your Savior. And we pray Your blessings on our study today about the Holy Spirit, and we are searching out to know just how He is a help to us and how He can be if perhaps He has not been because of the lack of our faith and our understanding of Your word. Help us, Lord, in our study today and be with us, attend us. We pray You in Jesus' name, Amen.

You probably hear Christians talking a lot about "the day of Pentecost." Well of course, Bible students know that to the Jewish people there was a day of Pentecost every year. However, generally the expression "the day of Pentecost" is a reference to the first such day after the resurrection of Jesus. The events that make that day so important are described for us in the second chapter of the book of Acts. It is the day that marks the beginning of a new era! It is the birthday of the church of Christ! It was a turning point in history. It is the day God dispatched the Holy Spirit to begin His ministry! It is the day of which the Old Testament prophets had spoken for centuries.

It is the day God was talking about through the prophet Joel, when he said, "And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out of my spirit upon all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: And also on My servants and on my maidservants I will pour out of My Spirit in those days..." And it shall come to pass that whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Joel 2:28 through 32). Well, "all flesh," "sons and daughters," "old men and young men," "menservants and maidservants" and "whoever" are all key words and phrases in that passage. Because beginning on the day of Pentecost, the message of reconciliation with God became a universal one, to people of every nation and every position, every accountable age, women and men alike, and they would all be recipients of the gift of the Holy Spirit.

The apostle Peter was the spokesman for the apostles, and for God, on that day. He began his sermon by saying in Acts 2:47, "This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel: And it shall be in the last days, God says, that I will pour forth of My Spirit upon all mankind..." And then he concluded, saying in verse 36, "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ. Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said to them, Repent and be baptized, let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call."

Well, Peter was saying every person receives the Holy Spirit when he is baptized into Jesus Christ. That is when he is saved, becomes a child of God. And that is the promise of God. He confirms that in Acts chapter 5, verses 30 through 32 when, before the Jewish council he said again, "The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom you murdered by hanging Him on a tree. Him God has exalted to His right hand to be the Prince and the Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. And we are His witnesses to these things, and so is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey Him"-- as we just saw from chapter two, verse 38.

To the Gentile Christians at Rome the apostle Paul wrote to in that passage we just read, "So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God. But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His. And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of Him who raised up Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you."

Although there are many, many passages which teach the Spirit's indwelling, it hardly seems necessary to pile one upon another indefinitely. Suffice it to say from what we have already seen, any person who obeys God as Peter declared on Pentecost Day is saved, he receives the Spirit to indwell him. Life in the Spirit is a promise to every obedient believer-- no one is "left behind". And that is what God was saying through Joel and Peter and Paul and the others.

There should be no more mystery associated with the indwelling of the Holy Spirit than with the indwelling of the Spirit of Christ or the indwelling of the Spirit of God who raised up Jesus from the dead, because that is precisely what we are talking about, as seen from that passage we just read. Well, it is not then a personal indwelling-- or an incarnation of the Holy Spirit, as for example in the case of Jesus, who having been born of Mary, was God incarnate-- living in a person's body.

The Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, the Spirit of Him who raised up Jesus from the dead, comes to dwell in us when we are born anew of water and the Spirit as Jesus taught in John chapter 3, verses 3 and 5. God says if any such person says God's Spirit does not dwell in him, he is none of His. Well, we don't want to leave you with a false expectation. There is no evidence that what Peter promised every obedient believer in Acts chapter 2, verse 38 and 5, in verse 32 and what Paul wrote with the Gentile Christians about it in Romans 8:8 to 11 as indwelling, is what the apostles received in Acts 2:1 to 4-- the baptism of the Holy Spirit. What the apostles received was promised them by our Lord to equip them to do the work to which God had chosen and called them. What they received enabled them to do "the signs [or the works] of an apostle" (II Corinthians 12:12). Matthias had taken Judas' place to bring the number back up to twelve, and what the twelve received was the baptism of the Holy Spirit. That was never promised to every obedient believer. If we fail to make that distinction, friend, we are destined to disappointment and confusion. It is obvious just from the reading of the Scriptures that not all the saints--

even in New Testament times received what the apostles did on the day of Pentecost. To promise that to every person becoming a Christian, or to create an expectation of it, is a serious, grievous mistake. It is false, friend. Don't be deceived by it. Another distinction we must make between the Holy Spirit as a gift to abide in us and the "gifts of the Spirit" mentioned in I Corinthians 12:1 to 11-- well, continuing on over into the thirteenth and fourteenth chapters, too; the gifts of extraordinary wisdom, knowledge and faith. These were the gifts of healing, miracles and prophecy, the gifts of discerning of spirits, tongues and interpretation of tongues and so on. No one member of the church possessed all of these gifts and there is no indication that all of the members, or every member, possessed any one of them.

The indwelling Spirit does not empower the Christian to do miracles. As we just noted from I Corinthians 12, some of the early Christians did possess power to do miracles. And others possessed that power as a result of the laying on of the apostle's hands. But some did not receive it. Two examples of the first of these that I mentioned: the Samaritans (Acts chapter 8) who believed and were baptized (Jesus said, "Everyone who believes and is baptized will be saved" (Mark 16:16), and they had, so, the only biblical conclusion, has to be that they were saved-- so they were Christians alright). They had received the Holy Spirit in the measure promised in Acts 2:38 and 5:32. If not, why not? However, it was not till later that, by the laying on of the apostles' hands, the apostles Peter's and John's hands, that they received a measure of the Holy Spirit which empowered them to do miracles (Acts chapter 8, verses 1 to 18). And the same is true with the twelve men in Ephesus in Acts 19 who were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus, and just as God had promised in Acts 2:38 received the gift of the Holy Spirit. But, it was not until after the apostle (Paul in this case) had laid his hands on them that they "spoke with tongues and prophesied" (Acts 19, verses 1 to 12).

So then, what are the advantages of the indwelling of the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, the Spirit of Him who raised Christ from the dead, the Holy Spirit? If it isn't miraculous, what does it mean to me as a Christian? Well, first, my friend, with the absolute certainty of it, the child of God is very adamantly determined not to defile his body with sin (I Corinthians 6:19 and 20), be it with cigarette smoke, or pot, or crack or cocaine or liquor or illicit sex-- or gluttony. I mentioned gluttony; I knew someone was wondering why preachers never say anything about that, so I thought I would toss it in here. I do love that Very Berry Cobbler I found at one of our restaurants, though.

Secondly, with a strong faith that the Holy Spirit indwells him, which faith is firmly fixed on biblical teaching as we have just seen, the Christian draws strength to resist the works of the flesh, and walk in the Spirit (Ephesians 3:16; Galatians 5:16) and it enables him to keep himself pure (I Timothy 5:22). And in that same connection he is emboldened to add to his faith, moral excellence, and to that knowledge, and add that to his knowledge, and to knowledge, self control, and to self control perseverance, and to perseverance, godliness, and to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness, Christian love. And that is II Peter chapter 1, verses 5 through 11.

Well, there is much more to be said, so let us hurry on to those thoughts in the first chapter of Ephesians. Here Paul is addressing Gentile Christians particularly about God's bringing together in one body, or one church, all people in Christ; that would be to His own glory. Oh say! That was great news to the Gentiles! They were received into the body of Christ as one with the Jews! The end of that discrimination! They had heard the gospel of their salvation and had believed--"and were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God's own possession, to the praise of His glory" (verses 13 and 14). A seal was a mark or a sign of ownership, a stamp of validity. Cattle and even slaves were often given such a sign-- sometimes called a "brand". On the farm we branded our cattle, our livestock so as to know what were ours. The idea here is

that the Gentile Christians had received the Holy Spirit as a mark or a sign that they were the people of God, the church of Jesus Christ. It was a constant sign, an assurance to them more than to other people; but it was a sign to others, too. It was something that they needed every day. And so do we, friend. And, that is what the indwelling Spirit means to all Christians of every generation, whether Jew or Gentile. It was (and is) given at baptism, as we learned from Acts 2:38, which is a sign read by others. My friend, are you so identified with Christ? I hope so, but if not, I hope you will "repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive that gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children, as many as the Lord our God shall call to Himself." Let us pray. Father, we thank You for the precious promise we have of the gift of the indwelling of Your spirit and all that it means to us; and this faith is founded so firmly in what You teach in Your word. We pray in the lovely name of Jesus. Amen.

In that first chapter of Ephesians the apostle Paul says three things about the indwelling Spirit. It is a promise. We talked at length about that. Number two: It is a seal or a sign belonging. And we discussed that. And it is the "earnest of our inheritance." That is King James Version, verse 14. I wanted that to be our closing thought. In verse eleven he had said that in Christ we have obtained an inheritance. And the apostle Peter wrote about that inheritance, too. He said in I Peter 1:4 that it is an incorruptible or imperishable inheritance, one that is undefiled and one that will not fade away-- and it is reserved in heaven for us. Oh my! Having lived so long in this old world of change, we have witnessed the corrupting and trashing and destruction of so many beautiful and valuable things, that the thought of an incorruptible, undefiled and unfading inheritance really grabs us, doesn't it? There is the old hymn that says, "In the land of fadeless day lies the city foursquare; it shall never pass away and there is no night there. God shall wipe away all tears; there is no death, no pain, nor fears; and they count not time by years, for there is no night there."

Well, we Christians have such an inheritance reserved in heaven for us, and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit is our "earnest" payment (King James Version), our "guarantee" (the New King James Version), a "pledge" (the New American Standard Version). The word used here has its origin in the Hebrew but came into use by the Greeks through the Phoenician merchants. In modern Greek it is used for an engagement ring, but in its ancient commercial usage, it meant a first installment, a deposit, a down payment or a pledge that was a part of the purchase price, paid in advance to secure a legal claim to the article under consideration and to validate a contract. And that is what the Holy Spirit means to the Christian, my friend. God has the beautiful inheritance reserved for us and He reassures us daily of the validity of that promise by His constant presence with us.

"God's Holy Spirit in Conversion"
John 16:7-13

There is no passage that describes the work of the Holy Spirit in conversion better than the one which we are using for our text today. It is a part of Jesus' last conversation, or last recorded conversation I should say, with His Apostles before his departure before his crucifixion. And we will begin reading in verse 7 of the 16th chapter of the book of John. "Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is for your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you. And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they do not believe in Me; of righteousness, because I go to my Father and you see Me no more; of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged. I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will show you or tell you things to come." Reading through verse 13. Now let us go to God in prayer. All mighty and all wise God, we are so thankful to you that you have revealed through the Holy Spirit you have revealed your will and your word to us, in the Bible. And that we have access to it in our own language a translation and that we can have and speak it in the English language and study it in the English language. We pray your blessings upon our study today. In the lovely name of Jesus we pray you, Amen.

You know, you have probably experienced it, every discipline has its own vocabulary. When we begin the study of a new specialty, we find ourselves running to the dictionary quite often. And the more proficient we become in that study, we can with greater ease read or hear lectures about it. Studies in religious matters are no different than that. There are certain words, which may not be in themselves religious words, but we've reserved them almost exclusively for religious use. The word "gospel" for example, literally means "good news, glad tidings, good message." It could apply to the announcement of a wedding or the birth of a baby, a report on the national economy, or the news of having made the Dean's honor roll. But to most people it's a religious word describing a certain kind of music or meeting or literature or even a religious broadcast such as this one.

"Conversion" is another such word. A good dictionary defines it as "the act of converting or being converted in any sense." "Convert" is a verb meaning "to change into another state, form or substance; to transform." We change or convert cotton that we see growing in the rows on the farms of the south into a shirt or other wearing apparel. We convert or change the raw wheat we see blowing in the wind into cereal such as you might have had for breakfast this morning. There's really no mystery about that, is there? When it's applied to man, conversion is a major change also. The big difference is that since man was created with a free will, he isn't passive, as the wheat or the cotton in the field. He possesses the power to choose about his conversion.

Well, just as there are several minor changes in the process of converting cotton into a shirt or a dress, like the ginning, the milling, the cutting and the sewing, so there are several minor changes in the conversion of man. Christ seeks to control the person from the inside outwardly, therefore, the beginning place at any real change in his life is in the heart. We must experience a change of heart in order to be truly converted to God, and that's experienced by believing in God and in His Son, Jesus Christ. However, the conversion process does not end there, any more than the cotton becomes a shirt when it passes the milling process. There must also be a change of behavior or lifestyle in a person's conversion. That's accomplished in what the Bible calls repentance. There must also be a change in a person's relationship with God, which is brought about at the point of baptism when he moves from being without Christ or

outside of Christ to within Christ. It's then and there that he's reconciled to God as in Ephesians chapter 2 verse 11.

No person is completely or wholly converted until he's undergone or experienced all of those changes. You see, it's possible for a person to believe in Jesus, but never change his lifestyle. He might continue to live a life of sin and believe in Jesus. And it's possible for a person to repent, but never come by baptism into the cross of Jesus for forgiveness of sins. Many people have stopped the practice of some evil in their lives simply because it was the expedient thing to do, health reasons or economic reasons, not because God said to do it, but for these other reasons, maybe even some social reasons.

Well, the question before us today is, what is the role of the Holy Spirit in all this? There's never been any controversy over the fact that the Holy Spirit is a real and active and powerful influence in bringing about all these changes. There has never been a true conversion to Christ since the events of the Day of Pentecost ushered in the Christian era in which the Holy Spirit was not active. But, how He accomplishes those changes in a person's life haven't always been clear with lots of people. Let's see what we can learn from the scriptures about that. Ok?

No single passage so nearly perfectly defines this ministry of the Holy Spirit as John chapter 16 verses 7-14, which we read awhile ago. Here the Savior was preparing His apostles for His departure from among them. And He promised not to leave them without a Helper. He would send the Holy Spirit to be a helper. There are four things the Holy Spirit would do to help them: number one, He would abide with and comfort the disciples; He would reveal all truth to them; number 3, He would glorify the Son, number 4, He would convict the world, them converted. This is our particular interest today. The Holy Spirit is going to reprove or convict the world, the unconverted person of sin, of righteousness and of judgment.

First: Jesus said, "He will "convict the world of sin... because they believe not on Me." Lost man is convicted as a sinner because of his rejection of Christ. Christ is holy and just and pure and to reject him is to oppose righteousness. Furthermore, every institution, civil, religious or other, is founded upon some fundamental fact held as truth. Christianity, the church, is founded upon the truth that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. Matthew 16:18 When Jesus asked the apostles who they perceived Him to be, Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." Jesus pronounced a blessing on him, then promised, ". . . upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of HADES shall not prevail against it" (Matthew 16:18).

Centuries before, Isaiah had prophesied, "Thus says the Lord God, Behold I lay in Zion a stone for a foundation. A tried stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation: whoever believes will not act hastily" (Isaiah 28:16). Both Paul in Romans chapter 9 verse 33 and Peter in I Peter chapter 2 verses 5-8 reach back over the centuries, as it were, lift this passage from Isaiah's prophecy and apply it to Christ Jesus. He is the "tried stone", He is the "sure foundation." He was tried in His death and resurrection. Had He died and revived not, "the gates of Hades" would have prevailed and Jesus would have been tried and found wanting. But now He is "declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead" That's Romans chapter 1 verse 4. As Isaiah's foundation stone, He stood the test. But the world has rejected Him. And, in rejecting Him, it has rejected God. In the process of conversion, the Spirit operates on the heart of the sinner convicting him of sin in the rejection of the Savior.

He will "convict the world . . . of righteousness," said Jesus, "because I go to the Father." As the Son of God, Jesus Christ existed in the beginning with God John chapter 1 verse 1. While our Lord did not consider equality with God a prize to be grasped (Philippians 2:5-10), He repeatedly affirmed His Deity. And because of those claims the Jewish leaders demanded His crucifixion. But upon His ascension to the

right hand of the Majesty in the heavens, His claims were vindicated. His righteousness was established forever and He reigns as King of Kings, because He was received of the Father. His throne is for ever and ever: His scepter is a scepter of righteousness (Hebrews 1:8). In the process of conversion the Holy Spirit works on the heart of the person convicting him of the righteousness of Christ because He sits at the Father's own right hand.

Jesus also promised, "He [the Holy Spirit] will convict the world of judgment because the prince of this world has been judged." After a life of "doing good", Acts chapter 10 verse 38, Jesus was betrayed into the hands of sinful men, condemned and crucified. His friends removed His body from the cross and tenderly placed it in the tomb hewn out of a rock in a nearby garden. Disappointment and sorrow filled their hearts as they wearily turned and walked away that day. Their fondest hopes had faded amid tears and gloom when the Savior dropped His head and said, "It is finished." The world had rejected its Savior.

Wicked men, believing that the "gates of Hades" had prevailed on that occasion. Satan had had his field day. But early in the morning upon the first day of the week, an angel descended from heaven and rolled away the stone from before the door of the sepulcher. The earth trembled. The soldiers became as dead men. And death yielded up her prey. The "gates of Hades" were overcome. And Satan was vanquished! Conquered! Overcome! Defeated! At the cross he'd marshaled all his forces. In the resurrection of Jesus he (the devil) suffered his eternal defeat. In conversion the Holy Spirit yields influence upon the heart of man to convict him of judgment because the prince of the world has been judged.

Thus the work of the Holy Spirit in conversion is defined: "He. . .will convict the world of sin, of righteousness and of judgment." The question now is, how does he do it? It isn't a question of power but of fact. It isn't what the Holy Spirit can do, but what the Holy Spirit does do in the conversion of a person. Confusion always enters in when we try to define the power of deity. Just so, there's no good purpose to be served by limiting the power of the Holy Spirit, by which He influences people in conversion, nor in ascribing to Him operations upon the heart of man which He plainly does not exercise.

I've studied about that for years. So far as I am able to determine there are only two possible avenues through which He may operate upon man in order to convict him of sin, righteousness and judgment. First, He might employ argumentation and persuasion. I mean, He may convict the world by presentation of evidence --by preaching. In this case He would employ the word of truth to convict the sinner. Or, He might employ physical force, physical power or force him to do so. In this case He would employ miracles, separate and apart from the word of truth. But miracles don't convert. They can only obtain a favorable hearing of the word. They were used for this purpose in the New Testament, and to confirm the preached word. In Acts chapter 8 verses 5 and 6 the Bible says, "Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ to them. And the multitudes with one accord heeded the things spoken by Philip, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did."

The miraculous appearance of our Lord to Saul of Tarsus on the Damascus Road didn't save him. It only prepared him for a hearing the things that Ananias would tell him he must do. He was commanded to "Arise and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do"(Acts 9:6). The appearance of the angel to Cornelius didn't convert him, but it prepared him for a receptive hearing of the gospel and he was told to send to Joppa and get Peter who would tell him and his household how he was to be saved (Acts chapter 10 verses 5; and chapter 11 verse 14). And the miracle of the earthquake in Philippi set the stage for a receptive heart in the jailor, so that he heard the word of God as spoken by Paul and Silas (Acts chapter 16 verses 16-40).

Well, the idea of a direct operation of the Holy Spirit on the heart of the sinner to convert him

cannot be sustained by Scriptures, friend. We must remember that Jesus had earlier in the same passage that we are studying today in John 16, told the apostles that the world (the unconverted world) cannot receive the Holy Spirit, because they do not see him and they do not know Him (John 14:17). Therefore, according to Jesus' own words, the Holy Spirit does not come upon the sinner and by force convert him or change him. It's significant that of all the conversions recorded for us in the word of God, none of them was achieved without the preaching or the teaching of the word of God. No one since that time has ever been known to be genuinely converted to Christ without hearing and learning of Christ. God says in His word, Romans 1:16, the gospel is God's power to save. Now let us pray. Holy Father we are thankful for the expression of your love and the revelation of your love and your message in your word. And we pray that it will have the power to convert souls today and we believe that it will, when it is really preached in sincerity and in love. Bless this study today. We pray you, in the name of Christ, Amen.

We've seen what the work of the Holy Spirit is in changing the lives of the unconverted and bringing them to salvation. According to Jesus' statement to the apostles, it is a work of convicting them of sin, of righteousness and of judgment. And, since Jesus said the world (the unconverted) cannot receive the Holy Spirit, He performs his convicting ministry by teaching and persuading. The conversion of the three thousand on the Day of Pentecost is an excellent example. Peter preached to those Jewish people the death, the burial and the resurrection of Christ. He said, "Let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ. Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart (they were convicted, friend. The Holy Spirit did that through the preached word.) And [they] said to Peter and to the rest of the apostles, "men and brethren, what shall we do?" Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sin; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit....Then those who gladly received his word were baptized." That's Acts chapter 2 verses 36-38 and 41. Please notice, they did not receive the Holy Spirit. They received the preached word!

The idea of a miraculous, mysterious operation of the Holy Spirit in conversion, apart from the gospel, is a dangerous one, my friend. It declares the word of God as a dead letter. It makes God a respecter of persons by giving such power to some and withholding it from others. It places the responsibility for the lost on the Holy Spirit, by so doing. And it deprives man of the free exercise of his will in his salvation. And it encourages people to wait for, pray for, and anticipate a power to their salvation which God has not promised. And in their delusion and disappointment, they may forever be turned from God in disgust. Some of them I've known even in anger. The Holy Spirit is active, very active, in changing the lives and bringing them to Christ in this twentieth century just as He was in the first century. I hope you will yield to his powerful message and become a child of God today.

"The Holy Spirit and Miracles"
Romans 8:12-17

We are reading today from the book of Romans chapter 8. We'll begin reading in verse 12. "Therefore, brethren, we are debtors – not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. For as many as are led by the spirit of God, these are the sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father." The spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs – heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together." Now let us go to God in prayer. Our Father who are in heaven, we pray to you today, in the name of Jesus Christ. And give you our thanks and our praise for revealing yourself to us in Your Son and sending us the gift of the Holy Spirit to help us to abide in you and walk in the ways that Jesus taught. We pray your blessing upon our study today, Amen.

A great many people inevitably associate the Holy Spirit with miracles. And since it's generally perceived that there's a greater power in a miracle than in any other event or deed, to these people the Holy Spirit possesses and exercises more power than --well, even God or Christ. They exalt Him to the very highest position in the heavens. Those people even pray to Him instead of to God as the Bible teaches us to do in Matthew 6:9. There, Jesus taught, "In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name." The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Christ, the Spirit of God --the Spirit of Him who raised up Jesus Christ from the dead. (All of those expressions are found in Romans 8:9-10.) Then, let's freely ascribe to Him all the attributes of Deity, for He is Deity. He is the Spirit of the Almighty God. He is the Spirit of Christ Jesus. He possesses miraculous powers. However, unlike God and Christ, the Holy Spirit does not possess sovereign power. It's interesting, and it's worthy of note here that in the Scriptures, the Holy Spirit never calls attention to Himself. Jesus said the Holy Spirit whom God would send would glorify Him (John 16:14).

Jesus Christ showed Himself to be an obedient Son, even to death on the cross to accomplish the Father's will (Hebrews 5 verses 8 and 9). It was then that God declared Him to be His Son with power by raising Him from the dead (Romans 1:4). And the Father gave the Son all power or authority in heaven and on earth (Matthew 28:18-20). That authority will be returned to God at the consummation of all things at Christ's second coming (I Corinthians 15:28). And today, my friend, right now, as we speak Jesus Christ is seated at God's "... right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come. And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all" (Eph. 1:20-23). Then, it's by God's design that the fullness of deity dwells in Christ, that Christ might have preeminence in all things (Colossians 1:18).

Therefore, the ministry of the Holy Spirit, including the exercise of His miraculous powers is all in conjunction and cooperation with that of God and of Christ. The Spirit's ultimate purpose is the reconciliation of God and man. God conceived the plan of reconciliation; Christ executed it; the Holy Spirit revealed it. Without the Holy Spirit the riches in Christ would remain securely stored in Heaven's keeping. But because so much is being taught to the contrary, it must be stressed that the miracles ascribed to the working of the Holy Spirit in the New Testament are done for no reason than what can be associated with the revelation and the confirmation of the gospel message.

After His resurrection and prior to His ascension to the Father, Jesus charged the eleven of the

twelve men whom He had chosen and prepared for the apostleship (remember Judas had hanged himself). He charged them to go "into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized," He said, "will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned." A-n-d," He said, "these signs will follow those who believe; In my name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover. --So then, after the Lord had spoken to them, He was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God. And they went out, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, confirming the word through accompanying signs. Amen." So ends the gospel of Mark.

From Luke's account of that commission, we glean more information. It's in Luke 24 verses 44 through 49. Among other things He said to them, "Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And you (the apostles) are witnesses of those things. Behold I send the promise of My father upon you; but tarry you in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high."

The promise was the Holy Spirit who would (1) guide them into all truth, (number 2) bring to their memory all He had taught them over the space of about three years and (3) reveal to them new truths. And, according to Mark, He would verify their teaching with signs or miracles. They were told not to go out on their own, but to wait in Jerusalem for the promise --the Holy Spirit. They returned to Jerusalem where they waited and prayed and chose Matthias to take Judas' place in the apostleship. And, at the occasion of His ascension (Acts 1) He warned them again not to go yet, but to wait for the promise. "For John truly baptized with water;" He said, "but you (apostles) shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now." They would need the Holy Spirit's inspiration, His guidance, His revelations, and His power to do those signs and wonders to confirm their teaching.

"When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind fill all the house where they were sitting. Then there appeared unto them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." So it was that, immediately the preaching and the teaching began that this Jesus whom the Jews had crucified had been raised from the dead, and was then seated at God's own right hand in heaven. Jesus had been made both Lord and Christ!

Just as Jesus promised, they did speak with new or other tongues --not an "unknown tongue" now, not a "prayer language" not an "ecstatic utterance," but languages spoken by other nations, which the apostles had never studied or never spoken. "And many wonders and signs were done through the apostles" (Acts chapter 2 verse 43). Peter and John healed a lame man who sat asking alms at the Beautiful gate of the temple in Acts chapter 3. "Through the hands of the apostles many signs and wonders were done among the people---" (Acts 5:12).

They went and they preached and they baptized people who believed in Jesus as the Lord commanded them to do, and the Lord worked with them confirming their preaching with those signs or those miracles. It was not the miracles, but the gospel they preached that was the power of God to salvation. Read it in Romans 1:16. The miracles or the signs confirmed or verified their gospel --their good news message.

Acts chapter 2 verse 4 says, "And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." You know, I've often wondered why those who claim

this gift for themselves nowadays, who speak in tongues, don't today hear the sound of that great wind that "filled the house where they were." Well, it would be a grave error to say that everyone of whom the Scripture says, "they were filled with the Holy Spirit," did miracles. For example, there's John the Baptist of whom it is written in Luke 1:13-15 that he was "filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mothers womb." John was one of the greatest preachers of all time. Jesus said of him, "Among them that are born of women there has not risen a greater than John the Baptist" (Matthew 11:11), yet John did no miracles (John 10:41). There were lots of others just like him.

There were people in the early church on whom the apostles laid their hands and conveyed on them miraculous power, but it was not "the baptism of the Holy Spirit" like the apostles received on Pentecost. For example there were the seven men in Acts chapter 6 who were chosen by the congregation to "serve tables." Stephen was one of them. Verse 8 says, "Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and signs among the people." Another of them was Philip, who when the disciples were scattered, went to Samaria and preached Christ to them. Acts chapter 8 verse 6 says, "And the multitudes with one accord heeded to the things spoken by Philip, they heeded to the things that were spoken by Philip, when they saw the miracles which he did." Acts 2:45.

I Corinthians 12 mentions "spiritual gifts," nine in number, which were also miraculous. They were the gifts of wisdom, knowledge, faith, healing, miracles, prophecy; discerning of spirits, tongues and interpretation of tongues. These are not identified as the "baptism of the Holy Spirit." Not in the scriptures. Neither are they called, "the gift of the Holy Spirit" which Peter promised at Pentecost in Acts chapter 2 verse 38. They are "gifts of the Spirit," –that the Holy Spirit gave.

So, that the early church enjoyed the presence of miracles is not arguable. Of course it did. I don't know anybody who denies it today, but should there be found someone who tried, he'd certainly be showing his biblical illiteracy. Well then, doesn't that mean that the presence of the Holy Spirit necessitates miracles in the twentieth century church too? No, no not at all; for good reason, too. The discussion of those gifts of the Spirit which is introduced in I Corinthians 12 continues through chapters thirteen and fourteen. And in chapter 13 verse 11 Paul writes, "When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things." Well, what has that to do with this question anyway? It must have some bearing on the subject because the Holy Spirit Himself interjected it into the discussion right here.

Well, you may have heard me tell it before, but I can't find a better illustration of it right now, so what He was saying, so I will just repeat this one that I told you before. I was waiting in the Oklahoma City air terminal for the departure of a flight to somewhere back, awhile back. I was amused by a woman with a baby, whose --well, I guess it was a combination car-seat and a stroller. Whatever it was, it wasn't going to go in an overhead bin on an aircraft. It was a whopper sized thing. It would take up a large portion of a baggage compartment even. The thing that struck me was, is there no limit to the size of what a passenger can check? But, I understood why she needed it, of course. She had this small baby. She'd need it when she arrived at her destination. We boarded the plane and across the aisle from me was a man and woman with what appeared to be --maybe a 15-year-old boy. I had a 15 year old grandson at the time, so I had an idea what one looks like. But they didn't have a car-seat-stroller with them. That wasn't surprising. They wouldn't be expected to have one, now would they? Not with a 15-year old. Just so, you wouldn't expect the mature church to carry around some of the necessities of an infant church. That's what it means.

Miracles were a necessity for the infant church to confirm the gospel that was being revealed to them and was in the process of revelation at the time. Remember? Awhile ago we read from the

Scriptures that when the Helper (the Holy Spirit) would come He would (1) guide the apostles into all truth. Number 2 He would refresh their memory of what Jesus had taught them during those three years that he was with them. Number 3 He would reveal more truth to them and number 4 He would confirm the revelation by miracles. And when that ministry was finished, the miracles were no longer necessary and the Holy Spirit stopped doing them (I Corinthians 13 verse 8). Let's pray. Holy Father. Thank you for the Holy Spirit which you bestowed in such a miraculous way upon the apostles to guide them in the revelation of Your word. And now that we have your word, we are thankful for it and this provides for us the guidance of the Holy Spirit in things spiritual. We thank you Lord, in Jesus' name, Amen.

A while ago we mentioned the nine gifts of the Holy Spirit, all nine mentioned in I Corinthians 12. They are wisdom, knowledge and faith; healing, miracles and prophecy; discerning of spirits, tongues and interpretation of tongues. Now notice chapter 13 verses 8 to 10: "Love never fails. But where there are prophecies they will fail. Whether there are tongues, they will cease, whether there is knowledge it will vanish away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect has come then that which is in part will be done away" --like the baby carriage. I've seen people just try to laugh those words away. They actually make light of them. But, they are the very crux of this discussion in I Corinthians 12, 13 and 14. He mentioned three of the nine gifts and said they are going to "end," "cease," "be done away." So, from the beginning, miracles in the church were designed --planned-- by the Lord Himself, to be temporary. If three of the nine gift's of the Spirit, listed in that list are to end, couldn't a person reasonably conclude that the whole list would end? Of course so; that's the idea.

These gifts had to do with revelation and confirmation of God's word. When I Corinthians was being written, the revelation was not complete, but when revelation was completed, and the bible was written of course partial knowledge would have ended, and once revelation had been confirmed by miracles, there's no need to keep on confirming it with more miracles. The purpose of miracles in the church was served at that time. And since, the Holy Spirit always works in conformity with the will of God and of Christ, He has no divine purpose in performing miracles in today's church. As a matter of honesty, dear friend, modern miracles are not said to be for the same purpose as New Testament miracles. They are done today for the glory of the self-acclaimed miracle performer! I know. I've been there and seen it and heard it.