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BULLETIN BRIEFS

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THE HOLY SPIRIT THROUGH FAITH
Jim E. Waldron

Note: This is a continuation of the study on the gift of the Holy Spirit from January. That lesson was introduced by pointing out that the Spirit has been given in three ways under Christ: 1) The baptism of the Holy Spirit, which was given by Christ directly from the throne of God; 2) The Holy Spirit by the apostles’ hands and 3) The Holy Spirit by faith by means of the word through faith. This lesson covers the latter point.



The apostle Paul affirmed that "*we are all sons of God through *faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ*" (Galatians 3:26-27); and it is through this same faith, which we make our own by obedience, that we receive the promise of the Spirit. As it is written, "*that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through *faith*" (Galatians 3:14). Again as the same apostle speaking of Jesus to the Ephesians said, "*in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise*" (Ephesians 1:13).

Again the apostle to the Gentiles told the Corinthians God “*has sealed us and given us the Spirit in our hearts as a deposit*” (2 Cor. 1:22). The Holy Spirit does not literally dwell in the Christian as demons used to invade the bodies of

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certain individuals (Mark 1:23-26), but He dwells in the heart of the Christian just as Christ does; that is, through faith. For it is written, **"that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith..."** (Ephesians 3:17; cf. Romans 8:9-10). Again, Paul testified to the saints in Colosse of **"Christ in you, the hope of glory"** (Col. 1: 27). He spoke to the wayward Galatians of his travail **"in birth again until Christ is formed in you"** (Gal. 4:19).

The word of God is the instrument of the Spirit (Eph. 6:17) to operate on the mind of man; faith comes through hearing the word of God (Rom. 10:17). It is the word, which is **"the power of God unto salvation"** (Rom. 1: 16), and the medium for man's sanctification, as it is written, even of the apostles, **"sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth"** (John 17:17).

As noted earlier Philip, Stephen and the other five brothers who were chosen to care for widow's tables in Jerusalem were **"full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom"** prior to the apostles laying hands on them (Acts 6:3-6). How was this possible? It was possible because they had accepted the word of faith and were continuing to be obedient to it (cf. Acts 2:38-42). That is, they were keeping the command which was later recorded in the letter to the Ephesians: **"be filled with the Spirit"** (Eph. 5:18). This latter text implicitly teaches that the children of God in general were and are filled with the Spirit in a manner that is not miraculous. In deed, the Christian is expected to so learn Christ through the word that he will be thus filled (See again Gal. 4:19).

Paul in his letter to the Colossians shows in practical terms how this is accomplished; **"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom"** (Col. 3: 16). As was noted the Holy Spirit does not literally or actually dwell in the body of the Christian, but He dwells by means of His thoughts, His concepts, His wisdom, which rules the mind and life of the saint by means of His word.

Whenever the indwelling of the Spirit of God in a Christian (Rom. 8:11) is explained to a new convert or anyone else for that matter, it should not be so complicated as to render the matter unintelligible or impractical to him or her. The scriptures maintain that God (2 Cor. 6:16); Christ (2 Cor. 13:5)

and the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:11) live in His people. Yet, the crux of the matter boils down to this practical question, how does the Godhead work in those who have been sanctified? Now the scriptures plainly say that He does so work, as Paul said to the saints in Philippi, **"for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure"** (Phil. 2:13).

Is it by an illumination on the subconscious that comes directly from the Spirit? Is it an inner feeling that is better felt than told? Or is it by an internal nudge through some unknown Divine operation? It is not! Because we are plainly told that the man of God is made **"complete"** or perfect through the scriptures and that they **"thoroughly"** equip him **"for every good work"** (2 Tim. 3:16-17). Again we are told, that God by **"His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness through the knowledge of Him who called us to glory and virtue"** (2 Peter 1:3).

Seven times in the book of Revelation the Lord Jesus says one should use his ears to hear the Holy Spirit (Rev. 2:7,11,17,29; 3:6,13,22; cf., 13:9). And the scriptures are very clear as to the manner in which God works in His children. As it is written, **"the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe"** (1 Thess. 2:13). The Greek word in this reference for **"works"** comes from the same word from which we get the word **"energy."** In other words God energizes in His people by means of His divine word. The **"living and powerful"** (Heb. 4: 12) word of God in a believing active Christian is like uranium energizing in a nuclear reactor.

To repeat, it is not a literal indwelling, nor is it an actual indwelling in conjunction with the word, but it is by means of the word, which, as noted, is the instrument of the Spirit's operation on the mind of man. The understanding and acceptance of this fact brings an overwhelming reality to the mind of the obedient believer that the Holy Spirit so rules his life, through the all powerful word that he (the believer) **"may be filled with all the fullness of God"** (Eph. 3:19).

This begins when a sinner is sanctified by the blood of Christ at the time he obeys the gospel (See John 17:17, Acts

3:19, I Cor. 6:11). This is the reason the apostle Paul asked the saints at Corinth, **"Do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have from God ...?"** (I Corinthians 6:19). It is certainly right to admonish Christians young and old to keep their bodies pure because God dwells in them as His temple, for Paul tells us **"you were bought at a price, therefore glorify God in your body and your spirit which are God's"** (1 Cor. 6: 20).

As the scriptures speak of **"our common salvation"** (Jude 3), even so this indwelling of the Holy Spirit, through faith, (to repeat) is not miraculous. It is the ordinary and common gift of God to all, who through faith keep His word, even as Peter testified of **"the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey Him"** (Acts 5:32). Again Peter said to the mass of people on Pentecost, **"Repent, and let everyone of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit"** (Acts 2:38). Observe in this text the receipt of the gift of the Holy Spirit was contingent upon the hearers obeying the primary steps of faith, which was not the case with the apostles (Acts 2:1-4), nor the household of Cornelius (Acts 10:44-48).

Thus the Holy Spirit today lives in the obedient child of God by means of the word of faith which has been preached to us (I Peter 1:22-25). Do you desire (cf. Luke 11:13) the Holy Spirit to work in your life, then read His word, believe it, obey it and keep on obeying it. To use a term from Isaiah be **"willing and obedient"** (Isa. 1:19), then the Spirit by means of His word will live in you and effectively work in you (I Thess. 2:13). It will be like a fire in your bones, as it is written, **"is not My word like a fire? Says the Lord, and like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces?"** (Jer. 23:29; cf. 20:9). "

**The Greek text has "dia tes pisteos," "through the faith." All scripture quotations are from the New King James Version Bible, Copyright 1982, by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Nashville, TN, USA. 171 Walden Lane, Harriman, TN 37748, Phone: 865-376-9947. Gift Of The Holy Spirit, Jim E. Waldron, Copyright 1999, 2008. Permission to copy without alteration granted.*