

Fulton County Gospel News

Good News About Christ And His Church For All Of The World

"...Christ is the head of the church: and He is the Savior of the body." - Ephesians 5:23

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THE GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

by Jim E. Waldron

THE HOLY SPIRIT UNDER CHRIST'S RULE HAS BEEN GIVEN IN THREE WAYS:

I. THE BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Just ten days after his ascension back to heaven, Jesus, on Pentecost (A.D. 30) from the right hand of the Father's throne, personally sent down the Holy Spirit upon the twelve, as Peter affirmed that day, "He (Jesus) poured out this which you now see and hear" (Acts 2:33). This was not to make them His apostles, for He had done that already (Luke 6:13, cf. Acts 1:21-26). It was in order for the Holy Spirit to teach them, "all things" of God; to bring to their "remembrance all things," which Christ had said to them (John 14:26), to "guide them into all truth" (John 16:13); and to provide them "power" (Acts 1:8); through which power they were to do many "signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit" to confirm the word of God (Hebrews 2:3-4, cf. Mark 16:17-20). This was the baptism of the twelve in the Holy Spirit, which Christ had promised to them (Acts 1:4-6). Not all the 120 spoken of in Acts 1:15 were baptized in the Holy Spirit, but only the apostles, as the reading of Acts 1:26, 2:1; 2:14, 37, 40, 43 shows. When the twelve received the power from on high they did not string together a babel of nonsense or speak a few Hebrew words in vain repetition as those who claim the power of "Pentecost" do today. The apostles spoke real tongues, or languages, of real people, even as those who heard that day affirmed, "We hear, each in our own language in which we were born" (Acts 2:8).

According to the inspired record, baptism of the Holy Spirit occurred only one other time, about ten years later on the first Gentile converts in the house of Cornelius at Caesarea (Acts 10:44-48). It was not to make them apostles, nor did they receive this special gift in order to guide them into all truth. That, as noted, had

been promised to the apostles; but these Gentiles did have "the gift of the Holy Spirit...poured out on (them) also" (Acts 10:45) in a miraculous way, directly from the hand of Christ Jesus. This was done in order to prove to the Jews that the Gentiles, as well as they, were to have the gospel.

Later when Peter was called to give an account of his conduct in Caesarea by the believing Jews at Jerusalem, he gave, as Acts 1:11-18 shows, a very detailed description of the events which had led to his decision to command baptism in water for the Gentiles at Cornelius' house (see Acts 10:47-48). Not only this, but Peter did not indicate in any way that such a miraculous gift, of the Holy Spirit directly from Jesus, was a common occurrence. In fact, he did the opposite, for he had to go all the way back to Pentecost, approximately ten years before, to find a like example. He said, "the Holy Spirit fell upon them, as upon us at the beginning" (Acts 11:15). He did not say, as on us "last night," "last week," "last month," or even "last, year," as modern Pentecostals claim.

On the day of Pentecost there had been two baptisms: 1) Holy Spirit baptism on the twelve (Acts 2:1-8), and 2) the baptism of about 3000 (Acts 2:38-41) in water, according to the authority of Christ, as given in the great commission, even unto the end of the world (Matthew 28:18-20, Acts 8:36-38). Again there were two baptisms at Cornelius' house according to Acts 10:47: Holy Spirit baptism and water baptism. Yet, twenty years after the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Caesarea, around A.D. 60, Paul affirmed by the Spirit that there was "one Lord, one faith, one baptism" (Ephesians 4:5). Holy Spirit baptism had ceased to be given by that date and it does not occur today. There is now one baptism, the one commanded in the great commission, not two.

II. THE HOLY SPIRIT BY THE APOSTLES' HANDS

The church at its beginning had only the Old Testament Scriptures (cf. Acts 17:11). When a congregation was begun it had no written account of Christ's life, the Acts or any of the twenty-one letters which are in our New Testament. Therefore, Jesus at the beginning in a miraculous way, set certain positions among the disciples to provide for the young churches until they could have the faith and the knowledge of Him in unified form: "He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors (elders), and teachers, for the equipping of the saints, for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness by which they lie in wait to deceive" (Ephesians 4:11-14). Later some of these, such as evangelists (2 Timothy 4:1-5), elders (pastors) (Titus 1:5-9), and teachers (2 Timothy 2:2) were set in the churches by means of the word; but as noted at the first, such positions in the early church were done in a miraculous manner by the Lord, until the knowledge of Jesus and the faith in unified form could be given. The Savior also arranged for the Holy Spirit to distribute certain miraculous gifts among the disciples, as it is written, "there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit" (I Corinthians 12:4).

There were nine of these gifts: 1. wisdom, 2. knowledge, 3. faith, 4. healings, 5. miracles, 6. prophecy, 7. discerning of Spirits, 8. various kinds of tongues or languages, and 9. the interpretation of such tongues (I Corinthians 12:7-10). These were distributed among the disciples in the first century by the Holy Spirit, not directly but through the apostles. The record says, "Simon saw that through the laying on of the apos-

(Continued on page 2)

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(Continued from page 1)

bles' hands the Holy Spirit was given..." (Acts 8:18). Simon had seen Philip, the evangelist, perform miracles, wonders and signs (Acts 8:5-8), but he had not seen him impart what Peter called "the gift of God" (Acts 8:20), which produced such miraculous powers among the first century Christians. Philip was able to perform miracles himself because the apostles had earlier laid their hands on him (Acts 6:5-6), but he could not pass that power to others as the apostles did. The statement by Luke at the time of the apostles' arrival among the Samaritan disciples concerning their receipt of the Holy Spirit, "For as yet He had fallen on none of them" (Acts 8:16), shows they had received no miraculous manifestation of the Spirit prior to the apostles' arrival. We must note, Philip and the other six brothers chosen with him to serve widows tables in Jerusalem were men filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 6:3, 5) before the apostles laid hands on them, but it was not a miraculous gift of the Holy Spirit. The miraculous manifestation of the Spirit came on the seven after the apostles had laid their hands on them (Acts 6:6-8; cf. I Corinthians 12:7).

The sending of the two apostles, Peter and John, to impart such spiritual gifts among the disciples at Samaria after Philip had converted them, illustrates

the apostolic practice of providing rapid leadership for the new congregations. Paul's inquiry about certain disciples receiving the Holy Spirit at Ephesus, their re-baptism for the right purpose, and his subsequent imparting of the Holy Spirit to them (Acts 19:1-6), confirms this practice of the apostles among the first century churches. These were temporary gifts until the perfect gift – God's completed revelation to man – could be given, that is, the unified form "of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God."

Paul wrote to the church of Corinth about A.D. 57 speaking of this complete or perfect gift: "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 (not He who) is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away" (I Corinthians 13:8-10). Daniel, in speaking of the seventy weeks determined on the Jews, said one thing the Messiah (Jesus) would do, was "to seal up vision and prophesy" (Daniel 9:24). This He did with the death of John, the last living apostle and those upon whom the apostles had laid hands. Zechariah had also foretold that God would "cause the prophets and the unclean spirits to depart from the land" (Zechariah 13:2). This took place with the close of the apostolic age. Today there are no prophets of God (see Zechariah 13:3). The masses do not have to depend on a part of God's word in this man and a part in that man. Today all men may have God's complete (perfect) revelation, the Holy Bible.

Since the apostles were distributors of these nine miraculous gifts, when they died, and those on whom they had laid hands died also, the age of miracles closed. We walk by faith, hearing the word of God and believing the signs that have been written (John 20:30-31). We are not a wicked and adulterous generation that keeps on demanding signs (Matthew 12:38-39) after God has confirmed His word and closed vision and prophecy.

III. THE HOLY SPIRIT THROUGH FAITH

The apostle to the Gentiles affirmed that "we are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ" (Galatians 3:26-27). It is through this same obedient faith we receive the promise of the Spirit, even as

it is written, "that the blessings of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith" (Galatians 3:14). Again, as the same apostle speaking of Jesus to the Ephesians said, "in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise" (Ephesians 1:13). The Holy Spirit does not literally dwell in the Christian as demons used to invade the bodies of certain individuals (Mark 1:23-26), but He dwells in the heart of the Christian just as Christ does; that is, through faith. For it is written, "that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith..." (Ephesians 3:17, cf. Romans 8:9-10). This is the reason the apostle Paul asked the saints at Corinth, "Do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have from God...?" (I Corinthians 6:19). Faith comes through hearing the word of God (Romans 10:17). As the Scriptures speak of "our common salvation" (Jude 3), even so this indwelling of the Holy Spirit through faith is not miraculous, but is the ordinary and common gift of God to all who through faith obey Him, as Peter testified of "the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey him" (Acts 5:32). Peter said to the mass of people on Pentecost, "Repent, and let everyone of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38). Thus the Holy Spirit today lives in the obedient child of God by means of the word of faith which has been preached to us.

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THE SINS OF DENOMINATIONALISM

by H. Joe Spangler

By denominationalism we refer to the acceptance, support and practice of sectism or division in religion. The idea that men can be divided religiously and still be a part of the universal church of Christ is false. It is the product of mistaken men and Satan. Note 1 Corinthians 3:3, "For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?"

1. Denominationalism is a sin because it wars against the prayer of Christ that

those who would believe on Him should be united (John 17:20-22). Those who love Jesus desire to help with the answer to His prayer and must renounce this sin. They should simply and humbly obey His teaching and not seek membership in any other religious organization.

Christ's prayer is answered as we agree to unite over His teachings and to abandon the doctrines of men that divide. *"Can two walk together, except they be agreed (Amos 3:3)? Now I beseech you brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. (1 Corinthians 1:10) Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one..." (John 17:20-21)."*

Denominationalism is the acceptance, support and practice of religious division. Today it is manifest in over two thousand distinctive religious organizations world-wide. It is a sin because (1) it slaps in the face of Christ as He prayed for unity (John 17:20-22).

2. It turns many souls to unbelief. Thus it is responsible for much of the world remaining in sin and lost. Jesus desires of those who would believe on Him, *"That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me" (John 17:21).*

Preachers of denominations and other proponents of division are perverting the way of the Lord like the sorcerer, Elymas. He tried to turn the deputy of Paphos away from the faith (Acts 13:6-10). They fill up their sins and fall under the condemnation of Jews who tried to hinder the Gentiles from obeying the truth unto salvation (1 Thessalonians 2:14-16).

How many must be turned away from faith in Christ because of contradictory teaching of denominations and their leaders? We must speak where the Bible speaks and be silent where the Bible is silent! Those who would believe and save others must not be divided. *"Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly*

joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment" (1 Corinthians 1:10).

The Lord's use of the word "church" in the Bible shows that denominationalism is sinful. Eighteen times it is used in reference to the Lord's body or church (Matthew 16:18; Ephesians 5:25; et al). Ninety-two times it refers to a local congregation(s) (1 Corinthians 1:2; 16:1). Paul uses it in this sense as he sends greetings to the saints of Rome from the many congregations of his acquaintance in Romans 16:16, *"Salute one another with an holy kiss. The churches of Christ salute you."* Twice it denotes the assembly (1 Corinthians 14:34,35). Once it is used of Israel in the wilderness (Acts 7:38).

Never once is the word "church" used to refer to a denominational religious organization! Yet denominational advocates use it unscripturally to refer to their sects. No denomination of modern or ancient origin is sanctioned in the New Testament. Division and diversity of doctrine are forbidden and condemned (John 17:20-21; Romans 16:16-18; 1 Corinthians 1:10-13; 3:3; Galatians 1:6-11). To those who practice sin (which denominationalism is) inspiration says, *"Wherefore come out from among them and be ye separate..." (2 Corinthians 6:17) Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds" (2 John 1:9-11).*

Denominationalism is a sin in that it perpetuates the false idea that men cannot agree religiously. It implies that it is permissible, if not desirable, that men be divided into the various sects. In truth, there is a way of agreement and unity. It is as we agree to forsake doctrines and organizations that God has not authorized and embraced the Gospel of Christ and His one church. Amos 3:3 teaches this great and needed truth, *"Can two walk together, except they be agreed?"*

"Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment "1 Corinthians 1:10). The doctrines and practices of men make each denomination distinct. These also distinguish the denominations

from the pure and simple church of Christ. By laying these aside, agreeing to only believe and practice what God has revealed in the New Testament, all believers would be united. Agreement with God is the way of religious unity. "But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John 1:7).

To honor God and help answer Christ's prayer for unity of believers (John 17:20-22), men must renounce and come out of denominations. We must believe and obey His doctrine alone, and enter only his church.

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If we would build on a sure foundation of friendship, we must love our friends for their sake rather than our own.

Charlotte Bronte

Associate yourself with men of good quality if you esteem your own reputation, for 'tis better to be alone than in bad company.

George Washington

Friendship consists of forgetting what one gives, and remembering what one receives.

Alexander Dumas

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BOOK BLURBS

Recommended Reading

COMMENTARIES ON ROMANS – I regret that we have not had this feature in FCGN for some time. It has simply been due to a lack of time I need to read the necessary material in order to review it. **Romans** is a tremendously important book in the New Testament. A lack of understanding of this letter robs Christians of the blessings intended by God for those who read and heed His Word. Also, misunderstanding of **Romans** teachings has prompted a number of false doctrines in denominational religion. Some excellent treatments of this epistle have been published by brethren in recent years. While I have not read every word of every commentary, I do not know of anything in these books reviewed which would be harmful to one's faith in Christ or God's Word. The number of books reviewed necessitates brief treatment of each. You may inquire further from the author/editor or ask your bookstore for further information.

FULL TEXT COMMENTARIES - "Studies In Romans," by Robert R. Taylor, is a complete commentary on this Bible book. This was published in 1996 and consists of 310 pages. It is written in the usual clear and incisive style of author, and is divided into 26 chapters with questions at the end of each chapter, making it suitable for Bible class type studies. Anything by brother Robert Taylor will reward you richly. I paid \$10.00 for my copy, but that may have been a lectureship special. You can ask the actual cost from the author at P.O. Box 464, Ripley, TN 38063. It will be worth the price you pay! A second volume appearing in November of 1995 is the 15th Annual Denton (Texas) Lectureship book, also entitled "Studies In Romans." This is a series of exegetical studies covering the entire text of Romans by many of our brotherhood's best and most faithful Bible students. Additionally, there are several topical studies, specific lessons on false doctrines relating to Romans, plus special sections dealing with difficult passages and controversial issues. This book is edited by Dub McClish and is a part of the continuing series of superb volumes coming out of Denton covering various books of the Bible. Brother McClish contributes to each book in a scholarly way and proves his noteworthy skills as an editor in his selection of the topics and speakers on Romans and all other books in the series. Write him and ask for a free detailed listing of all the available volumes. The book on Romans is 623 pages and well worth the

price of \$16.00. Write to Valid Publications, Inc., 908 Imperial Dr., Denton, TX 76201.

OUTLINED STUDIES ON ROMANS – By their nature outlined studies do not generally provide as much study material as full text studies, but they can be very helpful in giving the most important facts from the book they cover. One such commentary is called, "**Romans-Justified By Faith**," and is written by Robin W. Haley. The book is 276 pages giving a 1994 publication date. I truly like what brother Haley says, but I find myself often wishing he had said more. The particular outline format and line spacing allows ample space on each page for your notes and brother Haley often gives additional Bible references for further study on the subjects covered in Romans. This is a good study book to aid you in working through Romans. I do not have the exact price of this book, but I believe it is \$8.00 or less. You can write the author at 211 N. 5th St. in Marlow, OK 73055 for details. A second book of this type is called an "**Outlined Commentary on Romans**," by Bob Winton. This book is a spiral binding of 153 8-1/2 x 11 pages. This amounts to about the same material as in a 300+ page book. While written in outlined format, it could easily be converted into a full text type commentary. The back of each page is blank, giving plenty of space for additional notes you want to add as you study. The author includes several charts and some special studies which are helpful. He also quotes from a number of other writers on various topics and gives a vast number of Bible references which elaborate on the subjects treated. The cost of the book is \$10.00. There is a wealth of material in this outlined study from which you will greatly profit. You can order this commentary from the author at 1045 Main St., Sebastian, FL, 32958.

Whichever commentary you choose, you will be richly blessed by a detailed study in Paul's letter to the church in Rome.

Ted J. Clarke, Editor



He who has little and says it is enough has more than he who has much and wants more.

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GOD'S PLAN OF SALVATION

1. Hearing the word of God (Romans 10:17; Acts 16:32).
2. Believing what is taught (Mark 16:16; Hebrews 11:6).
3. Repentance (Acts 2:38; Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30).
4. Confession (Romans 10:9, 10; Acts 8:37).
5. Baptism (Acts 2:38; Mark 16:16; I Peter 3:21; Romans 6:3, 4).
6. After the above five steps, faithful Christian Living (I Peter 2:11, 12; Revelation 2:10).

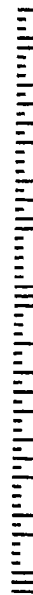
THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

1. The Bible is its only guide (Romans 1:16; I Thess. 2:13).
2. Wears a Biblical Name (Romans 16:16).
3. Established at the right place (Isaiah 2:2,3; Acts 2).
4. Established at the right time (Joel 2:28-32; Acts 2).
5. Established on the right person (Matthew 16:18; Acts 2:36).
6. Saved are in it (Ephesians 5:23; Acts 2:47).
7. Its members are enrolled in heaven (Hebrews 12:23).
8. Membership in it is obtained by obedience to God's commands including baptism (Acts 2:41-47; I Corinthians 12:13).

CHURCH OF CHRIST
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