

UPLOOK

JULY 2007

Assess the Need • Catch the Vision • Take the Challenge

The Spirit of Truth

THE GUIDANCE
OF THE
HOLY SPIRIT

Harold Fiss

SPIRITUAL
SIGNS &
SYMPTOMS

Michael Windheuser

BIBLICAL
PASTORS &
GNOM3

Jabe Nicholson

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The work of the
Holy Spirit in the
life of the believer



istockphoto / Joshua Blake

"We are from God; he who knows God listens to us; he who is not from God does not listen to us. By this we know the Spirit of truth and the spirit of error" (1 Jn. 4:6).

The Spirit of Truth

Christ-like thinking about the Spirit

The upper room ministry of our Lord Jesus is a testament to His gracious care for His disciples. Truly, *"having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end."* In those few hours, He poured into them—by word and deed—truth that would sustain them through the times ahead. He spoke of many topics, but one that stands out is His revelation of another Comforter: the Spirit of truth.

Ironically, there is a great deal of error current concerning the Spirit of truth. The Lord's teaching in the upper room is the antidote. Unbelievers deny the Spirit's personality or His deity, but Christ described the Holy Spirit as a real person, co-equal with Himself and with the Father. The unsaved, however, don't have a monopoly on misconceptions about the Holy Spirit. And so we find that our Lord's words also address mistakes about the Spirit that believers sometimes make.

Failing to distinguish between the Old and New Testaments *"The Spirit of truth...abides with you, and will be in you"* (Jn. 14:17). The permanent indwelling of the Holy Spirit was a privilege unknown to Old Testament believers (Ps. 51:11) but universal in the soon-to-be-born church. Much error concerning the Spirit today occurs when believers fail to note the differences between the testaments.

Focusing on the Holy Spirit *"The Spirit of truth...will bear witness of Me"* (Jn. 15:26). Although it is possible to err on the other side and neglect the existence and work of the Holy Spirit, nonetheless a real danger exists in obsessing on Him. It is not difficult to find Christians who rave about the Spirit but have little or nothing to say of Christ, the cross, or the Bible. But the Lord Jesus taught that the characteristic ministry of the Holy Spirit would be to speak of Christ, not draw attention to Himself. True appreciation for the Spirit of God is manifested, not in endlessly speaking of Him, but in cooperating with Him in exalting Christ (cf. Jn. 16:14a).

Neglecting the Scriptures *"The Spirit of truth...will guide you into all the truth"* (Jn. 16:13). The Spirit's work is inseparably linked to the Word of God. He is essential to every aspect of the Bible, including its origin (2 Pet. 1:20f), its understanding (2 Cor. 1:10-16), and its ministry (1 Cor. 12:11). The word "inspiration" or "God-breathed" used in 2 Timothy 3:16 is closely related to the word for "Spirit." We also see parallels between the Spirit and the Word of God. Pictures of one are often pictures of the other: for instance, water (Jn. 7:38f and Eph. 5:26) and fire (Rev. 4:5 and Jer. 23:29), and we read that they perform the same work. Believers are born again by the Spirit (Jn. 3:5-8) but also by the Word (1 Pet. 1:23); and, as other articles will point out, being filled with the Spirit yields the same results as being filled with the Word of Christ (Eph. 5:18ff and Col. 3:16ff). What does all this mean to us? Simply that the genuine evidence of the Spirit's work among us is seen not by extra-biblical "revelation" or counter-biblical experiences, but by lives and churches where the Word of God is honored, taught, read, and obeyed. It is commonly held that a "Spirit-led" church meeting will be heavy on emotion and singing, with the ministry of the Word becoming increasingly short and shallow. Nothing could be further from the truth.

U P L O O K

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BACK COVER

UPLOOK magazine is intended to encourage the people of God in fidelity to His Word, fervency in intercessory prayer, labors more abundant, and love to the Lord. Believing in the practical Headship of Christ and the local autonomy of each assembly, this is not intended to be an official organ of any group or federation of local churches. The editor and authors take responsibility for materials published. For any blessing which accrues, to God be the glory.

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Submissions

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- 1) by using the reminder envelope sent to facilitate your renewal;
- 2) by using the form on our website at:

<http://www.uplook.org/subscribe.html>

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NEW LIFE IN HIM *From seed planting to fruit growing*

A Name

What brand name are you?

A friend of mine observed a couple praying for their food in a restaurant. Guessing that they were Christians and encouraged by their boldness in the Lord, he went to their table and introduced himself as a fellow believer. Their response was, “What’s the name of your church?” Instead of enjoying fellowship as believers in Christ, he was—in essence—asked what “brand” of Christian he was. My friend wisely replied, “There are only two churches mentioned in Scripture: the true church and the false church. I’m in the true church!”

Names may divide

Unfortunately, today many local churches are named after great men, a particular form of church government, or specific doctrines they hold dear. This tendency to take a name and divide believers into categories began to appear early in the history of the church and was rebuked by Paul in his letter to the saints at Corinth (1 Cor. 1:12-15). Christ is not divided and neither is His church! “*By one Spirit were we all baptized into one body*” (1 Cor. 12:13) and this body is the one true church (Eph. 1:22). Distinguishing names divide the body. Even within a local church, names such as “Pastor,” “Father,” “Reverend,” or “Minister” separate believers by improperly elevating one over the others.

Names may destroy

Early in history, man desired to unify under a common name for a common cause. At the tower of Babel man said, “*come, let us build us a city and a tower whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth*” (Gen. 11:4). Man desired a name to form a center of unity against God’s command to be fruitful, multiply,


and spread throughout the earth. The Lord, however, was neither impressed by their name nor by their feeble show of selfish ambition, and He judged them accordingly. Instead of humanistic unity, they were divided one from the other, their efforts abandoned to absolute ruin.

“[God] raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come” (Eph. 1:20f).

The Name above all names

In Exodus 20:24, the Lord stated, “*in all places where I record my Name I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee.*” In the New Testament His name—the name of Christ Jesus—is equally important. His disciples boldly preached in His name (Ac. 9:27), evil spirits were rebuked in His name (Ac. 16:18), eternal life is through His name (Jn. 20:31), prayer requests were made in His name (Jn. 16:23-26), thanks-

giving was in His name (Eph. 5:20), church discipline was in His name (1 Cor. 5:4), elders prayed for the sick in His name (Jas. 5:14), Christians gathered in His name (1 Cor. 5:4; Mt. 18:20), and Colossians 3:17 reminds us that “*whatsoever ye do, in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus.*” In preserving the pre-eminence of the Lord’s name, New Testament churches are often referred to by geographical location such as “the saints at Philippi” or the “church of the Thessalonians” (Php. 1:1; 1 Thes. 1:1). Believers are referred to, not by names that divide, but by names common to all: “Christians,” “disciples,” “believers,” “saints,” “brethren,” and “children of God.”

There is no room for special “brand names” and titles when we are wanting to exalt the name of Christ. May we seek to identify ourselves according to our biblical relationship to Jesus Christ, through whose name we were saved (Jn. 1:12; Ac. 4:12).  —RANDY HORN

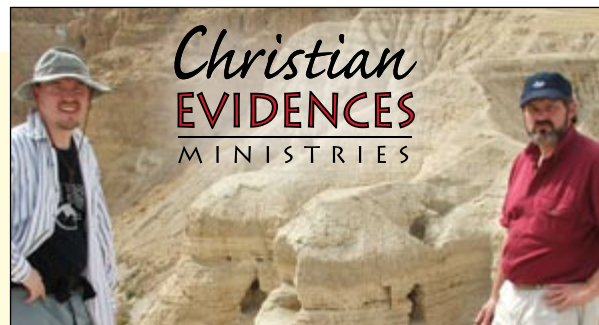
Holy Land Adventure

Tour Bible lands from a *Christian Evidences* perspective

If you've always wanted to visit the lands of the Bible, now's your opportunity! Rob Sullivan and Curt Kiessling, founders of *Christian Evidences Ministries*, will be leading a Holy Land Adventure tour

March 31-April 11, 2008. Both Rob and Curt are veterans of travelling to the Middle East and are looking forward to sharing their knowledge of the land as well as helping believers build their faith as they view evidence to support the authenticity of the Bible. This trip will include visits to many of the popular sites in Greece and Israel, but it will help you to view them from a new perspective. Join their group and see the latest archeological finds and watch history come to life. You are guaranteed to come back encouraged and reading your Bible in a fresh way.

If you are interested in the 2008 Holy Land Adventure, visit www.christianevidences.org for more information and to access the online registration form. Still have questions? Contact Curt at 563-564-6162 or email info@christianevidences.org



LABOR DAY CONFERENCE IN BC

Christians gathered as Horse Lake Christian Fellowship, 100 Mile House, BC, extend a warm invitation to attend a Bible conference Sep 1-3. The theme is "Lord, Teach us to Pray!" Speakers include Steve Price (KS) and John Bjorlie (MI). Paul and Maria Forcucci (CT) will lead seminars for youth. Workshops and seminars are planned for Saturday afternoon and evening. Plenary sessions are planned for Sunday evening and Monday morning and afternoon. Youth events are planned. **Contact:** Rob Brennan 250-791-5657 or Don Street 250-395-4230.

TX LABOR DAY CONFERENCE

Golden Bible Chapel, Golden, TX will host their 2007 Labor Day Conference Sep 1-2. In the will of the Lord, Randy Amos (NY) will be opening the Word. Meals provided. **Contact:** Bryan Hughes 903-569-8880 or 903-521-1844 (cell) email: goldenbibleconf@aol.com web: www.goldenbiblechapel.com

GOLDEN, BC BIBLE SEMINAR

Randy Amos (NY) will be speaking on the topic "The Tabernacle; Looking

backward to go forward - a picture of Christ and the Church" Sep 7-9. **Contact:** Ralph Kirchhofer 250-348-2059 email: gospel@uniserve.com

ASHEVILLE/WAYNESVILLE, NC

Bernard Osborne will be the speaker at the annual men's Bible conference (hosted by Western NC assemblies) at Camp Living Water, Bryson City, NC Fri and Sat, Sep 7-8. **Contact:** Walter R. Peck Ph: 828-254-5475 or email: Morganconsult@AOL.com. Mr. Osborne will also speak at a series of special meetings, starting Sunday, Sep 9 through the end of the week at the Asheville Gospel Chapel. **Contact:** Ron Morgan at 828-337-1625 or email: morganconsult@AOL.com

WORD ALIVE SE FALL STUDY PROGRAM

Studies will be held on the following Saturdays at Washington Chapel, 808 E. Robert Toombs Ave, Washington, GA. Scheduled times are 9:00 AM - 3:00 PM and lunch will be provided.

Sep 8 Sam Thorpe Joshua Part 4
Oct 13 Steve Price Prayer
Nov 10 Alan Gamble Leadership

Dec 8 Rex Trogden Joshua Part 5
Contact: Mike Attwood 706-678-3180 or email: saved2serve@mac.com

EMMANUEL BIBLE CAMP

The Emmanuel Bible Camp 2007 Men's Retreat begins Friday, Sep 7 at 7:00 PM and ends Sunday after lunch. Get away, relax, enjoy the outdoors, experience Bible study and worship and spend time with other Christian men. The camp is located on the beautiful Boughten River in Upton, PEI. Speaker: Rick Morse (NS) Director: Bill Mooney (PEI) **Contact:** 540 Mt Hope Road, RR#3 St. Peters Bay, PEI COA 2B0. 902-583-2805 www.emmanuelbiblecamp.ca or email: emmanuel.bible.camp@hotmail.com

GOSPEL OUTREACH IN VIRGINIA

A few of the Assemblies in Southeastern Virginia are planning a 3 day Gospel outreach at Community Beach Park, Norfolk from Wednesday through Friday, Sep 12-14 at 7:00 PM nightly. Jeff Buckles (NC) is scheduled to be the primary speaker.

Contact: Mike Beverly 757-432-0415 email: phoshouse@cox.net or Neil Goggin 757-357-4041 email: kilroygo@verizon.net

EASTERN IOWA BIBLE CONFERENCE

High Point Bible Chapel (Davenport, IA) and Gateway Bible Chapel (Fulton, IL) will be hosting a Bible conference Sep 14-16 at Grace Camp, DeWitt, IA. Mike Attwood (GA) has been invited to speak. Children's meetings and activities are planned. Lodging is available at the camp and all meals will be provided for Sat. and Sun. **Contact:** Jim Iverson 563-391-3122 email: iversonhpt@aol.com Jim Fullan 563-242-4597 or email: jimfullan@ci.clinton.ia.us

ANNUAL CONFERENCE IN IOWA

All are invited to the 92nd annual Bible conference in Atlantic, IA Sep 14-16, Lord willing. Friday's meeting begins at 7:30 PM. Saturday and Sunday meetings begin at 10:00 AM. Scheduled speakers are Steve Herzig (PA) and Dave MacLeod (IA). **Contact:** Dennis Oathoudt Koathoudt@hotmail.com

KNOW THE WORD SEMINAR

Get a month's worth of Bible study in a day! Rex Trogdon (NC) will be the teacher at a one-day, five-session seminar designed to give an interesting and informative overview of the Scriptures according to major Bible themes, characters, chronology and doctrine. The seminar is planned for Saturday, Sep 22 from 9:30 AM to 4:00 PM at Bethany Bible Chapel, Toms River, NJ. There is no cost, but registration is required. **Contact:** Mark Holchin, PO Box 305, Lanoka Harbor, NJ 08734 email: knowtheword@comcast.net

CONFERENCE IN KENTUCKY

Brethren from Kentucky are hosting a regional conference scheduled for Sep 22 at Clear Creek Park in Shelbyville, KY. Lord willing, Randy Amos will minister the Word. **Contact:** Jim Harmon 859-626-8509 email: JamesHarmon@bellsouth.net

FALL FOLIAGE CONFERENCE

Rex Trogdon (NC) will be the speaker for a special five day conference Monday through Friday, Sep 24-28 at Camp-of-the-Woods, Speculator,

NY in the heart of scenic Adirondack State Park. The cost of \$320 per person includes meals, deluxe accommodations and a narrated luncheon cruise on historic Raquette Lake. **Contact:** knowtheword@comcast.net To register, send fully-refundable amount to: Know the Word Ministries Inc. c/o Mark Kolchin, P.O. Box 305 Lanoka Harbor, NJ 08734

WESTBROOK ME BIBLE CONFERENCE

A cordial invitation is extended for all to join for the annual Bible conference, DV, at Spring Hill Gospel Hall, Westbrook, ME Oct 5-7. Speakers expected are Wade LeBlanc (NB) and Donald Norbie (CO). Overnight accommodations available upon early request. **Contact:** Daniel F. Chick, 95 Maple Street, Westbrook ME 04092. 207-449-1492

YOUTH CONFERENCE AT CRESCENT HILLS

There will be a youth conference at Crescent Hills Bible Chapel, Morgantown, WV Oct 5-7 for teens in grades 7-12. Scott DeGroff (KS) will be speaking. **Contact:** Steve Boone 304-296-4517 email: boonestar@westco.net

NC LADIES MISSIONARY CONFERENCE

Hosted by Faith Bible Fellowship and Wilmington Bible Chapel, the 56th Annual North Carolina Ladies Missionary Conference will be held Oct 6 from 10:00 AM to 3:00 PM (lunch provided). The conference location in Raleigh, NC is at Wake Christian Academy. Speakers are Dr. Colleen Redit, India, Anne Chalvet, France, and Christina Harengo-zo with the Ezekiel Project. Also, there will be reports from young ladies who have recently been on summer missions trips. **Contact:** Mary King 910-686-0501 email: we_king@hotmail.com

117th ANNUAL CONF. IN DETROIT

Curtis Gospel Chapel, Detroit MI will hold it's 117th Annual Conference, Lord willing, on Oct 13-14. Invited speakers are J. Wade Le Blanc (NB) and Joe Reese (ON). Meetings begin Saturday at 2:30 PM and will conclude Sunday at 4:00 PM. All are welcome to join for two

days of fellowship and great messages from God's Word. **Contact:** Gerald Fitzgerald, 29911 Orangelawn St., Livonia, MI 48150-3034 ph: 734-425-4217

MISSIONARY CONFERENCE IN FL

A warm invitation is extended to attend the Missionary Conference at Park of the Palms in Keystone Heights, FL on the weekend of Oct 19-20. There will be separate meetings for men and women. The speakers for the women will be Colleen Redit (India) and Amy Hernandez (Mexico). Speaker for the men is Joel Hernandez (Mexico), who is now Missions Instructor at Emmaus Bible School. **Contact:** Helen Pinches 352-473-6393 e-mail mompinch@aol.com

MORE IN ASHEVILLE, NC

Asheville Gospel Chapel will host the Land of the Sky conference, Sat, Oct 20. Foreign missionary, Paul Bramson, and domestic missionary, Dennis Bailey will speak. **Contact:** Ron Morgan at 828-337-1625 or morganconsult@AOL.com

CAMP HOPE, GA FALL CONFERENCE

Camp Hope will hold their Fall Family Conference Oct 26-28 with Alan Malchuck ministering God's Word, in the will of the Lord. The conference begins Friday at 6:00 PM and ends Sunday with lunch. There will not be a set charge or suggested offering to the camp. It is realized that many young families would not be able to meet the expenses of such a camp weekend but that the Lord would move in the hearts of others to give above the cost of their coming in order to supply the needs of others. **Contact:** Steve Roys email: camphopega@arilion.com 770-536-4787 www.camphopega.org for registration.

CALVINSIM – ARMINIANISM SEMINAR

Mike Attwood (GA) will be the speaker at a seminar dealing with the topics of Calvinism and Arminianism. This will be a Biblically-based examination of these two controversial theological perspectives and how they affect a believer's walk and witness. The date is Sat, Oct 27 from 9:30 AM - noon at

Bethany Bible Chapel, Toms River, NJ. Lunch will be provided. **Contact:** Mark Kolchin, PO Box 305, Lanoka Harbor, NJ 08734 knowtheword@comcast.net

WOMEN'S RETREAT IN NJ

A "meat of the Word" study in Mark, hosted by Bethany Chapel, Toms River, NJ will be held at America's Keswick in Whiting, NJ from dinner Friday to dinner Saturday, Nov 2-3. The Lord's messenger is expected to be Keith Keyser. **Contact:** Greg Kuras 732-920-7191.

WORD ALIVE SE MEN'S BIBLE STUDY

Alan Gamble (Scotland) will lead a conversational Bible reading on Galatians at Camp Hope, Dahlonega, GA, Tuesday through Friday, Nov 6-9. Come having studied Galatians and be ready to participate. Brother Gamble will introduce each portion and moderate discussion. Cost: \$ 75. **Contact:** Mike Attwood 706-678-3180 e-mail: saved2serve@mac.com or Sam Thorpe 706-359-6297 e-mail: sambarb@nu-z.net

OAKVILLE BIBLE STUDY ARCHIVES

After 14 years of ministry, we regretfully advise that the Saturday morning Bible Studies held at Hopedale Assembly in Oakville, ON will be suspended as it has been increasingly difficult obtaining suitable teachers. We wish to thank all who have faithfully supported the studies over the years. A large archive of ministry is available in the form of cassettes, CD's or MP3s. Any interested in obtaining a catalog of ministry available should contact Bill Allison, 905-336-8101 or e-mail: hw.allison@sympatico.ca Any correspondence not related to the ministry archives should be directed to W. H. Burnett at wh.burnett@sympatico.ca

COMMENDATIONS

Morton and Shirley Morris
The Christians gathered at Grace Bible Chapel in Springfield, IL announce the commendation of Morton "Bud" and Shirley Morris to the work of the Lord. The Morrises have been in fellowship

at Grace for many years and have been active in teaching the saints and preaching the gospel. Bud serves as an elder, Shirley is active in teaching Sunday School and also ministers at the ladies' weekly Bible study meetings during the summer months. They were previously commended to the work of the Lord in Zambia where they served for several years. They are the parents of eight children, three at home. The assembly heartily commends them to the care, prayer and keeping of the Lord's people.

Mark and Gail Beach

The saints meeting in the Lord's Name at Northeast Bible Chapel in Colorado Springs, CO are pleased to commend brother and sister, Mark and Gail Beach to the work of the Lord at Everyday Publications, Inc. (EPI) in Port Colborne, ON. Mark and Gail will seek to come alongside the current staff to assist them in the administrative, operational, and technical aspects of the work.

Rebecca Cade

The saints and elders at Colmar Manor Gospel Chapel commend sister Rebecca Cade to the work of the Lord in Nairobi, Kenya. Rebecca will be teaching both Art and French at the West Nairobi School. We heartily endorse Rebecca and can readily testify to her own spiritual growth through the years here at our assembly. Although we will miss her greatly, we believe that she is in the Lord's will and therefore, we recommend her for the prayers of the saints in the work she is setting out to accomplish by the grace of our God.

Katie Scott

The elders of High Point Bible Chapel announce that their commendation of Katie Scott to the work of the Lord at Living Waters Bible Camp has ended. Katie was recently married and has resigned from her position at the camp. She and her husband continue to serve the Lord at the assembly in Westby, WI where they are in happy fellowship. We are thankful for Katie's faithful service to the Lord at Living Waters.

HOME CALL

Ben Tuininga passed through "gates of splendor" on Jul 27, from the Lord's presence here and into the Lord's presence there. Brother Ben taught at Emmaus Bible School and served for a time with Bill McDonald as co-president; helped plant and minister to assemblies throughout the Midwest; served as a Minneapolis Police Chaplain for 15 years; was an elder in several assemblies; and had a many-faceted involvement with Story Book Lodge Christian Camps for more than a half-century. A memorial service is planned for 7:00 PM on Sep 22 at Story Book Lodge. All are welcome. An email to Roxanne Rodgers with your intention would be much appreciated (registration4@storybooklodge.org). In lieu of flowers, Ben's family suggests any memorial gifts be directed to Story Book Lodge, 5079 Vermillion Trail, Gilbert, MN 55741.

MINISTRY OPPORTUNITIES

Pittsboro Christian Village in Pittsboro, NC is seeking a Food Service Manager. This person will oversee Food Service Operations for Assisted Living and Independent Living residents of a Christian Continuing Care Retirement Community. If you have a desire to serve the Lord in a Christian environment, contact Gerald Baker at 919-542-3151 or gerald.baker@pcvnc.org

Parkside Ranch, located in Orford Quebec, Canada has a need for a full time cook, (single or couple). This camp has year round facilities and has been in operation for 40 years. The cook position includes 8 weeks of summer camps with weekend and weekly groups during the year and the responsibility of ordering food. www.parksideranch.com email: registrar@parksideranch.com Fax to: 819-868-6730
c/o Mr. Dean Somers, President

HYMN BOOKS NEEDED

If your assembly has any copies of *Hymns of Truth & Praise* you are willing to donate, Myrtle Beach Bible Conferences, Inc. would be happy to pay the shipping costs. **Contact:** Mark Hartley 919-598-0392 email: here2serve@nc.rr.com 📞



Spiritual Signs and Symptoms

What can sickness teach us?

Babies cry because they cannot say what is wrong or where it hurts. Crying is thus a visible and audible *symptom* of an underlying problem. Hunger or wetness can be dealt with easily, but, if crying continues, parents become medical detectives, looking for other general symptoms that may indicate an infection or disease. For example, a runny nose or pain in the muscles or joints are some common, qualitative symptoms that could point to either bacterial or viral infection. The diagnosis based on symptoms is confirmed by the results of specific tests that are medically called *signs*. In this case, the child's body temperature could be elevated, a blood test could reveal increased numbers of bacteria-eating, white-blood cells, or ear fluid could be used to grow and identify disease-causing bacteria. Signs and symptoms like those above lead to the realization that a disease or infection is actively hurting the body and needs to be treated. They are a call to action.

This is not to say that the body cannot actively defend itself. In fact, the symptoms of redness and swelling at the site of a cut indicate the body is doing just that, bringing bacteria-eating white blood cells to the area. Likewise, most viral infections resolve after seven to ten days because the body produces its own anti-viral medicine called interferon. To the knowledgeable observer, it seems that the human body's active defenses against bacteria and viruses must have been designed with foreknowledge of what they would be fighting. But if these lines of defense fail and the infection or disease continues without treatment, there can be severe consequences. Hearing or sight can be lost.

To ignore the call to action of ongoing signs and symptoms can have terrible, even deadly, results.




Limbs may need to be amputated. Damage to the heart or other organs can occur. Some infections, like pneumonia, can result in death, as is frequently the case among elderly people in nursing homes. To ignore the

call to action of ongoing signs and symptoms can have terrible, even deadly, results.

Just as in the physical realm, spiritual signs and symptoms serve to call attention to the reality of an underlying spiritual problem that, if left untreated, results in death. An observer of human history would note the general, but chronic, symptoms of selfishness, hate, violence, and moral ambiguity, and the ensuing

specific signs of innumerable wars, the killing of millions of unborn children, and the legal redefinition of sexuality and gender, as confirmation of an underlying spiritual disease. The disease is called sin. Sin is a congenital spiritual disease of human beings that keeps us separated from God and, if left untreated, is eternally fatal. Spiritual signs and symptoms call for an effective spiritual prescription.

Thankfully, there is an effective treatment freely available. Like a physician prescribing the right medicine to cure an infection, the biblical prescription for the disease of sin is faith in Jesus Christ. Only faith in Jesus brings relief from the symptoms of sin, an eternal resolution of the infection of sin, and freedom from the fatal outcome of sin.

"But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, and by His scourging we are healed" (Isa. 53:5). 

—MICHAEL G. WINDHEUSER, PH.D.

The Filling of the Spirit

What on earth does it mean?

**“He will fill every room in your being to which you give Him the key. If He does not fill you, it is because you are reserving some part for yourself.”
—Harry Ironside**

We occasionally hear the criticism that a person is “so heavenly minded that he is no earthly good.” I’d like to meet that person. A surplus of heavenly-minded people does not appear to be this world’s main problem. I suppose there is the rare instance where such an objection—understood the right way—might be valid. But, by and large, the Scriptures present to us a beautiful harmony of lofty, heavenly truth with very practical consequences in our lives. Nowhere is this more evident than in the book of Ephesians. The first half of the epistle concerns our position in Christ: seated in the heavenlies (Eph. 2:6); the last half addresses our practice: our walk on earth. In the fifth chapter alone, we are told to walk in love (v. 2), in light (v. 8), and in wisdom (v. 15). And it is in this intensely practical chapter that we are commanded, “do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit” (v. 18).

What does that mean? How do we get filled with the Spirit? What will happen to us when we’re filled?

What it doesn’t mean

Before considering what it means to be filled with the Spirit, it can be helpful to consider what it doesn’t mean. A common pitfall is to become careless with the language of Scripture and treat a variety of the Spirit’s works as being the same thing. It is not uncommon to hear filling, baptism, and anointing (and sometimes even indwelling and seal-

ing) being spoken of as if they were all names for exactly the same event. You can be sure that any understanding of the filling of the Spirit that confuses it with His other works is really a misunderstanding. Carelessness with the Word of God is not the path to truth.

Once it has been assumed that these works are all one and the same—some sort of “second blessing” that only extra spiritual Christians receive—this event is then linked with speaking in tongues or some other flamboyant display. Oddly, the pandemonium that is frequently associated with these performances is more in keeping with the half of the verse that speaks of being “drunk with wine.” Any true work of the Spirit in our lives will be characterized by the self-control that is part of the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:23). The filling of the Spirit is not a code word for speaking in tongues or for any of the other works of the Holy Spirit.

What does it mean?

This is the essential question. To find the answer, we must look to the Word. Paul says that instead of being drunk with wine, we are to be filled with the Spirit. The illustration is very simple: instead of being controlled by wine, we are to be controlled by the Spirit.

When we are saved, we need a change in behavior. Instead of walking “according to the course of this world” (Eph. 2:2) as we formerly walked, we should now “walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which [we] have been called” (Eph. 4:1). Who or what will change us? The answer is simple: the Holy Spirit. When a person gets drunk, they are influenced by alcohol and behave differently than they would normally behave. Paul says that instead of letting wine influence and change



THE FILLING OF THE SPIRIT *continued*

us, we should let the Holy Spirit influence and change us. You'll note a significant difference that was alluded to earlier. The sin of drunkenness is characterized by a lack of self-control. The filling of the Spirit is characterized by increased self-control. Instead of being slaves to the flesh, we are able to submit ourselves to God and to His Word.

Another detail is important. Some of the Spirit's works relate to our position (e.g. sealing). Others, like the filling of the Spirit, relate to our practice. Being filled with the Spirit is not a reference to a greater endowment of the Holy Spirit; it is not a matter of somehow getting more of the Spirit (we received all of the Spirit when we were saved, and He took up residence within us). Rather, it is a matter of allowing the Spirit to have more of us. If we have areas of our lives that we have shut Him out of, where we refuse to let Him in that He might convict and change us, then we are not filled with the Spirit. Again, this refers to our condition, not our position in Christ. We may have submitted many elements of our daily lives to Him so that He can use us. But Paul is urging us to submit *all* of our lives to Him; to let Him into *every* corner of our lives; to be *filled* with the Spirit.

How do we become filled?

Ephesians 5 and 6 describe to us the results of being filled with the Spirit: speaking to one another in psalms and hymns, giving thanks to the Father, submitting to one another, etc. But when we turn to the book of Colossians, we discover a parallel passage. Starting in Colossians 3:16 we find the same list, but this time they are said to be the results of "[letting] the Word of Christ dwell in you richly."

We are sometimes tempted to adopt the view that the Holy Spirit typically operates in mystical and vague ways, guiding us through our feelings. But the Bible says that *"the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it"* (Jer 17:9). Our feelings are no sure guide. That is not to say that the Holy Spirit never directs us in ways that are inexplicable to us, nor is it to deny God's constant, providential care in our lives. But it is to say that His characteristic method of dealing with us is through an infinitely far more reliable and objective instrument than our hearts or feelings: the solid and unchanging Word of God. The




Scriptures are the channel through which the Spirit primarily works in our lives.

Do we want to be filled with the Spirit? Then we need to immerse ourselves in the Word of God. We need to hunger for it, read it, meditate on it, and obey it. We need to feed on it. Without a passion for the Scriptures that translates into devotion to the Lord, we cannot be filled, for being filled with the Spirit is the parallel of letting the Word of Christ dwell in us richly.

What happens after we are filled?

As already mentioned, the verses following the command to be filled with the Spirit (Eph. 5:18) give us a description of the Spirit-filled life. We note that the passage says nothing about speaking in tongues. The Spirit-filled life is a miraculous life, but miraculous in a deeper sense than ostentatious shows of power. Being filled with the Spirit allows us to live the kind of life that pleases God; it gives victory over the flesh. Only by being filled by the Spirit can we day by day put off the old man and put on the new. Being taken up with spiritual concerns, having hearts of praise, speaking to one another in an edifying manner, a perpetually thankful spirit, and putting others before ourselves—this is the fruit that only the Spirit can produce in us. Do you recognize such a life? Have you read of one before? It is the life that the Lord Jesus modeled for us during His time on earth. In short, when we are filled (or controlled) by the Spirit, He reproduces the life of Christ in us.

There is one other result of filling that we should consider. When we examine other references in the New Testament to being filled with the Spirit, we find that in a large number of them (e.g. Lk. 1:41, 67; Ac. 2:4; 4:8, 31; 7:55; 9:17), those who were filled testified to Christ. This doesn't surprise us, does it? The Holy Spirit came to glorify Him (Jn. 16:14). So when we allow the Holy Spirit to control our lives, we, too, will exalt the Lord Jesus.

The character and the testimony of Christ—these are the consequences of being filled with the Spirit. The Spirit's filling is a glorious and heavenly truth. But the evidence of it should be seen on earth every day. 

The Sealing of the Holy Spirit

God's mark of ownership, commitment and purpose on the child of God

The author explains this important truth: a past completed act with present and future benefits.

God has revealed truth progressively through His Word and sequentially through time. God does not give a complete doctrinal statement about Himself in Genesis, but, in successive ages and to a variety of believers, He has made Himself known. In this regard, little is revealed of the person of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament. There are indicators and illustrations of the Spirit's work, but there are no detailed explanations. The Lord Jesus introduces the Spirit and the ministry of the Spirit in the upper room.

The sealing of the Spirit is never referred to in Old Testament teaching, nor is it seen in the Gospels or Acts. It is Paul, through his epistles, who gives a fuller explanation of the Spirit's work. He makes three statements about the sealing of the Holy Spirit that form our understanding of this important truth.



In 2 Corinthians 1:22, he says that it is “*God that seals us and has given us the Spirit in our hearts as a deposit.*” In Ephesians 1, and then again in chapter 4, believers are said to have been sealed. These texts put this action in the past as an event that happened at a point in time. But although it is a past activity, there are present and future implications of this sealing.

In the past, this is a completed action

This is a ministry of the Spirit that occurs at the very moment of salvation. Ephesians 1:13 ties this action of the Holy Spirit to the time of our believing. The Revised Version renders it, “*when you believed you were sealed.*” Romans 8:9 states that anyone without the Holy Spirit does not belong to Christ. The clear teaching of Scripture is that the Spirit regenerates and indwells at the moment of salvation, not before and not at a later date.

The sealing is a work of God with no corresponding response from man. There is no visible evidence for this action by God nor is there an inner feeling within the believer when this sealing takes place. The sealing by the Spirit is a fact stated in the Word of God, and it must be accepted and believed by faith.

To appreciate the impact and import of this truth, it is good to explore how the word “seal” or “sealed” is used in the Bible.

In Jeremiah 32:9-13, there is an account of a land purchase by Jeremiah. The Lord commanded this action as a sign to Israel of the fact that they would return to the land after the time of captivity. Jeremiah made the purchase and signed and sealed the deed. The seal was affixed to indicate that the price was paid and the transaction was complete. This is the seal that marks a finalized transaction.

In the Lord's discourse about bread from heaven in John 6, He says of Himself, “*God the Father has set His seal on Him.*” This declaration meant that the Father had authenticated the Son as the source of the “*food that endures to everlasting life.*” This is the seal of divine approval.

Pilate gave the Jews Roman guards for the tomb of the Lord Jesus, which was officially secured and sealed. Matthew 27:66 states,

THE SEALING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT *continued*

“So they went and made the tomb secure, sealing the stone and setting the guard.” The seal was an attempt at security in addition to the contingent of soldiers. This seal actually carried the weight of the imperial Roman government and was meant to ensure against tampering of any kind. This seal was a visible expression of security.

In the future, as seen in Revelation 7, the 144,000 witnesses out of Israel will be sealed in their foreheads. This is in contrast to the “mark of the beast” and designates that these men belong to God. This is the seal of ownership.

All of these uses of the word are applicable to the sealing of the Spirit which takes place when a person is saved. The seal indicates that the price is paid and the transaction is complete. The believer enters into the truth of our Lord’s words, “*It is finished!*” as found in John 19:30. The seal of authentication displays that one truly is a child of God and thus has divine approval. The seal of security comes with all the authority of God and the assurance that no one can pluck us out of the Father’s hand. Finally, the seal of ownership declares that the Lord knows those that are His.

In the present, this gives assurance

An appreciation and appropriation of this truth will lead the believer to the conclusion that a child of God is eternally secure. In Ephesians, the sealing is tied to the guarantee of the redemption of the body. Ephesians 4:30 says that it is possible for a believer to grieve the Holy Spirit. This happens when there is unconfessed sin in a Christian’s life. But even when there is sin, the seal is still applicable as a past completed action. The Holy Spirit has personality and grieves over sin, but the Spirit does not depart from the believer. The believer in this age could never pray as David did in Psalm 51:11, “*take not Thy Holy Spirit from me.*”

Some would argue that accepting this truth gives believers a license to sin. To the contrary, this sealing and security should be an incentive for holy living. “*The solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: The Lord knows those who*

are His. And, Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity” (2 Tim. 2:19).


When a believer embraces this truth by faith, it is then that they put on “the helmet of salvation.” This helmet gives assurance of salvation and security that allows one to stand against the fiery darts of the devil when he throws doubts as to the reality of salvation. The believer can stand on the fact of being sealed. Satan will not have an inroad into the believer’s mind and will retreat from the sword of the Spirit.



As to the future, there is certainty

As Paul writes about the sealing of the Spirit, he ties in the idea of “the earnest of the Spirit” mentioned in Ephesians 1:14 and 2 Corinthians 1:22. The word “earnest” conveys the thought of a guarantee or down payment. It is the deposit that guarantees the transaction will be complete. For believers, it is a proof that the work of redemption will be complete and that what Christ has purchased will be with Him in glory.

Believers can look ahead with complete assurance knowing that the Spirit’s sealing absolutely guarantees the redemption of the body and that our inheritance is secure. Even if a believer sins and grieves the Spirit, the seal remains as proof of a future redemption. Toplady’s hymn speaks of this great truth:

*Yes, I to the end shall endure,
As sure as the earnest is given,
More happy but not more secure,
The souls of the blessed in heaven.* 

**The Spirit’s
sealing
absolutely
guarantees...
that our
inheritance is
secure**

We Need Biblical Pastors

But what exactly do they do? Let's take another look at Ephesians 4

One lesson we have learned in traveling with Good News on the Move across the U.S. is the need for what is commonly called “follow-up.” But while that is the usual designation, what is it called in the New Testament? I believe the word would be “pastoring.”

THE OTHER GIFTS

How grateful we are for the gifts enumerated in Romans 12 and 1 Corinthians 12. These are supernatural abilities given by the Holy Spirit for the enriching and upbuilding of local assemblies. But perhaps we need a more careful look at the other gifts listed in Ephesians 4.

The Ephesian epistle is written not with the local church in view, but with something broader being described. It is often called “the universal church,” meaning that these apostles and prophets, as well as the evangelists, pastors and teachers, are given to build up the whole body. The gifts recorded here are given by the risen Christ (not by the Spirit) and the gifts are gifted men whose sphere of ministry is obviously wider than any local church. The first two were laid as a foundation for the whole church (Eph. 2:20) and the latter three (or two if the pastor-teacher is taken as one) are for the advancement of the church beyond existing local assemblies.

Clearly, the evangelists and pastors would be involved in the work of the gospel and caring for the new believers, but the emphasis in Ephesians 4 seems to be the training of the saints to do this work as well. So the obvious question is this: do we have people gifted in these areas training the people of God in evangelism and “follow-up”?

WHAT PASTORS DO

The model given for us in Acts seems to be clear. Timothy, Titus (recipients of Paul’s “Pastoral Epistles”), and others worked along with Paul in the initial evangelistic work. Although not gifted in evangelism, they were to “do the work of an evangelist” (2 Tim. 4:5) and thus have a vested interest in the futures of those who had trusted the Lord.

They then were left in the various locations where souls had been saved to establish the believers and see the for-

mation of a functioning local church. No doubt the length of time needed would vary, but their objective was to work themselves out of a job as quickly as feasible, then move on to another location to do the same work with other new believers. Since this work was more time-consuming than evangelism, Paul worked with several “pastors.”

Their work would involve instruction in practical Christian living, basic doctrines, and safeguard teaching against false ideas then current. There would be evangelistic Bible studies, discipleship classes, perhaps marriage counselling, helping to stir up gift and training in Bible study methods. There might also be training in hospitality, Christian etiquette, responsibilities on the job, caring for widows, and other needs as they became evident.

WHERE ARE BIBLICAL PASTORS TODAY?

So concerned that we not have the unbiblical version of pastors, have we neglected training those obviously gifted to be the biblical kind? Often in our minds we replace the “pastors” of Ephesians 4 with assembly elders. But that is not the idea at all. Elders should be “pastors” of course, but the Ephesians 4 pastors are men whose gift is to be utilized in extending the work of God beyond existing assemblies. Where are the biblical pastors today who can train the people of God to shepherd new believers?

A BOLD EXPERIMENT

When we look at successful missionary efforts around the world, we see this biblical model at work. Take Angola. Fred Lane called the young men of Ireland to help him reach the unevangelized tribes. Some, like T.E. Wilson, responded. They would work with the veteran for a time and then move a few days’ walk into the interior and establish another base camp. Then men like David Long came to work with T.E. Wilson and would then move further into the field. The saved nationals handled much of the gospel work, and these missionaries did mostly pastoral work. Soon hundreds of assemblies covered the country. Why can’t we see the same thing happen in North America?

GNOM ON THE MOVE AGAIN

It seems the Lord is providing another team of exercised young men for GNOM 07-08. We plan, Lord willing, to begin with orientation in mid-September at Story Book Lodge in northern Minnesota. We appreciate the continuing prayers of the saints.

The past year was one of great encouragement, although we believe the ongoing care of those contacted by the team could be improved. This year we hope to help the visited assemblies with this by beginning the follow-up the same week as the initial outreach, so that by the end of our week's visit a second contact will have been made with those expressing interest, and hopefully Bible studies, etc., will have been arranged so local believers will be able to carry on from there.

A TEAM IN CANADA?

Some have suggested some cross-border visits



Think GNOM is a new idea? Here is a photo of Herman Luhm's father (custom graphics, vehicle with sleeping quarters, literature for mass distribution) heading from San Diego to Mormon country with the Good News.

of the Good News team into Canada, but transporting 10 "unemployed" young men across the border under present conditions does not seem advisable. We are, however, discussing the possibility of an all-Canada team, using a somewhat different approach (and a different schedule necessitated by the Canadian winter). We would appreciate your prayers regarding this possibility. *Watch for an update next month.*

IN JOURNEYS OFT

CITIES and TOWNS VISITED by GNOM 1 and GNOM 2



with possible LOCATIONS for the first half of GNOM 3 (DV)

STANDING IN THE NEED OF PRAYER: Other sites have yet to be finalized, but we seek the Lord to guide us so we find His open doors and come in "the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ."

The Teaching Ministry of the Holy Spirit

The same One who inspired the Book is now our personal Tutor. How amazing is that?

The understanding of spiritual truth does not lie exclusively in the realm of intellect, grammar, and history, but through the teaching of the Spirit.



Just before the Lord Jesus went to the cross, and knowing that He was soon to depart to be with the Father, He gathered His disciples around Him and assured them that His departure would not leave them without the comfort, counsel, and teaching that they had enjoyed from Him. He said, “I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever” (Jn. 14:16). The word “another” in this verse means another of the same kind. The Lord was promising that the Holy Spirit would completely fill the role that He had occupied while with them. How this must have comforted their hearts, and how this comforts and

encourages us in our day, to know that the Holy Spirit is to us all that the Lord promised to the disciples of the past. Let us consider His blessed ministry as Teacher, and the means that He uses to impart the truth.

The teaching ministry of the Spirit

To complete the canon of Scripture The Lord, speaking to His disciples, promised, “But the Comforter, [which is] the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you” (Jn. 14:26). We learn from this that the

coming of the Spirit was critical to the completion of the canon of Scripture. Considering that the gospel records were written long after the Lord had gone back to heaven, it would have been impossible in a non-technological age to be able to report verbatim the many discourses and sayings of the Lord. But in a unique way, unknown in our times, the Spirit brought all things to their remembrance that

he had said to them. This is part of what the apostle Paul meant when he said, “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God...” (2 Tim. 3:16).

To reveal Christ The Lord Jesus said, “but when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, [even] the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, He shall testify of Me” (Jn. 15:26). Yes, the primary role of the Spirit in this age is not to draw attention to Himself but to testify of Christ. The charismatic movement has mistakenly given all prominence to the Spirit, almost to the exclusion of Christ, which is contrary to His mandate in coming into the world.

To lead us into all truth The Lord Jesus then said to the disciples, “Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth” (Jn. 16:13). Here we learn that the Holy Spirit is the one who takes the inspired Word of God and reveals its truth to us. In this respect, the believer is advantaged beyond the greatest literary geniuses of the world because they cannot decipher spiritual things. The apostle Paul, himself an academic of no mean stature, wrote to the Corinthians, “But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know [them], because they are spiritually discerned” (1 Cor. 2:14). The understanding of spiritual truth does not lie exclusively in the realm of intellect, grammar, and history, but through the teaching of the Spirit. There is a spiritual dimension to spiritual teaching that is not a part of the learning process in the secular world. The author recognizes his eternal debt to men of God, knowledgeable in the Word, who never had the benefit of a higher education, yet they were in no way disadvan-

THE TEACHING MINISTRY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT *continued*

taged in their ability to absorb, understand, or teach the truth by the Spirit.


The means by which the Spirit imparts truth

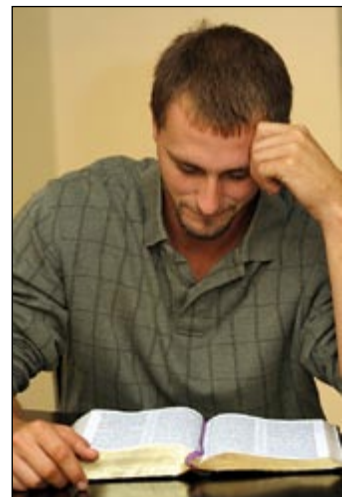
Intuitively The apostle John, speaking of the Spirit, wrote, *“But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things ... but the anointing which ye have received of Him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you”* (1 Jn. 2:20, 27). Now the apostle is not saying that we are independent agents who do not need to be taught by anyone. Indeed, through the Spirit, the Lord has given gifts to men for the edification of the body of Christ. What the apostle is teaching is that there are certain things which those indwelt by the Spirit know intuitively. When a child is born into the natural realm, it does not need lessons on feeding or breathing, or how to recognize pain or hunger. All of these instincts are present intuitively. So also it is in the spiritual realm. All who are born of God have that inherent, protective intuition to discern between truth and error which flows from the Spirit of God.

Personally Here we refer to the understanding of spiritual things through personal study and application. The key here is to understand that before the Holy Spirit can guide and direct into the truth, certain spiritual conditions must be present. John recorded in his gospel, *“If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine”* (Jn. 7:17). Similarly, when he was exiled on Patmos, he wrote, *“I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s Day”* (Rev. 1:10), and it was in this condition that he was able to receive the wondrous Revelation of Jesus Christ. This means that the teaching of the Spirit is only available in lives to the extent that He is not quenched or grieved, and where one is walking in constant fellowship with the Spirit. Also, we must recognize that to be taught by the Spirit places responsibility on us to make ourselves available to Him. The teaching of the Spirit has been mistakenly likened to some mystical means whereby, without any effort on our part, we will become familiar with spiritual truth. Those who have been taught by the Spirit

know differently. The cost in terms of career, time, talent, and relationships is high, but the rewards are sweet.

Collectively In Revelation 2 and 3, each letter to the seven churches closes with the exhortation, *“He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the Churches.”* Note that the imparting of the truth in these chapters was from the Lord to John and then, in turn, to “the angel of the church,” who was then responsible to convey the message to the specified local church. Much debate has centered around who the angel of the Church is. Might we suggest that this refers to those who are the Lord’s messengers to the local church. When the Lord ascended on high, He gave gifts to men: apostle, prophets, pastors, and teachers. The apostles and prophets were temporary and have now disappeared, but the pastors and teachers remain. We are told the reason for these gifts is, *“for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ”* (Eph. 4:12-13). So we are dependent upon those whom the Lord has gifted among us if we are to hear what the Spirit saith to the churches. May the Lord enable us to place a true value on the benefits and blessings that we have all enjoyed through those whom the Lord has raised up among us as the Lord’s messengers.

In closing, may the Lord give us an increasing awareness of the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit in this present age. May we live our lives such that we are found in the Spirit and therefore capable of receiving spiritual truth. May we also make ourselves available to Him in a sacrificial way in order that He might teach us. Finally, may we ever cherish those whom the Lord has placed among us as His messengers to the churches, who are uniquely gifted to teach by the Holy Spirit. 



The Spirit moved holy men to write the Word. He now wants to teach holy men to understand it so they may instruct the people of God.

Led by the Spirit

What is your heart's desire?

The Holy Spirit's leading... speaks of the heart's desire for spiritual things that all true Christians experience, even when conflicting desires may result in our going astray.



Jim went to the medicine cabinet to take some cough medicine. Unfortunately, the moisture in the bathroom had caused the labels of two similarly shaped bottles to peel off. One contained the desired medication, the other some stomach medicine. Jim thought he knew which was which and stuck the labels back on accordingly. He was wrong. The result was not fatal, but it kept him from getting the benefit he really needed.

There is a great deal of confusion as to the various ministries of the Holy Spirit, and what each is designed to do for those who believe in Christ. Some have to be “taken” to be enjoyed. (This is true of the fullness of the Holy Spirit which cannot be known by those who neglect the Word of God. A comparison of the results

of letting the “*word of Christ dwell in you richly*” (Col. 3:16-17) with that of being continually “*filled with the Spirit*” (Eph. 5:19-20) shows this to be the case.) Other benefits of the Spirit’s indwelling, however, come immediately into effect when we are born again. Being led by the Spirit is a blessing given to all of God’s sons. At least that is what Romans 8:14 states. “*For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.*” And it is not guidance to be sought when a Christian arrives at

some particular crossroads in his life, but is the natural outflow of the Spirit’s indwelling all the time in the life of a normal Christian. For example, we ought to love our fellow Christians but are “taught” to do this the moment we are born again, and, in fact, it is the most natural thing for us to do because we are now led of the Spirit instead of the flesh (1 Jn. 4:11; compare with 3:14 and 1 Thes. 4:9).

Led or guided?

In this article we are focusing on being led of the Spirit, but to understand what this undeserved grace to us involves, it may help to contrast it with the divine guidance with which it is often confused. We seek guidance for our movements but being led has more to do with our motivation. Guidance has to do with what we do or where we go, while the Holy Spirit’s leading speaks of why we want to do these things. The first refers to the direction we may need from time to time, while the latter speaks of the heart’s desire for spiritual things that all true Christians experience, even when conflicting desires may result in our going astray. (Read carefully Gal. 5:17-18.)

An Old Testament illustration may help us to understand the difference between being guided and being led. Balaam, the false prophet, was not in sympathy with what he was constrained to preach. God guided him to say the right words as he described Israel’s glorious future, but the false prophet had no desire to see it come to pass. He was not led of the Spirit but was motivated by greed for money. See Numbers 22-24 and 2 Peter 2:15. Now let us apply to our experience what we have learned from these scriptures.

A wrong application

One of the commonly accepted ideas among many of us who receive this magazine has to do with the breaking of bread. This is a meeting in which any brother may take part audibly and the emphasis is worship. But some brethren remain silent week after week. Such a brother, asked why he voices praise so rarely, may reply, “I have learned to wait for the leading of the Holy Spirit.” That sounds pious enough but it is a serious

ARE YOU LED OF THE SPIRIT? *continued*

“Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.”
2 Cor. 3:17



misunderstanding of the way the Comforter acts in the experience of God's children when they are gathered together. If this brother is asked how he decides when the Holy Spirit is leading him, he will seldom be able to give a clear answer. He may say that it happens "when a thought is on my mind, and some other brother gives out a hymn or reads a passage which fits in with it." But however desirable harmony in worship may be, the truth is that this brother is waiting for guidance from a source external to himself. One might wonder how the breaking of bread meeting could even get started, because the first one to take part has no such crutch to lean on!

We should note that in the one passage in which we are permitted to listen in on a gathering of Christians (1 Cor. 14:1-40) there is no mention of the necessity for them to "wait for the leading of the Spirit." The absence of such instruction is all the more striking when we remember that the Corinthians' conduct generally left a lot to be desired. Instead, the meeting was to be improved by each man weighing carefully wheth-

er his contribution would edify the others. Indistinct or unknown language was to be avoided; the mind of the speaker was to be engaged in deciding whether to participate or not. They were even told to consider how what they had to offer would affect someone who was uninstructed in the things of God. In short, they were not to act like children but to think maturely. Not a word here about the need to "wait on the leading of the Spirit"! "*For God has not given us the spirit of fear [that we will miss His guidance], but of power and love and sound judgment*" (2 Tim. 1:7).

The leading of the Spirit is intended to affect not so much what we do but the way we do it. Whether we are with the church, in the home, at the farm, or driving to the office, we may be led of (motivated by) the Spirit in every situation that is God's will. We will not simply be responding to rules but will be allowing the nature He has given us to express itself. This is possible because the Holy Spirit dwells within. We have become partakers of the divine nature (2 Pet. 1:4). What a glorious privilege! What holy liberty! 📌

WHAT ELSE DOES HE DO? This issue of Uplook contains articles on several ministries of the Holy Spirit in the lives of believers. Some of His other ministries include:

Regeneration (being born again with a new nature): "*Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Spirit.*" (Titus 3:5)

Comfort in trials: "*Then had the churches rest throughout all Judaea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, were multiplied.*" (Ac. 9:31)

Intercession in difficulties: "*And in the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words.*" (Rom. 8:26)

Spiritual gifts for service: "*Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit. ... But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually just as He wills.*" (1 Cor. 12:4, 7)

Combating the flesh: "*For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another*" (Gal. 5:17)

Fellowship in the local church: "*If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies...*" (Php. 2:1)

Unity among believers: "*Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.*" (Eph. 4:3)

Reproducing the character of Christ: "*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance*" (Gal. 5:22f)

Some through the Fire

Remember your “brethren in bonds” as with them in their trouble

It is a situation fraught with irony. On the one hand, the *Christian Post* reports that Christians worldwide are becoming too busy for God, according to the results of a newly released five-year study when 20,000 Christians from 139 countries were sampled for “The Obstacles to Growth” survey. Its results indicate that 6 out of 10 Christians worldwide agreed that “the busyness of life gets in the way of developing my relationship with God.”

At the same time, news reports from many countries record rising social pressure, violence, and even martyrdom for Christians in many places. It seems the devil’s tactics are similar to the foes that the shepherd David faced: the lion that tears his victim to pieces and the bear that hugs his prey to death. How thankful we should be for our Shepherd who gave His life for the sheep. Let’s diligently pray for the suffering saints.



USING THE INTERNET IN THE MUSLIM WORLD

A recent issue of the *Lausanne World Pulse* online magazine recounts ways that the internet is bringing the gospel to the Muslim world. Internet use in Muslim countries is skyrocketing, and with it comes increased opportunities for evangelism. The article states:

“...Some ministries have hundreds of people gathered online for Bible studies. Mobile phones are used to share Bible verses...Although text and picture messages via mobile phones can be interrupted and blocked, they are likely to be less censored because of the overwhelming number of users.”

EGYPTIAN SECURITY POLICE TORTURE CHRISTIAN WIFE

Compass Direct News reports that security police in Alexandria, Egypt have repeatedly tortured a young woman convert to Christianity in custody since July 16.

“Fanatic Islamist relatives of Eman Muhammad el-Sayed, 26, attacked her two days ago while she and

her husband were strolling through a local fair in Alexandria. Although police intervened in the street-side fracas, they promptly arrested the victim herself, allegedly to protect her from her Muslim family...since then,

El-Sayed, 26, has been transferred to security police headquarters in Alexandria, where inside sources confirmed that she has been subjected to hours of interrogation and severe physical torture...Since their marriage four years earlier, the couple had managed to avoid any contact with her family, members of the fanatic El-Salafiyeen, Sunni extremists.”

“This is not legal treatment, but is happening all the time,” said Rasha Noor, an Egyptian convert living

abroad who tracks overt persecution against Christians in her homeland. “Christians from Muslim background can’t change their identities, so they are always pushed by the authorities to turn back to Islam—or else.”

PERSECUTION IN BANGLADESH

Islamic radicals in Durbachari village in the Nilphamari district of Bangladesh have delivered more beatings and death threats to Christians after 41 Muslim converts were baptized in a river on June 12. On June 27, they gave the Christians a 24-hour deadline to leave the village or face further beatings and the destruction of their homes. Soon after the baptism, villagers had banned the believers from using the village well.

On July 15, the *Inkelab*, a Bengali newspaper, published an article calling for a ban on the activity of Christians and churches in Bangladesh. The article quoted the leaders of three prominent Islamic groups who accused Christians of converting “the poor and helpless people of Nilphamari.” These claims completely ignored statements from the Christians of Durbachari that they had chosen to convert from Islam of their own free will and not for any material or other inducement.

CHILDREN ARRESTED WITH OTHERS IN ERITREA

Mission Network News reports that twenty Christians, including some young children, were arrested by Eritrean security forces 17 days ago. At time of writing, the whereabouts of those arrested remain unknown.

Voice of the Martyrs' Todd Nettleton commented, "It's not uncommon in the sense that a church was raided, but it is uncommon that they took these children into custody as well. What danger, what threat could these Christian children be to the Eritrean government or to the nation?"

This year marks five years since the government closed all churches in Eritrea. Since then, 2,000 believers have been taken into custody. These numbers mean that approximately one in ten Eritrean evangelicals are presently being detained. Persecution is intensifying, with deaths now being reported along with detainment.

EVANGELIST POISONED IN ETHIOPIA

Voice of the Martyrs-Canada reports that an evangelist is being treated in a hospital after being poisoned. Yosuf Hajji was being imprisoned 125 miles (200 km) south of Addis Ababa, Ethiopia's capitol, in the town of Bulbula. He became extremely sick after eating food that local Christians suggest was poisoned by Muslim authorities. It's believed that the authorities col-

laborated with local Muslims to poison Hajji.

This attack comes just about a month after two Christians were killed by a Muslim bombing. The Christians were meeting in a tent to mourn the loss of Christians killed in early April.



In this photo a group of South Korean Christians pose for a memorial photo before leaving for Afghanistan.

AP Photo/Sammul Church via Yonhap



KOREAN HOSTAGES IN AFGHANISTAN

As Uplook goes to press, negotiations continue in the case of the 23 South Korean hostages held by the Taliban. Reports indicate two of the Christians have been executed. However, locals in the Ghazni Province held a demonstration for the hostages' release, knowing they are Christians. This is a surprising act, considering the fear that surrounds the Taliban. The hostages were taken while on a short term mission trip. The Afghan government promised last March that they would make no more hostage deals.

Can we be counted with those who are, "granted on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake"? (Php. 1:29)

MEANWHILE BACK AT HOME

A Florida judge has dismissed all counts against Ernest Simpson and Anthony Mirto, two members of Gideons International who were arrested while handing out Bibles on a public sidewalk outside a school in Key Largo.

The initial counts were dismissed at the request of the Alliance Defence Fund, but then authorities filed a second round of counts, under a different law that prohibits anyone from being within 500 feet of any school property, including on public sidewalks and streets, without having either "legitimate business" or permission.

Mirto and Simpson were charged with trespassing and jailed after the school principal called police. "There was no call for Officer [John] Perez's angry demeanor, his inappropriate handling of the situation, his abusive treatment of the Gideons, his stopping and arresting them while they were in the process of leaving, his unnecessary towing of the car (parked where many other cars were parked), his handcuffing the men behind their backs, his leaving them cramped in a hot car for nearly an hour...nor his mocking the Gideons' religious beliefs stating 'now you can pray to Jesus all the way to jail,'" the ADF said.

Every seven days the Gideons distribute more than 1 million copies of the Word of God, free of charge, the group says.

Baptism in the Holy Spirit

It's a popular topic, but what does it really mean?

"For in one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free" (1 Cor. 12:13)

Our starting point in the consideration of the baptism in the Spirit must be the references and terminology of Scripture. For instance, the subject of filling with the Spirit is quite distinct and ought to be dealt with separately; it is not the subject of this article.

We notice that the Lord Jesus referred to the fact that this baptism was promised. In Acts chapter 2, Peter said that the prophecy of Joel provided the explanation of what happened on the Day of Pentecost, the occasion of his address about the baptism in the Spirit. Our consideration of the subject, then, starts with Joel, with whose prophecy the promise originates.

The prophecy of Joel

Peter did not say that his audience was seeing the fulfillment of Joel's prophecy, for that relates specifically to Israel. What Joel prophesied was a wave of divine blessing described as a "pouring out" of His Spirit. Translators differ as to whether the word "spirit" should be given an initial capital letter in Joel. Peter clearly would be in favor of capitalizing the

word and reading it as a reference to the Holy Spirit. In any event, what Peter was explaining is seen in the New Testament as a new experience of divine blessing. The Spirit would come and remain with, and in, God's people.

New Testament references to this event begin with the public ministry of John the Baptist. John spoke of his relatively simple task of baptizing in water those people who

repented (Jn. 1:33). By contrast, he foretold that the Lord Jesus would baptize them in the Holy Spirit, an infinitely more significant task. So what was prophesied by Joel for Israel was now being seen as relevant for believers in the Lord Jesus. The relationship between pouring out the Spirit and baptizing in the Spirit is established by the language used in Acts.

After His resurrection, the Lord Jesus took up the promise already communicated by John the Baptist and called on His disciples to wait in Jerusalem for "the promise of the Father." He described this to them in these words: "For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit" (Ac. 1:5, NIV). He further explained that this would empower them for their task of witnessing throughout the world.

Soon after that promise by the Lord Jesus, on the Day of Pentecost, Peter had to explain extraordinary events. The people present for a Jewish festival were Jews and proselytes. A sound was heard as if a strong wind were blowing and tongues like flames of fire were seen. No literal wind blew, nor were there literal flames of fire. What was seen was tongue-like to indicate that they would witness by word of mouth to a risen Saviour.

Perhaps more startling events were the addresses given by men in languages which were foreign to the speakers. These were real languages, for the hearers, who came from many language groups, heard the addresses in their own languages. What was spoken was clearly understood: "We hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!" (Ac. 2:11).

Peter informed them that all this was proof that the Lord Jesus was not only raised from the dead but also glorified and exalted to



THE BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT *continued*

the right hand of God. Now, said Peter, “*He has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear*” (Ac. 2:33). Notice his adoption of Joel’s term “poured out.” Notice also the emphasis on what is seen and heard.

Beyond Jerusalem

The people involved so far were all Jewish. But Acts chapter 8 leads on to a new scene. In obedience to the Lord’s commission, the preachers had spread out beyond Jerusalem and Judaea. Now, in Samaria, outside orthodox Judaism, the gospel was being preached and people were responding in faith. The question was whether Samaritan believers could be accepted on level terms with Jewish believers. Peter and John were sent to Samaria. They prayed that the converts might receive the Holy Spirit and laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit. Thus the Samaritan converts were clearly seen as being accepted by the apostles. People were able to see that they had indeed received the Holy Spirit, for Simon saw it and longed for the power which he saw at work. We remember that in chapter 2 the Jewish believers had visible and audible evidence of the Spirit’s coming. Notice the words used in the narrative here—receive, was fallen upon, was given, the gift of God—and compare these with earlier references to the promised baptism in the Spirit.

But the gospel was to be preached beyond even Samaria; it was to be preached “*to the uttermost part of the earth.*” Before the next episode we are to consider, a man was converted who was to be the apostle to the Gentiles, Saul of Tarsus. In chapter 10, a Gentile Roman centurion named Cornelius was addressed by a preacher sent to him by God. Why was the preacher Peter, the apostle to the circumcision, instead of Paul? Because the question which would be asked about Gentile converts would be whether they were to be accepted on equal terms with Jewish believers. So Peter, who had laid his hands on Samaritans in chapter 8, was sent to preach to Gentiles in chapter 10. While Peter was still

preaching, the Holy Spirit fell on the hearers when they believed. How did Peter know this had happened? Because of what could be heard—they spoke with a language or languages other than their own. What they said was intelligible, for they were heard to magnify God. Presumably, there were others present who understood the language or languages used. We notice the words used in this account: fell on, the gift, received.

The significance of this baptism

Individuals were saved on other occasions in Acts, but in no case do we read of such an experience of the Spirit’s coming upon an individual in this visible or audible way. What we have in chapters 2, 8, and 10 are homogeneous groups: first Jews, then Samaritans, then Gentiles. Each group had an identical experience of receiving the gift of the Spirit. The apostolic approval is expressed on the experience of the second and third group. The three incidents show all being “*in one Spirit baptized into one body,*” to adopt the language of 1 Corinthians chapter 12 verse 13. The baptism in the Spirit was the event by which a new corporate identity, the church, was established, in which there is no Jew or Gentile.

The coming of the Holy Spirit as set forth in Acts marked a new development. In John 7:39, it was said of that point in time that “*the Spirit was not yet given; because Jesus was not yet glorified*” (RV). In Acts chapter 2, Peter explained that what the people were seeing and hearing at Pentecost was evidence that Jesus was now glorified—not just risen, but also glorified.

In John chapter 14:16-17, the Lord Jesus had promised His disciples another Comforter, the Holy Spirit. The Lord Jesus would be leaving them, but the Spirit would continue with them. Moreover, the Spirit would not only be constantly *with* them (and us), but He would be *in* them. This was to be true in personal experience and also in the corporate experience of His people. This is our glorious portion now until the Lord Jesus comes back for us. 🕊



What the people were seeing and hearing at Pentecost was evidence that Jesus was now glorified.

Sanctification by the Spirit

He is, after all, the **Holy Spirit**.

“Many of God’s children long for a better life, but do not realize the need of giving God time, day by day, in their inner chamber by the Spirit to renew and sanctify their lives.”
Andrew Murray



In the Old Testament, the tabernacle and the priests who served in it were sanctified to the Lord. Given the detail of the instructions regarding its structure and their service, one might be excused for imagining that these details somehow led to the sanctification of the tabernacle, or of the priests who served in it. But it was not its lavishness nor its splendor that set apart the tabernacle. What consecrated the tent of meeting was the very presence and glory of God (Ex. 29:42-46).

When the more permanent structure of the temple was built, it, too, was beautiful beyond compare. And when the Lord appeared to Solomon upon its completion, He proclaimed that the temple was sanctified. But once again, it was not sanctified due to its own outer glory, nor by the service within. God told Solomon, *“I have chosen and sanctified this house that My Name may be there for ever: and Mine eyes and Mine heart shall be there perpetually”* (2 Chron. 7:16). God’s presence was what sanctified the temple.

When we arrive in the New Testament, we see a similar principle in the lives of believers. Although the believer is holy, it is not through his or her skill, personality, beauty, or charisma that they are sanctified or set apart to God. It is, once again, the very presence of God with the believer by which he is sanctified—the indwelling Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 3:16-17).

The principle of sanctification

The Scriptures have much to say about sanctification. Our English words for “consecration,” “holy,” “sacred,” and “set apart” are often derived from the same word for sanctifi-

cation. God wants His people to be different, to be set apart for His glory. This was true for Israel: *“lo, the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations”* (Num. 23:9). As John Bramhall has put it, “God’s protection for Israel depended solely on their unlikeness and separation from the nations around them; never upon their federation with them. This same principle is to govern us today as His people.”¹ As Israel was to be set apart, so, too, Christians ought to be sanctified, both positionally and practically. And He has provided many resources by which we are sanctified. For example, the Scriptures speak of sanctification by the truth (Jn. 17:17), by faith (Ac. 26:18), by the blood of the covenant (Heb. 10:29), and the Word of God and prayer (1 Tim. 4:5). There are many enriching truths that can be gleaned from these methods of sanctification that are worthy of continued study. Clearly, sanctification is a glorious and complex process. But with some effort and diligence, we can understand much of what God would wish to teach us about this subject in His Word.

Universality

There are a few references that discuss the sanctification of the believer by the Spirit of God specifically. In Romans 15:16, Paul talks about Gentiles being sanctified by the Holy Spirit. This was, no doubt, music to the Romans’ ears! This would represent a shift for the nation of Israel, who, up to that point, was sanctified from the nations (Ezek. 37:28; 38:16; 39:27). Now, the Spirit of God would also sanctify people from these same nations, with no distinction between Jew and Gentile (Rom. 10:12), provided they responded to the message of salvation. The Gentiles, once aliens

SANCTIFICATION BY THE SPIRIT *continued*



and foreigners to God's grace, were brought nigh by the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit. Praise the Lord that the floodgates of His grace were opened, so that Gentiles could enjoy sanctification by the Spirit as well!

Purity

In 1 Corinthians 6:9-11, we're given another reason to rejoice in the sanctifying work of the Spirit of God. For any who would boast in their own righteousness, we are reminded of our wretched state before we knew the grace of God. The list of attributes that precluded the unbeliever from inheriting the kingdom of God included the most abominable sins (e.g. idolatry and adultery) as well as (in our feeble minds) the most trivial (e.g. covetousness). Notwithstanding its type or magnitude, our sin separated us from God and any inheritance in His kingdom. But thanks be to God for the work of the Lord Jesus and the Spirit of God. We have been washed, sanctified, and justified through it (v. 11). The sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit in salvation gives us a position acceptable in Christ Jesus, now fit for the inheritance. However, it also urges us to be set apart from our former way of life. We are to be holy and undefiled by sin. The draw of sin still entices the old man. Were it not for the sanctification of the Spirit, we might very well fall into the same sins that we were characterized by before we met the Lord Jesus as Saviour.


Deliverance

We are also encouraged that God's sanctifying work through the Spirit is not partial. It is complete and will carry us through to the end. 2 Thessalonians 2 talks about the man of sin (v. 8) and end time events. This is the context for verse 13 which begins with the transition word "but." The man of sin will deceive the perishing in that time. Those who will suffer at his hand do so "*because they received not the love of truth, that they might be saved*" (v. 10). Verse 13 paints the opposite picture for those sanctified by Holy Spirit: "*But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.*" Salvation and truth will be the difference between those who perish and those who are saved from the wiles of the man of sin. The enabling catalyst will be sanctification by the Spirit.

Closeness

In 2 Thessalonians 2:13, we also read that not only will those sanctified by the Spirit be delivered, they will also enjoy a closeness to God. The phrase is added by divine instruction that these are they that are "beloved of God." Its inclusion must add to our appreciation that the sanctifying work of the Spirit of God produces a closeness to God; it produces believers who have a desire for God, believers who are not easily deceived by those who would attempt to destroy, Christians who believe in and are built on the truth (v. 13), those who stand firm and hold to the teachings of the Word of God (v. 15). These attributes are direct results of those who have been sanctified by the Spirit of God and enjoy a close relationship with Him.

Obedience

In speaking to believers scattered throughout the world, 1 Peter 1:2 states that these believers had been chosen "*through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Christ.*" They were chosen for a purpose—obedience to Christ. That obedience began with the sprinkling of the blood of Christ and the salvation that comes to each believer through His shed blood. Peter picks up the subject of the value of the blood of Christ again in verse 19 where we are told that our redemption is through the precious blood of Christ. What a position we have in Him: incorruptible! But it would be nearsighted to suggest that sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience ended at salvation. Day-by-day obedience to Christ is a process that is abetted by the sanctification of the Spirit. One of the Spirit's primary roles is to reveal Christ to the believer (Jn. 14:15-26). As we see Him more clearly, our response ought to be obedience. Our sanctification through the Spirit is a continual process of ever-increasing love and submission to the Saviour. Much of the rest of 1 Peter bears this out with its instruction on godly living. We are assured by Scripture that God will complete this work in us to the utmost. "*And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He is faithful who will do it*" (1 Thes. 5:23-24). 

1 John W. Bramhall, *I am My Beloved's* (Grand Rapids, MI: Gospel Folio Press, 1994), p. 19.

The Book of Esther

God at work from behind the curtain.

The book of Esther is the most secular of all the writings of the Old Testament. Those who are interested in overt teaching about the great theological subjects of the Scriptures such as deity, prophecy, eschatology, or ecclesiology will search its pages in vain for any help. Esther is never quoted in the New Testament or even alluded to and the name of God does not occur in the book. Even prayer is not mentioned when there are times we surely would expect to see it. But, although the book's riches are hidden, they will yield themselves to those who will make the effort to search for them.

The events in the book cover a period of approximately five years. As Ezra and Nehemiah deal with the captives that returned from exile, Esther deals with those who chose to remain among the heathen empire of Medo-Persia. The central character is a young woman, Esther, who married a divorced unbeliever, King Ahasuerus (an unequal yoke), and kept her true identity as a Jew secret upon the advice of her guardian, Mordecai. She won the King's affection by outward beauty. Hardly a book to teach Christian values! Yet despite these things, God worked on behalf of these people and preserved them from a hostile adversary, Haman illustrates the conniving of Satan with his vicious hatred of the Jews (see Revelation 12) and desire to destroy them.

The author is unknown, but certainly he had access to the archives of the public records in Persia (see 2:23; 6:1; 9:32 and 10:2). It has been suggested that perhaps one of the King's chamberlains was responsible.

Outline

The sections can be divided up by noting the prominent characters:

- The king and his wives (chapters 1-2)
- The exaltation of Haman and his decree to destroy the Jews (chapters 3-5)
- Mordecai honored (chapter 6)
- Esther delivers her people (chapters 7-8)
- The Jews' victory and subsequent celebrations (chapters 9-10)

"And I will surely hide My face in that day for all the evils which they shall have wrought, in that they are turned unto other gods." Deut. 31:18



Themes

The faithfulness of God The overall theme and, therefore, value to the church today is the covenant faithfulness of God. The covenant in question is the Abrahamic Covenant. God honored that covenant, even though the people were quite far from Him spiritually at this time. Of course the reason He did is that the Abrahamic Covenant is an unconditional covenant. *"I will bless them that bless thee [Israel], and curse him that curseth thee"* (Gen. 12:3).

The work of God Although the name of God is not mentioned, His unseen hand is at work in the book:

- in placing Esther in a position of influence (election for service)
- in delaying the destruction of the Jews for almost a year, thus giving time for the deliverance to occur
- in keeping the king awake in order to reward Mordecai
- in promoting a despised Jew to the position of prime minister

THE BOOK OF ESTHER *continued*

Ups and downs The book also contains some amazing ups and downs—people rising to great heights and then falling to great lows. It is a roller coaster ride.

- Ahasuerus – exalted and humiliated at the banquet by the refusal of Vashti to obey his commands
- Vashti – from a private banquet of her own to divorce and shame
- Mordecai – elated at the promotion of Esther to be queen and then humiliated and crying in the street at Haman’s decree
- Haman – exalted to lofty heights by the king and then made to escort the man he detested most, announcing to all that this was the man whom the king delighted to honor
- Haman – making a lofty scaffold to hang his enemy and then hanging on it himself
- The enemies of the Jews – expected to get both the lives and the spoil of their enemies but were humiliated, losing 75,000 of their number in the battles with the Jews

God’s care for Israel For Mordecai, Esther, and the Jews, it ends on a high note. In a coming day, Israel, currently despised by the nations, will be exalted in the coming Kingdom of Messiah.

Like the book of Exodus, the enemy’s plans to wipe out the people of God failed miserably. Pharaoh tried to drown the Israelites and ended up being drowned in the Red Sea. Haman tried to hang Mordecai and ended up hanging on the gallows himself. Both enemies reaped what they sowed. In each case, deliverance was celebrated with a feast, which Israel keeps to this day (Passover and Purim).

Other themes

The Book also has one other contrast: feasting and fasting. We see several banquets and great extravagance and then we see a time of serious, concerted fasting.

Esther is a valuable book for the church today. In it we see God sovereignly working out His purposes, and we will in this world, even when God Himself is unseen. Sometimes we are not

fully conscious of this, but He is still on the throne and in control.

Helpful commentaries

- *The Book of Esther* by William Kelly, published by Bible Truth Publishers. A brief and helpful overview of the themes of the book.
- *Esther, Triumph of God’s Sovereignty*, John C. Whitcomb, published by Moody Press. Helpful in background information and historical data.
- *Esther* by Albert McShane, published by John Ritchie. Short with very thought-provoking material.
- *Esther* in the Bible Exposition Commentary by Warren W. Wiersbe, published by Cook Publishing. The typically high standard of work from Wiersbe. [🔗](#)

Esther is a valuable book for the church today. In it we see God sovereignly working out His purposes...



Engraving by Gustave Doré

Errata

In the May-June issue of *Uplook*, in the article titled, “The Preaching of the Church”, all Bible references in the subtitles were mistakenly changed to show as being from the book of Acts. These all should have been from 1 Thessalonians. Our apologies for any confusion.

The Guidance of the Holy Spirit

Direction and light for the greatest journey

The author gives practical suggestions for learning to walk with the Spirit all the way home.

Christian tours are quite common in our day, and perhaps the countries most visited are Middle Eastern countries. As you listen to stories from those who were part of these tours, you find that one person is referred to often: the tour guide. The tour guide is the one you follow. You depend on him to lead you and explain to you things that you would otherwise not know or see. Imagine what that tour would be like without a guide! Think of the things you would miss because there was no one there to point them out to you. Think of the things you would see and hear but not understand because you had no one to explain what they meant.

A divine Guide

Every true believer in the Lord Jesus Christ is also on a journey. The Lord Jesus said, *“They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world”* (Jn. 17:16). Therefore, we are pilgrims and strangers traveling home to glory. We travel through enemy territory, and we are engaged in spiritual warfare on unfamiliar pathways. Our new life in Christ is a spiritual life (1 Pet. 1:23). We are spiritual beings and we enjoy a spiritual relationship with our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 5:17). While on tour, we need a Guide, Someone who knows the way. We need Someone to walk with us and talk with us; Someone whose attention is centered on us; Someone who is committed to guide and teach us. The Lord Jesus said, *“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” (Jn. 14:26). The Father and Son have provided such a Guide: a personal Guide; One who was promised to be in us and with us forever; One who knows the way; One to lead us safely home. He is the Holy Spirit. What a wonderful provision!

An advantage

Jesus told His disciples, *“It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come; but if I depart, I will send Him to you”* (Jn. 16:7). They couldn’t have it both ways. They couldn’t have Him in the flesh and enjoy the indwelling of the Spirit, too. The departure of the Lord Jesus (bodily) and arrival of the Spirit (spiritually) meant that the Spirit’s indwelling presence would empower them, give them courage, teach them, and make Christ more real to them than ever before.

Guidance into truth

Jesus went on to say, *“When He the Spirit of truth is come, He will guide you into all truth”* (Jn. 16:13). Not just some truth or some things that are true, but “all truth.” He continued with, *“He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come.”*

It’s been said that to glorify is to manifest the hidden excellence and worth of an object. This is what the Holy Spirit does relative to the Lord Jesus in every true believer.

In John 16:14, Jesus said, *“He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you.”* The Lord Jesus would come and speak personally to every true believer through the Spirit in a new relationship. No longer would the Spirit be known only as the Holy Spirit, as in the Old Testament when He



THE GUIDANCE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT *continued*

came upon men and women in power for a time, but now He would be known as the promise of the Father and the representative of the Son. No longer was He to be upon them temporarily, but He would be in them and with them forever.

When did the promised Holy Spirit come? At Pentecost—all that Jesus taught in the upper room started to unfold at Pentecost. The Spirit came in power, and the apostles spoke as He gave them utterance. Peter's first message (Acts 2) was with power and boldness under the guiding of the Spirit. Under the same guidance and power there was also conviction. The passage also tells us that about 3000 souls were saved at Pentecost and others were added daily.

God's plan and purpose for all true believers in our Lord Jesus Christ is for us to be led by the Spirit. We see this in Romans 8:14: *"For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are the sons of God."* As the Spirit leads, He continually reminds us of our identity: *"The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God"* (Rom. 8:16).

It is important to remember that the Spirit indwells every true believer in our Lord Jesus Christ. However, not everyone submits to His guidance. But such guidance in our lives is not an option for us to consider; it is a ministry that is essential to our spiritual development. It requires a deliberate, obedient response on our part to the sovereignty of God through His Spirit. It involves our entire inner person being yielded to Him. Being guided by the Spirit is a spiritual walk. We are on a tour, and He alone knows the way. As He leads us into all truth, He reminds us that, *"no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God"* (1 Cor. 2:9-11).

For those who desire to be guided by the Spirit **What is required of us?**

- Acknowledge continually His indwelling presence. *"Your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God and you are not your own"* (1 Cor. 6:19f).
- Deal with sin moment by moment and act accordingly. Walk a holy walk. *"As He who called*

you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct" (1 Pet. 1:15).

- Be obedient to His guidance. *"...be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God"* (Rom. 12:2).

What is involved in being guided?

- Surrendering to the will of God with your entire inner being (Eph. 3:16-21).
- Allowing the Word of Christ to dwell in you richly (Col. 3:16).
- Growing closer to the Lord in your daily walk (Jn. 14:23).
- Focusing on things above, not on things on the earth (Col. 3:2).
- Keeping the flesh in the place of death (Gal. 5:16).
- Acknowledging the struggle between the flesh and the Spirit (Gal. 5:17).
- Realizing victory over the flesh and freedom from the Law (Gal. 5:16, 18).
- Recognizing the manifestation of the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22f).

Examples of guidance

PHILLIP

- *"Go near and overtake this chariot"* (Ac. 8:29)
- *"The Spirit of the Lord caught Phillip away"* (Ac. 8:39)

THE CHURCH AT ANTIOCH

- *"...the Holy Spirit said, 'Now separate for Me Barnabas and Saul...'"* (Ac. 13:2)

PAUL AND THOSE WITH HIM

- *"...were forbidden by the Holy Spirit to preach the Word in Asia"* (Ac. 16:6)
- *"...tried to go into Bythnia, but the Holy Spirit did not permit them"* (Ac. 16:7) 📍

Andrew Murray, *The Spirit of Christ* (Ft. Washington, PA: Christian Literature Crusade, 1963).
Lewis Sperry Chafer, *He That is Spiritual* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1982).



"The Spirit-filled life is not a special, deluxe edition of Christianity. It is part and parcel of the total plan of God for His people."

—A.W. Tozer



ELDER HELPS *To feed, to take heed, and to lead*

Shepherding from the Good Shepherd (part 4)

Principle 4: The Good Shepherd brings security to the sheep (Jn. 10:28-29).

We have come to our final axiom for the shepherd: “...neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand” (Jn. 10:28). Out of all the intricate elements of human anatomy, there is no part better structured for security than the hand. Although it comprises merely two percent of the body’s surface area, each hand contains 16 bones and 23 muscles. It is the only anatomical area with this concentration of muscle for the sole purpose of holding. It is inborn to use our hands to grasp—we never see an infant use anything else! Nothing are as dependable as the hands for safekeeping. This is precisely what the Lord is saying: nobody is safer than the one whom He protects with His own hands. Furthermore, the Lord pointed out that this is the family practice: “My Father...is greater than all; and no one is able snatch them out of My Father’s hand” (Jn. 10:29). It is the Father’s intention to exercise His absolute control for our safety.

Notice the common thread with the Father and Son: each personally bears the responsibility for our security. This idea is cleverly illustrated in the carrying of the articles of God’s tabernacle. In Numbers, the tribal leaders of Israel offered the Lord carts and oxen (7:3-4). The Lord directly forwarded these items to the families responsible for carrying tabernacle hardware. Out of the four families, three were given these gifts to fulfill their duties (7:5-8). The sons of Kohath, however, were not allotted the aid of ox or cart (7:9). The Kohath family was responsible to carry God’s holiest items such as the ark of the testimony, the lampstand, and the table of showbread. These items were too precious to the heart of God to rest on the shoulders of mere animals. The Kohathites had to use their own shoulders (and obviously their hands) to carry these esteemed portraits of

Christ. Here they were the most safe and secure from potentially rolling off the cart in the event of a stumbling ox (cf. 2 Sam. 6:6-7). Items of this significance are too valuable to delegate their care to something else.



Likewise, we are so treasured by the Lord that only His personal touch and protection are adequate. The Lord Jesus and the Father are both committed to this principle, and John 10 reflects the priority of this commitment.

It is with matching intensity that His under-shepherds are asked to serve. “Eldering” requires a hands-

on approach. While we are charged to oversee, sadly this term often gives the impression of shepherding from afar. But the sheep tend to find rest and peace when the gentle touch of their shepherd’s hands has recently been felt. The people of God need that type of nurturing, especially when they are struggling: when they become sullen, when they withdraw, or when they are hospitalized. The hand of the shepherd is required to reach out and grasp their hand in that hour of desperation. How many hands will we let slip through our fingers as we grasp at sport events, hobby events, or leisure events? We must stop the bleeding and that requires our hands tending to the wounds.

Might our prayer become: “O that we would treasure His sheep like the Good Shepherd cherishes them. O that we might know the sheep and be known by them. O that we might remain willingly sacrificial in the course of shepherding. O that we might bring security to the flock. O that we might shepherd like the Good, Great, and Chief Shepherd!” 🙏 —STEVE PRICE

We appreciate the comments and questions we receive. They help us deal with current needs. Please keep them coming to elders@uplook.org

What Is In Your Hand?

You'll be amazed at what God can do with it.

"Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful" (1 Cor. 4:2).

God had appeared to Moses as he was shepherding the flock of his father-in-law Jethro in the wilderness. He had spelled out the commission He had for Moses. God had chosen Moses to deliver His people from the slavery of Egypt and to lead them into the land promised to Abraham centuries before. It was an awesome task, and Moses was reluctant. Forty years before, he had impulsively come to the aid of a Hebrew slave who was being beaten by a taskmaster. Then he had fled for his life when he realized it was known that he had killed the Egyptian. Now the impulsive self-confidence of youth was gone.

"Then Moses answered and said, 'But suppose they will not believe me or listen to my voice; suppose they say, 'The Lord has not appeared to you'" (Ex. 4:1). It was a reasonable question. His earlier attempt to deliver one of them had been rejected, and he had been scorned. Moses did not relish another rejection by his brethren. How could he convince them that God had really called him?

The Lord asked him, *"What is in your hand?"* It was just a common shepherd's staff. God commanded him to cast it to the ground. Moses complied and it became a writhing

serpent as it landed. He instinctively ran from it, but God commanded him to pick it up by the tail. Instantly it became the familiar staff he used daily.

It was an amazing miracle, but God gave him two other signs to convince the people. He told Moses to put his hand into his bosom. When he pulled it out, it was leprous, a fearful sight. When he put it back into his bosom, it became clean and healthy once again. Then God gave him a third sign. If they were still unconvinced, he was to take water from the Nile River and pour it on the ground; it would turn to blood. These three miracles should be convincing to them.

But Moses doubted his ability to lead the people. Although he had the best education that Egypt could offer, forty years in the solitude of the desert had not sharpened his oratorical skills. God promised to be his mouth. However, Moses persisted in making excuses, so God said He would send Aaron to him to speak for him.

God calls each of us to serve Him. We are all gifted differently. *"Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us..."* let us [use them] (Rom. 12:6).

What is in your hand? What gifts do you have? Use them! Do not think more highly of yourself than you ought to think (Rom. 12:3), but do not denigrate the gifts God has given you. Be thankful for those gifts and use them wholeheartedly! Even if they seem common—as common as a shepherd's staff in Moses' day—use them! God wants no excuses.

One day we will all stand before the Lord, and He will ask us, *"What did you do with the gifts and the talents that I entrusted to you?"* May we hear Him say, *"Well done, good and faithful servant."* 🙏



iStockphoto / Noel Powell



Stockphoto / Steven Robertson

The apostle Paul didn't want to beat the air. He wanted his life to make an impact. Do we? Are our local assemblies stirring our cities as the early Christians did? What was their secret?

Maximum Impact

Daniel and friends weren't marginally different; they were 10x better!

Another pro-family U.S. congressman has gone down in disgrace, ambushed by his own lust. This is the refuse on which the bottom-feeding pundits thrive. Meanwhile “conservative” talk show hosts try to put the best spin on it, saying the only reason the incident made the news was because it concerned a Republican; Democrats, they say, due to their concept of relative morality, condone such behavior—in other Democrats, at least.

The argument is specious. If you claim a higher standard, in fact, the Bible's standard, don't be surprised if other people hold you to it. And if, being a failing sinner, you come short of that standard, it is no time to excuse yourself or give an anemic “apology” (I'm sorry if anyone was offended by what it has been reported that I purportedly may or may not have done). Such, like Laodicean water, serve only as an emetic to others.

The prophet Jeremiah would have some stimulating commentary on today's talk radio circuit. Take, for example, his quoting of the Lord's words to the leaders in Israel:

How can you say, “We are wise, and the law of the Lord is with us”? Look, the false pen of the scribe certainly works falsehood. The wise men are ashamed, they are dismayed and taken. Behold, they have rejected the word of the Lord; so what wisdom do they have? Therefore I will give their wives to others, and their fields to those who will inherit them; because from the least even to the greatest everyone is given to covetousness; from the prophet even to the priest everyone deals falsely...Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? No! They were not at all ashamed, nor did they know how to blush” (Jer. 8:8-12, NKJV).

These are sad days in North America. Lands blessed with everything—in fact surfeited with their excess—Canada and the U.S. not only are embracing the darkness, but those who ought to be lights in these countries have found their influence waning. And why? Pollster George Barna observes: “The downfall of the Church has not been the content of its message but its failure to practice those truths...” (*The Second Coming of the Church*, p. 5).

Is there any hope of making a dramatic, eternal difference in our day? What was the secret of the New Testament church? We turn to the early pages of Acts and discover that what they did was not only the truth of chapter 2 and verse 42; there was more than that:

- they had a strategy to methodically, systematically reach their world for Christ
- they took the gospel to the people, preaching on the street corner, in the universities and schools of the philosophers, in the markets, and one-on-one with every strata of society; they sought open doors and were given them (Acts 14:27; Col. 4:3)
- they did good works—in fact, miraculous works (signs and wonders, Acts 2:43) and one can't help but ask if we don't believe in a miracle-working God anymore
- they loved each other; in fact, were in each others' homes daily (see 2:46) and actually shared financially with one another, an idea also adopted by so-called “early brethren”
- they actively removed barriers—economic, social, ethnic—and by it told the world that the gospel was for all people, and that it was level ground at the cross

I think we might benefit from another series of Powerscourt conferences, like they had in the early 1800s, to discover the truths we may have overlooked in the church's history book. 🔴

UPLOOK

If the outlook is dark, try the uplook.

NOT NOW.....

After the storms have vanished,
Tempest and wild and rain,
Once and forever banished,
Never to come again,
O what a dawn shall follow,
Full of a glad increase,
Mountain and hill and hollow
Clothed in a holy peace.

After the hours of chastening,
Grievous and sad and sore,
Fruit of the Spirit hastening,
Such as we lacked before,
Then shall we each within us
Features of Him display,
Only the rod could win us
Wealth for eternity.

After the will is broken
Great is the victory won—
Chastening is love's true token,
Proof that He trains a son;
Rest will reward surrender,
Fruit of the faithful rod,
Rest in His purpose tender,
Rest in the ways of God.

—I. Y. EWAN

AFTER

