

ON BEING LED BY THE SPIRIT OF GOD

Rom.8:14

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. According to Rom.8:14 those who are “sons of God” are led by the Spirit of God.
 - a. Stated another way, for so it is necessarily implied: Those and only those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.
 - b. Or, Those and only those who are sons of God are led by the Spirit of God.
 - c. Thus we can Scripturally affirm that sons of God, those born again, or Christians, “are led by the Spirit of God.”
2. This passage teaches that we are, but leaves the question of how we are led by the Spirit of God unanswered.
 - a. On the fact of our being led by the Spirit of God there is agreement among all believers.
 - b. On the question of how we are led there is wide spread disagreement among believers.
3. There are two widely differing views held by professed believers on how we are led by the Spirit of God.
 - a. Virtually all those of the Denominational religions hold the view that we are led by some kind of mysterious, better-felt-than-told, direct, supernatural influence of the Holy Spirit on the human soul separate and apart from the word of God.
 - b. We who are of the body of Christ, the N.T. Church, hold the view that the Spirit of God leads us only by, through, and with the written word of God, the scriptures.
 - c. Obviously, both positions can't be right. Both may be wrong. But both can't be right.
4. Question: Which view, if either, is the right one? Since the N.T. Scriptures are our only rule of faith and practice, our authoritative guide in faith and practice, we must diligently search them for the answer. Cf. Jno.6:39; Psa.119:104,130; Isa.8:20; 2Tim.15: Jno.8:31,32; 1Cor.4:6; 1Pet.4:11; Rev.22:18, 19.

II. DISCUSSION

A. 1ST , WHO IS THE SPIRIT OF WHOM WE SPEAK AND WHO LEADS US?

1. In Rom.8:14 he is called “the Spirit of God;” in Jno.14:17 and Jno.16:13, “the Spirit of truth;” in Jno.14:26, “the Holy Spirit.”
2. In Ac.5:3,5 he is identified as God, or deity.
3. Then in Mt.28:19 he is identified as one of the Godhead three into whose fellowship the believer is baptized in obeying the gospel, being born again, and becoming a child of God.
4. In Eph.6:17 the word of God is said to be “the sword of the Spirit.”

B. HOW DOES THE HOLY SPIRIT SPEAK TO MAN AND THUS LEAD HIM?

1. In the Godhead three there is one God, or one deity, but three separate, distinct persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.
2. With the three there is perfect unity of purpose, while in function they differ. In the great scheme or plan of human redemption:
 - a. The Father planned.
 - b. The Son executed the plan.
 - c. The Holy Spirit revealed the plan to man.
3. Since the Holy Spirit’s function was to reveal, then God’s will was revealed to man, spoken to man, by means of the Holy Spirit through the Apostles of Jesus Christ, who spoke as the Spirit gave them utterance, Ac.2:1-4; Eph.3:1-5; Gal.1:6-12; 1Jno.1:1-3.
4. Thus the Spirit of God is said to led the sons of God.
5. To be more specific, the Holy Spirit, sent for that purpose, communicated directly to the apostles of Christ and inspired men.
 - a. Speaking of the sacred writers, 2Pet.1:21 says, “...holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.”

- (1) The original Greek suggests that they were moved and empowered for their task even as a sailing ship is moved and empowered by the wind.
 - b. Jesus told his apostles that the Father would send the Holy Spirit in his name, and, “he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you,” Jno.14:26.
 - c. He also promised the apostles that when he returned to the Father he would send the Holy Spirit unto you, and when he is come, “he will guide you into al truth,” Jno.16:13.
 - d. At the time of his ascension to the Father’s right hand in heaven, he promised them they:
 - (1) Would “be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days hence,” Ac.1:5.
 - (2) Would “receive power, after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and you shall be witnesses unto me...unto the uttermost part of the earth,” Ac.1:8.
 - e. On Pentecost, according to Ac.2:1-4, his promise to them was fulfilled.
 - (1) They received the power promised and began to speak “as the Spirit gave them utterance.”
 - (2) In Ac.2:16 Peter told this Jewish audience “this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel” where he quoted Joel 2:28-32 which contained God’s two-fold prophetic promise identified in Ac.2:17,18, 21.
 - f. What they received through inspiration of the Spirit they preached the world over, or to all creation (Col.1:1-28), and wrote it in the N.T. where we can read it and understand what the Spirit says (Eph.3:1-5; 5:17), as they were commissioned to do (1Jno.1:1-5a; Mk.16:15,16; Jno.20:19-23; Ac.2:36-41,47)
6. Combining two parallel passages Eph.5:18,19 and Col.3:16 we see how the Spirit leads.
- a. Studied together we must be convinced we are dealing with the non-miraculous leading of the Spirit.
 - b. In the first place, “be filled with the Spirit” is the imperative mood and carries a command – it is a

command for all Christians to obey, a thing in which the one subject to it is active, i.e., all Christians.

(1) The command of Col.3:16 is its parallel.

- c. Not all N.T. Christians were miraculously endowed, nor were they commanded to be, which is proof that the passage pertains to the non-miraculous leading of the Spirit through the word.
 - d. Here the metonymy of cause is beautifully demonstrated by virtue of the parallel passage, Col.3:16, which commands, “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly..”
 - e. “Be filled with the Spirit” in Eph.5:18 obviously means to be filled with the communication (the word) of the Spirit (which all Christians are commanded to be), which is effected by the Spirit (the initial cause); here the cause is given where the effect is clearly intended.
 - f. This is an equation –Eph.5:18 is equated with Col.3:16. In Eph.5:18 we (all of us) are commanded to be filled with the Spirit, and in the command of Col.3:16 we are told how to obey the command.
 - g. Therefore, once again, we see that the Spirit leads by means of the word of Christ, not in some direct, mysterious, miraculous way.
7. Thus the Holy Spirit leads us, speaks to us, today, only through the written word those inspired men recorded, Eph.3:4,5; 5:17.
- a. No one today would or could know a single word of God’s truth without knowledge of the scriptures.
 - b. Only the Primitive Baptists have taken the direct operation doctrine to its logical conclusion. Consequently, they are rapidly becoming extinct.
8. The view that the Spirit of God leads sons of God in some kind of mysterious, better-felt-than-told, direct, supernatural influence on the human soul separate and apart from the word is not only wrong because it contradicts the plain truth taught in the N.T. on how the Spirit leads us; but it is wrong because of the kind of fruit it bears, which is confusion and religious division. Cf. 1Cor.14:33; 1Cor.1:10-13; Mt.12:30.
- a. Illustrate by the religious division existing and promoted by those supposedly led by the Spirit of God.
 - b. No matter how honest one thinks such experience is from the Spirit of God, one can be honestly wrong.

**C. CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING FIVE UNIMPEACHABLE
INSPIRED WITNESSES' TESTIMONY TO WHAT ONE MUST
RECEIVE TO BE SAVED AND HOW THEY RECEIVE IT.**

1. Jesus' testimony: Jno.17:20; Cf. Jno.1:11,12.
2. John's testimony: Jno.20:30,31.
3. Peter's testimony: Ac.15:6-9; Cf. Ac.2:36-38.
4. Paul's testimony: Rom.10:9-17; Cf. 6:16-18.
5. James' testimony: Jas.1:18-22; Cf. 2:14-26.

(In fact, we can cite the same five witnesses on the matter of what one must receive and how he is to receive it after he is saved from past sins.)

III. CONCLUSION

1. Today the Spirit of God tells sinners to come to the Savior, Rev.22:17.
2. He "calls you through (the) gospel to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ, 2Th.2:13,14.
3. That same Spirit is leading Christians who have sinned to confess their sins that Christ might forgive them and cleanse them from all unrighteousness, 1Jno.1:9.
4. An unknown poet expressed the principle thusly:
Feelings come
And feelings go,
And feelings are deceiving.
My warrant is the word of God.
Nought else is worth believing.
5. May we all gladly follow his instructions for our lives now and forever.