

“STRENGTHENED BY HIS SPIRIT IN THE INNER MAN”

Eph.3:16

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. Some of us may have different religious backgrounds, brought up or reared, being taught different religious doctrines.
 - a. In my up-bringing, the Bible was, though not intended, more or less a neglected book subjected to a Denominational creed for the meaning of various passages and subjects.
 - b. Neglected because it was believed it could not be understood when read. Yet it must be recognized as God’s revealed will to man.
 - c. Grossly perverted because it supposedly said one thing to you, another to me, still another to others.
 - d. Not taken seriously because it really doesn’t matter what you believe as long as one is honest and sincere in what one believes; one faith is as good as another.
 - e. Others are taught that it takes the direct intervention, or direct leading, of the Holy Spirit to enable one to understand the written word of God.
2. What a revelation and a relief it was for me to learn the truth about the faith of Jesus Christ as well as the true working of the Holy Spirit in conviction, conversion, and sanctification of sinners.
3. My many years of consecrated study of the Bible since learning the basic truth and obeying the gospel of Christ has strengthened my conviction that the Holy Spirit uses only the written word of God, which is “the sword of the Spirit” (Eph.6:17), to convict and convert the sinner to Christ, and to guide the Christian in his earthly life to his heavenly home.
4. Our topic for study is based on and part of Eph.3:16, which in turn is part of Paul’s prayer that the Lord would grant the Ephesians, “according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man.”
 - a. That little word “in” in the expression “in the inner man” from the Greek term “eis” is the major problem in this verse.

- b. It is the source of so much controversy as to the meaning of the verse.
 - c. With some contending that it teaches and is proof of the personal indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the baptized believer.
 - d. With others, of whom, I am one, denying the passage teaches that theory.
5. Thus we begin our study of the subject by taking note of the fact that:

II. DISCUSSION

A. THE NEED FOR CHRISTIANS BEING STRONG IN FAITH AND SPIRITUAL UNDERSTANDING IS RECOGNIZED AND ENCOURAGED.

- 1. The Ephesians needed and Paul in Eph.3:16 , led by the Holy Spirit, prayed that the Lord would grant them, according to the riches of his glory:
 - a. “To be strengthened”
 - b. “With power by the Spirit”
 - c. “In the inner man.”
- 2. Here, in Eph.3:16, he prayed that they would be strengthened; then, in Eph.6:10-13, he enjoins upon them the duty to “be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might,” and tells them how to do it by putting on “the whole armor of God.”
- 3. The Colossian Christians needed and were also the object of Paul’s prayer that they be “strengthened with all power, according to the might of his glory,” Col.1;11.
- 4. What brother in Christ would dare deny that we also need strength?
 - a. If the Ephesian and Colossian Christians needed to be strengthened, we also need to be.
 - b. What was enjoyed upon them is with equal force meant for and to be applied to us.

B. MOREOVER, HELP IS NOT ONLY NEEDED BUT HELP IS ALSO AVAILABLE FOR OUR NEED.

1. Being available is one thing; recognizing and utilizing it, something else!
2. The necessary help for needed strength is available through “the word of his grace,” or his “worded grace,” to which Paul committed the Ephesian elders in view of the dangers they faced in performing their duties, Ac.20:32.
 - a. Their duty is emphasized in Ac.20:28.
 - b. The dangers they faced of which he sorrowfully warned them, Vv.29-31.
 - c. The all-sufficient help offered for strength to prevail, V.32.
3. God’s written word when utilized makes the man of God complete and supplies the help needed, 2Tim.3:15-17.
4. To utilize what is available we must exercise diligent effort to rightly divide the word, 2Tim.2:15.
5. No study, no strength! The Holy Spirit never gives the strength needed separate and apart from the word. See Heb.5:11-14; 1Cor.3:1,2.
6. Without diligent dedication to a study of the word, the only thing able to built us up, or strengthen us, we will remain “babes in Christ.”
7. Called by the gospel (2Th.2:13,14), we must “give all diligence” to add to our faith, and to make our “calling and election sure,” 2Pet.1:5-10.
8. It takes both knowing and doing what is needed to prevent spiritual weakness and falling from grace. Jno.13:17; 2Pet.1:8-11; Psa.1:1,2.

C. THE MAN TO BE STRENGTHENED BY GOD’S SPIRIT IS “THE INNER MAN.”

1. To fully understand and appreciate the truth about how the Holy Spirit strengthens we must know what “the inner man” of Eph.3:16 is.
2. The “inner man” is the mind of man or, as the Bible speaks of it, the “heart” of man, which the Bible reveals has four parts: *the intellect; the emotions; the will or volition of man; the conscience of man.*
3. The Hebrew word translated “heart” is pronounced “*leb*” and means “the soul life...the seat of the senses, affections, and

emotions of the mind...it is applied to the mode of thinking and acting,...the seat of will and purpose...intellect and wisdom are often ascribed to the heart...and even the faculty of thinking.” (Gesenises, p.427)

4. The Greek word *kardia* “denotes the seat and center of all physical and spiritual life; the soul or mind, as it is the fountain and seat of thoughts, passions, desires, appetites, affections, purposes, endeavors.” (Thayer, p.325).
5. Further Bible identification of the four parts of the heart of man, the “inner man.”
 - a. First, there is the *intellect*.
 - (1) The Bible says the “heart” is what man uses to think with, or the source of man’s thinking, Mt.9:4; Heb.4:12.
 - (2) It can *imagine*, Gen.6:5.
 - (3) It can *meditate*, Psa.19:14.
 - (4) It can *trust*, Psa.28:7.
 - (5) It can *remember*, Lk.2:51.
 - (6) It can *reason*, Mk.2:8; 7:6.
 - (7) It can *know* and *understand*, Josh.23:14; Mt.13:15.
 - b. Second, there is the *will or volition* of man, which the Bible identifies as the *heart*.
 - (1) It *purposes*, Ac.11:23; 2Cor.9:7.
 - (2) It *determines*, 1Cor.7:37.
 - (3) It has *intents*, Heb.4:12.
 - (4) When taught it can *believe* and it *motivates* one to obey, Rom.6:16-18; 10:9,10.
 - c. Third, there is the heart as the source of man’s *emotions*.
 - (1) It can *fear*, Isa.35:4.
 - (2) It can *love*, Mt.23:27.
 - (3) It can *despise*, 2Sam.6:16.
 - (4) It can *rejoice*, Psa.33:21; Jno.16:22.
 - (5) It can *grieve or suffer anguish*, 2Cor.2:4.
 - (6) It can be *comforted*, Eph.6:22.
 - (7) It is noteworthy that the Ephesians were comforted by the words spoken by Tychicus, Eph.6:21.
 - (8) God’s children can be assured (persuaded, footnote, ASV) or taught by the truth (1Jno.3:18-20). Therefore, the heart is appealed to by facts

and motives from which it reasons. See Jno.8:31,32; 6:44,45; Jno.17:17.

- d. Fourth, there is the *conscience*.
 - (1) It can be *pricked*, Ac.2:37.
 - (2) It may be *cut*, Ac.5:33.
 - (3) It may be *violated*, Rom.14:22,23; Ac.23:1; 24:16.
 - (4) It may *condemn or approve*, Rom.2:14,15.

D. HOW IS THE “INNER MAN,” THE HEART, THE WILL, INFLUENCED AND STRENGTHENED “BY HIS SPIRIT?”

- 1. Col.1:9-11 reveals when, how and the object (purpose) for which the Colossians were to be strengthened.
 - a. V.11 reveals three things about their being strengthened for which Paul prayed.
 - (1) The fact that they be “Strengthened with all might,” (power).
 - (2) That it be “according to his (God’s) glorious power,” (krator – dominion)
 - (3) Its resultant effect “unto (in order to) all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness.”
 - b. Vv.9,10 reveal the things necessary to and preceding their being strengthened, for which Paul prayed.
 - (1) “That you might be filled with the knowledge of his (God’s) will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding,” V.9.
 - (2) “That (in order that) you might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God,” V.10.
 - c. Note this: That for which Paul prays they might be able to do in V.10, must be preceded by that for which he prays in V.9. One without the other, and their proper order, is not possible.
 - d. Note again: V.9 begins with and V.10 ends with the all-important, absolutely necessary, enabling ingredient leading to being strengthened, which is “knowledge of his (God’s) will.”
 - e. This knowledge of God, which comes through the knowledge of his will, or his written word, which has

been revealed to man by the Holy Spirit, through the Apostles of Christ, is how the “inner man” is influenced and strengthened “by his Spirit.” Cf. Col.1:3-6.

- f. This is why the Colossian passage can teach that baptized believers are strengthened by the knowledge of God’s will, and the Ephesian passage (Eph.3:16) teaches we are strengthened by the Spirit, and both be teaching the same thing.
 - (1) One passage is emphasizing the one bringing the message (the Holy Spirit).
 - (2) The other passage is emphasizing the message brought.
 - g. Therefore the “inner man” is strengthened by the Holy Spirit through the inspired word. Cf. 2Tim.3:15-17.
2. Another example is that of the Ephesian elders and how they were to be strengthened.
- a. According to Ac.20:32, when Paul knew he and they would not see each other again (V.38), and in view of the future troublesome situation they faced, he said, “and now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up...”
 - b. According to Tit.2:11,12 “the grace of God” “instructs us” in what we are to do and not do.
 - c. We are taught, built up, strengthened by “the word of his grace,” or by “his worded grace,” the gospel, which came to us by means of the Holy Spirit through the Apostles of Jesus Christ. Cf. Gal.1:11,12; Eph.3:1-5; Tit.2;11,12.
 - d. As a counter argument, some will claim, “I was tempted to do wrong, but the Spirit kept telling me...?”
 - (1) We do not deny that the Spirit keeps telling Christians not to do wrong.
 - (2) We have just noted where the grace of God by the Spirit instructs us (teaches us) with words not to do wrong but, instead, to always do right.
 - (3) When we learn from the Spirit-revealed word the lessons intended, then every time we are tempted to do wrong we are going to remember the Spirit’s teaching through the word. See Mt.4:4, where Jesus said, “It is written, man shall not live by

bread along, but by every word that procedeth out of the mouth of God.”

- (4) There is nothing wrong with the words people say about the Spirit telling them not to yield to temptation. The wrong is in what they mean by what is said.
 - (a) What they mean is that in some unexplainable, mysterious manner, the Spirit, in an immediate way, keeps speaking to them, instructing them not to yield to the temptation and do wrong.
 - (b) What they claim the Spirit is doing in an immediate, direct way is really being done in a mediate way by the Spirit.
 - (c) The spirit is using an agent, the all-sufficient word of God to convict, convert and sanctify and strengthen.
 - (1) Ill. by the way a woodsman cuts down a tree using a saw, his agent, though he may never personally touch the tree he saws down.
 - (2) Still the man is said to have sawed down the tree.
 - (3) Which did it? The man or the saw? Both did it. The man by means of the saw did it.
 - (4) So it is with the Spirit and the word.
3. The principle of agency explains the process of how and by whom or what the “inner man” is influenced and strengthened.
 - a. The Holy Spirit influences the heart of man by reproving (convicting), Jno.16:7,8.
 - b. 2Tim.3:16,17, the Scriptures are “profitable for reproof” (conviction).
 - c. Peter’s Holy Spirit inspired sermon pricked the hearts of 3,000 on Pentecost who heard him speak, Ac.2:37.
 - d. According to Heb.4:12 the influence of the word of God upon the heart of man is powerful.
 - e. Summed up, this illustrates the principle of agency by teaching:

- (1) That man is reprov'd or convicted by the Holy Spirit, Jno.16:7,8.
 - (2) That man is reprov'd or convicted by the Scriptures, or the word of God, the sword of the Spirit, 2Tim.3:16,17; Ac.2:37; Heb.4:12; Eph.6:17.
 - (3) That the Holy Spirit plus the Scriptures, or the word of God, the sword of the Spirit, equals man reprov'd and convicted.
4. The principle of agency explains how spiritual growth necessary to spiritual strength is attained.
- a. 1Cor.3:6 says, "but God gave the increase (growth)"
 - b. 1Pet.2:2 says, you must "desire the sincere milk of the word, that you may grow (increase) thereby."
 - c. Therefore, the "increase," or the "growth," is given by God by the agency of the Spirit revealed word.

III. CONCLUSION

1. Now, in conclusion, back to our Eph.3:16 text for a brief explanation to show that it is not saying, nor does it mean, that the Spirit is in (that is, personally dwelling in) the inner man and thereby strengthening the inner man.
2. Regarding Paul's desire and prayer for them, the text says, "That he (the Father) would grant you (lit. – that he may give you), according to the riches (abundance) of his glory, to be (that you may be) strengthened (to be made strong; to increase in strength; to grow strong [Thayer, 358]. This expresses the purpose.) with might (power) by (through) his (God's) Spirit *in* (from the Gr. term "eis," denoting "direction:...towards" [Thayer, 183] the inner man."
 - a. Not "in" as in dwelling in . But "eis" denoting direction: towards to inner man.
 - b. Thayer, 184, further says, "II. Eis after words indicating motion or direction or end...univ. of acts in which the mind is directed towards, or looking to, something...of reference or relation; with respect to, in reference to; as regards, Rom.15:2; Gal.6:4; Eph.3:16; Phil.1:5; 2:22; 1Th.5:18.
 - c. Therefore, Eph.3:16 is not saying, nor does it mean, that the Spirit is in (that is, dwelling in) the inner man and thereby strengthening the inner man.
 - d. Rather, it is saying that the Spirit's strengthening is directed towards ("eis") the inner man.