

7. THE HOLY SPIRIT IS YOUR CONSTANT COMPANION

COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

This lesson is designed (1) to point out that the Holy Spirit is very important in the lives of Christ's people and (2) to show what people can do to receive the Holy Spirit.

EXPLANATION OF TERMS

ABBA: an Aramaic word, meaning "father.

DAY OF PENTECOST: a Jewish festival, which is celebrated fifty days after the Passover feast.

EARNEST: a down payment that indicates that the rest will be paid later.

GENTILES: all the nations that are not Jewish.

GOSPEL: the good news about Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection. (The gospel message also included instructions about how to obey the gospel.)

HEAVEN: the dwelling place of God. The word "heaven" can also refer to the sky.

HELPER: refers to the Holy Spirit, who helps people by comforting and encouraging them. He also aids their

prayers. The “Helper” revealed truth to the apostles and prophets.

INHERITANCE: the multifaceted gift, which God gives to His children. It includes living with God in heaven after this life is over.

LAYING ON OF HANDS: a symbolic action of putting one’s hands on someone in a ceremonial way to give that person some gift or office.

TONGUES: languages.

SPEAKING IN TONGUES: speaking in languages that one has not learned.

THE HOLY SPIRIT IS YOUR CONSTANT COMPANION

Before Jesus was crucified, He promised to send a “Helper” to His apostles after He was gone (John 14:16). When Jesus said this, He was referring to the Holy Spirit.

Jesus kept His promise. He poured out the Holy Spirit on His apostles on the day of Pentecost in Jerusalem (Acts 2:1-4). Later, once the Holy Spirit had been poured out, the Holy Spirit became available for everyone who obeyed the gospel (Acts 2:38-39).

TO WHOM DOES GOD GIVE THE HOLY SPIRIT?

The apostle Peter said that God gives His Holy Spirit to those who obey God (Acts 5:32). If this statement is true, one should not expect to receive the Holy Spirit until he has begun to obey God. There is some confusion among believers on this point. Many think that God sends His Holy Spirit into the hearts of people in order to make them His children. The New Testament teaches, however, that God sends His Holy Spirit into the hearts of people that are already children of God. The apostle Paul wrote,

“And because you are sons,
God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son
into your hearts, crying out, “Abba, Father!”
Galatians 4:6

This shows that the Holy Spirit comes to a person in order to confirm that person’s sonship, not to establish it.

HOW DOES A PERSON GET THE HOLY SPIRIT?

On the day of Pentecost, the apostle Peter showed that the reception of the Holy Spirit is dependent upon, and connected with, a person's being baptized (immersed in water) in the name of Jesus for the forgiveness of sins. Peter said,

“Repent, and 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.”

Acts 2:38-39

The expression “gift of the Holy Spirit” means that the Holy Spirit Himself will be given as a gift. God promised in the Old Testament that the Holy Spirit would come upon people. See Joel 2:28-32.

The Holy Spirit comes to a person from outside of himself. The Holy Spirit is not present in a person from the time of his birth. This means that no amount of meditation will enable anyone to discover the Holy Spirit within himself, because the Holy Spirit is not in him until the Holy Spirit has been given to him. So, if the Holy Spirit is living

in anyone, it is because the Holy Spirit has been given to that person.

THE HOLY SPIRIT HELPS IN PRAYER

We need the help of the Holy Spirit in prayer because no one understands fully how to pray as he ought (Romans 8:26). The Holy Spirit does not tell people, in so many words, what they ought to say in prayer. Yet, the Holy Spirit does help in prayer. He puts the prayers that we pray into expressions that are fit to be uttered before the holy and majestic throne of God (Romans 8:26).

WHAT ABOUT SPEAKING IN TONGUES?

No doubt some of the early Christians could speak in tongues, that is, in foreign languages, which they had not previously learned. There are two instances recorded in the New Testament of where the Holy Spirit fell from heaven on people and they began to speak in tongues. The first of these is found in Acts 2:1-13, where the Holy Spirit fell on the apostles in order to equip them for their world-wide mission. The second is found in Acts 10:44-46, where the Holy Spirit fell on a group of Gentiles, who were gathered at Cornelius house at Caesarea. The Holy Spirit fell on them in order to convince Jewish Christians that Gentiles should be baptized.

Others who received miraculous, spiritual gifts received them indirectly, that is, through the laying on of the hands of an apostle (Acts 8:14-19). Not all Christians in the first century, however, received the ability to do

miraculous deeds (1 Corinthians 12:29-30). They did not receive such gifts, either because they did not happen to come into contact with an apostle, or because the apostle with whom they came into contact did not choose to lay his hands on them. Therefore, one must conclude that the gift of speaking in tongues (foreign languages) was not essential for salvation, otherwise the apostles would have gone to extreme lengths to see that everyone received this gift.

The gift of tongues, as well as the other miraculous, spiritual gifts, such as prophesying, healing and so forth, represented a passing phenomenon. That is, they were peculiar to the early church. They were given to confirm the truthfulness of the gospel that the apostles and others were introducing to the world. See Hebrews 2:3-4. Miraculous gifts were never intended for all time.

The apostle Paul implied that these miraculous gifts were “childish” (1 Corinthians 13:11), indicting that they belonged to the infancy of the church. Paul also said that they would “fail,” “cease,” and “vanish away” (1 Corinthians 13:8). No other part of the Christian system ever was depreciated in such fashion, as were miraculous, spiritual gifts. Paul said that love is a “more excellent way” (1 Corinthians 12:31) and that it, in contrast to miraculous gifts, would “never fail” (2 Corinthians 13:8).

It is a matter of history that, after all the apostles had died, and after all of those upon whom the apostles had laid their hands had died, miraculous, spiritual gifts stopped. In our day, however, certain individuals, seeking to experience excitement and desiring to attract attention to themselves, have attempted to revive miraculous gifts.

They attempt it often for their own financial gain, but this attempt is artificial and deceptive.

IS THE HOLY SPIRIT PRESENT TODAY?

Yes, very much so! The Holy Spirit lives in the hearts and lives of all of Christ's people on earth (Romans 8:9). Christ's people are temples of the Holy Spirit, who lives in them (1 Corinthians 3:16 and 6:19).

There is a difference, however, between the human temple, in which the Holy Spirit lives and the Holy Spirit Himself. Although both are holy and have much in common, they are not the same. One is human and the other is divine. It is possible, of course, to be like God in many ways (2 Peter 1:4), but that does not mean that a person may become God.

WHAT DOES THE HOLY SPIRIT DO FOR CHRIST'S PEOPLE?

The main thing the Holy Spirit does in the lives of Christ's people is to have a sanctifying effect upon them (Romans 15:16). The Holy Spirit beautifies their lives by enabling them to bear fruit. Here is a list (Galatians 5:22-23) of some of the wonderful fruit that the Holy Spirit helps people to bear: love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. The very nature of this list shows what the interest of the Holy Spirit is. He is interested in helping people act like God's children. If they do not act like God's children, they do not belong to God (1 John 3:10). That is why everyone must

be careful not to defile himself with sin (1 Corinthians 3:17).

HOW CAN YOU TELL IF THE HOLY SPIRIT IS IN YOU?

You may not be aware of the presence of the Holy Spirit within you. You cannot hear, see, feel, smell, or taste Him with your bodily senses. In fact, there may be no physical evidence of His presence except in the fruit that He enables you to bear. Nevertheless, by faith you can know that the Holy Spirit is there.

To be more specific, you can be confident that the Holy Spirit is living in you if your sins have been washed away in baptism (Acts 22:16) and if you are allowing yourself to be led by Him (Romans 8:14). You can be confident of the Holy Spirit's presence within you if you believe what the Bible says and follow it (Romans 8:16).

THE HOLY SPIRIT IS A DOWN PAYMENT ON YOUR INHERITANCE

The fact that God is willing to give you His Holy Spirit shows that He loves you and that He has great things in store for you. The Bible calls the Holy Spirit the "earnest" (or guarantee) of your inheritance in heaven (Ephesians 1:14). The Holy Spirit is a down payment on good things to come. Question: If God has given you His

Holy Spirit, will He not also give you all the things that He has promised?

WORKSHEETS

After you have read this lesson and have looked up all the references in the Bible, please read the following sentences. As you read, please pay attention to whether or not these statements are true. If you decide a particular statement is true, please write a “T” before it. If you decide a statement is false, please write an “F” before it.

- _____1. The Holy Spirit lives in the lives of God’s people.
- _____2. You don’t have to do anything in order to receive the Holy Spirit.
- _____3. God sends His Holy Spirit into a person’s heart in order to make that person a child of God.
- _____4. Reception of the Holy Spirit is not connected to baptism in any way.
- _____5. When God’s children pray, the Holy Spirit makes intercession for them.
- _____6. Speaking in tongues is “childish.”
- _____7. The Holy Spirit and the temple in which He lives (your body) are one and the same.
- _____8. One of the main functions of the Holy Spirit is to

bear fruit in the lives of Christians.

_____9. There is no way for you to know whether or not the Holy Spirit is living in you.

_____10. Receiving the Holy Spirit is a down payment on good things yet to come.

Please, complete the following scriptures with the help of the New King James Version of the Bible.

Acts 2:38

“Then Peter said to them, ‘Repent, and let every one of you _____ in the name of Jesus Christ for the _____ of sins; and you shall receive the _____ of the _____.’”

Acts 5:32

“And we are His witnesses to these things, and so also is the _____ whom God has given to those who _____ Him.”

Galatians 4:6

“And _____ you are _____, God has sent forth the _____ of His Son into your hearts, crying out, ‘Abba, _____!’”

THOUGHT QUESTIONS: Please, think about the following questions and write a short paragraph about each of them.

1. Do you think that God is more interested in your speaking in tongues or in your bearing the fruit of the Spirit in your life? Which? Please, explain.

2. How does the Holy Spirit help in your daily life? Please, explain.