

## The Holy Spirit Lesson 3

### V. The Work of the Spirit in Salvation

#### A. The Convicting Work of the Holy Spirit (John 16:8-11)

The idea of "conviction" is complex. It involves these 4 ideas: authoritative examination, unquestionable proof, decisive judgment and punitive power. Conviction is when the Spirit makes the truth of the Gospel clear to an unsaved person either directly from the Spirit to a person's conscience, through the Bible or through a messenger or a testimony of another person. Conviction is not the saving of the person, that is regeneration.

What truth does He make clear? The truth about sin, righteousness and judgment (John 16:8-11). The proof that men are in a state of sin is "because people do not believe in Me" (John 16:9). The righteousness of Jesus is proven by His resurrection from the dead and ascension to God (John 16:10). The proof of judgment to come is based on the past judgment of Satan (John 12:31; 16:11).

The order of the Spirit's work of conviction is logical: (1) People need to see their state of sin, (2) then they need to have proof of the righteousness of the Savior Who can save them from that sin and (3) people need to be reminded that if they refuse to believe in Jesus for eternal life, that they will face certain eternal judgment and condemnation. Conviction may take time and be a process, but there is still the moment when a person hears and realizes his need for a Savior.

#### B. The Regeneration Work of the Holy Spirit (Titus 3:5)

The word regeneration means to give life or to be born again. The key passage on regeneration in the New Testament is Titus 3:5 "He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of His mercy." Two Old Testament verses on regeneration are Isaiah 57:15 and Psalm 119:25. The concept of being born again is found in John 3:1-8 where Nicodemus interacts with Jesus. To be regenerated is to be "born again" (John 3:3). To be born again, we must be "born of the Spirit" (John 3:6).

The Word of God is also closely associated with regeneration to provide the proper content to a person's faith. (1 Peter 1:23; James 1:18) Regeneration is instantaneous, although the preceding and following events may involve processes over time. Once we have been born again, our spirit is regenerated which brings about a new nature (2 Corinthians 5:17; Titus 3:5), with a new capacity to do right things. We still also retain our old sinful nature and the capacity to serve self. Regeneration does not make a man perfect, but it places him in the family of God and gives him a new ability to please his Father by growing more like Jesus Christ. (1 John 1:6-8; 2:29) Some believers walked away from Jesus such as the disciples in Matthew 26:56; believers in Hebrews 3:12; 6:4-6; 2 Peter 3:17; 1 Timothy 4:1; but God never loses ANYONE who has believed in Jesus for eternal life, 2 Timothy 2:11-13.

#### C. The Indwelling of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19)

The distinctive feature of the ministry of the Holy Spirit today is that He indwells every believer, regardless of his spiritual condition. Please note the carnal Corinthians in 1 Corinthians 3:3 and the believer who was living in gross immorality in 1 Corinthians 5:5. And yet Paul says, without making any exceptions, that the Holy Spirit lived within their bodies (1 Corinthians 6:19). Furthermore, Romans 8:9 makes it clear that the absence of the Holy Spirit in a person is one evidence of an unsaved condition. When we believe in Jesus we have "eternal life" (John 3:16; 36; 5:24; 6:47), NOT temporary life as some teach.

How can we know we have the Spirit of God in us? (1) Simply believe the Word of God which says it is true and (2) see in your own experience the presence of the Spirit working in your life. We should understand that many times the process of Christian growth may be slow and steady with no unusual demonstrations of the power of God. This unspectacular kind of progress should never be confused as indicating an absence of the indwelling Spirit. He does abide forever in every believer's life (John 14:16-17).

#### D. The Baptizing Ministry of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:13)

Contrary to many popular teachings on the subject, the baptizing work of the Spirit primarily involves our position and, only secondarily, power. (1 Corinthians 12:12-13, Romans 6:3-5; Galatians 3:26-28; Ephesians 2:11-22; 4:1-6). Spirit Baptism is often confused with the special filling or the pouring out of the Spirit in Acts 2 when the church was born.

Here are four characteristics of the baptism of the Spirit:

1. It is for all believers today without exception (1 Corinthians 12:13). The Roman Centurion Cornelius and other Gentiles in Acts 10:44-48 believed in Jesus according to Acts 11:17 and were baptized in the Spirit. Paul tells the church at Corinth, "For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink." All the believers at Corinth were baptized (Greek Aorist-Past Tense) by the Spirit.
2. The baptism of the Holy Spirit was predicted by John the Baptist in Mark 1:7-8 and by the Lord Jesus in Acts 1:5 and then for the first time on the day of Pentecost the baptism took place. Peter referred to it as happening first at Pentecost in Acts 11:15-16. Therefore, it is a distinct work which began at the birth of the church in Acts 2:1-4.
3. Each believer is baptized only once (Ephesians 4:5) as supported by the Aorist tense of the verb "baptize" in 1 Corinthians 12:13. The verb (passive voice) supports this work as an action taken by God when a person believes in Jesus. Galatians 3:27 also supports the idea that all the believers at Galatia were baptized by the Spirit and identified with Christ and the universal body of Christ even though some at Galatia were turning to a different gospel according to Galatians 1:6.
4. The baptism of the Holy Spirit joins believers to the body of Christ. The figurative use of Greek verb "baptize" focuses on the initiation into the church and a believer's identification with Christ spoken of in Romans 6:3-4. Please note that 1 Corinthians 12:13 makes a distinction between the baptism of the Spirit and the spiritual gifts including speaking in tongues or languages. IN 1 Corinthians 12:30 "Do all have gifts of healing? DO all speak in tongues? Do all interpret?" The expected answer in each of these questions is a strong "NO" in the original language. Tongues were never the unique sign or proof of Spirit baptism in any book of the Bible.  
To experience fully the benefits of the new position which the baptism of the Spirit gives every believer, a person must also "be filling with the Spirit" such as commanded in Ephesians 5:18. The baptism of the Spirit is the work of the Spirit that makes every believer a member of the universal church and is the basis for ALL Christian growth and experience. People are never told to seek Spirit baptism in the Bible!

#### E. The Sealing Ministry of the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 4:30)

One of the greatest assurances of the eternal security of the believer is the fact that the Father has sealed every believer with the Holy Spirit (2 Corinthians 1:21-22; Ephesians 1:13; 4:30). All are sealed, and it occurs when we believe (Ephesians 1:13). The concept of sealing includes the ideas of ownership, authority and security.

Since God has sealed us, we are God's possession. Therefore, we are secure in Him, unless there is someone with greater power than God Himself, which is NOT true or possible. God is the only one Who could break the seal of the Holy Spirit; and He has promised to deliver us safely to heaven. That is eternal security in the clearest terms.

Notice the context of Ephesians 4:30 to not grieve the Spirit. We grieve the Holy Spirit when as God's children we sin, especially with our desires (Ephesians 4:22), or with our attitudes (Ephesians 4:23), or with our words (Ephesians 4:25 or with our actions (Ephesians 4:26-32). A proper understanding of eternal security was never meant to encourage license and sin, but holiness and Christlikeness.