

The Holy Spirit in First and Second Corinthians

by Arno Clemens Gaebelein

Arno Clemens Gaebelein preaches on the significance of the Holy Spirit in the epistles to the Corinthians, emphasizing how the Spirit accompanied Paul's preaching of Christ and His crucifixion, revealing the deep things of God to believers. The Spirit's work includes anointing, sealing, and being the earnest in believers' hearts, as well as giving life and liberty through the new dispensation of grace. The chapter on the gifts of the Spirit highlights the importance of using these gifts for the edification of the church and discerning true manifestations of the Spirit from counterfeits.

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Transcript

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 - name: "Holy Spirit" slug: "holy-spirit" - name: "Spiritual Gifts" slug: "spiritual-gifts" bibleRefs: outline: -
 heading: "The Holy Spirit in 1 Corinthians" - heading: "The Holy Spirit in the Life of Believers" - heading:
 "The Ministry of the Holy Spirit" - heading: "The Holy Spirit Gives Life and Liberty" - heading: "The Holy
 Spirit Reveals Christ and His Glory" faq: - q: "What is the role of the Holy Spirit in the life of believers?" a:
 "The Holy Spirit indwells, seals, and anoints believers, giving them life and liberty." - q: "How does the
 Holy Spirit reveal deep things of God?" a: "The Holy Spirit reveals deep things of God through spiritual
 revelation and inspiration." - q: "What is the difference between the ministry of the law and the ministry of
 the Spirit?" a: "The ministry of the law is a ministry of death, while the ministry of the Spirit is a ministry of
 righteousness and life." - q: "What is the significance of the baptism of the Spirit?" a: "The baptism of the
 Spirit is a dispensational act that forms the church, the body of Christ, and unites believers with Christ." -
 q: "What is the relationship between the Holy Spirit and the gifts of the Spirit?" a: "The Holy Spirit is the
 source of the gifts of the Spirit, which are given to believers for the edification of the church." quotes: - "But

as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for them that love Him." - "The Holy Spirit will stand back of this message and use it." - "The baptism of the Spirit is a dispensational act in which the church, the body of Christ was formed." applicationPoints: - "Believers should recognize the Holy Spirit's presence in their lives and seek to live in accordance with His will." - "The gifts of the Spirit are given to believers for the edification of the church, and should be used for the benefit of others." - "The baptism of the Spirit is a one-time event that forms the church, the body of Christ, and unites believers with Christ." keywords: - "Holy Spirit" - "Spiritual gifts" - "Baptism of the Spirit" - "Ministry of the Spirit" - "Indwelling of the Spirit" - "Sealing of the Spirit" - "Anointing of the Spirit" - "Life and liberty in the Spirit" ---

IN the second chapter of this epistle the Holy Spirit is mentioned by the Apostle Paul several times.

1 Corinthians 2:4

Chapter 2:4. Paul went to Corinth declaring that he would know nothing but Christ in contrast with philosophy among these heathen. He preached Christ and Him crucified. This he did not, by embellishing his speech, or by words of human wisdom and eloquence. He preached Christ from the Word of God, and the Holy Spirit accompanied the message he preached, so that it was in the demonstration and power of the Holy Spirit. If Christ is preached in His blessed person and His work as Saviour and Lord, the Holy Spirit will stand back of this message and use it.

1 Corinthians 2:9, 10

Chapter 2:9, 10. "But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for them that love Him. But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit; for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." The ninth verse has nothing whatever to do with heaven. It is a quotation from Isaiah 64:4. It was not revealed in the Old Testament what man redeemed in Christ, saved by grace and indwelt by the Holy Spirit, would be. The glory of sonship and that redeemed sinners should be the heirs of God and the fellow heirs of the Lord Jesus Christ, was not known to anyone in the Old Testament. But now God has revealed it by His Spirit, for His Spirit searches the deep things of God; these deep things are the things of Christ in whom are hid the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

1 Corinthians 2:11, 12

Chapter 2:11, 12. Only the spirit which is in man knows the things man has left unexpressed in words; even so no one knows the things of God save the Spirit of God. And this Spirit who knows the things of God was given to Paul end to others who revealed the truth of God, that they might know the things which are freely given of God.4

1 Corinthians 2:13, 14

Chapter 2:13, 14. Paul and the other chosen instruments who received the revelation of God and communicated it to others received the knowledge of the things of God first of all by the Spirit of God. And when they wrote it down, as we possess it now, they did not write in their own words, in words which man's wisdom teacheth, but in words taught by the Spirit of God. It means nothing less than verbal inspiration. The truth of God has been given by the Spirit of God in the very words which the Holy Spirit dictated. There was given a spiritual message, a spiritual revelation by spiritual means.

1 Corinthians 3:16

Chapter 3:16. He reminds them of their great dignity as believers, "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" Solemn truth it is! How different many a Christian's life would be lived if daily this great truth, that the Holy Spirit indwells the heart would be remembered.

1 Corinthians 6:11

Chapter 6:11. What the Corinthians were in their old nature is stated in the preceding verse. Having accepted the Gospel they were washed, sanctified and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of God.

1 Corinthians 6:17

Chapter 6:17. The Corinthian church was given to worldliness. Many evils existed in their midst. In spite of it all they were saints, separated ones. The apostle did not exhort them to seek a remedy in a "second blessing experience" or in getting "their Pentecost" or in anything else. But he reminded them, that the Spirit of God dwelled in them, in spite of their worldliness. "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom ye have of God and ye are not your own?" This is another strong argument against the false teachings that the Holy Spirit dwells only in a certain class of believers.

1 Corinthians 12:3-13

Chapter 12:3-13. This is an important and fundamental chapter as it deals with the different gifts of the Spirit and mentions for the last time the baptism of the Spirit.

The chapter begins with a significant statement. "Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed, and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Spirit." The Corinthians had been heathen Gentiles who were carried away by dumb idols and were as idolators under the influence of demons. After their conversion the Holy Spirit had been given to them and He manifested His power in their midst through the different gifts. The power of the Spirit of God attracted the attention of the world about them and also stirred up the enemy who attempted to creep in among them through evil spirits, who generally try to imitate and counterfeit the manifestations of the Holy Spirit. As these Corinthians lacked in discernment they were in danger of being again deceived by certain manifestations, which appeared to be the work of the Spirit of God, when they were the work of demons. So the apostle gives a test. A demon would not acknowledge the Lordship of Christ; the true confession that Jesus is Lord is only possible by the Spirit of God, nor would any man who speaks by the Holy Spirit call Jesus accursed. It seems that there were powers in their midst which did this and while they spoke of Jesus, they did not acknowledge Him as Lord. It is a striking fact that in the different sects which claim a restoration of apostolic gifts, such as the gift of healing, the gift of miracles and especially the gift of tongues, our Lord is called exclusively by the name of His humiliation. They constantly speak of Jesus and rarely of the Lord Jesus Christ. The damsel in Philippi who had a demon acknowledged the apostles as servants of God, but the demon in her would not own and acknowledge the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. And when Paul used that worthy name, the girl was delivered. The vagabond Jewish exorcists also used the name Jesus, but did not speak of Him as Lord.⁵

From verses 4-13 we have a revelation concerning the gifts of the Spirit. First, we read of the diversities of gifts, but it is the same Spirit. Then the Lord is mentioned, that there are differences of ministrations, but it

is the same Lord; and there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God. They are bestowed through Him. These gifts are in relation to the Lord; they are to be used in ministry, that is, in service for the Lord, under whom and for whose glory these gifts are to be used. The whole operations are of God who worketh all in all. All is confined to the church, the body of Christ. "But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man (a true believer) for profit." The gift bestowed upon one member of the body is not for self-gratification, to please oneself, but the gift is given for the whole body, for the edification of each member of the church.

Then follows the enumeration of the gifts of the Spirit. There are nine: The Word of wisdom; The Word of knowledge; the gift of faith; the gift of healing; the working of miracles; prophecy; discerning of spirits; gift of tongues and the gift of the interpretation of tongues. The miraculous sign-gifts hold a secondary place, the last mentioned are the gift of tongues and the interpretation of tongues. The highest gifts are the gifts of wisdom and knowledge. By these gifts the deep things of God are understood and the ability is given to communicate them to others. The gift of faith is a special endowment of confidence in God and His promises, which enables the possessor to lay hold on God and accomplish great things by faith. Of course all believers have faith and live by faith. The gift of healing and the working of miracles were sign gifts specially bestowed for the beginning of Christianity when the present dispensation started. There is no intimation that these sign-gifts were to continue throughout the present dispensation on the other hand, we do not find a statement that they should be withdrawn. It is, however, a fact that these gifts, like the gift of healing, of working miracles, of tongues and interpretation of tongues, began to disappear even in apostolic days. Many times in church history persons appeared who claimed that these gifts had been restored. Each time it was found out that they were imitations brought about by satanic powers, for Satan's sphere is counterfeiting the manifestations of the Spirit. Such is the case in Irvingism, Mormonism, Spiritism, Christian Science and in certain other sects. The Pentecostal sects, for instance, claim a restoration of the gift of tongues and their interpretation, under the plea that the age is about to close, and the church should expect a revival of apostolic powers. But where is it taught that the end of the age should bring back apostolic powers and supernatural manifestations? There is a prophecy in Scripture that before the coming of the Lord signs and wonders will be manifested, but they are the lying signs and wonders of the man of sin (2 Thess. 2). There is a gift of tongues, besides the gift of prophecy and discerning the spirits (trying the spirits whether they are of God).

As we find in chapter xiv of this epistle, the Corinthians, whose spiritual state was so unsatisfactory, esteemed the gift of tongues the highest, while the Spirit of God put it in the lowest place. They seemed to have been destitute of the gifts of wisdom and knowledge, and magnified the gift which was for an outward, demonstrative display, because it exalted themselves. The fourteenth chapter enters more fully into this. That chapter also gives an important injunction against women speaking and taking part in the exercise of gifts in the church.⁵

We have pointed out in the comment on Ephesians 4 that the permanent gifts of the Lord through the Spirit are mentioned there, the gifts which will remain till the Lord comes; the sign gifts are omitted. Nor are these gifts of miracle-working mentioned in Rom. 12:3-8. Of much importance is verse 13, "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit."

The passage is important, for it mentions for the very last time the Baptism of the Spirit. First, John the forerunner and herald of Christ had spoken of it. Then our Lord before His ascension had told His disciples to tarry in Jerusalem, and that they would be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days hence. On the

day of Pentecost the baptism took place. But never again do we read anything of the baptism of the Holy Spirit in the book of Acts. The only other passage in which the Baptism of the Spirit is mentioned is 1 Cor. 7:13. What, then, is the baptism of the Spirit as revealed here? That baptism which took place on the day when the Holy Spirit came down to earth, the day of Pentecost, united the 120 believers, who were gathered in Jerusalem in one body. The baptism of the Spirit constituted them the body of Christ; Christ is the glorified head, and every believer is a member in that body. The body of Christ, the church, was formed by this baptism of the Spirit. Scripture knows nothing whatever of different baptisms of the Spirit, repeated baptisms, or individual experiences of baptism with the Spirit, nor is there in Scripture a single word of command to seek the baptism with the Spirit. The baptism of the Spirit happened once and does not need to happen again. Ever since that event took place, whenever or wherever, a sinner trusts on Christ, he is at once joined by the same Spirit to that body. He makes the believer a member of the body of Christ, so that he shares in the one Spirit. The baptism of the Spirit is a dispensational act in which the church, the body of Christ was formed.

In the fourteenth chapter several references as to the Spirit are made, in connection with the gift of tongues (14:2, 14, 15, 16) which need no further comment.

Much less is said of the Holy Spirit in the second letter to the Corinthians than in the first. The relation of the first epistle to the second epistle and the purpose and scope of each is not our object to examine. We have done so in our "Annotated Bible."

2 Corinthians 1:21, 22

Chapter 1:21, 22. "Now He who stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts" (see also chapter 5:5). Three operations of the Holy Spirit are here mentioned for the first time in the New Testament. The first is anointing; He anoints the believer. This phase of His work is fully explained in the notes on 1 John 2:20, 27, where the purpose and effect of the anointing are stated. The second is, the Spirit seals the believer. As the Ephesian epistle speaks of this twice, as sealed by the Spirit of promise and sealed unto the day of redemption, the reader will find the meaning unfolded in the comments there. The third is, the Holy Spirit is the earnest. This also is found in Ephesians and explained there. Here we simply call attention to the fact that all believers have the anointing, are sealed by the Spirit and possess Him as the earnest.

2 Corinthians 3:3, 6, 8, 17, 18

Chapter 3:3, 6, 8, 17, 18. In this chapter the Spirit of God is mentioned six times. The chapter contains a contrast between the dispensation of the law, that which is now passed away, and the new dispensation of grace. The church is called in verses 2 and 3 "the Epistle of Christ," and that Epistle is not written with ink, nor is it written as the law was, in tables of stone, but it is written with the Spirit of God in the fleshy tables of the heart. Paul speaks of the Corinthians as being his letters of commendation. These converted heathen were his letters of commendation, because they were the evidences of the power of the Spirit of God in his ministry. In their faith they were the living expression of the truth and doctrines he preached. In verse 6 we find another contrast. "Who also hath made us able ministers of the New Testament; not of the letter, but of the Spirit; for the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life." All the law can do, being a rule imposed upon man, is to slay him, to put the sentence of death upon him. The power of the grace of God in the heart is His Spirit and He quickens, gives life to the believer.

2 Corinthians 3:8

Chapter 3:8. "How shall not the ministration of the Spirit be rather glorious." The contrast between the two dispensations continues. The ministration of the law dispensation, a ministration of death (verse 7) was introduced with glory, which was seen reflected upon the face of Moses, which the children of Israel could not behold, and which faded away. The ministration of the Spirit, who gives life, is much more glorious. "For if the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory" (verse 9). The law required righteousness so that a sinner might stand before God, and as he has not this righteousness the law condemns him to death. But the gospel is the ministration of righteousness in that it reveals Christ the righteousness of God and this is revealed by the Spirit of God.

2 Corinthians 3:17, 18

Chapter 3:17, 18. Now the Lord is that Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty." The thought of the Spirit which in the law dispensation was hidden under types and figures, is Christ glorified. The glory of Christ was veiled in the Old Testament, but now after Christ died and rose again, has gone to heaven and is there glorified, the Holy Spirit reveals Him and His glory; indwelling the believer He enables him to know and to enjoy that glory. Where that Spirit dwells, who reveals the glory of Christ, there is liberty, perfect freedom from the fear of death and condemnation. The glass, or mirror, mentioned in verse 18 is the Word of God. There we see the glory of the Lord. As we look there and let the Spirit of God take the things of Christ to show them unto us, the Spirit of the Lord does His blessed work in changing us into the same image from glory unto glory.

2 Corinthians 6:6

Chapter 6:6. Paul speaks of the things in which he and his fellow ministers were attested as the ministers of God. Among these things the Holy Spirit is mentioned. The Holy Spirit manifested through them was an evidence that they were sent of God to minister.

2 Corinthians 13:14

Chapter 13:14. "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with you all." This is the prayerful wish of the apostle Paul for the Corinthian Saints. It should be used in conclusion of every assembly of God's people. It will be noticed while this prayer concludes this epistle, no epistle in the greetings ever mentioned the Holy Spirit. The greetings are from the Father and from the Son; the Holy Spirit is omitted for the reason that He dwells in those to whom the greeting is sent. How perfect is the Word of God! Again we repeat though the Corinthian church was partly given to worldliness, the scene where the carnal spirit of denominationalism, that is sectarianism, manifested itself first, the presence of the Holy Spirit in them is acknowledged and not a single exhortation is given to seek "the baptism with the Spirit" or some "deeper experience."

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