

THE ROLE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT AFTER CONVERSION

I. INTRODUCTION

1. That the Holy Spirit has a role or a function in the life of the Christian, the baptized believer, the child of God, the member of the church, the body of Christ, I do not deny, rather I affirm.
2. The question of WHAT that role is or HOW the Holy Spirit functions in the life of those converted to Christ is the burden of this study.
3. Our study of the role of the Holy Spirit after conversion naturally involves the matter of what some call “the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.”
4. Our plan or procedure in the study shall be as follows:
 - a. The role of the Holy Spirit after conversion in the life of baptized believers during the time of progressive revelation by means of spiritual gifts.
 - b. The role of the Holy Spirit after conversion in the life of baptized believers after the cessation of spiritual gifts.

II. DISCUSSION

A. THE ROLE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT AFTER CONVERSION IN THE LIFE OF BAPTIZED BELIEVERS DURING THE TIME OF PROGRESSIVE REVELATION BY MEANS OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS.

1. The power of the Holy Spirit, not the Holy Spirit himself, was promised to baptized believer by Jesus in Mk.16:17,18.
 - a. The rules of English grammar force us to the conclusion that the promise of the “signs” or “spiritual gifts” of Vv.17,18 was to baptized believers.
 - b. In Vv.14,15a,19,20 there is **indirect address**, Mark telling in his own words what Jesus did with reference to his apostles, as well as why and how he did it, and where Jesus is spoken of as “he” – **2nd person**; the apostles spoken of as “they” or “them” – **3rd person**.
 - c. But in Vv.15b-18 there is **direct address**, where Mark quotes Jesus’ own words in his commission of his apostles, and where the apostles are addressed, not as “they” or “them” – **3rd person**, but as “ye” – **2nd person**, and where the saved, the baptized believers, are spoken as “he,” “them,” “they” – **3rd person**.

- d. Who is the “he” in V.16? Any person who will believe and be baptized to be saved.
 - e. What would “follow them that believe” according to Vv.17,18? Answer: “these signs” of V.17. Further identified in V.18 as “spiritual gifts”.
 - f. Take note that Jesus here said **WHAT** would follow believers – “these signs” – but he didn’t say **HOW** they would follow them or **HOW** they would receive this power, or **WHEN** it would occur.
 - (1) For the fulfillment of that promise we must look elsewhere
 - g. “These signs” of Mk.16:17,18 which were to follow baptized believers are further identified in 1Cor.12 as to what they were – “spiritual gifts”, in 1Cor.13, as to their temporary duration – “till that which is perfect is come,” in 1Cor.14, as to their function and their regulation while in existence.
2. The fulfillment of this promised power of the Holy Spirit to baptized believers by means of spiritual gifts was at the beginning of the apostle’s work at Pentecost.
- a. For Peter on Pentecost (Ac.2), “standing up with the eleven” (the other apostles), and having received “the promise of the Father” (Lk.24:49; Ac.1:4), or having been “endured with power from on high” (Lk.24:49), the power of the Holy Spirit (Ac.1:8), or the baptism of the Holy Spirit (Ac.1:5), and operating under the Great Commission of Mk.16:15-20, promised baptized believers “the gift of the Holy Spirit”(Ac.2:38), and according the prophecy of Joel quoted at Ac.2:16-18.
 - b. Take note also that Peter, as did Jesus in Mk.16:17,18, said **WHAT**, but he didn’t say **HOW** in Ac.2:38.
 - (1) That is, Ac.2:38 doesn’t tell us **HOW** baptized believers would receive “the gift of the Holy Spirit”, first spoken of by Joel and promised by Peter on Pentecost.
 - (2) We learn the **HOW** and the **WHEN** from Ac.8:12-19; 19:5,6; Cf. 2Tim.1:6; Rom.1:11.
3. Jno.7:37-39 is also parallel to Mk.16:16-20.
- a. To believers is promised the Holy Spirit, or the power of the Holy Spirit, that would produce “rivers of living water” flowing out of the belly or the inward parts of believers, Vv.38,39.
 - b. This must of necessity represent the work of the Holy Spirit through spiritual gifts bestowed upon believers of the first century during the age of progressive revelation beginning at Pentecost. See Ac.2:14-18,38,39.

- c. The power of the Spirit referred to here in Jno.7:37-39 of necessity is parallel to that of Mk.16:17,18; Ac.8:12-19; 19:5,6; 1Cor.12,13,14, and which enabled the early church to carry on its work of evangelism and edification in the absence of an apostle in their midst and until a complete revelation of God's word was received.

B. THE ROLE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT AFTER CONVERSION IN THE LIFE OF BAPTIZED BELIEVERS AND AFTER THE CESSATION OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS.

1. Think on the following things as we seek to develop the truth concerning the Holy Spirit's role.
 - a. No man has ever been more than mere man except Jesus Christ who himself was both God (deity) and man (humanity).
 - b. No mere man, no mere human being, as we are, has ever received deity in any form as a gift from God.
 - c. Either Christians, baptized believers, are totally human by virtue of the fact that they are beings possessing human bodies indwelt by a human spirit.
 - d. Or they are more than human by virtue of the fact that they are beings possessing human bodies indwelt by a human spirit and also by a divine Spirit, the Holy Spirit (deity).
 - e. Is it the case that we as Christians are human and only human, or have we become more than human when we became Christians by virtue of the fact that we receive deity (the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God), as a gift at baptism for the remission of sins?
 - f. How can it be that we are personally filled with deity, or have the personal indwelling of the Holy Spirit, and are not both human and divine as was Jesus?
 - g. At the same time, we do not deny that the Holy Spirit has a role in the life of baptized believers in this age after the cessation of spiritual gifts, nor that the N.T. affirms that the Holy Spirit indwells and thus influences, guides and directs the life of the baptized believer.
2. Various passages teach:
 - a. That God, the Father, deity, dwells in baptized believers, 2Cor.6:16 (Cf. Lev.26:12); Eph.4:6; 1Jno.3:24; 4:4,12-16.

- b. That God, the Son, deity, dwells in baptized believers, Jno.6:56; Rom.8:10; 2Cor.4:10,11; 13:5; Gal.4:19; Eph.3:17; Col.1:27; 3:11.
 - c. That “the Spirit of God,” “the Holy Spirit”, deity, indwells baptized believers, Rom.8:9,11; 1Cor.3:16; 6:19; Eph.3:16.
 - d. That baptized believers are led by the Spirit, Rom.8:14.
 - (1) How? 1Tim.4:1; 2Tim.3:16-4:4; Tit.2:11,12; Ac.20:32.
 - e. That the word of Christ dwells in us, Col.3:16.
 - (1) An added thought: The 119th Psalm is completely and entirely about the word of God and the believer.
 - (2) There is not a hint in its entirety of God’s presence, or of deity’s presence, without the word.
 - (3) There is no indication of any power or role of deity in the baptized believer’s life apart from the Spirit-inspired, Spirit-revealed and Spirit-recorded word of God.
3. Therefore, all members of the Godhead, Deity, indwell and thus influence baptized believers, but in what sense?
- a. The answer is explained in Eph.3:16,17 as being “by faith” which, of course, comes by hearing; i.e., the acceptance of the word of God, “which the Holy Spirit teacheth,” 1Cor.2:13; Rom.10:17. Cf. Jno.14:23.
 - b. The same is true of the Holy Spirit as per Paul’s teaching in Gal.3:2: the Spirit is received “by the hearing of faith.”
4. Hence, the Scriptures clearly teach that when the words, thoughts and Spirit of God are controlling factors in the lives of baptized believers, God dwells in them; that when the gospel controls us, Christ dwells in us; that when we receive the gospel by the hearing of faith, the Holy Spirit dwells in us.
5. Since spiritual gifts and the miraculous workings of God through human agency have ceased, the role of the Holy Spirit in the life of believers after their conversion to Christ cannot be miraculous or direct through no medium.
6. Hence, it cannot be the role of the Holy Spirit himself that personally indwells and thereby influences, guides and directs the baptized believer, but the Holy Spirit by means of his power which is the Word of God, the sword of the Spirit, according to Eph.6:17.
- a. Cf. the man and the axe. Which cuts down the tree?

C. FURTHER CONFIRMATION OF THE ROLE OF THE SPIRIT AFTER CONVERSION AS EVIDENCED BY THE MODE, MANNER OR MEANS OF HIS SPIRITUAL INFLUENCE BY AND THROUGH THE WORD.

1. According to Col.1:9,10, it was the apostle's desire for all to be **filled** with knowledge.
 - a. But according to 1Th.1:5 it was "through the power of the Holy Spirit" that the knowledge of God's will had come to them for the source of spiritual understanding.
 - b. It came to them and can come to us and dwell in us only through the teaching of the truth according to Col.1:5,6 (1Th.1:5) – and that means only through the word, the gospel.
2. Baptized believers were given inspired instruction to let the **word** dwell in them, Col.3:16. Cf. Eph.5:18,19, the parallel passage.
 - a. Eph. is a command to be filled with the Spirit, and the parallel passage in Col.3:16, which says let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, describes **HOW** the command is obeyed.
 - b. Thus Eph.5:18,19 and Col.3:16 are equated, and to be filled with the Spirit is accomplished through the word.
3. The means of direction and guidance for the child of God is that of being led by the Spirit through the word, Psa.73:24; 119:105,9,11; 17:4; Rom.8:14-16.
 - a. By means of being led by the Spirit through the word we can know we are children of God, Rom.8:14-16.
 - b. Psa.73:24 reveals that his word is able to lead us to glory: "Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel and afterward receive me to glory." Cf. Psa.119:,11,105.
4. The growth of the spiritual babe in Christ is by the milk of the word, 1Pet.2:2.
 - a. The reference to the newborn babes connects with the immediate context of the preceding verse of 1:23, "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God...As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby."
 - b. Cf. 2Pet.3:17,18; 1:2-11.
5. According to 1Th.2:13 the effectual working within the baptized believer is accomplished by the indwelling word.

- a. According to 1Th.1:5,6, these baptized believers had received the word of God by hearing the preaching of it by means of the power of the Holy Spirit. See Ac.17:1-4, the record of their conversion.
 - b. This same word of God was *effectually working* in them after their conversion.
 - c. The word *effectual* means: that which is powerful enough to produce the intended effect; that it is adequate – it is fully efficacious – no supplement is necessary. Cf. 2Tim.3:16,17.
6. According to Col.1:5,6, the *truth within* produces *fruit without*: “the truth of the gospel; Which is come unto you, as it is in all the world; and bringeth forth fruit, as it doth also in you, since the day ye heard of it, and knew the grace of God in truth.”
- a. This living, animated thing, called the *word* and the *truth* and the *gospel* which they had heard remained in them to produce and bring forth *fruit* continually, making them increasingly fruitful in the knowledge of God enabling them to “walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God,” Vv.9,10. Cf. 2Tim.3:17.
7. Our source of *strength* as baptized believers is the knowledge of the word of God’s grace by which we are *edified* and able to “*admonish one another*,” Ac.20:32; Col.1:9-11; Rom.15:14.
- a. The expression “word of his grace which is able to build you up,” in Ac.20:32, is an equation with “the grace of God that bringeth salvation,” in Tit.2:11,12, which “teaches us” – thus the grace of God *builds* us up by *teaching* us
 - b. We are “strengthened with all might” (Col.1:11) when we are “filled with the knowledge of his will” (Col.1:9).
 - c. And this is how the believer is “strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man,” Eph.3:16,17.
8. According to 1Th.4:18; 3:1,2, and Rom.15:2, the inspired word of God has in it the power to *comfort* the bereaved believer concerning his faith.
- a. Yet Ac.9:31 says, “Then had the churches rest throughout all Judea 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.”
9. Our source of *understanding* and that which *keeps us from sinning* is the inspired word, Job32:8; Psa.119:104,105,11; 17:4; Eph.3,4; 5:17; 1:17,18; 2Tim.3:16,17.
- a. The idea that it requires the direct indwelling of the personal Holy Spirit to illuminate the scriptures and to enable us to understand

- them and/or to guide us and/or enable us to obey is pure denominational nonsense. Besides that, it “ain’t so!”
- b. Note what 2Tim.3:16,17 says about the sufficiency of the Word!
10. According to Ac.7:51-60 not lending ear to the word is resisting the Spirit.
 - a. Neh.9:30 says, “Yet many years didst thou forbear them, and testified against them by thy spirit in the prophets: yet would they not give ear.”
 - b. 2Tim.3:8: “Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith.”
 11. According to 1Th.5:19-21, baptized believers are taught that disobedience to the word is quenching the Spirit.
 - a. “Quench” here is the same word as “gone out” in Mt.25:8 – “our lamps are gone out.”
 - b. It conveys the idea of a flame, when it is put out or allowed to go out, it is quenched.
 - c. When the flame of the word is extinguished, the Spirit of God is quenched.

III. CONCLUSION

1. If the Holy Spirit’s role after conversion in the life of the baptized believer is to dwell within and operate upon his heart either without or separate and apart from the written word, what does he do that is not affirmed of the word?
2. By the direct operation and indwelling of the Holy Spirit apart from the word, or the word apart from the Holy Spirit, the agency of one or the other is cancelled. But with God operating through the word, both remain.
3. It is through the baptized believer imbibing the characteristics of God (the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit) as revealed in the written word, and incorporating these characteristics into his intellectual, emotional, and volitional activity, that God can be said to be a functional, guiding, directing presence in his life.
4. He dwells with us “in his word.” He enters our lives through revelation and dwells within us, thus guiding and directing our lives through revelation; i.e. biblical revelation (inspired Scripture).
5. Don’t forget the power of God’s living word:
 - a. It’s power to save us initially and eternally, Rom.1:16; Jas.1:21; 2Pet.1:2-11.
 - b. It’s power to transform us by the renewing of our minds, Rom.12:1,2.

- c. It's power as "a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart," of the believer, Heb.4:12.
- 6. In all of this, we refer not simply to mere words filling our minds in the sense of having a knowledge of them; we have reference to the Spirit-revealed word of God *filling our lives*.
- 7. Therefore, we do not believe in nor advocate, but deny, a doctrine of salvation and service by word only. For the word does not save us and spiritually guide and direct us separate and apart from God (the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit), any more than God saves us and spiritually guides and directs us separate and apart from his written word.

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