

Sabbath School Less

for Adults

Volume 59

Number 2

Published quarterly by the Bible Advocate Press at 330 West
152nd Avenue, Broomfield, Colorado 80020. Second class
postage paid at Broomfield, Colorado 80020.

Second Quarter

1974

April, May, June

Subscription price \$1.50 per year; 45 cents a single copy;
40 cents per copy in bundle orders of six or more;
or \$1.25 each when ordered by the year in clubs
of six or more ordered sent to one address.

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PREFACE

There is perhaps no other subject which excites as much curiosity and controversy in religious circles as does a discussion on the Holy Spirit. Each denomination seems to have very strong opinions about the nature and work of the Spirit, how it is received, and how its influence is to be manifest.

These lessons will attempt to give the student a better understanding of what the Bible has to say about the Spirit of God. Of course, these studies cannot satisfy all the questions that have been raised on the subject, but it is hoped they will stimulate the student to deeper study and provide him with an awareness of the Spirit's importance to an effective Christian ministry.

The Holy Spirit—What Is It?

SCRIPTURE READING: John 14:16-26.

"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." (John 15:26).

LESSON AIM: *To become fully aware of the source, operation, and purpose of the Holy Spirit in relation to our personal lives.*

INTRODUCTION TO THE LESSON: The Holy Spirit has consistently been a point of study. This lesson will attempt to prove that, contrary to popular belief, the Spirit is not an individual being apart from God and Christ, but the power of God manifested in the world.

The Holy Spirit is that which was promised by Christ to work in His absence (John 14:16, 17). The Holy Spirit is the power that convicts the world of sin (John 16:8), reveals the truth of the Word of God, and controls the lives of men and women as they live for Him. Through the Spirit the Christian receives assurance and is sanctified. It is the source and supply of wisdom and power to the church.

No one can know Jesus, the Son of God, the Saviour of the world, but by the Holy Spirit. However, men today are seeking to interpret this Jesus in terms of reason, history, philosophy, and social mores, forgetting that the real Christian experience begins through a new birth in the power of the Holy Spirit. The Christian experience will be fruitless and hopeless without the power of the Holy Spirit.

REFERENCES FOR LESSON PREPARATION: Joel 2:28-32; Luke 11:9-13; Ephesians 1:3-13; 4:23-30; Acts 2:1-4, 16-21, 33; John 14:16-18, 26, 27.

QUESTIONS FOR STUDY AND DISCUSSION

1. What was it that the prophet Joel foretold? Joel 2:28-32. What happened at Pentecost that was the beginning of a new era? Acts 2:1-4. Through what physical sense was the Spirit manifest?
2. Was the Holy Spirit active in the world before Pentecost? 2 Peter 1:21; Psalm 51:11.
3. Define the Holy Spirit by using the following texts: Luke 24:49; Acts 2:33; John 14:26.
4. How can one receive the Holy Spirit? Acts 2:38; 5:32. Where does the Spirit dwell? 1 Corinthians 3:16, 17; Ephesians 2:21, 22.
5. How does the Holy Spirit work through us in promoting an effective church program? 1 Corinthians 12:4-7; Ephesians 4:12.
6. We know that God is willing to give His Holy Spirit (Luke 11:9-13). How, then, are our lives affected upon receiving the Spirit? Romans 8:11-14; Hebrews 12:14.

LESSON CONCLUSION: *At the time of Pentecost the Spirit and power of God came to abide in the surrendered hearts of Christians. The most important question is, has it happened to you and me? Have we received the Holy Spirit?*

The Holy Spirit in Old Testament Times

SCRIPTURE READING: Psalm 99.

“... Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts” (Zechariah 4:6, last part).

LESSON AIM: *To emphasize that the Holy Spirit has been in operation from creation, revealing God to man; and to show that this same power is present with us today.*

INTRODUCTION TO THE LESSON: If we believe the Bible to be the inspired Word of God, we must also believe that God's Holy Spirit was present and active in the world from the very beginning. “There is a spirit in man, and the breath of the Almighty giveth understanding” (Job 32:8). “The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty giveth me life” (Job 33:4).

Throughout the Old Testament we see countless manifestations of God's power and how it came upon God's chosen vessels, Moses, Joshua, Samson, Gideon, Samuel, Elijah, at just the right moments when help was needed from on high. “And all the prophets spake as they were moved (motivated) by the Holy Spirit” (2 Peter 1:21).

Before Christ the Holy Spirit was active, but in a different way. It was not available to everyone, as we find the case to be after Pentecost. In early times the Holy Spirit worked with and through only those individuals chosen by God to direct His people, to relate God's message to them, and to prophesy of things to come, especially of Jesus.

God's Holy Spirit came mightily upon those chosen ones for a specific reason, and with signs, wonders, and miracles God manifested His power and called out to His people to return to Him.

After Pentecost the Holy Spirit came to us as a promise of the Father. To all that would repent and be baptized, they too would receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, so that they could also become heirs to the promise (Galatians 3:29) and be translated into the kingdom of His dear Son (Colossians 1:13).

The Holy Spirit is with us, is for us, and should be in us, to be witnesses for the glory of God.

REFERENCES FOR LESSON PREPARATION: Genesis 1:2-3; Exodus 40:34-38; Numbers 24:1, 2; 2 Chronicles 5:13; Isaiah 63:1-2; 1 Corinthians 2.

QUESTIONS FOR STUDY AND DISCUSSION

1. How was the Holy Spirit manifested in the Old Testament? Zechariah 4:6 (last part); Numbers 11:17, 25-29; Judges 6:34; 13:25; 14:6, 19; 15:14.
2. What primarily was the work of the Holy Spirit? 1 Samuel 19:20, 23; Nehemiah 9:20, 30; Isaiah 61:1.
3. What effect did the Holy Spirit have on the people of the Old Testament? 2 Chronicles 36:14-16; Acts 7:51, 52. Will God's Spirit always strive with man? Genesis 6:3; Proverbs 1:24, 26, 28, 29.
4. How did the prophets react to the moving of the Spirit? Isaiah 6:8; Psalm 51:10-15.
5. Old Testament leaders taught and prophesied by the power of the Spirit. Contrast Christ's ministry as it was influenced by the Spirit. 2 Corinthians 3:9-17; John 8:3-11; Matthew 7:28, 29; John 6:38.
6. How does the ministry of Christ operate through the Holy Spirit today? John 10:10; 14:27; Hebrews 7:25; 9:15.

LESSON CONCLUSION: *The church today has no excuse for being ignorant of the working of the Holy Spirit before Christ. God moved then, and He is able to move now. We need to let prophesying be by inspiration and not by investigation. We can have a supernatural experience, a supernatural religion, only if the Holy Spirit dwells within us.*

The Fullness of the Holy Spirit

SCRIPTURE READING: Matthew 3:11-17.

“For John truly baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence” (Acts 1:5).

LESSON AIM: To define and explore the terms “fullness of the Spirit” and “baptism of the Spirit” to see if they mean the same.

INTRODUCTION TO THE LESSON: Many questions are asked about the works of the Holy Spirit, especially concerning our topic today. Do the words “fullness” and “baptism” mean the same? Are we to receive the Spirit in portions? Or do we receive it initially at conversion? What does the Bible teach about the “fullness” or “baptism” as applied to the Holy Spirit?

We should note that the word “baptism” does not appear in the account of Acts 2. However, we can agree that this is when baptism of the Holy Spirit took place. The phrase “filled with the Holy Ghost” is used repeatedly in reference to the experience described in Acts 2:4. So by taking the words of John in Matthew 3:11, and those of Jesus in Acts 1:5, it is evident that the “filling with the Holy Spirit,” and “being baptized with the Holy Spirit” means one and the same thing.

We find the experience described in Acts 2:1-4 was indeed promised by the Father, and also was the “fullness of the Holy Spirit.” Because of the indwelling Spirit at that moment, the disciples experienced power, joy, and courage. They overflowed because they were *filled*.

We find an interesting point recorded in John 20:22: Jesus breathed on His disciples and said, “Receive ye the Holy Ghost.” It would seem from this that His followers had received the Holy Spirit prior to their experience at Pentecost. Likewise, we also receive the Holy Spirit at our conversion, for it is the Holy Spirit that leads us to salvation (John 3:5).

The disciples gathered together in the upper room did receive the gift of the Holy Spirit for salvation. But it wasn't until Pentecost that they experienced the *fullness* or *baptism* which was the infilling presence of God that caused them to overflow with power and joy. It was this fulness that made the difference in Peter and the other disciples. It was this power that led them to openly preach Jesus and even accuse the rulers of His death. This same power also brought new meaning to the Word of God and especially to the teachings of Christ and His ministry.

REFERENCES FOR LESSON PREPARATION: Acts 1:4-8; 10:42-48; 11:15-18; John 7:37-39; Romans 6.

QUESTIONS FOR STUDY AND DISCUSSION

1. What is the Bible meaning of “baptism”? Colossians 2:12. How can this apply to the baptism of the Holy Spirit? Romans 6:4.
2. What steps of preparation did the disciples take to receive the baptism of the Spirit? Acts 1:12-14. How can we prepare?
3. If water baptism is for remission of sins (Acts 2:38), what purpose does the baptism of the Holy Spirit serve? Discuss.
4. Does the baptism of the Holy Spirit replace water baptism? Acts 2:37, 38; Acts 10:44-48.
5. Does the Christian receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit before or after water baptism? Acts 2:1-4; 11:15, 16.
6. Can the baptism of the Holy Spirit be received by the same person more than once? Acts 4:8, 31.
7. Were any of God's people baptized with the Holy Spirit before Pentecost? Luke 1:15, 41, 42, 67; 2:25-27; Ezekiel 11:5.
8. According to John, who would be the one who would baptize with the Holy Spirit? John 1:32-34; Matthew 3:11.
9. Why should the Christian seek for the fulness, or baptism, of the Holy Spirit? Ephesians 1:17-19; John 4:22, 23.
10. What then is the evidence of the Spirit's indwelling fullness? 1 Corinthians 3:1-4; Ephesians 5:18-21; Galatians 5:22, 23. (Note: The fruit described in Galatians 5 are moral qualities—the fruit represents the natural product of a real Christian life lived in the Spirit.)

LESSON CONCLUSION: We need to be sensitive to the stirring of the Holy Spirit and aware of what it is trying to say or do for us. We must be ever so careful not to blaspheme, not to quench the Holy Spirit by restricting it within our old ideas or traditional patterns.

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The Church With No Spirit

SCRIPTURE READING: I Peter 2:1-25.

"I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold or hot, I will spew thee out of my mouth" (Revelation 3:15, 16).

LESSON AIM: *To point out why it is so essential for the church to be Spirit-filled and Spirit-led.*

INTRODUCTION TO THE LESSON: The church is the creation of Christ (Matthew 16:18), which He purchased for the price of His own blood (Acts 20:28). Membership in His church is by spiritual birth, and the record is kept in the Lamb's book of life.

The Holy Spirit is the sole agent and active administrative power in the place of Christ. The church, then, is the body of Christ, and the Holy Spirit is to fill this body with power in order to direct its movement. Its influence controls its members, inspires them with wisdom, leads them into all truth, and motivates witnessing.

The church that has lost this Spirit is headed for difficult times. The church does not necessarily need the Holy Spirit to help run its social affairs and fund-raising projects, but the church does need the Holy Spirit to win souls, to lead people to Christ, to have an effective ministry. The church that relies on the leading of the Holy Spirit is a growing, working body—one that brings glory and honor to God. Man can accomplish many things on his own, but the real need, the real work of God's church depends solely upon the power and activity of the Holy Spirit.

The presence of the Holy Spirit in His church is a vital element in God's plan. The church laboring without the guidance of the Spirit labors in vain and spends its strength for nought. As lively stones, we are being built up as a *spiritual house* for a *holy priesthood* (I Peter 2:5). Only Spirit-led and Spirit-filled people can be the church's "lively stones." It takes the presence of the Holy Spirit to make a temple of the living God. Let us strive to be led and used of God. In this way the Church of God will prevail.

REFERENCES FOR LESSON PREPARATION: Revelation 22:12-14, 16, 17; 2:7; Romans 8:1, 5, 9-16; Galatians 5:16, 17, 21-25; Ephesians 2:18-22; 4:3-6; 11-13; 1 Corinthians 10:31, 32.

QUESTIONS FOR STUDY AND DISCUSSION

1. What kind of people should belong to God's church? Acts 10:34, 35; Romans 8:5, 6; 12:1; John 4:23, 24.
2. What kind of attitude can hinder the growth of God's church? Matthew 15:8, 9; Revelation 3:16.
3. When we restrain the Holy Spirit, what effect does it have on the church? Discuss.
4. What was wrong with the church at Laodicea?
5. Do you feel that religious fervor or spirit generally declines with the advance of education? Discuss.
6. What lesson can we glean from I Corinthians 3:1-3?
7. In these last days who, or what, must God's people guard against? II Timothy 3:1-5; Matthew 24:24.

LESSON CONCLUSION: *Even though we know that the Holy Spirit emanates from the presence of God and great things can be wrought through its power, it will do nothing unless we are willing to yield to its guidance.*

The Gifts and Fruits of The Holy Spirit

SCRIPTURE READING: John 15:1-8.

"But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal" (I Corinthians 12:7).

LESSON AIM: *To determine the distinction and relationship between "fruits" and "gifts" of the Spirit.*

INTRODUCTION TO THE LESSON: In Acts 2:38 Peter said, "...repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." The Holy Spirit is in itself a gift from God to man. And through our spirit and the Holy Spirit we can communicate with God. But there are also gifts within the gift of the Holy Spirit, as pointed out in I Corinthians 12. There are different gifts emanating from the Spirit, and not every Christian receives one of these. The gifts of the Spirit are given to people elected according to God's will, and He divides to every man severally as He will (I Corinthians 12:11). The fruit, on the other hand, is given to all. We must bear fruit, but we may covet gifts. Gifts cannot take the place of fruit.

Jesus describes Himself in John 15 as the True Vine. Every branch (or child of God) within that vine must bear fruit, or else it is pruned away for being unproductive.

The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance (Galatians 5:22, 23). These attributes are of God, and not products of man's efforts. Christian fruits are God's work and signs of the Christ-like character. Matthew 7:16-20 tells us that men do not gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles. The fruit of the Vine grows by the life that is in the Vine (Christ). *Fruits* and *gifts* are not identical. *Fruit* belongs to character; *gifts* are endowments of power. Gifts are bestowed; fruit is a manifestation. Christian fruit, then, is produced by the living presence of God's Spirit in one's life.

REFERENCES FOR LESSON PREPARATION: I Corinthians 12; Galatians 5:22-26; II Peter 1:3-8.

QUESTIONS FOR STUDY AND DISCUSSION

1. What are the nine gifts of the Spirit as outlined in I Corinthians 12:8-10?
2. Can we expect the experiences and gifts granted to others to be given to us in the same manner? I Corinthians 12:28-31, 11.
3. How are spiritual gifts to be used? Romans 12:6-8; I Corinthians 14:12. (Note: Gifts are for service.)
4. What are the nine fruits of the Spirit? Galatians 5:22, 23.
5. Should every Christian demonstrate the fruits of the Spirit? John 15:2, 5, 8.
6. Separate the fruits of the Spirit into the following categories: Their relationship to God; relationship to one's fellow man; relationship to oneself.
7. Are fruits and gifts identical? Discuss.
8. Is there any reason why the gifts and fruits of the Spirit should not be operative today?

LESSON CONCLUSION: *The gifts of the Spirit and the fruits of the Spirit are both from God. We need them today more than at any other time in history. We can do nothing on our own, but in the Spirit of God there is victory over the world.*

Use of Spiritual Gifts

SCRIPTURE READING: Acts 2:1-11.

"In the law it is written, With men of other tongues and other lips will I speak unto this people; and yet for all that will they not hear me, saith the Lord" (I Corinthians 14:21).

LESSON AIM: *To discover the purpose of spiritual gifts, particularly speaking in tongues. Was this power limited to one group of people? Was it just for the Pentecostal time period, or is it for the Christian today?*

INTRODUCTION TO THE LESSON: In I Corinthians 13 and 14 Paul admonishes the brethren on the correct use of certain gifts of the Spirit. The gift of prophecy and tongues came into competition (I Corinthians 14), and their use was limited to certain situations. But *love* (I Corinthians 13) was credited as a necessary requirement of the spiritual life. There are no limits on the exercising of this gift.

Speaking in tongues is listed last among the gifts of the Spirit in I Corinthians 12:8-10, but it always seems to be the first under consideration when the gifts are discussed. There are strong prejudices exhibited on both sides of the question as to whether or not the gift of tongues is a necessary sign or evidence of the presence of the Holy Spirit.

The gift of tongues served a great purpose on the day of Pentecost as well as on several other occasions during the ministry of the apostles. While the other gifts, such as healing, were equally valuable, there are those who champion the gift of tongues and would like to consider it a necessary evidence of the Holy Spirit. This conclusion is in error. While the gift of tongues should be properly regarded, it still remains as one of the lesser gifts.

The spiritual gifts have been imitated, and opportunists have boasted of possessing them to add credibility to their religious dogmas, but that does not invalidate the Word of God. People who do not live according to the will of God or who do not have the fruit of the Spirit cannot have their lives genuinely blessed by the gifts. On the other hand, the gifts of the Spirit are a real blessing to God's people.

REFERENCES FOR LESSON PREPARATION: Acts 2; I Corinthians 12, 13, 14; Isaiah 28:11-13; Acts 10:44-48; 11:15-17; 19:1-6.

QUESTIONS FOR STUDY AND DISCUSSION

1. What was the purpose of the tongues (languages) spoken on the day of Pentecost? Acts 10:42-48; 2:38.
2. What prophecy was fulfilled on the day of Pentecost? Isaiah 28:11-13; I Corinthians 14:21.
3. In Paul's view, for what purpose was speaking in tongues given? I Corinthians 14:22.
4. What else did Paul say about speaking in tongues? I Corinthians 14:4, 5 (first part), also verse 39. Tongues were indeed spoken at the house of Cornelius and at Ephesus. It is evident that the manifestation of tongues in these incidents was in known languages.
5. Even though Paul said he spoke in tongues more than the rest, what admonition did he make to the brethren? I Corinthians 14:18, 19, 20, 26, 33, 40. In view of the preceding scriptures, what do you feel is the proper place for the gift of tongues? Discuss.
6. Did the speaking of tongues, as described in Acts 2:1-4, ever occur again in the same way? Acts 10:45, 46; 11:15, 16; 19:6.
7. What should the Christian's attitude be concerning spiritual gifts? I Corinthians 12:31; 14:1, 39.
8. How are the gifts of the Spirit to be distributed in the church? I Corinthians 12:28-30; Romans 12:6-8.

LESSON CONCLUSION: *The Christian's goal should always be the edification of God and His teachings. So whatever gift God might give us, let us use it wisely, decently, and in timely fashion.*

The Holy Spirit in the Believer

SCRIPTURE READING: Romans 8:1-16.

"But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you" (Romans 8:11).

LESSON AIM: *To discover the relationship of the Holy Spirit to the Christian's salvation and spiritual well-being.*

INTRODUCTION TO THE LESSON: The apostle Paul, in his writings to the Corinthians, attributes all his spiritual guidance and effectiveness to the power of the Holy Spirit. "Our sufficiency," he says, "is of God; who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life" (2 Corinthians 3:5, 6).

Carnalities kill. But spiritually minded believers have life and peace (Romans 8:6). The power that quickens, transforms, perfects, is found through God's Holy Spirit, and must be in the believer for him to be counted as having part with Christ (Romans 8:9).

The problems the apostle Paul had with the brethren at Corinth (described in 1 Corinthians 3:1-3) were not unique, for we find these same difficulties in our churches today: envying, strife, and divisions. Could it be that the Holy Spirit is lacking in believers? "Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God." We must have the Holy Spirit dwelling within, for without it we will not be able to discern between the spiritual and the carnal.

Man has always sought justification for his deeds by using the standard of his own conscience. He establishes guidelines which are often contrary to the Lord's will. God wants to reveal to us, *through our obedience*, the great power, joy, and fulfillment we can have by yielding completely to His Holy Spirit. For without holiness in our lives, we shall not see the Lord (Hebrews 12:14). And the only way we can become holy is by God's Holy Spirit living and abiding in our hearts.

REFERENCES FOR LESSON PREPARATION: 1 Corinthians 2; James 3:14-18; 4:1-10; Galatians 5:16-26; 6:1-8.

QUESTIONS FOR STUDY AND DISCUSSION

1. What is the gift God gives to the believer? 1 Corinthians 6:19; 2 Corinthians 6:16.
2. Discuss from your own experience what we actually mean when we talk of "His spirit that dwells within" (Romans 8:11).
3. What two important things can the Christian receive according to Acts 1:8?
4. How does the Holy Spirit work as a reminder? Galatians 2:20; Romans 8:13.
5. If the Holy Spirit was to "reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment" (John 16:8), what application does this have for us today? Isaiah 64:6; Romans 3:21-23; 1 Peter 4:17, 19. Note: If the Christian keeps himself open to the guidance of the Holy Spirit, it will reprove him of carnality and sin within.
6. How can we detect when one is spiritually motivated? Matthew 7:16-23; John 3:6, 7; 1 John 3:24.
7. Will we be able to enter God's kingdom without possessing the Holy Spirit? Hebrews 12:14; 1 Corinthians 3:17.

The Holy Spirit and Holiness

SCRIPTURE READING: Romans 6:12-23.

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service" (Romans 12:1).

LESSON AIM: *To show the relationship of holiness to the Spirit, and the influence it must have upon each of us.*

INTRODUCTION TO THE LESSON: What is holiness? The National Dictionary definition is, "The state or quality of being holy; freedom from sin; moral and spiritual purity, sacredness." However, it is quite evident that the world and even many churches have lost the true meaning of holiness. It is sad, but true, that the term holiness has ceased to attract even good people. Many regard it with suspicion and scorn, and it has become the focal point of many cheap jokes and doubtful stories.

Nevertheless, the Bible declares in 1 Peter 1:16, "Be ye holy, for I am holy." This quality of God is also demanded and expected of His people. Every believer is called unto holiness (1 Thessalonians 4:3, 7). "For this is the will of God, even your sanctification... For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness." God, in the very beginning, chose us to be pure (Ephesians 1:4). So we have no reason to choose to be otherwise.

There are many misconceptions about holiness. Many regard it as something only for certain classes of people, certain levels of learning and understanding, something that is only an emotional state or condition, or a temporary spiritual fad. Consequently, few seek to determine its true meaning or take seriously the words of Scripture in regard to holiness and its application and practice in the lives of Christians.

Holiness, through the Spirit, is one very important trait of the Christian character. For without it the Bible says we will not see the Lord. Christ lives in us through the Spirit. He sanctifies our life, possesses it, lives it, and transforms it. The Spirit of God should not only work *upon* us, but live *within* us, so that we can manifest a holy existence in this present world.

REFERENCES FOR LESSON PREPARATION: Romans 6:12-23; 2 Corinthians 6:16, 17; 7:1; 1 Thessalonians 3:13; 4:1-8; 2 Timothy 2:1-15; Titus 2.

QUESTIONS FOR STUDY AND DISCUSSION

1. What evidence do we have of holiness in the time of the apostles? Acts 6:5. How effective was Philip's ministry? Acts 8:5-8.
2. Philip was chosen a deacon, to take care of the business of the church (Acts 6:1-3). What caused him to go to Samaria to preach Christ to the inhabitants? What lesson can we glean from his experience? Discuss.
3. Why is it dangerous to disregard the Holy Spirit and holiness in one's daily life? Acts 5:1-5; Galatians 6:7.
4. What must one do to be able to acquire holiness? Luke 11:13.
5. 2 Corinthians 11:23-28 gives an account of real Christian courage. How can one also acquire this same type of strength? Acts 1:8; Ephesians 4:23, 24; Philippians 4:13.
6. What role does holiness play in the life of Christian women? 1 Timothy 2:9, 10, 15; Proverbs 31:30. Note: Holiness is not a luxury but a necessity, nor is it an attitude of dedication, but an actual experience.
7. What place is there in the church for holy women? Titus 2:3-5. Note: We need spirit-filled holy women to teach, to sing, to testify in the Spirit, and to please God and witness for His church.
8. In this twentieth century, is holiness actually necessary? Hebrews 12:14; Matthew 5:8.

LESSON CONCLUSION: *By God making His holiness ours, we too can be holy. "...so whether we live or die, we are the Lord's" (Romans 14:8).*

The Guidance of the Holy Spirit

SCRIPTURE READING: I Corinthians 2:9-16.

"Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come" (John 16:13).

LESSON AIM: *To understand how the Spirit serves as an interpreter, an infallible teacher, and a trustworthy guide.*

INTRODUCTION TO THE LESSON: The Holy Spirit has worked and does work through human cooperation. Prophecy came not of the prophets' own prompting, but the Bible teaches that holy men of God spoke as they were motivated by the Spirit.

There are diversities of operation, inspiration, and employment, but one Spirit. We may have all the machinery and tools to accomplish many things, but unless the Holy Spirit leads and guides us, the Word of God is just a dead letter. For it is the Holy Spirit that quickens, illumines, and interprets the Word. The Word then becomes real to us. It becomes the "Living Word."

"But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: For the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God" (1 Corinthians 2:10). Divine truth is not of logic, or reasoning, or learning, but is revealed by the Holy Spirit. The things of God are received through the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Just as the deep thoughts of a man are known only to the spirit of a man, so the deep things of God are known only to Him. But we know Him, and we know that we know Him because we can have an anointing of the Holy Spirit that reveals spiritual things to us.

REFERENCES FOR LESSON PREPARATION: John 16:7-15; 14:16-18, 26; 15:26, 27; 1 John 2:20-29.

QUESTIONS FOR STUDY AND DISCUSSION

1. Cite some examples of the guidance of the Holy Spirit in the early church. Acts 7:55, 56; 9:17, 26; 13:8-12.
2. Give examples of the leading of the Holy Spirit as evidenced in the ministry of the apostles after Pentecost. Acts 2:43.
3. Even though we may possess great knowledge and religious training, what attitude will we have when guided by the Holy Spirit? Philippians 3:7, 8.
4. How will our lifestyle be changed through the influence of the Holy Spirit? Acts 20:22-27; Philippians 4:13.
5. Why is it important for the Holy Spirit to prepare and renew the mind of man? 1 Corinthians 2:14; Romans 8:6-8.
6. If we have been delivered from the flesh and live according to the guidance of the Holy Spirit, what assurance do we have? Galatians 5:16; Romans 8:1, 38, 39; Matthew 24:13.
7. What should be the Christian's ultimate goal? Philippians 3:12-15.

LESSON CONCLUSION: *If we are going to be guided by the Holy Spirit, we must continually dedicate our lives as a living sacrifice and be sustained by the constant renewing of the mind by the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 4:23, 24).*

Offences Against the Holy Spirit

SCRIPTURE READING: Mark 3:21-30.

"If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it" (1 John 5:16).

LESSON AIM: *To comprehend the magnitude of sinning against the Holy Spirit and its consequences. And to study the other offences against the Holy Spirit.*

INTRODUCTION TO THE LESSON: The subject under consideration today is one of peculiar solemnity, perhaps because of the mystery which surrounds it. Yet enough is revealed in God's Word to dismiss any justification of ignorance on this subject.

The Bible lists several different offences against the Holy Spirit, but the one most widely discussed is blasphemy against the Holy Ghost. The sin of blasphemy (dishonor or disrespect) against God was well understood by the patriarchs. Under Jewish law it was punishable by death through stoning, as we learn from Leviticus 24:10-16. In Matthew 26:63-66 Jesus Himself is accused of blasphemy and was sentenced to death by the Jewish authorities instead of the Roman, whose punishment for treason against Caesar was crucifixion.

In Mark 3:21, 22, 30 we find three charges of blasphemous conduct applied to Christ. First of all, in verse 21, it seems that Jesus' own friends charge Him with madness, for they said, "He is beside himself." His friends, as well as the Jews, accused Him of madness (John 10:20). His second indictment was in verse 22, where the scribes accused Him of being demon-possessed, for the power of the Spirit within Him was ascribed to Satan. The third charge was the worst and most injurious of all, in verse 30, "Because they said, He hath an unclean spirit." Jesus' defense against the charges of blasphemy indicates how seriously He regarded such accusations. He went on to say in verses 28 and 29, "All sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme: but he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation." Also in Matthew 12:31, 32 Jesus says, "But the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men.

And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come."

Regardless of its degree, blasphemy could be held against the Christian. But blasphemy against the Holy Ghost is the one unforgivable sin, for it denies and dishonors the power and sanctity of the Spirit. It is interesting to note that God will forgive dishonor to His Son, but not to the Holy Ghost.

Other offences against the Holy Spirit are described in various parts of the Scriptures. Examples are: resisting, vexing, grieving, tempting, lying, and quenching the Spirit.

REFERENCES FOR LESSON PREPARATION: Leviticus 24:10-23; Jeremiah 7; Matthew 12:22-32; Mark 3:1-30; Acts 7:51; Isaiah 63:10; Ephesians 4:30; Acts 5:9; 1 Thessalonians 5:19; Acts 5:3.

QUESTIONS FOR STUDY AND DISCUSSION

1. In 1 John 5:16 the Bible speaks of a "sin not unto death" and a "sin unto death." Discuss what these might be.
2. God is love and will forgive sin if one repents and turns from that sin. Are there instances where His forgiveness might not be extended? Hebrews 6:4-6; 10:26-29; Matthew 12:31, 32.
3. The references in the previous question are said by some to refer to backsliding. Do you feel this to be an unforgivable sin? Consider 2 Chronicles 7:14; Isaiah 55:7; 1 John 2:1.
4. Are there instances where "good works" might be considered blasphemous? 2 Corinthians 11:13-15; 2 Thessalonians 2:9; Revelation 13:13.
5. How was God's outrage against blasphemy revealed in the Old Testament? Leviticus 24:10-16; Jeremiah 7:25, 26, 28, 16.
6. From lesson study during the week, list other offences against the Holy Ghost. Do you see examples of these in the so-called Christian world today? Be explicit.

LESSON CONCLUSION: *May God keep our hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God, and of Christ, and of the Holy Spirit. He can, if we will!*

Trying the Spirits

SCRIPTURE READING: Ephesians 5:6-17.

"Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world" (1 John 4:1).

LESSON AIM: *To discover those spirits that are different from the Spirit of God, and to realize by what spirit we are motivated.*

INTRODUCTION TO THE LESSON: The Bible teaches that God has made man in His own likeness, with the capability to judge, justify, and reason things through. We have the ability to accept or reject anything that would confront us.

The Bible is still our best teacher and guide. The prophet Isaiah gave us the key to understand its great truth, when he said in Chapter 8:20, "To the law and to the testimony, if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them."

The Word of God is real and divinely inspired. But whenever there is a genuine article there can also be a counterfeit. Satan and his ministers can transform themselves into angels of light. The Bible also reveals to us that the "dragon (Satan) was wroth with the woman (church) and went to make war with the remnant of her seed;" and if it were possible, the very elect would be deceived. The apostle Paul gave earnest admonition to the brethren at Galatia: "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed" (Galatians 1:8).

If the problem of deception was hard to deal with in the early church, think how much greater it is today with the reasonings of increased knowledge and science to confound the believer.

The Word of God has been polluted, and diluted, in today's so-called world of Christendom. The Bible is the truth, but there are many using the Word deceitfully for their own personal gain. For this reason we must not only have a basic knowledge of the Bible, but also be filled and led by the Spirit in study and application of the Word.

When we rely on our own wisdom and become obedient to our own spirit, we will develop an attitude contrary to God's will. We become self-willed, which is evil. We constantly need to exercise our faith in God. If a doctrine or belief can be proven by the Word

of God, then accept it; if not, study to determine where it stands in error.

"Beloved, believe not every Spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world" (1 John 4:1).

REFERENCES FOR LESSON PREPARATION: 2 Corinthians 11:1-15; 2 Peter 2; 1 John 2:18-29; 1 John 4:1-6; Jude.

QUESTIONS FOR STUDY AND DISCUSSION

1. What conditions will exist during the last days? 1 Timothy 4:1; 2 Timothy 3:4, 5. Do you feel these characteristics are caused by a lack of "trying (or proving) the spirits"?
2. Will sincerity make one's belief right? How does the term "sanctify" apply to this question? John 17:17. Will the Holy Spirit lead one into a partial truth or all truth? John 16:13; 1 John 4:6.
3. By what method do we "prove the spirits"? Isaiah 8:20; 1 Thessalonians 5:21; 2 Timothy 2:15.
4. Why is it so important to be led by the proper spirit? John 5:39; 2 Timothy 3:16, 17.
5. What is the Christian's responsibility when being led by the Spirit of God? 2 Timothy 3:14; 2:25, 26.

LESSON CONCLUSION: *Obedience is one of the criteria in "trying the spirits." We must submit ourselves to God in humbleness and meekness, accepting His Word as a rule of conduct for our daily lives.*

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Reception of the Holy Spirit

SCRIPTURE READING: Matthew 7:7-11.

"But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint" (Isaiah 40:31).

LESSON AIM: *To analyze how and when one can receive the Holy Spirit.*

INTRODUCTION TO THE LESSON: In recent years man has made astonishing discoveries in every field of knowledge imaginable and yet has not reached his full human potential.

Many theories have been expounded on how to receive the Holy Spirit and uncover the very mysteries of God. Many feel that one must "work himself" into an emotional frenzy to receive the Holy Spirit; others say one must follow certain procedures or say certain words or phrases over and over in order to invoke the Spirit.

We must remember that the Holy Spirit emanates from the very Presence of God, Who gives His Spirit as He wills. We cannot command God as to when and where we want to receive His Spirit. It is true that God wants us to ask Him for all our needs; yet by the same token He knows what we require. So we need to be careful that we do not ask amiss.

The Bible teaches us that God is more willing to give than we are willing to receive. It is then quite evident that we are the ones minimizing the power of God. It is our duty to prepare ourselves in obedience and humility in order to receive the full extent of God's power within us.

REFERENCES FOR LESSON PREPARATION: Luke 11:13; 1 John 3:24; John 14:12-17; 1 Corinthians 2:12; 2 Corinthians 11:4; Galatians 3:2, 3; Titus 3:5, 6.

QUESTIONS FOR STUDY AND DISCUSSION

1. What must the believer do prior to receiving the Holy Spirit? Acts 2:38.
2. Is belief in God sufficient to receive the Holy Spirit? James 2:19, 26.
3. Is it necessary to have a great emotional display in order to be receptive of God's Spirit? Matthew 6:5-8; Ecclesiastes 5:1, 2.
4. From the class members' experiences, consider the different ways in which the Spirit can be received. Review Paul's conversion, and that of Stephen. Acts 9:4-6; 6:3, 5, 8.
5. In what ways can the Spirit be hindered from entering our lives? Matthew 15:8; Romans 6:19.
6. What must the Christian guard against? Hebrews 3:12; 5:11.
7. It has been said that we are what we eat. Compare this to our spiritual life. Mark 7:18-23; Romans 10:9, 10.

LESSON CONCLUSION: *The granting a privilege reserved for the few, but cast out by our sins and unbelief have robbed us of our sleep; for now is our salvation nearer (Romans 13:11).*

REFERRED
1 Peter 1:5
Jude 35-39
I need one church

The Way Into Blessing

SCRIPTURE READING: I Peter 1:3-13.

"Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3:13, 14).

LESSON AIM: *To reassure ourselves that the way to salvation and great blessing is through the Spirit.*

INTRODUCTION TO THE LESSON: As in all things, there are both right and wrong ways of seeking more of the blessings of God.

The Bible teaches that "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Proverbs 14:12). "Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it" (Matthew 7:14). Many sincere Christians have preconceived ideas of what God's Spirit is, what it does, its mode of manifestation, and how to go about receiving it in full measure. It is reassuring to know that the Bible does contain all the answers to these questions.

The way into blessing is nothing more than living under the influence of the Holy Spirit. To have power over sin! To be sanctified in truth! To be changed from carnal to spiritual, from proud to humble, from selfish to loving! To have power for service! And to be completely transformed! All this comes by abounding and delighting in total involvement with the Holy Spirit.

The blessings of God come quite easily where faith is exercised. Many stumble at the question of faith, but the Bible teaches that without faith it is impossible to please God. To receive and continue in His Spirit, one must have faith, for without it, it is useless either to ask or seek. But where faith is, prayer will prevail. Everything depends on what we believe about God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit. God grants His gifts to every believer according to the measure of his faith.

REFERENCES FOR LESSON PREPARATION: Hebrews 11:32-40; 1 Peter 1:3-12; 2 Timothy 3:14-17; 1 Timothy 4:12-16; Hebrews 10:35-39; Jude 20-25; Revelation 22:11-17.

QUESTIONS FOR STUDY AND DISCUSSION

1. For what kind of blessing should the Christian seek? John 10:10.
2. What is the main factor in securing this abundant life? Hebrews 11:6.
3. What words of comfort does Jude give to the believer living in a carnal world? Jude 20-25.
4. On the other hand, how does Jesus caution us? Mark 13:13.
5. List some attributes God expects in His people. 2 Peter 1:5-7.
6. What is one method by which we can continue to receive blessings from God? Ecclesiastes 9:10; 1 Corinthians 10:31; Colossians 3:17, 23.
7. As we have studied these lessons on the Holy Spirit and realize its importance in our lives, the question is, what are we going to do about it? Just how real will we allow the Holy Spirit to become to us?

LESSON CONCLUSION: *God is wonderful! His love and mercy are beyond our comprehension. Recognition of our individual responsibility is also great. For we must realize how much we need God in order to receive more of His promises. Let us be of one mind in seeking and securing more of the Holy Spirit. The Church of God must prevail!*

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