

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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WHAT IS THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN MAN'S CONVERSION?

by Lee Moses

Conversion is a beautifully wondrous event, bespeaking forgiveness, new life, and hope: “*Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new*” (2 Corinthians 5:17). And whenever Biblical conversion occurs, the Holy Spirit is involved. Jesus Christ spoke of the need to be born again (John 3:3), and spoke of the means by which this is done: “*of water and of the Spirit*” (verse 5). Just as the water of baptism must be involved, the Holy Spirit must be involved for one to be Biblically converted, or “born again.” The question that remains is, **How** is the Holy Spirit involved? What is the work of the Holy Spirit in man's conversion?

The Goal of His Work

The Bible reveals to man the Three Persons of the Godhead. The First Person is God the Father, the Second is Christ, and the Third is the Holy Spirit. All Three work in perfect unity with one primary goal in mind: the salvation of man. The will of God the Father is to “*have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth*” (1 Timothy 2:4). Jesus “*came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me*” (John 6:38); and as such He affirmed, “[*T*]he Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost” (Luke 19:10). And the Holy Spirit

has worked toward this same end. God showed amazing kindness and mercy to man as He saved the church by means of the “*washing of regeneration*” (baptism) and the “*renewing of the Holy Ghost . . . That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life*” (Titus 3:4-7). Thus, the Holy Spirit works to effect renewal in man, that man might be freed from the guilt of his sins and ultimately inherit eternal life.

The Role of His Work

In the construction of a skyscraper, the architect, contractor, and construction workers all share a common goal, but each serves a different role. Likewise, the Three Persons of the Godhead all share common goals, but Each serves an individual role toward achieving those goals. The Creation of the universe originated with God the Father (Genesis 1:1), was carried out through the pre-incarnate Word (or Christ as He became) (John 1:1-3; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Colossians 1:16-17; Hebrews 1:2), and was finished and enabled to perpetuate by the Holy Spirit (Gen. 1:2; Job 26:13). The Godhead work similarly in the spiritual creation. The Gospel, for the conversion or “new creation” of man, originated from eternity with God the Father (Ephesians 3:11), was carried out through Christ (Eph. 3:11; 1 Cor. 15:1-4), and was finished and

enabled to perpetuate by the Holy Spirit.

Jesus spoke of His mission during His earthly ministry: “*I must preach the kingdom of God to other cities also: for therefore am I sent*” (Luke 4:43). This was parallel to His task of “seeking and saving the lost.” But as He concluded His earthly ministry, Jesus told His apostles,

I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you (John 16:12-14).

Jesus states several things that the Holy Spirit would do. Consolidated and placed in chronological order, the Holy Spirit would (1) hear/receive from Jesus, (2) come, (3) speak what He had heard/show the apostles what He had heard/show the apostles things to come/guide the apostles into all truth, and (4) glorify Jesus. When Jesus departed this earth, He had not finished teaching the apostles all they needed to know. The Holy Spirit fully completed this teaching by guiding the apostles into all truth.

Additionally, the role of the Holy Spirit's work was to bear witness of Christ: “*But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me*” (John

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15:26). He was also to reprove the world:

And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: Of sin, because they believe not on me; Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged (John 16:9-11).

Reproving the world was not a new task for the Holy Spirit. In the period prior to the Flood, the Holy Spirit was used in preaching to the disobedient world (1 Peter 3:18-20); a period during which He was said to “*strive with man*” (Gen. 6:3). One can see that the Holy Spirit’s role toward mankind involves **persuasion**—He seeks to show man the error of His way, and to show him how he can change to better his plight.

Briefly summarized, the role of the Holy Spirit’s work was (1) to come and guide the apostles into all truth, (2) to testify of Jesus, (3) to reprove the world, and (4) to glorify Christ. This all comes together to persuade man toward conversion and its resultant salvation.

The Tool of His Work

Most workers have some “tool of their trade,” an instrument by which each can accomplish his task. A writer uses a pen, an artist a paintbrush, and a lumberjack an axe. The Holy Spirit similarly has a tool He utilizes to persuade men and women toward conversion: the word of God.

As diligent Bible students have noted and faithful Gospel preachers have proclaimed, “What is said about the Holy Spirit is said about the written word.” That is, the influences the Bible attributes to the Holy Spirit toward man’s conversion and sanctification, the Bible also attributes to the word. This is not mere coincidence. The word is given by the Holy Spirit (2 Samuel 23:2; 1 Cor. 2:12-13; 2 Peter 1:20-21); thus when anyone is influenced and persuaded by the word, he has been influenced and persuaded by the Holy Spirit, the Source of the word.

While the Holy Spirit reasons with and persuades men through the word, He never forces anyone into obedience—it is a choice each person makes (Deuteronomy 30:19; Joshua 24:15; Revelation 22:17). Thus, there can be no direct operation of the Holy Spirit involved to compel man to obedience. When the Holy Spirit “strove with man” prior to the Flood, He did it by means of Noah’s preaching (2 Peter 2:5). The Holy Spirit tried to reason with the Israelites by means of the prophets He inspired: “*Yet many years didst thou bear with them, and testifiedst against them by thy Spirit through thy prophets: yet would they not give ear: therefore*

gavest thou them into the hand of the peoples of the lands” (Nehemiah 9:30, American Standard Version).

Jesus said the Holy Spirit would come to the apostles and guide them into all truth (John 16:13). He would also reprove the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment (verses 8-11). On the Pentecost ten days after the ascension of Christ, the Holy Spirit came to the apostles, empowered them with miraculous abilities, and guided them into truth (Acts 2:4). On that day Peter, inspired by the Holy Spirit, reproved the people of sin (verse 23), righteousness (verse 38), and judgment (verse 40). The apostle Paul likewise reasoned with Felix, the Roman governor of Judea, “*of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come*” (Acts 24:25).

We today have the word, as given by the Holy Spirit to the apostles, preserved for us in written form: “*All Scripture is given by inspiration of God*” (2 Timothy 3:16). This is how the Holy Spirit converts. One must be “*born of . . . the Spirit*” (John 3:5); also expressed as being “*begotten . . . through the gospel*” (1 Cor. 4:15), and “*being born again . . . by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever*” (1 Pet. 1:23). If one is to be converted, he must be converted by the Holy Spirit; and if one is to be converted by the Holy Spirit, he must be converted by the Holy Spirit’s tool—the word of God.

The Fullness of His Work

Jesus had said that the Holy Spirit would come and guide the apostles into **all** truth, which in turn would provide the means, or tool, whereby men and women would be persuaded toward conversion (John 16:7-14). The Holy Spirit certainly completed His task of guiding the apostles into all truth before they died, or the words of Christ were meaningless. The New Testament affirms that the words of Christ were fulfilled; as Peter wrote,

“Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord, According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness” (2 Pet. 1:2-3, emphasis LM). The apostles had received **all** things that pertain unto life and godliness, leaving nothing else.

And the apostles revealed those things to us by the words they recorded in the New Testament; as John wrote, *“That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with*

the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full” (1 John 1:3-4). Thus, we now have *“the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints”* (Jude 3, ASV). The Holy Spirit has nothing more to deliver to the saints, nor to those who would be saints; He has furnished us *“once for all”* with *“all things that pertain unto life and godliness.”*

There is nothing lacking to convert men and women to Christ today, nor to convert an erring child of God back from the error of his way. *“All scripture is given by inspiration of God,*

and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works” (2 Tim. 3:16-17). The Holy Spirit has forged a sword for man whereby anyone can fight and defeat the influence of evil in his life and in the lives of others. Those who are willing can take *“the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God”* that they may be able to *“stand against the wiles of the devil”* (Ephesians 6:17, 11).

Let us avail ourselves of the perfect work of the Holy Spirit.

ASSURANCE

by Brian Dixon

Life is an emotional roller coaster. Throughout your life you'll know happiness, joy, peace, frustration, anger, et al. Circumstances change, friends grow apart, and some relationships will strengthen while others falter. New towns spring up while others die away. New nations will be born while others go the way of all the earth. We can be absolutely certain of only a few things: 1) We will either die or the Lord will return first; 2) People and places will change; 3) Governments will tax their subjects; 4) God will always be exactly who He has always been.

Number four is the reason that we can have that blessed assurance. While everything around us changes, God never will (James 1:17). Thus, His promises will never fail (Titus 1:2) and His desire for your salvation will never wane (2 Peter 3:9). Since God is all-powerful (Revelation 19:6), He is perfectly able to preserve His word (Luke 21:33) so that from those sacred pages you and I might develop spiritual self-confidence and wonderful assurance. Truly, in all things we must say, *“To God be the glory; great things He*

hath done” (compare with Psalm 57:5).

The steadfastness of God grants us many wonderful blessings. As we look toward Heaven we can walk through life without cowardly fear (2 Timothy 1:6-8). Why? **Because such is contrary to the nature of Christianity.** God has given us a spirit (attitude) of “I can” and not one of timidity. God's word develops in us a sound mind and loving heart. A faithful Christian stands before the world resisting unrighteousness (Jude 3), teaching the lost (Mark 16:15), and lifting the weak (Galatians 6:2). A faithful Christian is confident in the faith answering those who would oppose the gospel (1 Peter 3:15). A devoted child of God knows in Whom he has believed (2 Timothy 1:12) and therein has all confidence. To be timid relative to the faith and your Father in Heaven is to be un-Christ like. To fail to confess Christ when doing such may be difficult is to forfeit any hope that Jesus will confess us as his own before His Father (Matthew 10:32,33).

What can the world do to you? Spiritually speaking, nothing (Romans 8:31-39). To be sure, worldly folks can cause you a great deal of *physical* harm and loss. Look at what they did to your Lord (Matthew 26:46-27:54). But, what can a person do to your soul that

would cause you to fear him more than you respect God? (Matthew 10:28). Through the word we have absolute assurance that God loves us (Romans 5:8), knows us (John 10:14), rewards the overcomer (Revelation 2:7), and will vindicate the righteous (Romans 12:17-21).

Ultimately, we can know that eternal life awaits (1 John 5:11). Some say that the possibility of falling away negates such knowledge and assurance, but this is an extreme reaction to denominational false doctrine. John wrote so that his brethren would **know** that they had eternal life (1 John 5:13). Our Lord stated plainly that if you believe (John 8:24), repent of your sins (Acts 17:30), confess Him before others (Matthew 10:32,33; Romans 10:9,10), and allow yourself to be immersed in water (baptized) for the remission of sins (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 22:16) then you will be saved. Once saved, always saved? No. A constant source of forgiveness for the penitent Christian who has fallen? Yes (1 John 1:7-9; Acts 8:5-24). What more do you need in order to have that blessed assurance unto the end? (Hebrews 6:11).

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THE SIN OF DOING NOTHING AT ALL

Author Unkown

He made no mistakes, took no wrong roads,

He never fumbled the ball.

He never went down 'neath the weight of a load,

He simply did nothing at all.

He lost no hard fight in defense of the right,

Never bled with his back to the wall;

He never felt faint in his climb to the light,

He simply did nothing at all.

So death came nigh, for life slipped by,
And he feared for the Judgment Hall;

When they asked him why, he said with a sigh,

"I simply did nothing at all."

So God will pardon your blunder, my friend,

Or regard with pity your fall;

But the one big sin that surely means hell,

Is simply to do nothing at all.

[Editor's Note: Pardon on the Day of Judgment will only be extended to those that have washed away their sins and kept their sins washed away by the blood of Christ. However, the blood of Christ and the grace of God give no excuse to do **nothing** for the Lord and His bride. *"Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord"* (1 Corinthians 15:58).]

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GOD'S AUTHORIZED WORSHIP

- COLOSSIANS 3:17

1. **LORD'S SUPPER** - The New Testament and early church history record that Christians met on the first day of every week (Sunday) to worship God and remember Christ (Acts 20:7; I Corinthians 11:23-34; 16: 1-2).
2. **PRAYERS** - (Acts 2:42; Philippians 4:6-7; I Thessalonians 5:17-18).
3. **SINGING** - God's word authorizes only vocal music and specifically singing (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16; Hebrews 2:12). The New Testament shows no use of mechanical instruments of music in worship to God by the church Christ established. Church history notes no such use for nearly 700 years after the New Testament was completed. It is an innovation of men, not of God.
4. **GIVING** - Free-willed, cheerful, generous, and every week (Acts 20:35; I Corinthians 16:1-2; 2 Corinthians 8 & 9).
5. **PREACHING OF THE WORD** - The gospel of Christ, not men's doctrines nor entertainment, saves and strengthens us (Acts 2:42; 20:7; Romans 10:17; I Corinthians 1:18-23).

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