

The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit

A Study by Albert Fairweather

Questions answered about:

Baptism of the Holy Spirit

Prophecy, Speaking in Tongues & Healings

Chapter 1

There is much confusion today over the Person and work of the Holy Spirit. Questions arise over "**Baptism of the Holy Spirit**", "**Prophecy**", "**Speaking in Tongues**" and "**Healing**".

The Lord Jesus Christ taught His disciples about the coming and the ministry of the Holy Spirit:

"And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever; the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you. I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you" (John 14:16-18).

He also said that the Holy Spirit would: *"teach you all things"* (John 14:26); *"He will testify of Me"* (John 15:26); He would *"convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment"*; *"tell you things to come"* and *"glorify Me"* (John 16:7-15). From this we learn:

1. In answer to the prayer of the Lord Jesus, the Holy Spirit would be sent by the Father.
2. He is called the Helper or Comforter.
3. 'He' is a Person, not an influence - "The Spirit of truth".
4. The world cannot know, see or receive Him.
5. The disciples would know Him, for He was 'with' them as Jesus spoke, and later would be 'in' them and *'abide with them forever'*.
6. He would have a ministry to the world, convicting of sin, righteousness and judgment.
7. He would have a ministry to believers, teaching and glorifying Christ.

The Father, Son and the Holy Spirit

While the word 'Trinity' does not appear in the Bible, the teaching does. Notice what the Lord Jesus Christ said: *"All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen* (Matt. 28:18-20). Baptising is to be done in the **one name**, but the **three Persons** of the Godhead are named in this unity.

The 'Trinity' is also seen at our Lord's baptism –the **Spirit of God** descended like a dove and alighted upon the **Son**, and the **Father's** voice was heard from heaven (Matt. 3:13-17).

The Trinity is seen in Hebrews 9:14, all acting together to bring redemption to us: *"how much more shall the blood of **Christ**, who through the **eternal Spirit** offered Himself without spot to **God**, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?"*

The Bible clearly teaches the deity of both the Lord Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit, and that the Father sent both into this world! *"And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son as Saviour of the world"* (1 John 4:14). *"And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever" "who proceeds from the Father"* (John 14:16; 15:26).

The Holy Spirit is God and Lord

Peter also understood the deity of the Holy Spirit: *"Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit ... You have not lied to men but to **God**"* (Act 5:1-4). He is called: *"the eternal Spirit"* (Heb. 9:14); *"the Spirit of life"* (Rom. 8:2) and *"the Spirit of truth"* (John 14:17) and much more. These are all attributes of the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit. He has personality; He can be lied to, grieved and quenched.

The Bible clearly teaches that the Holy Spirit is one with the Father and the Son. *"Now **the Lord is the Spirit**; and where **the Spirit of the Lord** is, there is liberty"* (2 Cor. 3:17).

Jesus Christ is God and Lord

From earliest time Christians understood that Jesus is God: *"Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,"* which is translated, *"God with us"* (Matt. 1:23; Isa. 7:14). He is called *"The Lord Jesus Christ"* over 80 times in the New Testament. The word 'Lord' tells us that He is God: *"And Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!"* (John 20:28). Over 700 years before Christ's birth, Isaiah wrote: *"For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace"* (Isa. 9:6). There are many more Bible verses confirming this truth.

From this we see that there are three Persons in the Godhead, but they are one in essence.

Chapter 2

The Sending of the Holy Spirit

It is important to notice that the Holy Spirit was not sent until Jesus was glorified: *"But this He (Jesus) spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified"* (John 7:39). After Jesus died and was buried, He rose again and was 40 days teaching the disciples, and then He ascended out of their sight and was glorified in heaven (read Acts Chapter 1). Then He prayed the Father, and the Holy Spirit was sent from heaven at the feast of Pentecost, 50 days after His resurrection (Acts chapter 2). So the Church (a new thing) was formed – for Jesus said *"on this rock I will build My Church"* (Matt. 16:18).

John the Baptist foretold the sending of the Holy Spirit. *"I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire"* (Matt. 3:11). The Lord Jesus reminded the disciples of this promise (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4-5) which was fulfilled at Pentecost: *"And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them"* (Acts 2:1-3). This was the birthday of the Church, a once-only event, never to be repeated. In answer to Christ's prayer, the Father sent the Holy Spirit who baptised the disciples into one body, the Church!

Baptism of the Spirit

It is wrong to teach "The baptism of the Holy Spirit" or to say that believers are baptised **in** or **into** the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the '**baptizer**' who at Pentecost 'baptised' the disciples **into one body**, *"For by one Spirit we were all baptised into one body; whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free; and have all been made to drink into one Spirit"* (1 Cor 12:13). In the Greek, *"were we all baptised"* is in the past and is completed - a never to be repeated event! The Church is this 'body' made up of all believers from Pentecost when it was formed, to the day when the Lord Jesus takes His people home to heaven (John 14:1-3).

Now at conversion, every believer comes into the good of this, and becomes part of the body of Christ, and a member of His Church. This is something the Holy Spirit does for us, quite apart from any 'experience'.

The Lord Jesus told Peter that He would give him *"the keys to the kingdom of heaven"* (Matt. 16:18-19). Keys are used to open doors, and Peter was used to open the doors to the kingdom of heaven, first to the Jews (Acts 2:14-47); then to the Samaritans (Acts 8:14-17); then to the Gentiles (Acts 10:1-48).

In all this we see how the Lord was extending the kingdom of heaven into new areas, just like a city that has the water supply connected to each new suburb as it grows. Lastly Paul (also an apostle) was used to extend the kingdom to the disciples of John the Baptist (Acts 19:1-7). These men had not even heard about the Holy Spirit and knew very little about the Lord Jesus. They only knew John's baptism and teaching.

So in God's order it was to the Jews first where the body, the church began. Then there was an extension to the Samaritans where **religious** barriers were overcome. Then to the Gentiles where **racial** barriers were overcome. And lastly to the disciples of John the Baptist where **dispensational** barriers were overcome. Now in this the Church age, the age of grace, all who believe are baptised by one Spirit into one body. What a wonderful unity this is, overcoming all religious, racial and dispensational barriers! There is truly only *"one body"* (Eph. 4:5).

The Filling of the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is the 'Helper' or 'Comforter', meaning '**one who draws alongside to help**'. He would be sent to help the disciples in all situations of life. While the Lord Jesus was with the disciples, He was their Helper and Comforter! He would not leave them orphans; He would come to them in the Person of the Holy Spirit who would take the place of Jesus on earth (read John 14:15-18).

It is wrong to speak of a second blessing, some extra 'supernatural' thing happening after conversion. People are here confusing the **baptism by the Spirit** into the one body, with **the filling of the Holy Spirit**. There is only *"one baptism"* (see Eph. 4:5), but there are many fillings. After the Holy Spirit was sent and the one body, the Church, was formed, the disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:4; 4:8, 31; 9:17; 13:9). To pray for or expect another 'Baptism of the Spirit' is nowhere mentioned in the Bible, but the filling of the Holy Spirit is often mentioned.

The Bible tells us about this filling: *"And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit"* (Eph. 5:18). In the Greek language it is a command to be continuously filled.

Now a man drunk with wine is under the influence of the spirit of alcohol, and so he acts foolishly. In contrast, a person filled with the Holy Spirit will act differently, showing the influence and fruit of the Holy Spirit in his or her life. *"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law"* (Gal 5:22-23).

So we are commanded to *"be filled with the Spirit"* (Eph. 5:18); to *"Walk in the Spirit"* (Gal. 5:16); to be *"led by the Spirit"* (Gal. 5:18); and to show the *"fruit of the Spirit"* in our lives (Gal. 5:22-23).

The Bible also says: *"If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit"* (Gal 5:25). Every believer **lives in the sphere** of the Spirit by virtue of the new birth and by being baptised by the Holy Spirit into the body of Christ. Now we are told to **walk** in the Spirit, for we can **grieve** and **quench** the Holy Spirit who dwells within us. *"And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption"* (Eph. 4:30). *"Do not quench the Spirit"* (1 Thes. 5:19).

When we are disobedient, living self-centered or sinful lives, we **grieve** or hurt the Holy Spirit and **quench** the fire that He lights in our hearts to zealously serve and live for Him. We will not have the peace and joy that a true follower of Jesus should have. He is the **'Holy Spirit'**, and He works to produce holiness in our lives. If we continue sinning, He will be unable to use us, as He wants clean vessels in His service.

We should never seek a **baptism of the Spirit**, but we should seek to be **filled with the Spirit**. The baptism by the Holy Spirit is **God's work in us at conversion**; the filling is **our yielding to God's will in our lives**, a day by day necessity.

The Holy Spirit wants to occupy every room in our heart. So often there are rooms where He is not welcome! These rooms may be occupied with wrong and sinful thoughts, an unforgiving spirit, or with worldly ambitions and sinful deeds. We cannot know full joy and peace until we yield all to Him. *"Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's"* (1 Cor. 6:19). Paul wrote these words to carnal or fleshly Christians (1 Cor. 3:1-3). This church was allowing, and some were doing, sinful things. They were not filled with the Spirit.

Whenever we find ourselves doing things that grieve Him, we need to confess and forsake those things: *"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness"* (1 John 1:9). Then He will again use us for His glory. Now is the time to enjoy this filling by yielding all to Him. He has a special work for each to do, and there is joy in living for the Lord and being used by Him as He extends His kingdom among people today.

Chapter 3

The Holy Spirit's Work for and in Us

Water baptism sets forth our wonderful relationship with Christ and our position as hidden in Him: *"Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life"* (read Rom. 6:1-14).

Through the work of the Holy Spirit we are identified with Christ, so that Paul could say: *"I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me"* (Gal. 2:20). *"If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory"* (read Col. 3:1-4).

This is what God sees of every believer: When Christ died, we died in Him; when He was buried, we were buried with Him, and when He arose, we arose in Him. See the important role of the Holy Spirit in this:

1. We were convicted of sin by the Holy Spirit and brought to repentance and faith (John 16:8-11).
2. We were born again "*of water and the Spirit*" and made God's children (John 1:11-13; 3:5).
3. We were placed as God's sons by "*the Spirit of adoption*" (Romans 8:12-17).
4. We were "*by one Spirit ...baptised into one body*", the Church (1 Cor. 12:13).
5. We were "*sealed with the Holy spirit of promise*", a sign of security and ownership (Eph. 1:13-14).
6. We are "*sanctified by the Holy Spirit*", this means 'set apart' for God's purposes (Rom 15:16).

This is the **sphere of the Spirit** in which we dwell in God's sight! We are eternally identified with Christ in the eyes of the Father through the work of Christ on the cross, and through the Holy Spirit who dwells within us. God has done such wonderful things for us we cannot really understand them now. But in eternity to come we will forever praise and worship Him for who He is and what He has done.

The Holy Spirit in the Old Testament

In the Old Testament the Holy Spirit was 'with' God's people and came 'upon' chosen ones to empower them to serve God in a special way (Judges 14:6; 15:14; 1 Sam. 10:6-10). He came on David, but He left King Saul (Judges 16:20; 1 Sam. 16:13-14).

David became a great king, a prophet and the sweet psalmist of Israel because the Holy Spirit was upon him. After his great sin with Bathsheba, he realised he was also in danger of the Spirit leaving him. His repentance is recorded in Psalm 51:11. He asked God, "*do not take your Holy Spirit from me*".

The Gifts of the Holy Spirit

David had lost the joy of his salvation (Psalm 51:12), and was in danger of losing the empowering to be a wise and good king, to be a prophet and write inspired Psalms. These were all gifts from the Holy Spirit.

Today, the Holy Spirit will never leave a true child of God, "*For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable*" (Rom. 11:29). We also have the wonderful promise of the Lord Jesus Christ: "*And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever*" (John 14:16).

Every Christian has received a gift, given by the ascended Lord (Eph. 4:7-16) and by the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 12:1-31). We need to ask the Lord to show us what our gift is, and then use it for His glory.

Chapter 4

Is Prophecy for Today?

It is important to look at God's book, the Bible, and carefully note what it says about these issues. After the Holy Spirit was sent by the Father and the Church was formed (Acts 2:1-4) there were about 120 disciples in Jerusalem! Peter preached and 3000 were added. These first believers "*...continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine (teaching) and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers*" (Acts 2:42).

Who were the Apostles? (Apostle means 'One sent forth'). They were a unique band of men:

1. Chosen by the Lord (Mark 3:13-14)
2. They had seen the Lord (1 Cor. 9:1)
3. They were His witnesses (John 15:27)
4. They laid foundations (Eph. 2:20)
5. Signs and wonders authenticated their ministry (Acts 5:12; Heb 2:3-4)
6. Their names are written on the twelve foundations of the New Jerusalem (Rev. 21:14)

The Bible gives instruction to appoint elders, but nowhere does it say to appoint more apostles! They passed the baton to the elders, and there are no apostles today (Acts 14:23).

What was the apostles' doctrine? The apostles simply taught what the Lord had taught them (Acts 1:1-3) and what He later revealed to them (2 Cor. 12:7; Eph. 3:1-7). This is now found written in the New Testament and it is there for us to teach and obey as well (Acts 16:4). There were very few copies of the Old Testament and they were very costly, all hand written on large scrolls, unlike our Bibles today. Bibles as we know them were first printed in the 15th century.

Gradually the Lord inspired the writing of the New Testament, between about AD 52 to AD 96. These were also hand written and gradually circulated among the churches. During this time the apostles and prophets taught in the churches, teaching what the Lord had taught to them and what He was revealing to them!

Paul knew that soon the apostles and prophets would die, and so God revealed to him this truth: *"Love never fails. But whether there are prophecies, they will fail; whether there are tongues, they will cease; whether there is knowledge, it will vanish away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away"* (1 Cor 13:8-10).

The word 'perfect' means to be 'complete', and in the Greek it is not a 'person', but some 'thing'! The Bible is the only 'complete' and 'perfect' thing on earth. Nothing is to be added or taken away from its pages (Rev. 22:18-19). In it is *"the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints"* (Jude 3).

What is Prophecy? (Ephesians 4:11) Prophecy is:

1. Speaking forth the mind of God
2. The declaration of what cannot be known by natural means
3. The revelation of the mind of God
4. Warning of future events

This gift is no longer with us or needed since we have the completed Bible. Nowhere are we told to appoint more prophets. They passed the baton to the teachers. 'Knowledge' was the ability by some men to remember and teach the doctrines taught by the apostles and prophets. This knowledge was partial and is now incorporated in the completed scriptures.

The apostles and prophets belonged to the foundation period of the Church (Eph. 2:19-20; 1 Cor. 3:10-11). They and their special gifts of miracles, healings and tongues are no longer with us, since we have the completed Scriptures.

These gifts are not necessary today for the normal functioning of the local church. They were temporary in nature, used by God primarily for purposes of confirmation and authentication of the apostle's message. They were outlined in 1 Cor. Chapter 12; would pass away in 1 Cor. Chapter 13 and strictly limited in use in 1 Cor. Chapter 14. Paul had to correct many abuses and limit the use of these gifts by carnal believers in the church at Corinth.

Notice the divinely given **order** for these gifts: *"And God has appointed these in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, varieties of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Are all workers of miracles? Do all have gifts of healings? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? But earnestly desire the best gifts. And yet I show you a more excellent way"* (1 Cor 12:28-31). Apostles and prophets were first in order, tongues were last, and not all had these gifts. To teach that if someone does not speak in tongues they do not have the Holy Spirit is a serious error.

Chapter 5

Are Tongues for Today?

Peter and the disciples spoke in 'tongues' or 'known languages' on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-12). The people present were from different lands and spoke different languages, but heard each in their own language the wonderful works of God. Paul spoke in tongues more than all, but never in the church meetings (1 Cor. 14:18-19). Why did he have this gift? He would have been able to preach the Gospel to all people he met in many lands. Today's 'tongues' are not used for this purpose, and are not the same as those of the early Church. Tongues have ceased along with prophecy and knowledge. Knowledge is the ability to remember and teach the apostles doctrine without having a Bible (1 Cor. 13:8). Today all missionaries have to learn the language of the people they are evangelising! Otherwise they must have an interpreter.

Tongues had ceased by the end of the age of the apostles (96 AD) and of those who outlived them. John Chrysostom (AD345 - 407) wrote in his *Homilies* of *"the cessation of happenings which were common in those days (of the apostles) but unexampled (or unknown) in our own"*. He said *"they have long since ceased"* (Homily 4). The present Charismatic movement dates from the early 1900, when an attempt was made to revive these gifts.

Many teach that to receive the gift of tongues, one must begin praising God as fast as possible, relax, let the mind go blank, then start to speak in a babble. Then the Holy Spirit will come upon you and you will receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit! Some roll on the floor, scream and do other strange things. Nowhere does the Bible teach such things, and we need to be aware that Satan is a deceiver. Women also take part in these meetings, even though the Bible says *"let your women keep silent in the churches"* (see 1 Cor. 14:31-34). From ancient times women (the Sibyl) have been prominent in pagan rites where they speak in strange utterances.

The Bible teaches that **'self-control'** is a fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:23): *"And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets. For God is not the author of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the*

saints" (1 Cor 14:32-33). Those who preach should be careful not to be carried away by speaking faster, shouting and stirring up the people into a frenzy. The demon possessed prophets of Baal acted like this, but Elijah acted calmly and with a simple prayer (1 Kings 18:20-40). God's *"still small voice"* was not heard in the strong wind, the earthquake or the fire (1 Kings 19:11-12). God is heard when we quietly and prayerfully wait on Him, and souls are saved when we preach the Word of God calmly, with reverence and sincerity.

Chapter 6

What About Healings?

Both Peter and Paul healed people, but not on every occasion: *"Trophimus I have left in Miletus sick"* (2 Tim. 4:20). To Timothy he wrote: *"No longer drink only water, but use a little wine for your stomach's sake and your frequent infirmities"* (1 Tim. 5:23). Why did he not heal them? Paul had the *"gifts of healings"*, but even over these supernatural gifts God was sovereign. He cannot be dictated to or manipulated. He does everything after His own sovereign will.

Today we do not have apostles, prophets, or gifts of tongues, prophesy and healings. However, we do know and believe that miracles and healing happen at times today in answer to prayer and as it pleases the Lord.

If anyone had the *"gifts of healings"* today, hospitals could be emptied and dead people raised. This is the challenge to those who claim these gifts. When the Lord Jesus was on earth, He perfectly and completely healed all who came to Him, raised three people from the dead, and caused great joy among multitudes. At times the apostles did this also, but not on every occasion.

In Conclusion:

In teaching about these gifts, Paul said this: *"But earnestly desire the best gifts. And yet I show you a more excellent way"* (1 Cor 12:31). He taught that we should *"pursue love"* and *"especially that you may prophesy"*, for *"he who prophesies speaks edification and exhortation and comfort to men"* (1 Cor. 14:1-3).

Love is the main thing, for love unites, but arguments over these special gifts given to the apostles and early disciples have divided many churches. Today the teacher has taken the place of the prophet, and his teaching should be for:

1. **'Edification'**, that is 'building up' believers in their most holy faith.
2. **'Exhortation'**, that is 'stirring up' believers to be obedient and to live disciplined lives.
3. **'Comfort'**, that is 'binding up' wounded souls and broken hearts and ministering comfort.

Let us be very careful not to be led astray by sensational claims about supernatural sign gifts, but rather let us give ourselves to *"the more excellent way"* of loving, caring for and nurturing one another in the Christian walk.

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