



Questions
About the
Holy Spirit

Sermon  SNAPSHOTS

Questions about the Holy Spirit

There is MUCH misunderstanding about the Holy Spirit. Most of this stems from a lack of study, or to false concepts fostered by Charismatics or Calvinists. In this lesson, we shall address a few questions. Before we begin, it should be pointed out that the Holy Spirit is a part of the Godhead, in other words, He is GOD (Ac.5:3-4).

Also, although He gave miraculous powers in the past, He no longer does so (1Cor.13:8-10).

How does the Holy Spirit try to “influence” us?

- First, the Holy Spirit is NOT the word of God; & the word of God is NOT the Holy Spirit
- BUT the Holy Spirit affects us THROUGH the word of God (that which He revealed)
- If we can see how John works THROUGH his ax, in order to cut down a tree...
- Then we can see how the Spirit works THROUGH the word! (Eph.6:17; Heb.3:7-11; 10:15-18)

What does the Holy Spirit do through the word?

- He convicts us of sin (Jn.16:7-11) -- through inspired words! (Ac.2:1-4, 14, 36-37)
- He causes us to be born again (Jn.3:3-5) -- through inspired words! (1Pt.1:22-23)
- He saves-rescues us from our sin (Tit.3:5) -- through inspired words! (Jm.1:21-22)
- He sanctifies us [makes us holy] (1Cor.6:11) -- through inspired words! (Jn.17:17)
- He leads [guides] us (Rm.8:12-14) -- through the teaching of His word! (Rm.8:2)

Does the Holy Spirit ever act apart from the word?

- Yes! But note that, in such cases, His actions are TOWARD God, and on our behalf
- He bears witness "with" – not "to" – our spirit that we are God's sons (cf. Rm.8:16-17)
- He also makes intercession (prays on our behalf) when we can't find the words (Rm.8:26-27)

What is “the GIFT of the Holy Spirit” in Acts 2:38?

- Interpretation 1: “the gift of the Holy Spirit” = the gift which “is,”-“consists of,” the Holy Spirit
- Compare “the gift of righteousness” (Rm.5:17) – i.e., “consisting of” righteousness!
- This is usually interpreted to mean that the Holy Spirit personally indwells the believer
- I do not share this view, because I do not believe the Holy Spirit personally indwells anyone
- Interpretation 2: “the gift of the Holy Spirit” = the gift which “the Holy Spirit gives”
- Compare salvation as “the gift of God” (Ep.2:8) – i.e., salvation is the gift which God gives!
- This is usually interpreted to mean that this gift is “something” given by the Holy Spirit
- What that “something” is will be discussed in our next point...



“The gift of the Holy Spirit” is also described as a “seal”

- Just as in Acts 2:38, this occurs AFTER hearing and believing the gospel of salvation (Ep.1:13-14)
- A “seal” was used to authenticate, ratify, or prove genuine (as a modern “notary seal”)
- The Holy Spirit “seals” us, showing or proving that we are genuine “sons of God” (2Tm.2:19)
- Of course, this is FIGURATIVE language! There is NO LITERAL SEAL anywhere on our person!
- The same text (Eph.1:13-14) also calls this seal “the earnest (down payment) of our inheritance”
- Our FULL reward will be in heaven; but God shows good faith by “sealing” us with His Holy Spirit
- Thus, God has “sealed” (or marked) us as His, showing His intent to “pay fully” in Heaven!



What is meant by the “indwelling” of the Holy Spirit?

- First, let us clarify some things which simply MUST be understood about indwelling.
- The concept of HS “indwelling” is NOT LITERAL (it’s not an “incarnation,” like Christ in 1Tm.3:16)
- The concept of HS “indwelling” is NOT CALVINISTIC ENABLING, due to “total depravity” (Ezk.18:20)
- The concept of HS “indwelling” is NOT CHARISMATIC ABILITIES (1Cor.13:8-10, “fail... cease”)

Instead, the Holy Spirit “dwells in us” by means of His influence “in us”

- Since “indwelling” is FIGURATIVE, let’s try to understand just “how” He “indwells” Christians
- I suggest that He “indwells” in the same manner as Christ does via His influence! (Ga.2:20)
- This “influence” is wielded through, or by means of, God’s word! (Ac.2:4, 14, 22, 37)
- It’s not merely “reading” or “knowing” Scripture; but the transformation it brings! (2Tm.2:19b)



I hope that we have answered some common questions about the Holy Spirit. It is clear that He is still active today in some ways. But He never acts upon us separate from the word! These facts rule out the direct operation of the Holy Spirit on our hearts. No one will ever be saved apart from the word! (Rm.1:16)

-Lanny Smith

Fishers Church of Christ

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