



Front Cover

I WILL SEND UNTO YOU THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH

THE HOLY SPIRIT IS A PERSON

The word spirit is used 385 times in the New Testament. In 138 passages, other expressions are found like "the Spirit of God," "the Spirit of the Lord," "the Spirit of Christ," "the Spirit of truth," "the Spirit of life," "the Spirit of the living God," "My Spirit," and frequently just, "the spirit." But 233 times in the New Testament alone the term is used of the Holy Spirit.

One would think that with so many passages telling who the Holy Spirit is and what He does, there would be no possibility of misunderstanding. But such is not the case. I am confident that there is no subject with which the Bible deals where there are more misconceptions, distorted views, and inaccurate images than of the Holy Spirit. He is pictures as a *glorified It*.

Reams have been written to teach that He is a mere influence, or some impersonal *vague force*. "As for the 'Holy Spirit,' the so-called third person in the trinity, we have already seen that He is not a person, but God's active force" (*The Truth That Leads to Eternal Life*, page 24).

Millions of people over the world who have been taught that the Holy Spirit is a person have illogical and unbiblical pictures of what He does in the lives of people. He seems to seize them and send them into some kind of hysterical frenzy. They become contortionists, rolling on the ground, kicking their feet over their heads, and assuming all sorts of unnatural positions of the body.

Accompanying all of this is an outpouring of gibberish, rapid, incoherent, and unintelligible chatter. It is all a meaningless jargon, resembling in no way a language, and understood, of course, by no one. The Holy Spirit is supposed to be responsible for this kind of conduct; but the Holy Spirit never made anyone act like a fool. I have witnessed the primitive religious rites and practices of voodoo services in Haiti and can attest that they are not radically different from some religions services I have attended of prominent denominations of Christendom in cites in the United States and other countries.

It is unexplainable to me how otherwise good and honest people can understand how God and Christ can come into and dwell in the Christian's life and they are able to maintain a sensible state of balance and adjustment in their life, but, if the Holy Spirit enters their heart, they completely lose their equilibrium!

The Holy Spirit is a person and, as a person, He possesses such attributes as self-consciousness. "These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual" (I Corinthians 2:13). You will be aware, as you read this passage that the Holy Spirit teaches and interprets the word of God. He is, therefore, a person.

He subsists in individuality and identity. "The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God" (Romans 8:16). This is a reflexive pronoun, "the Spirit Himself," and brings to view the fact that He is an individual who is able to testify or produce evidence concerning the genuineness of the Christian's conversion.

He is endowed with intuitive reason. By that is meant that He knows. He has the power, the capability of knowing. "For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the 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 possesses free will. "Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood" (Acts 20:28). He possesses a rational nature. "Then one of them, named Agabus, stood up and showed by the Spirit that there was going to be a great famine throughout all the world" (Acts 11:28).

PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Holy Spirit possesses those characteristics and qualities which make Him a person. Let me give you a brief list of them: (a) He has a mind. "Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is" (Romans 8:27), (b) He speaks. "Now the Spirit expressly says" (I Timothy 4:1), (c) He teaches. " For

prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit" (II Peter 1:21), (d) He bears witness. "But when the Helper comes whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of Truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me" (John 15:26), (e) He guides and leads. "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God" (Romans 8:14), and (f) He gives knowledge and wisdom. "For to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit" (I Corinthians 12:8)

A LIST OF WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS THE HOLY SPIRIT DOES

To help the student of the Bible in the study of this subject, I hereby submit a list of some length about what the Holy Spirit does. It should help in better understanding the topic, motivate to further study and research, and also assist in refuting false doctrine with which the student will most certainly meet as he goes out to teach his fellow man.

1. He quickens or makes alive. "It is the Spirit who gives life" (John 6:63). "but if the Spirit of Him who raised 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" (Romans 8:11. See also: II Corinthians 3:6; I Peter 3:18).

2. He shows or signifies. "The Holy Spirit indicating this, that the way into the Holiest of All was not yet made manifest while the first tabernacle was still standing" (Hebrews 9:8).

3. He refuses or forbids. "After they had come to Mysia, they tried to go into Bithynia, but the spirit did not permit them" (Acts 16:7).

4. He helps. "Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses" (Romans 8:26).

5. He makes intercession. "For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us" (Romans 8:26).

6. He reveals. "... which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets" (Ephesians 3:1-5).

7. He searches (I Corinthians 2:10).

8. He transformed men (II Corinthians 3:18).
9. He promises (Galatians 3:8, 14, 18, 29).
10. He strengthens (Ephesians 3:16).
11. He sanctifies (II Thessalonians 2:13; Romans 15:16).
12. He invites (Revelation 22:17).
13. He seals (Ephesians 1:13; 4:30).
14. He writes (II Corinthians 3:3).
15. He makes overseers (Acts 20:28).
16. He moved men; carried them along (II Peter 1:21).
17. He dwells in the body of Christians (I Corinthians 6:19).

OTHER CHARACTERISTICS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

1. He has affections (Romans 15:30).
2. He can be grieved (Ephesians 4:30; Isaiah 63:10).
3. He possesses a will (I Corinthians 12:11).
4. He can be lied to (Acts 5:3).
5. He can be resisted (Acts 7:51).
6. He can be blasphemed (Matthew 12:31–32).

THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE GODHEAD

His work in the Gospel:

1. It is the gospel of the Spirit (I Thessalonians 1:5–6).
2. It is the gospel of God (Romans 1:1; 15:16).
3. It is the gospel of Christ (Mark 1:1; Romans 1:16; 15:19; I Corinthians 9:12).

His part in our salvation:

1. The Spirit saves (Titus 3:5).
2. God saves (I Timothy 2:3; Titus 3:4–5).
3. Christ saves (Matthew 1:21; Titus 3:6; Luke 19:10).

His work in sanctification: (Sanctify and save are synonymous terms). Sanctify means "to separate, to set apart, to segregate," and save means "to rescue, to release, to deliver, to preserve."

HIS PART IN THE BUILDING OF THE CHURCH

1. The Holy Spirit built the church (Ephesians 2:22).

2. God built the church (Hebrews 3:4).
3. Christ built the church (Matthew 16:18).

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WHAT FUNCTION HE HAD IN THE REVELATION OF CHRIST

1. The Spirit revealed the Son of God (Luke 2:26).
2. God revealed the Son (Matthew 16:17–18; 3:17; 17:5).
3. Christ revealed the Son of God (Matthew 26:63–64; John 10:36).

WE ARE SAID TO BE BORN OF THE THREE IN THE GODHEAD

1. We are born of the Spirit (John 3:5).
2. We are born of God (I John 3:9; 4:7).
3. We are born of Christ (I Peter 1:3; James 1:18; I Peter 1:23–25).

You are able to see and conclude from these many passages that the Holy Spirit is not some impersonal force, an external influence, or just the exercise of God's power in the world. Some speak of Him as if He were some accessory that God uses in His enterprise, a kind of supplementary energy, which He calls upon in the performance of certain tasks. He is a person.

THE HOLY SPIRIT IS DEITY

The Holy Spirit possesses all the attributes of divinity.

1. He is eternal. "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal spirit offered Himself without spot to God" (Hebrews 9:14).
2. He is omniscient. That means "having infinite knowledge, knowing all things." "But as it is written: 'Eye has not seen, nor ears heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him.' But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God" (I Corinthians 2:9–10).
3. He is omnipotent. This means "having unlimited power, ability, authority, all-powerful." "But truly I am full of power by the Spirit of the Lord, and of justice and might" (Micah 3:8).

4. He is omnipresent. This means "present in all places at the same time." "Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from your presence" (Psalms 139:7)?

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The Holy Spirit is God

1. In lying to the Holy Spirit, Ananias and Sapphira lied to God (Acts 5:3-4).
2. Mary was found with child of the Holy Spirit and was told "... you shall call His name Jesus." He is also called the Son of God (Matthew 1:18-23; Luke 1: 30-35).
3. The Holy Spirit is Lord (II Corinthians 3:17).
4. The Holy Spirit is seen as one in the Godhead:
 - a. We are baptized into a relationship with God, Christ and the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19).
 - b. Unity of the three: One Spirit, one Lord, One God (Ephesians 4:4-6).
 - c. Note the three in all these passages (John 14:26; 16:13-15; 14:16-18)
 - d. Promises of the three (Romans 8:12-17).
 - e. Paul invokes the blessings of the three (II Corinthians 13:14).
 - f. Salvation of man provided by the three (I Peter 1:2).
 - g. Greetings from the three (Revelation 1:4-10).

WHAT THE HOLY SPIRIT DID FOR THE APOSTLES

For full and accurate understanding of the Holy Spirit's work, it is necessary that we examine what He did for the apostles in the first century. There are several questions that are appropriate to ask. How did the Holy Spirit prepare them? With what did He provide them? How did He care for them? Did He give them something beyond what they could supply? The answers to these three questions will be found in this considerable list.

1. He revealed the truth to them. "but as it is written: 'Eye has not seen, nor ears heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him.' But God has revealed them to us through His spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God" (I Corinthians 2:9-10). A similar statement is made by Paul to the Ephesians: "... He made known to

me the mystery (as I have briefly written already, by which, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ). which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it has not been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets" (Ephesians 3:3-5).

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Here is another passage which discusses the same subject: "To them it was revealed that, not to themselves, but to us they were ministering the things which now have been reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—things which angels desire to look into" (I Peter 1:12).

The word *revealed* (*apokalupto*) is defined by New Testament language scholars: "to uncover, lay open what has been veiled or covered up, to disclose, make bare; to make known, make manifest what before was unknown" (Thayer). "To be plainly signified, distinctly declared, to know, set forth, announced, discovered, to make to appear" (*Harper's Analytical Greek Lexicon*).

These passages, using the word *revealed*, are conveying to us one of the works of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit "removed the cover" so that they could see God's will and, in turn, preach it and write it down for all generations to come. Not only did the Holy Spirit uncover God's will to men, but in these passages He tells us that it was done plainly and distinctly so that men could understand. So, the Bible is not a book to be understood by a chosen few. You may know that it is not the business of the church to *interpret* the Bible and give you its meaning, and that, otherwise, the Bible is a *dead letter* and worth nothing. This is false doctrine to mislead and dupe the masses of people over the world

There are other terms than revealed which communicate to us what the Holy Spirit did for the apostles and the benefits, which accrue, to us. The word *know*, *ginosko*, is one of them. Jesus said to those Jews that believed on him, "And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32). Later John wrote another letter saying, "Because you have known Him who is from the beginning" (I John 2:13). And again, "By this we *know* the spirit of truth" (I John 4:6).

This word *know* means "to perceive, to ascertain by examination, to understand, to be assured" (*Analytical Greek Lexicon*). Among other things Thayer says about the word is this: "To learn to know, come to know, get a knowledge of, to readily understand, to recognize." The Lord transmitted the knowledge of God's will to the apostles and they, afterwards, disseminated this good news of life and salvation to a world that was lost. They passed it on to us,

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first, orally and then in a written document. Now we can *know, understand, recognize, and perceive* the gospel of Christ. This is what the Holy Spirit did for the apostles so that they could establish the truth for us.

In Paul's letter to the Ephesian church, he said, "To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given, that I should preach among Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to make all people see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God who created all things through Jesus Christ; to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places" (Ephesians 3:8, 10).

He used the term to *see* or to *enlighten* in this statement. It is translated from the Greek word *photisal* and means "to light, give light to, illuminate, to enlighten, spiritually, to reveal, to make known" (*Analytical Greek Lexicon*). It is a term from which we get our English word *photograph*. Paul and his fellow apostles were given this light of the knowledge of the will of God that they might broadcast it to the world. What a blessing this is to us and to all mankind! We ought not to cease thanking God for what the Holy Spirit did for the apostles, for it is through their instrumentality that we have received the message of truth, designed to set men free.

2. He inspired them. Jesus defined inspiration when He said to the apostles: "Now when they bring you to the synagogues and magistrates and authorities, do not worry about how or what you should answer, or what you should say. For the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say" (Luke 12:11-12). Later, Jesus said again to them: "For I will give you a mouth and wisdom

which all your adversaries will not be able to contradict or resist" (Luke 21:15).

Matthew's record of this promise of Jesus to the apostles is almost identical to Luke's account: "But when they deliver you up, do not worry about how or what you would speak. For it will be given you in that hour what you should speak; for it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you" (Matthew 10:19-20).

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Another passage which helps to understand what inspiration is: "These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual" (I Corinthians 2:13). The Spirit did the teaching through the apostles. A representative example of this is found in Peter's sermon on Pentecost, recorded in Acts: "For the promise is to you and your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call" (Acts 2:39). Peter did not understand at that time who those people were who, "are afar off," and it took him ten years and several miracles later to be convinced that God had granted repentance unto life to the Gentiles also. But the Spirit spoke through him on Pentecost. That is inspiration!

"... And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness" (Acts 4:31).

"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God ..." (II Timothy 3:16). The word inspiration is *theopneusios* and literally means *God spirited* or *God breathed*. The scriptures are the products of the breathing of God. God breathed into the apostles and enabled them to speak and write His words without error; without making a mistake. That is inspiration!

3. He taught them all things. "Teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:20). The word for teach, in this verse is *didaskontes* and means "to give instruction, speak in a public assembly, to direct, admonish, to teach." They were schooled and educated by Jesus for three and a half years, but it was not possible for them to repeat and instill all that He had taught them without some assistance. This was the work of the Holy Spirit. This is what He did for the apostles.

4. He brought to their remembrance all that He had taught them. "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you" (John 14:26). Your translation may call Him the *Comforter*. Counselor is likely a better English rendering, but the Greek word is *parakletos*. It means "one called or sent for to assist another; an advocate, one who pleads the cause of another; one present to render various beneficial services, and thus a *Paraclete*, whose influence and

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operation were to compensate for the departure of Christ Himself." It literally meant "one whom Jesus would call to stand by their side." The reason they needed him to "stand by their side" was to enable them to remember all that Jesus had taught them so that they could disclose His message to lost and dying men everywhere.

5. He guided them into all truth and showed them things to come. "However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth" (John 16:13). "Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue" (II Peter 1:2-3).

Let us make a simple analysis of some of these things Jesus said the Holy Spirit would do for the apostles: (1) He would send the Holy Spirit to them to stand by their side and assist them in their task of spreading the gospel, (2) He would teach them *all* things which He had said to them, (3) He would bring to their remembrance *all* that He had taught them, (4) He would guide them into *all* the truth, and (5) He has granted through His divine wisdom all things which pertain to life and godliness. Not only are these some of the things, which the Holy Spirit did for the apostles but it informs us that He thus provided all that they would need in their mission to the world. If He furnished them with all truth, please tell us what other truth there can be than that which they spoke and recorded.

We hear in our day of additional revelation, progressional revelation, new revelation, visions and dreams, confrontations with Jesus, a still small voice, and miraculous experiences with the Lord. How can men contend for such when Jesus said the Holy Spirit would teach the

apostles all the truth, and bring to their remembrance all that He had previously spoken to them? It is my opinion that you would rather accept what Jesus said on the subject that to be deceived and misled by the false claims of modern denominational leaders.

6. He enabled them to speak in tongues or in languages they had not studied. On Pentecost, the apostles "... were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the

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Spirit gave them utterance. ... And when this sound occurred, the multitude came together, and were confused, because everyone heard them speak in his own language. Then they were all amazed and marveled, saying to one another, 'Look, are not all these who speak Galileans? And how is it that we hear, even in our own language in which we were born' " (Acts 2:4-8).

There are two things to which I call your attention in these verses: (1) The Holy Spirit enabled the apostles to speak in these languages. The expression is "as the Spirit gave them utterance." The word in the New Testament is *apophtheggomai*. Young, in his *Analytical Concordance to the Bible*, defines the word "to speak sententiously," and that has to do with expressing much in words. The Holy Spirit gave them the power to "speak much" in other languages. What they spoke, of course, was the gospel. The *Analytical Greek Lexicon* defines the word as: "to speak out, declare, particularly solemn, weighty" matters. (2) There are two different words used for languages. One is *glossais* and the other is *dialektos*. The first one, *glossais*, is defined as it was used in the New Testament, "the tongue, speech, talk, language, a language not proper to a speaker, a gift or faculty of such language" (*Analytical Greek Lexicon*). Kittel says that the word means "language," and offers Acts 2:11 as an example of it: "We hear them speaking our own tongues the wonderful works of God." The context itself makes clear that tongues in this passage are used metaphorically for languages.

The other word used in Acts chapter 2 is *dialektos*. The scholars define it as "dialect, vernacular." As it is used in this setting it is " a spoken language peculiar to a region of country." There were some fifteen different languages represented on Pentecost and in which the apostles spoke.

My point here is that they spoke in languages that the hearers could understand, even the languages in which they were born; and they were not some ecstatic, excited jargon. It is contended that the Christians in the church at Corinth spoke in *tongues* which no one understood, but God. That what they were saying was a gobbledygook, mumbo jumbo, gibberish; and the proof of this is I Corinthians 14:2: "For he who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God, for no one understands him; however, in the spirit he speaks mysteries."

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The problem with such a conclusion is that the passage is not considered in its Biblical environment. If you take a passage out of its surroundings, you could likely prove anything upon which you set your heart to believe. A passage must not be taken out of its context. Paul is commenting on the fact that a man who has the miraculous gift of speaking in a *tongue* or a *language* which nobody in the congregation understands cannot be speaking to men but to God. He said to them, "So likewise you, unless you utter by the tongue words easy to understand, how will it be known what is spoken? For you will be speaking into the air" (I Corinthians 14:9). That is why he issued the directive: "Therefore let him who speaks in a tongue pray that he may interpret" (I Corinthians 14:13). The reason for that, he said, was "unless indeed he interprets, that the church may receive edification" (I Corinthians 14:5).

Further he said, "Otherwise, if you bless with the spirit, how will he who occupies the place of the uninformed say 'Amen' at your giving of thanks, since he does not understand what you say" (I Corinthians 14:16)? Further elaborating on the subject, he said that he spoke in tongues, or languages, more than any of them. "Yet in the church I would rather speak five words with my understanding, that I may teach others also, than ten thousand words in a tongue" (I Corinthians 14:19).

7. He, the Holy Spirit, empowered them, the apostles, to work miracles. "Many wonders and signs were done through the apostles" (Acts 2:43). "Then Peter said, 'Silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk.' And he took him by the right hand and lifted him up, and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength. So he, leaping

up, stood and walked and entered the temple with them—walking, leaping, and praising God. And all the people saw him walking and praising God. Then they knew that it was he who sat begging alms at the Beautiful Gate of the temple; and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him” (Acts 3:6–10). “Truly the signs of an apostle were accomplished among you with all perseverance, in signs and wonders and mighty deeds” (II Corinthians 12:12). These miracles, wonders, and signs which the apostles were empowered to perform were done by the Holy Spirit. “There are diversities of gifts, but the same spirit” (I Corinthians 12:4).

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Even Jesus said, “But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God surely the kingdom of God has come upon you” (Matthew 12:28).

The Holy Spirit empowered them to work miracles for several reasons: (1) they served as the credentials of the apostles, that is, they were proof that they were men sent from God, (2) they were for the purpose of inducing men to hear and believe the message, which the apostles proclaimed. Such miracles as tongues, “are a sign, not to those who believe but to unbelievers” (I Corinthians 14:22). The apostles performed miracles, confirming the word of God (Mark 16:20). “So the word of the Lord grew mightily and prevailed” (Acts 19:20). Peter performed a miracle on Aeneas who had been bed ridden for eight years and was paralyzed. As a result of this miracle, “... all who dwelt in Lydda and Sharon saw him and turned to the Lord” (Acts 9:33–35).

It should be remembered that they did not have the gospel in written form in those days. It was in the process of being declared to the world. Later, John said, “... but these [miracles] are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name” (John 20:30–31).

In speaking of imbuing them with power, Jesus said just before His ascension: “But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me” (Acts 1:8). So, from the passages we have read, we conclude that the Holy Spirit (1) empowered the apostles and (2) made them witnesses of Jesus. They saw Him, heard Him, were present with Him, and they proved it by the power the Holy Spirit gave them.

“And they went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word through the accompanying signs” (Mark 16:20). Jesus told the apostles: “Behold I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high” (Luke 24:29).

8. He enabled them to confirm the word of God. The Greek word for confirm is *bebaioo* and it means “to confirm, establish, to strengthen or establish by arguments or proofs, ratify, to verify” (*Analytical Greek Lexicon*). This word, with its cognates, is used nineteen (19) times in the New Testament. This is a very strong term and I would like to point out some of the implications

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of it. It means to establish as true what may have been doubtful or uncertain. It carries with it the idea of *substantiating* a thing by producing evidence that proves the validity of what has been said. There is the additional thought of *corroborating*, which suggest the strengthening of a statement or testimony of another. In this case, it would be the Holy Spirit who corroborated the preaching of the apostles with the testimony of miracles, wonders, and signs which attended that preaching.

Still another thought in the word *confirm* is to *verify*, or prove to be true or correct by investigation or comparison with a standard, or reference to ascertainable facts. For instance, the man at the Gate Beautiful in Jerusalem had been an invalid for more than forty years. Thousands of people had seen him daily. That he now walked, leaped, and praised God was beyond any question (Acts 3:1–9). The Lord had given him “perfect soundness in the presence of them all” (Acts 3:16). There is one other thought implied in confirm and it is to *authenticate*. This infers “proof of genuineness by an authority.”

“And they [the apostles] went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word through the accompanying signs” (Mark 16:20).

“For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward, how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord and was confirmed to us by those who heard

Him, God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, with various miracles and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will" (Hebrews 2:2-4).

Here it is clearly stated that (1) the Lord first declared the message, (2) it was attested, or confirmed to us by those who heard him, and (3) God bore witness by miracles and gifts of the Holy Spirit. The truth of the gospel was established then and for all time to come by miracles, wonders, and signs that the Holy Spirit enabled the apostles to perform. Once the truth was revealed and confirmed, the need for miracles ceased (I Corinthians 13:10).

9. The Holy Spirit made the apostles witnesses. "But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the

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Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me. And you also will bear witness, because you have been with Me from the beginning" (John 15:26-27). Please observe these three things Jesus said in this passage: (1) the Holy Spirit bore witness of Jesus, (2) the apostles also were witnesses, and (3) they could be witnesses because they had been with Him from the beginning. This harmonizes with the meaning of the word *witness* as it is used in the New Testament. The verb form of the word is *martureo* and Kittel, the German scholar, says in his *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*: "It is first used in the New Testament for the declaration or confirmation, on the basis of first-hand knowledge."

When he defines *martus*, which is the noun form, he says, "The original sense of witness to facts, i.e., the man who can speak about them from his own direct knowledge." He states that even in non-Biblical Greek, the meaning is the same: "Witness to the Facts in the Legal Sphere. The proper sphere of *martus* is the legal, where it denotes one who can and does speak from personal experience about actions in which he took part and which happened to him, or about persons and relations known to him."

Thayer's definitions of the words coincide with Kittel's exegesis: "To affirm that one has seen or heard or experience something. In the New Testament the apostles are said *marturein* (to witness), as those who had been eye and ear witnesses of the extraordinary sayings,

deeds, and sufferings of Jesus, which proved His Messiahship; so to Paul, as one to whom the risen Christ had visibly appeared." In defining *martus* (a witness), Thayer continues: "One who avers, or can aver, what he himself has seen or heard or knows by other means ... one who is a spectator of anything."

Bullinger, in his *Critical Lexicon and Concordance to the English and Greek New Testament*, gives this definition: "One who has remembrance or knowledge of anything, and hence, one who can give information, or bring to light, or confirm anything." These terms *witness* and *witnessing*, have been so abused and misapplied today, they scarcely resemble the original meanings. In the New Testament sense, no one can be a witness to the things that transpired with the Lord or to what He taught. We can read, study, and preach the gospel to others, and we can relate what

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Christ, through the gospel, has done in our lives. But we cannot be witnesses for several reasons: (1) we did not see nor hear Him personally, (2) we were not with Him from the beginning as were the twelve, and (3) we did not see Him as Paul saw Him. The gospel would be true if we had never lived on the earth. We cannot give witness or testimony to the authenticity of the message. That has already been done. It needs no further verification. The Holy Spirit gave the apostles that ability and power and the story is now complete and perfect.

Let us read a number of New Testament passages that not only strengthen what has been said but which establish that truth and settle it for all time to come. "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth" (Acts 1:8). "And we are His witnesses to these things, and so also is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey Him" (Acts 5:32). "For you will be His witnesses to all men of what you have seen and heard (Acts 22:15).

"For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty. For He received from God the Father honor and glory when such a voice came to Him from the Excellent Glory: 'This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.' And we

heard this voice which came from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain" (II Peter 1:16–18).

"That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life—the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested us—that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ" (I John 1:1–3).

In this passage John says, "We testify to it." Here, he used the word *witness*, which is from *martureo*. So, we see (1) who a witness was, (2) what a witness did, and (3) that the Holy Spirit enabled them to be witnesses.

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10. The Holy Spirit provided for them divine, miraculous protection: "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" (Mark 16:18).

An example of this actually happening is found in Acts 28:1–5: "Now when they had escaped, they then found out that the island was called Malta. And the natives showed us unusual kindness; for they kindled a fire and made us all welcome, because of the rain that was falling and because of the cold. But when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks and laid them on the fire, a viper came out because of the heat, and fastened on his hand. So when the natives saw the creature hanging from his hand, they said to one another, 'No doubt this man is a murderer, whom, though he has escaped the sea, yet justice does not allow to live.' But he shook off the creature into the fire and suffered no harm."

This is another instance of this divine, miraculous protection of these men providentially and especially prepared for the transmission of the gospel to the world: "Peter was therefore kept in prison, but constant prayer was offered to God for him by the church. And when Herod was about to bring him out, that night Peter was sleeping, bound with two chains between two soldiers; and the guards before the door were

keeping the prison. Now behold an angel of the Lord stood by him, and a light shone in the prison; and he struck Peter on the side and raised him up, saying 'Arise quickly!' And his chains fell off his hands. Then the angel said to him, 'Gird yourself and tie on your sandals;' and so he did. And he said to him, 'Put on your garment and follow me.' So he went out and followed him, and did not know that what was done by the angel was real, but thought that he was seeing a vision. When they were past the first and the second guard posts, they came to the iron gate that leads to the city, which opened to them of its own accord; and they went out and went down one street, and immediately the angel departed from him. And when Peter had come to himself, he said, 'Now I know for certain that the Lord has sent His angel, and has delivered me from the hand of Herod and from all the expectation of the Jewish people' " (Acts 12:5–11).

This is the divine, miraculous protection of which I have spoken that was provided for the apostles. The Holy Spirit was the

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Paraclete, the one who stood by their side to assist them in their work and who provided that protection, so that they could accomplish what they had been sent to do.

11. The Holy Spirit enables the apostles to impart miraculous gifts to others. Here are some passages that point up this truth. Seven servants, or deacons, were selected by the congregation in Jerusalem to attend to the needs of the Hellenist widows in the church. "... whom they set before the apostles; and when they prayed they laid hands on them. Then the word of God spread, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem and a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith. And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and signs among the people" (Acts 6:5–8).

Philip was one of those seven deacons chosen to serve in this special work in the Jerusalem church. He was also an evangelist. The apostles laid their hands on him. Here is what is said about the miraculous gifts they imparted to him: "Then 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. For unclean spirits, crying with a loud voice, came out of many who were possessed; and many who were paralyzed and lame

were healed. ... Then Simon himself also believed; and when he was baptized he continued with Philip and was amazed, seeing the miracles and signs which were done" (Acts 8:5-13).

Two of the apostles, Peter and John, came down to Samaria, following the great success Philip had had in the gospel meetings conducted in that city. They laid their hands on Christians there. But let us read it from the text: "Then they laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit. And when Simon saw that through the laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Spirit was given, he offered them money, saying, 'Give me this power also, that anyone on whom I lay hands may receive the Holy Spirit' " (Acts 8:17-19).

The context shows that receiving the Holy Spirit had reference to the impartation of miraculous gifts, for these reasons: (1) miracles were being performed and this what first attracted the attention of the people, and particularly Simon's attention, (2) Simon said,

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"Give me this power," having reference to the power of imparting miraculous gifts to others, and (3) these Christians had already received the indwelling of the Holy Spirit when they were baptized. On Pentecost, Peter had 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" (Acts 2:38). So, it is not a question of their receiving the Holy Spirit twice! When they obeyed Christ, they received the Holy Spirit. When the apostles later laid their hands on them, they were empowered by the Holy Spirit.

One time in his travels Paul found some disciples in Ephesus. They had been baptized into John's baptism. He taught them further and baptized them in the name of the Lord Jesus. "When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied" (Acts 19:5-6). Paul, an apostle, had the power, given to him by the Holy Spirit, to impart certain gifts, such as speaking and prophesying in a language one had not studied.

In writing to the Roman Christians, he said, "For I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift" (Romans 1:11). Notice, Paul said, "I" an apostle, may impart a spiritual gift to you! One reason

I know that people do not now possess spiritual, miraculous gifts is that there is no apostle to impart them!

One other passage on this subject. Paul wrote to his son in the gospel, Timothy, and encouraged him: "Therefore I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands" (II Timothy 1:6).

12. The Holy Spirit dwelled in the apostles. He not only empowered them in all these different ways we have discussed thus far, but he indwelt in them. "And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever—the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells in you and will be in you" (John 14:16–17).

There are three things I would like you to observe in this passage of promise: (1) Jesus promised that the Paraclete would come. I

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would like to re-emphasize that the word means, "one who will stand by your side." (2) the Holy Spirit will abide (remain) with you forever. He used this same term twice, no doubt, for emphasis of His promise, and (3) He shall be in you. Literally, He said, "And in you shall He be."

I have pointed out from the scriptures some twelve things the Holy Spirit did for the apostles. It is altogether likely that the list could be lengthened, but, hopefully, this will be sufficient to enable the student of the Bible to have a fuller and more comprehensive understanding of the Holy Spirit's work in the scheme of human redemption.

WHAT THE HOLY SPIRIT DID FOR THOSE ON WHOM THE APOSTLES LAID THEIR HANDS

We discussed at some length the fact that the Holy Spirit enabled the apostles to lay their hands on certain Christians in the first century church and impart to them spiritual, miraculous gifts. Several examples were given such as: Stephen in Acts 7, Philip in Acts 8, and the former disciples of John in Acts 19.

There are many other instances in the New Testament which exemplify this truth, that is, the conveying of miraculous power to some Christians by the laying on of the apostle's hands. It should be emphasized and carefully noted that this communicating, this transmitting of such power is attributed to the Holy Spirit through the instrumentality of the apostles. This is the part the Holy Spirit played in the plan of salvation.

As we read the following passage, there are three things noteworthy for your observation: (1) the variety of gifts, (2) the purpose they serve, and (3) the fact that the Spirit conveyed them to the Christian.

"Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I do not want you to be ignorant. ... There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all: for to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the

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same spirit" (I Corinthians 12:1-8). In introducing the subject of spiritual gifts, Paul tells us two things: (1) the source of them. While it is a single source, they are attributed to God, the Lord, and the Spirit, and (2) the purpose of them. They are for service, for working, and for the common good. This we will see as we further our study of this topic.

Paul lists nine of these gifts. Two of them have do with the intellect: wisdom and knowledge. Five of them concern faith; faith itself, then deeds of faith; healing and miracles; speech of faith; prophesy and discerning of spirits. Two of these gifts involve the tongue; languages and interpretation of languages.

You will notice that Paul wrote "word of wisdom" and "word of knowledge," which indicate discourse—and that for the benefit of others. The gospel has to be preached, either orally or written. The line that divides *wisdom* and *knowledge* is not always apparent. However, Paul certainly intended to name two gifts, and I believe the scriptures determine a difference. *Sophia*, the word that is translated wisdom, carries with it the idea of "ability, prudence, enlightenment,

skillful, artful, as well as knowledge." Lenski says that "it consists of all the gracious, heavenly, and efficient thoughts of God embodied in Christ Jesus for the enlightenment of our souls." Whereas knowledge, gnosis, "is the personal apprehension of the details of the gospel. Knowledge deals with the explanation, the unfolding, and the correlation of the gospel facts, or we may call them doctrines."

Both wisdom and knowledge enabled the Christians who were given these special gifts of the Spirit to understand and teach the truth of the gospel to others, and to do so free of error. You can see why this would be necessary, inasmuch as they did not have the word of the gospel written down. It was still in the process of being revealed. These gifts had to do with the disclosure of the gospel.

To be a little more literal, it meant the uncovering of God's will, taking the wraps off, unveiling, so men could see what God required of them. This had to do with preaching, and, therefore, with the intellect. But that preaching had to be "error free," and that was possible only by the miraculous guidance of the Holy Spirit.

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There was the gift of faith. This was a faith that enabled those possessed of the gift to remove mountains, to exert power. Faith, which is commonly used in the New Testament, and by which we are saved, comes by hearing the word of God (Romans 10:17). It is not a miraculous gift bestowed upon Christians today. Faith is not what God gives us, but what we do with the teaching and evidence that He has given us in His word. Then, however, in special cases the Holy Spirit gave a miraculous faith, permitting the Christians who possessed it to exert supernatural powers to prove the word of God to be true.

This also can be said of gifts of *healing* and the *working* of miracles. It was through such gifts as wisdom and knowledge that the word of God was communicated to the world; whereas it was through these gifts of faith, healing, and the working of miracles that the message which was preached was confirmed. You will remember that Mark said in closing his record of the gospel, "And they went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word through the accompanying signs" (Mark 16:20).

There is a discussion of healing in James 5:14–15: “Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up.” It has been shown that there were those in the first century church who were given the *gift of healing* by the Spirit.

From this passage, it is evident that some of those Christians with that special gift were elders in the church. The healing James discusses here was not a “maybe,” or “perhaps” or it can occur “if the sick man has enough faith.” It says “the Lord will raise him up,” and you can be sure that was one hundred percent of the time. This was a special gift, a miraculous gift, and it was bestowed on some Christians, not only to help the afflicted, but also to advance the cause of the truth!

To some of those Christians was given the *gift of prophecy*. This was speaking the message of God under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, whether with reference to the past, present, or future. The purpose of this ministry was to teach, to edify, to comfort, to impart God's will to others and to encourage believers. More than that, it was to convict the sinner and lead the erring back to God (I Corinthians 14:24–25).

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There were also the gifts of tongues. The Greek text calls them different kinds of tongues. This meant different languages (*glosson*). Those who possessed this gift could teach people of different nationalities the gospel in their own home language. If it had to be interpreted, it accomplished the same results. Add to that, however, it had the effect of confirming the word. It was just this simple: how could a man speak in a foreign language, which he had never studied and to which he had never been exposed? That is not possible. So, the deduction is that he received that ability from God; and that was a confirmation of the genuineness and of the authenticity of the word he spoke!

Some men in the early church had the gift of interpreting tongues. This was necessary if anyone was going to be taught, instructed, and edified by what was said. In fact, Paul forbade them to speak in a foreign language unless there was someone present to interpret it. “... Let all things be done for edification. If anyone speaks in a tongue, let there be two or at the most three, each in turn, and let one interpret.

But if there is no interpreter, let him keep silent in church" (I Corinthians 14:26–28). Paul further said, "Yet in the church I would rather speak five words with my understanding, that I may teach others also, than ten thousand words in a tongue" (I Corinthians 14:19).

There were those who had the gift of *discerning spirits*. In a time when the word of God was not written down, and there was, therefore, no infallible standard by which to measure the truth, this was a necessary gift. God's revelation had not been fully or completely established, and certainly not generally understood.

There were many false teachers and deceivers in the world then. So, it was necessary, in order to have an accurate revelation of truth, that there be some brethren with this gift of discerning spirits so that they could distinguish between the genuine and false preachers. It was about this that John was speaking: "Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world" (I John 4:1).

Peter spoke in this same vein: "But there was also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies ..." (II Peter 2:1).

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Paul gave considerable time to the discussion of this problem: "Now the Spirit expressly says that in the latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons" (I Timothy 4:1). In his second letter to Timothy, he charged: "Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables" (II Timothy 4:2–4).

In order to keep from wandering away from the truth, there had to be a standard by which to measure it. The word of God is that standard. It was first spoken by inspired men and later written down for accuracy and permanence so that succeeding generations could have access to it. In the first stage, it was spoken, and it was necessary,

therefore, that the miraculous spiritual gift of *discerning spirits* be given to some as a safeguard against false teaching.

Once inspired men wrote down the word of God, the written word became the ultimate standard by which all things are measured. "But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed" (Galatians 1:8). In his letter to the Corinthians, Paul said, "... that you may learn in us not to think beyond what is written" (I Corinthians 4:6).

THE PURPOSE OF MIRACLES

Although passages of scripture have already been read and points made as to the purpose of miracles, I would like to emphasize and underscore the purpose that is given in the New Testament. If we can learn the design of miracles, that is, why were they used, we will have an understanding of the part they played in the plan of salvation for mankind. Primarily they served these purposes:

1. **To reveal the truth:** "And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name" (John 20:30-31). Some of the miracles which were

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performed, served the specific purpose of inducing men to believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. This is a truth that must be believed for one to be saved. Men could not learn that of themselves. Peter acknowledged Him to be the Christ, the Son of the living God. Jesus, in response to that confession, said to him: "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven" (Matthew 16:17).

Paul discusses the disclosure of God's will to the Christians in the church at Ephesus. "In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence, having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself" (Ephesians 1:7-9).

He continued that thought in the third chapter. "How that by revelation He made known to me the mystery (as I have briefly written already by which when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ), which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets" (Ephesians 3:3-5).

Still later in the same letter: "And for me, that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel" (Ephesians 6:19). These passages settle the fact the the Holy Spirit revealed God's will to the apostles and prophets and enabled them to transmit that message to the world exactly and free of error.

In his letter to the Galatians he pursues this topic to ingrain it in the hearts of his hearers: "But I make known to you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through the revelation of Jesus Christ" (Galatians 1:11-12).

In Galatians 3:23, the apostle tells us that faith was revealed. Here he speaks of faith as a synonym of Christianity, or of the gospel. *Faith* is used in the New Testament as: (1) The personal faith of the believer in Christ. "... for if you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins" (John 8:24). "When he saw their faith

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..." (Luke 5:20). (2) Faith is used as the object of what one believes. "And truly Jesus did many other signs ... but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name" (John 20:30-31). "For if those who are of the law are heirs, faith is made void and the promise made of no effect" (Romans 4:14). "But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ" (Romans 3:21-22). It is important when one believes. That faith must be in God. It must be in the righteousness of God. It is the gospel which one must believe to be saved. (3) Faith is used many times in the New Testament for the whole scheme of human redemption, for God's plan of salvation, for the Christian religion, and for His total arrangement of grace. "... a great many of the priests were obedient

to the faith" (Acts 6:7). When Paul preached on the island of Cyprus, a magician by the name of Elymas was "seeking to turn the proconsul away from the faith" (Acts 13:8). Paul returned to some places where he had previously preached and converted people and was "exhorting them to continue in the faith" and had in mind the acceptance of the gospel rather than one's personal faith.

Remember Paul told the Corinthians that: "It is written: 'Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered in the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him.' But God has revealed them to us through His spirit" (I Corinthians 2:9-10). He speaks further of this to the Colossians: "... of which I became a minister according to the stewardship from God which was given to me for you, to fulfill the word of God, the mystery which has been hidden from ages and from generations, but now has been revealed to His saints" (Colossians 1:25-26).

All of this was done through the instrumentality of the Holy Spirit. He inspired and miraculously revealed the truth to divinely inspired men. The purpose of the miracles He performed was to reveal the truth.

2. **Miracles served the purpose** of confirming the truth. It has been pointed out before in this treatise that the word confirm is from the Greek term *Bebaioo*, and some form of it is used nineteen times in the New Testament. It means "to confirm, establish,

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render constant and unwavering; to strengthen or establish by arguments or proofs; to verify."

The preaching of the apostles was confirmed by signs or miracles which the Holy Spirit enabled them to perform (Mark 16:20). "I thank my God always concerning you for the grace of God which was given to you by Christ Jesus, that you were enriched in every thing by Him in all utterance and all knowledge, even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you, so that you come short in no gift" (I Corinthians 1:4-7).

He is not speaking here of the testimony that others brought concerning Christ, although they did that, but the testimony which Christ Himself made while He was on the earth. He proved that He was

the Son of God. He did it by preaching and establishing the authenticity of His message by miracles, which He performed throughout His ministry, from turning water into wine at the beginning until darkness enveloped the earth at His crucifixion. It was confirmed and then made solid in the hearts of the Corinthians.

In his second letter to these people, he said, "Truly the signs of an apostle were accomplished among you with all perseverance, in signs and wonders and mighty deeds" (II Corinthians 12:12). This, too, proved the genuineness of the message of the Savior.

The writer of Hebrews tells us: "How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him, God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will" (Hebrews 2:3-4).

"Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know" (Acts 2:22). In this way the deity of Jesus was established beyond doubt, and His ability to save. "But Saul increased all the more in strength, and confounded the Jews who dwelt in Damascus, proving that this Jesus is the Christ" (Acts 9:22). These passages plainly asset that God's revelation to man was attested and authenticated by miracles.

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In the process of unfolding His will to us, it had to be supported, sustained, and documented by this unquestionable divine means. Once it was ratified and undergirded by these works of the Holy Spirit, it became crystallized, formed, and settled for all time to come. It does not need bolstering and reinforcing now.

It is true! It will always be true! No man or group of men can change that. They may meet in councils, conferences, and tribunals and men may discuss God's revelation, debate it, deny it, or burn it, but you may be sure that they cannot change it, alter it, or destroy it.

Yes, I understand that they can prevent it and present it to their own people; but the word of God will live on forever. It is called the

incorruptible seed "... which lives and abides forever" (I Peter 1:23–25).

3. **Miracles helped in the establishment** and promulgation of the gospel until the New Testament was written. In discussing the miraculous spiritual gifts, Paul said, "Love never fails. But whether 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" (I Corinthians 13:8–10).

The 12th, 13th, and 14th chapters of I Corinthians are given over to a discussion of God's revelation of truth to man. In Paul's discourse he comments on the gifts, their use, and misuse in relation to the development of this revelation of God. They were for the purpose of communicating the gospel to people. At times he dealt with prophecy, which was telling what God said. This was for teaching and edification. Then, he would touch upon tongues and they were primarily to convince the unbeliever.

However, Paul forbade them to speak in foreign languages unless they were interpreted so that people could receive the benefit of the teaching. The whole purpose was "that I may teach others also" (I Corinthians 14:19).

so, these gifts were to last until the *perfect* came. Perfect what? The context shows that it was the perfect, complete will of God to

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the world. This is the matter that was under discussion. Paul was discussing the temporary nature of these gifts. God's complete disclosure of His will did not come in a total package at once. The apostles said it came in fragments, a little bit at a time. He used the analogy of his childhood. When he was a child, he did not have a mature understanding of the things in life.

He used another parallel—that of looking into a mirror dimly. The mirrors of that day were made of burnished metal and did not reflect as clearly as they do in our time. So, it was like looking into a mirror darkly; but when the perfect came, that which was in part, such as

prophecy, tongues, and knowledge was done away. They had served their purpose of revealing and confirming the truth of fitting into God's arrangement until the full disclosure of His will was written down in the New Testament—until it became the “perfect will of God” (Romans 12:2), and “the perfect law of liberty” (James 1:25, 2:12).

“When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts to men. ... And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ” (Ephesians 4:8–13).

The completeness of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God is that final attainment and realization of God's perfect will. This was achieved when John, the apostle, laid down the pen of inspiration at the termination of the New Testament.

This is how Jude words it: “Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints” (Jude 3). One time for all time the faith was delivered.

“His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue” (II Peter 1:3). You will note that it was through the knowledge of Him that these blessings are granted. And that knowledge is acquired only through His word.

WHAT THE HOLY SPIRIT DOES FOR THE CHRISTIAN TODAY

The charge has been made against us that because we do not believe that miracles are performed today, as they were in the first century by Jesus, the apostles, and some inspired men, we do not believe in the Holy Spirit. This is a false indictment. It is further alleged that we do not believe the Holy Spirit is active today in the lives and affairs of Christians. This, too, is an unjust imputation.

We have shown through the years and on many occasions how fictitious, imaginary, and erroneous are modern day miracles. In our discussions with faith healers and our examination of their professed claims of miracles, never have we found them willing to raise the dead, restore a limb, replace an eye, or heal a serious disease that is apparent to the onlooker.

To disprove their claims and refute their allegations brings an assault upon what we believe about the Holy Spirit. The counter charge is made that we do not even believe in Him or that He operates at all in this, the twenty first century.

To settle this question, let us go to the word of God, which is the only standard for determining the truth on any issue.

1. **The Holy Spirit is a gift to the Christian.** "Then Peter said to them, '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' " (Acts 2:38).

In his treatment of the passage, Lenski says, "The promise is the Holy Spirit, so here the gift is the Holy Spirit. This gift is bestowed upon each and every repentant and baptized soul and cannot refer only to charismatic gifts of the Spirit, speaking with tongues, healing, etc., but denotes the gift of grace and salvation which is always present in the heart when the Spirit enters. Here again, we must not separate repentance, baptism, and the Spirit. Not at some later time were these people to receive the Spirit, not in some later sudden, mysterious seizure; not as a later 'second blessing' that would produce a total sanctification or sinlessness by a sudden transformation."

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Peter is promising all of those who repent and are baptized for the forgiveness of their sins that God will give them the Holy Spirit. You shall receive the gift, namely, the Holy Spirit! The apostles, a few days later told the Sanhedrin: "And we are His witnesses to these things and so also is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey Him" (Acts 5:32). In his letter to the Galatians, speaking on this topic, Paul said, "And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, 'Abba, Father' " (Galatians 4:6)!

2. The Holy Spirit dwells in the Christian. Paul discusses this subject at length with the Roman Christians: "But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you" (Romans 8:9). Paul used a very strong contrast here between the *flesh* and the *spirit*. In this kind of speech, he denies that the Christian is in the flesh in order to emphasize the spiritual aspects of his life. He punctuates the spiritual things because they are what are truly important. Our tendency is to lay stress on the fleshly things of earth and disavow the significant, the paramount, and the things which are imperative and which should be in the highlights of our lives.

Paul said if we would give the spiritual the principal place in our lives, then the Spirit of God will dwell in us. It is interesting that he used a word for *dwell* which means to house. Paul continues, "But if the Spirit of Him who raised 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 [houses] in you" (Romans 8:11).

"Do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own" (I Corinthians 6:19)? He uses a special word for temple, *naos*, which means "the dwelling place of God." He takes the stand that the body of the Christian is the dwelling place of God and then declares that the Spirit of God dwells in the temple. So, there is no doubt about it, the Holy Spirit indwells or houses in the Christian. But there is a difference in the Holy Spirit indwelling in the Christian and his empowering the Christian to work miracles! If we would not lose sight of the purpose of miracles in the first century, our problems would be greatly reduced or solved all together!

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3. The Holy Spirit dwells in the church. "Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you" (I Corinthians 3:16)? A passage we formerly read states that the Holy Spirit dwells in the Christian. This passage assures us that He dwells in the church. The above scripture is addressed to the whole church. "To the church of God which is at Corinth" (I Corinthians 1:2). Then, in chapter three, he informs them that, "You are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you." These words are all plural. So, Paul declares that the church, temple, *naos* is God's dwelling place and that the Spirit houses, *oikei*, in you.

If God is on earth today, He is in the church. If He is in our community, He is in the church. And this is where the Holy Spirit is, because the church is His house. It is His residence. It is anti-Biblical to speak of being a Christian outside the church. It is completely out of harmony with the scriptures to assert that one can receive the Spirit and the benefits He offers and not be a member of the Lord's church. There can be no reconciliation in these two diverse ideas.

"In whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit" (Ephesians 2:22). This passage affirms that the church is God's dwelling place. It is His *katoiketerion*, and that means His house. The definition of the word by the scholars is: "an abode, dwelling, habitation."

4. The Holy Spirit helps the Christian in his infirmities and intercedes for him. "Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God" (Romans 8:26–27).

The passage says that the Holy Spirit helps us in our weakness. Literally, He says, "He takes a share in our weakness." Then He said that He intercedes for us, or supplicates on behalf of the saints. We do not always know how to pray. It is difficult for us to express our soul's longings and interpret our needs; so the Holy Spirit takes our spiritual hunger and thirst and translates them to God. Though the passage does not elaborate how He does it, it

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sounds as though He takes our cravings and needs and rephrases them, transcribes them, so to speak, into meaningful language.

I do not know in what manner the Holy Spirit accomplishes all of these things on our behalf. He does not relate to me the fashion in which He helps, how He shares our weaknesses, or how He communicates our necessities and requirements to the throne of God. Further, I do not know just how the Spirit dwells in me as a Christian. But neither do I know how my own spirit dwells in me. There are a great many inexplicable things about it.

But I know that the Spirit dwells in me for these reasons: (1) The Bible tells me He does. He was given to me as a gift upon obedience to the gospel, and (2) He produces the fruits of the Spirit. The Christian in whom the Spirit dwells will manifest His presence in his life by the fruits he bears (Galatians 5:22–24).

So a man knows that his own spirit dwells in Him because (1) the Bible says so. “For as the body without the spirit is dead ...” (James 2:26). (2) Of the actions of the man in whom His Spirit is dwelling, the man can see, hear, feel, speak, and act. The Bible says such things as this: “He sighed deeply in His spirit” (Luke 2:40). “And the Child grew and became strong in the spirit” (Luke 2:40). “Paul purposed in the Spirit (Acts 19:21), “For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit” (Romans 1:9).

These are just a few instances to show that our spirit dwells in us and manifest that fact by our consciousness and our activities. We understand that very well. In like manner we should understand that the Holy Spirit dwells in us because God says so and because of all the activities of the Spirit through our lives.

5. The Holy Spirit works through the instrumentality of the word of God. While we do not understand just how the Spirit dwells in us, we do know the bridge, the tool, the instrumentality, and the agency by which He effects His work in our lives. The equipment He uses to help us and use us in God's service is the word of God. Paul asks us to take “the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God” (Ephesians 6:17). “... God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth, to which He called you by our

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gospel, for the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ” (II Thessalonian 2:13–14). “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes” (Romans 1:16).

DOES THE HOLY SPIRIT WORK POWERFULLY TODAY?

Nothing that has been said in this treatise is meant to reflect upon or limit the power of God. There is nothing impossible with God. He who

spoke the worlds into existence in one blinding flash of creative power cannot be restricted or circumscribed. He can do anything He wills to do. God's power is absolutely unconfined. The question is not: "What is God able to do?" but "What does God will to do?"

Does the Holy Spirit work powerfully in the life of the Christian today? I believe, without question or doubt, that He does. In the letter to the Christians at Ephesus, Paul declared: "Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever" (Ephesians 3:20-21).

I call your attention first to what Paul said above about God's power: "He is able." He used the word *to dunameno*, which translates "to the one being able." But he goes on with this strong language, "to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think." So, we are made aware that the power and ability of God is limitless. You cannot mark it out, stake it off, or in any way demarcate it. There is absolutely no boundary to what God is able to do. It extends, Paul says, beyond anything we can think or ask. Then he said, "according to the power that works in us."

Paul discusses this power with Timothy: "For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind" (II Timothy 1:7). This power is available to the Christian. But what is the nature of this power? What is the degree of it bestowed upon Christians? What is the extent of God's power working in the life of the Christian today? Is it miraculous power? It could be, if that is what God willed. The question under consideration is not: "What is God able to do?" but "what does He do in the execution of His will?"

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Once, He performed miracles and empowered others to work miracles. Why did He do it? (1) To reveal the truth to mankind, (2) to confirm and verify that truth, giving it credibility, and (3) to help until the New Testament was written. Now it can be made available to people the world over. Even in those early days, it enjoyed a wide distribution. Historians tell us that by the last half of the second century, only fifty years after the close of the period of inspiration, there were more than 60,000 copies of the gospel in circulation.

I think we may not overlook that miracles served a secondary or subordinate purpose. When Jesus healed someone during His life's ministry, there was also present the ingredient of compassion. He had pity upon the sick, diseased, crippled, and unfortunate people. But this was not His primary purpose in performing miracles, for if that had been so, He would have healed everyone, for God shows no partiality (Acts 10:34). To contend that Jesus did not heal everyone because everyone did not believe does not comport with what the New Testament teaches on the subject. Jesus did not make faith a condition of healing. In only one case out of thirty-one instances of healing on record did the Lord require faith (Matthew 9:28–29). There was no personal faith required in fifteen instances. In nine of those cases where He performed miracles, nothing is suggested that faith was even present. In four instances, faith was altogether impossible!

I have been present at some of these so-called healing services where the Holy Spirit is reputed to work through the agency of the faith healer. When there is a failure in healing a blind man, the excuse offered every time is: "He lacked faith," or "He did not have sufficient faith." I recall, some years ago, attending such a meeting in Johannesburg, South Africa, where I lived and worked at the time. An elderly blind man came to those meetings each night, and each night he came forward to be healed. I sat close enough to the front to hear the healer ask him: "Do you believe Jesus can heal you?" To which the old man replied: "I believe it with all my heart." I almost wept at such sincerity, hope, and expectancy! But each night, at the close of the services, they led the old gentleman away, still blind!

When we lose sight of the purpose of these miracles that the Holy Spirit performed through Jesus, the apostles, and other inspired men on whom the apostles laid their hands, the product of our

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deductions will be confusion and error. Such fruit is seen today in the wild speculations and claims of those who maintain that they can speak in tongues, possess *charismatic powers* and the ability to perform miracles as the apostles did in the first century.

It has been pointed out that the word of God is the instrument which the Holy Spirit uses in effecting His work today. That should not be surprising to us since the Holy Spirit revealed that word! Someone has

said that in the great Scheme of Human Redemption, God is the Architect, Jesus Christ is the Builder, and the Holy Spirit is the Revelator. It is He who has made known the plan to us. He exposed it to view. This disclosure was first made to the apostles, which means that it was "laid open to view." They, in turn, both spoke it to their generation and wrote it down for all succeeding generations. In this lesson, I would like for us to examine what this word is capable of doing in the lives of men.

THE POWER OF THE WORD OF GOD

The apostle Paul, who tells us that the Holy Spirit revealed the gospel to them (I Corinthians 2:9–10), now tells us:

1. **That the word of God, the gospel, will save the believer.** "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek" (Romans 1:16). "Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls" (James 1:21).

2. **We are begotten or born of the word.** James said, "Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures" (James 1:18). "Brought us forth" is from the word *apokueo*, and means "to generate, produce; to generate by spiritual birth." "Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever" (I Peter 1:22–23). "Born again," in this verse, is from the Greek word *anagennao*, and the definition is, "to beget or bring forth again; to regenerate."

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The agency by which one is born again is "the truth," the "imperishable seed," "the living and abiding word of God." In addition to being born again by the "word of God, which lives and abides forever," Peter tells us that our souls are purified through our obeying the truth. He used the word *hagnizo*, which means "purify; to purify morally, reform. To live like one under a vow of abstinence" (*Harper's*

Analytical Greek Lexicon). This helps us understand what the word of God will do in our lives.

3. **The word of God will make us free.** "Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, 'If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free' " (John 8:31–32). Freedom is one of the most precious words in our vocabulary. It is a priceless, invaluable human commodity.

Slavery was common in the Roman Empire during this period. History records that every third man was a slave. I do not know how accurate that is, but we can be sure there were many slaves in the New Testament period. Freedom was dear, beyond price. So, there are many passages, which discuss forgiveness and the course of the Christian life under the picture of freedom. "But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered. And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness" (Romans 6:17–18).

The words freedom and liberty are used forty-one times in the New Testament. They derive from the same root word, *eleutheros*, and it means: "Free, in a state of freedom, exempt, unfettered; from the dominion of sin; free in the possession of gospel privileges; liberty." "Jesus answered them, 'Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin. And a slave does not abide in the house forever, but a son abides forever. Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed' " (John 8:34–36).

"Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage" (Galatians 5:1). Much of the world has been in slavery at one time or another. It is still practiced in the twentieth century in some places on earth. But men long to be free—free from the

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of a political tyrant, free from the crushing oppression of poverty, free from the constant threats and dangers of violence in our so-called civilized societies! I also believe men want to be free from the bondage of sin, from the iron chains of wickedness which destroys peace of mind and hope for a better life.

In the center of the city of Port-au-Prince, Haiti, is an impressive piece of sculpture. It is the bronze figure of a native slave whose legs have been shackled to a post driven into the ground. Upon gaining their freedom from France in 1804, he is represented as having broken the chain that suppressed his freedom of movement. He holds in his right hand a huge conch shell, which he is using as a trumpet to notify his fellow slaves that all restraints have been removed, the fetters are broken from their legs, and they now have their liberty.

In some such way as this, God wants us to know that through the word we have access to perfect freedom in Christ Jesus our Lord. Jesus made this striking charge and promise in Luke 6:37: "Judge not, and you shall not be judged. Condemn not, and you shall not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven." The word He used for forgive is "to loose, or to set free." The word is *apoluo*. It presupposes that one is either tied or enslaved; and the forgiveness of God, offered through His word, sets him free.

4. **The word of God makes men clean.** Jesus said to his disciples in John 15:3: "You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you." Some form of this word is used sixty-six times in the New Testament. Let us examine a few of them: "Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (II Corinthians 7:1).

"... that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word" (Ephesians 5:25-26). "... when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the majesty on high" (Hebrews 1:3). "So God, who knows the heart, acknowledged them by giving them the Holy Spirit, just as He did to us, and made no distinction between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith" (Acts 15:8-9). The word which is translated clean, cleanse, purity, and purge is from the Greek word *katharizo*, "cleanse, render pure; free from the influence of error and sin."

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The noun form of the word means "clean, pure, unsoiled, clean from guilt, upright, virtuous, void of evil." We get our English word cathartic from this and it is a very drastic action. So, it is indicated that the word of God will thoroughly purge or cleanse us of all defilement.

5. The word of God sanctifies people. "Sanctify them by Your truth; Your word is truth" (John 17:17). The conjunction here is *hagiason autous*, which is "sanctify them." Then, he expresses the means by which that is accomplished, *en te aletheia*, which is "in or by the truth." *Agaoazp*, sanctify, means "to separate, consecrate; cleanse, purify; regard or reverence as holy" (*Analytical Greek Concordance*).

So, the word of God, the truth, will set men apart from the world and separate them from the evil that is in the world. It is God's powerful instrument to effect man's salvation. But when Christian's live very much like the world, when they speak and act like the world, it is a strong indication that they have not been separated from the world—that they have not been sanctified.

6. Men are called by the word of God into His service. "But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth to which He called you by our gospel, for the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ" (II Thessalonians 2:13–14).

This passage affirms that God chose us from the beginning to be saved. He wants all men to be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth (I Timothy 2:4). That salvation is brought about by (1) the Spirit setting us apart from the world and (2) our belief of the truth. Then, he tells us, the instrument by which this is accomplished, the gospel.

We were called by the gospel. The word is translated from *kaleo*, which means "to call, to send for, to summon, to invite." Christianity is purely a voluntary matter. God does not force us to be Christians. It is a matter of choice with us, a decision we make. He invites us by the gospel to come to Him and believe the truth. Upon accepting His invitation, the Holy Spirit sanctifies, or sets us apart. The instrument He uses to do this is the gospel.

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7. The word of God is the gospel of our salvation. "In whom also we have obtained an inheritance being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will, that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of

His glory. In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise" (Ephesians 1:11-13).

The word of God is the good news and glad tidings which has the capability of rescuing and preserving us to everlasting life. This is in keeping with the council of His will. Further, it is achieved, this passage tells us, in this way: (1) hope in Christ, (2) hearing the word of truth, (3) believing in Him, and then (4) it is sealed with the promised Holy Spirit. A bit later in this letter, he says, "That He might sanctify and cleanse her with washing of water by the word" (Ephesians 5:26). Let us not underestimate the power of the word of God in our lives.

8. The word of God provides life. "But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name" (John 20:31).

In all passages, which have to do with the word of God and what it does, or is capable of doing, you will notice the part the individual plays in it. It always involves his volition—his choice to hear the word, believe it, and obey it. Life, that is spiritual and eternal life, is not offered unconditionally to man. It is not thrust upon us. We are never pressured into receiving it. It involves a willing response on our part. There are external sources, which influence us, as well as internal. Internally, I recognize a need, know my own helplessness, am aware of my sins and failings, and realize, in my need, that I cannot save myself. Externally, I see the love of God, His offer of freedom from sin in full forgiveness, and the innumerable blessings which come to the Christian; and I am induced to accept the gospel.

9. The word of God is living and active. "For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Hebrews 4:12).

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The word of God is incomparably powerful. The passage says that it is energetic. Literally, it says that it is "sharper beyond every two-mouthed sword!" It is able to distinguish for us and reveal to us the division between soul and spirit and is able to judge the thoughts and

intentions of the heart. The word of God discerns the whole man. A fearful thing about it, the Hebrew writer remarks, is it judges the thoughts and intentions of the heart. The word is *kritikos*, from the very krino. This word has a large meaning and use: "to separate; to make a distinction between; to exercise judgment upon; to bring under question; to judge judicially; to decide, determine, resolve" (*Analytical Greek Concordance*). We should be slow to criticize others and we should refrain from being judgmental; but let us be fully aware that the word of God can and has the right to sit in judgment upon our hearts and lives!

10. The word of God provides all of man's needs. "As His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue" (II Peter 1:3). "And my God shall supply all your need according to his riches" (Philippians 4:19). These needs are provided by His divine power. He identifies those needs by saying that they "belong to life and godliness." So God has given us the source of them. He has given us the character of the blessings—life and godliness. He also tells us the means by which they are made available to us—the knowledge of the one having called us to His own glory and virtue.

I am impressed that Peter repeatedly used the term *epiginosko*. This means the *full knowledge* of God. It is through the word of God that we can have a *full knowledge* of God and His will to us. It is true that God has not told us everything about Himself, either in the volume of nature or the volume of the Bible; but it is true that He has told us all we need to know to become and be His faithful children. He has disclosed to us what He wants us to know, and that should satisfy us completely.

11. The word of God will bring man to full maturity. "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work" (II Timothy 3:16–17).

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There are great truths in this passage we need to observe and respect: (1) The word of God is inspired. It is the product of the inbreathing of God upon divinely chosen men to speak and write free of error. (2) It

is profitable. This word, *ophelos*, means “advantage, profit, benefit, help.” Almost everyone is interested in profit! We like to accomplish things that are beneficial. The words of God will do that. (3) It is advantageous to teaching, instruction in righteousness, for reproof and correction. It has a wide range of benefits. (r) It will equip the man of God to every good work. (5) So that the man of God may be perfect—complete. Without the word of God, men would be barren and ineffective in their doings. Whatever good men accomplish today, whether they recognize or acknowledge it or not, has its source in God and His word.

12. The word of God turns men from darkness to light. I realize that much that is said about the word of God and what it will do is related, but each passage about the subject seems to assume a new and fresh truth that is worthy of our consideration.

“But rise and stand on your feet; for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to make you a minister and a witness both of the things which you have seen and of the things which I will yet reveal to you. I will deliver you from the Jewish people, as well as from the Gentiles, to whom I now send you, to open their eyes in order to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me” (Acts 16:16–18). This is a beautiful passage fraught with many lessons for us. The Lord Jesus Christ appeared to Paul: (1) To make him a servant. There are about ten different words for servant and serve in the New Testament and each one has a propriety of its own.

This word that Christ used as He appeared to Paul is *hypertes* and it means “an under-rower, one of a ship's crew; a minister, a servant, an attendant; and a magistrate; a servant of a synagogue; an assistant in any work.” He is an underling and respects the authority of his superior and submits to him in dedicated service. (2) To make him a “witness of the things which you saw in men and to which I will appear to you.” It is important that we remember that a witness is one who has seen! (3) To make him

an apostle. Having seen the Lord, he was qualified to be an apostle, upon the provision, of course, that the Lord used him in this capacity.

This verse says: *Ego Apostello se*, and that means "I send you." It is stronger than the English shows it to be, because He uses the personal pronoun **I** twice. If I can indicate the strength of it in writing, it would be: "**I** send you forth." The purpose of sending him forth is multiple: (1) It is to open the eyes of the nations. (2) To turn them from darkness to light. (3) To subject them to the authority of God instead of Satan. (4) To provide them the forgiveness of sins. (5) Assure them of a lot among those who have been sanctified by faith in Him.

13. It is through the word of God that men are made partakers of the promises of Christ. "... if has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets: that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel, of which I became a minister" (Ephesians 3:5-7).

He uses the terms, "joint-heirs, joint-body, joint-shares." This is what is beautiful about Christianity—the sharing of everything with our fellow human beings. Being together, being one, being united is the crux of the religion of Christ. But all of these things come to us through the gospel. You understand better now what He meant when He said that He would provide all of our needs!

14. The word of God enables all men to see. "To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given that, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to make all see what is the fellowship of the mystery which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God who created all things through Jesus Christ" (Ephesians 3:8-9).

There are two very important lessons in this verse to which I direct your attention: (1)The gospel was preached to make all men see. The word for see is *photisai*, and it means, "to bring to light." Paul proclaimed the unsearchable riches of Christ so that all men might have the truth of God brought to light, and for the purpose of seeing it. (2) Men can see. The gospel is understandable. It does not take a graduate of a university to understand the

for men to read, learn, and see what the will of God is. We have those around us who assert that the Bible is a dead book, unless the church interprets it. And "by the church" they mean the priests or clerics who assume the authority of "running" or "governing" the church! Nothing could be further from the truth. Paul said to Timothy: "And that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus" (II Timothy 3:15). God has so arranged His word that all men may see!

15. The word of God has these beautiful characteristics:

- (1) In it is revealed the righteousness of God (Romans 1:17).
- (2) It is the perfect will of Christ (Romans 12:1-2).
- (3) It endures forever (I Peter 1:24-25).

16. The word of God will judge us in the last day. "... the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day" (John 12:48). "God will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to the gospel" (Romans 2:16). It is the standard. The norm for judgment in that day will be the righteousness of God. His righteousness is revealed in the Gospel (Romans 1:17).

Already Jesus has told us that His word will judge us in the last day (John 12:48). So, we may deduce from these scriptures that the criterion for judgment of all men in the last day will be the gospel. It is important, I believe, that the expression He used, according to the gospel, *kata to euaggelion*, is in the accusative case, and means, therefore, "according to, conformably to, after the fashion or likeness." So, I do not hesitate to affirm that the measure, the rule, the instrument of judgment which God will use when He calls all men before Him to answer for their lives will be **the word of God!**

It seems sad to me that so many people live by the standard of the world, or a yard-stick of their own, but will be judged by God's measuring rod (Revelation 11:1-2). If we would live by the pattern of His word here in this life, there would be no fear or anxiety about being judged by that same standard when we appear before the judgment seat of Christ (Romans 14:11-12).

We have spoken of the confusion in the religious world over the work of the Holy Spirit; a confusion growing out of a lack of careful study of what the Bible says about the subject. Next, we pointed out what the Holy Spirit did for the apostles. It was such an essential, indispensable work that He did through guiding them infallibly to the finished, completed, revelation of God's will to man. He sent them to the ends of the earth with the message of life, hope, and salvation. He empowered them to do signs making their message credible and acceptable.

To assist in this greatest task which the world had ever known, He empowered the apostles to lay their hands upon certain, chosen Christians to assist in the promulgation of the gospel. Not all believers had these miraculous spiritual gifts. Listen to the rhetorical questions Paul asked to make a point; no answer being expected: "Are all apostles?" The answer, obviously was no. Are all prophets? No answer was needed, because all understood that all Christians in Corinth or any other congregation, were not prophets. "Are all teachers?" In the first place, all Christians were not qualified to teach—publicly, that is. "Do all work miracles?" The answer is no. "Do all possess gifts of healing?" They did not! "Do all speak with tongues?" And, again, the answer is no. "Do all interpret?"

The apostle commanded some in the church who had the gift of speaking in foreign languages, to pray that they may also have the gift of interpretation so that they could teach others and edify them.

We have learned in our study of this Bible topic the purpose of miracles: (1) To reveal the truth without error, (2) to establish and confirm the truth beyond any question, (3) to help until the New Testament was written, (4) as a secondary, subordinate purpose, to express compassion toward those who were being healed, and (5) to get the New Covenant and Age started. God always performed miracles to begin a work and get it initiated. He performed a miracle. He created Adam and Eve. Thereafter, people have been born, not by performance of a miracle, but by natural law, which God set in place.

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When He inaugurated the Covenant with Israel on Sinai, that introduction was by miracles. There were such things, to name a few, as the voice of God, the writing by the finger of God upon the tables of

stone, and the brightness of the face of Moses so that the children of Israel could not behold it without his placing a veil over it. There were many others. To launch that law, which was to last 1500 years to the cross, God performed miracles.

When He established the New Covenant at Pentecost, recorded in the second chapter of Acts, He opened it with miracles. He had promised the apostles that they should remain in Jerusalem until they were imbued with power from on high, and then, they were to begin preaching repentance and remission of sins in His name among all nations (Luke 24:44-49; Acts 1:8).

There were such miracles performed as the tongues of lambent flame, the inspiration of the apostles, and the speaking in foreign tongues. Jesus had performed many miracles in the three and a half years of preparation for the Christian dispensation; and, as you must know, in this introductory period of the religion of our Lord Jesus Christ, the apostles performed miracles. In an every day manner of speaking, we say in my country, that miracles were performed to "get the ball rolling."

We have spent some time in this study examining what the New Testament says about the help that the Holy Spirit gives the Christian today. He indwells the Christian, strengthens him in his weakness, intercedes for him before the throne of God and guides him, shapes his life, through the instrumentality of the word of God.

He uses that word in every facet of our lives. It is the factor involved in conversion. "Jesus answered, 'Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God' " (John 3:5). We are born of the incorruptible seed through the word of God, which lives and abides forever (I Peter 1:23-25). This is the Spirit working through His word. There is no evidence that He works apart from the word in His dealings with men.

I have lived in some very remote areas of the world in the fifty years of my ministry as a gospel preacher, but I have never found

a single soul in those distant, out of the way places who had any knowledge of the Holy Spirit until the word of the Lord was preached

to them. Even apart from what the Bible has to say about the issue, I believe this to be indisputable proof that the Holy Spirit does not work in the lives of people apart from the word of God! He dwells in the Christian and gives him strength and power, but no longer does He enable him to work miracles.

It is my sincere hope and prayer that this exposition on the subject of the Holy Spirit will both challenge and inspire the truth seeking student of the Bible to examine, research, and prayerfully study what the scriptures teach, embrace the truth, and share it with his fellow man.



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