

## **The Lord is that Spirit**

The Holy Ghost is the Spirit of Christ.

What does that mean to the plan of salvation?

By Ken Raggio

Now the Lord is that Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty.

2 Corinthians 3:17

## **That Spirit**

Paul taught in 2 Corinthians 3:3 that the saints at Corinth were "manifestly declared to be the epistles of Christ...written not with INK, but with the SPIRIT of the living God."

## **Epistles written by the Spirit**

Most people in modern Christian circles teach and preach the essentiality of being born again. These people believe that there must come a transformation to one's entire being, and that old things must pass away and all things must become new.

There is, however, a vast difference in the interpretation of just how this new birth is brought about.

## **How is one BORN AGAIN?**

In order to be BORN AGAIN, it is essential to take into account all the SCRIPTURAL TEACHINGS on this subject. There can be no question about the fact that "Ye must be born again". Those are the irrefutable words of Jesus Christ. There has been a question in 20th century Christianity on exactly what it means to be "born again." To many, the new birth takes place the moment one prays the "sinner's prayer." But not ONE SHRED of evidence is given in the Bible that anyone was ever born again as a result of a so-called sinner's prayer.

## **Was the thief on the cross born again?**

We repeatedly hear modern Christians refer to the thief on the cross appealing to our Lord to have mercy. Jesus' reply was "this day shalt thou be with me in paradise".

The misinterpretation of this reference has fostered the concept of "deathbed" conversions. There is a serious problem with that concept however, and it has to do with the requirements Jesus Christ placed on being born again.

Jesus told Nicodemus, "except ye be born of the water and of the Spirit you cannot see the kingdom of God." Water Baptism and Holy Ghost Baptism are essential elements of the new birth.

The fact that Jesus promised the thief on the cross entrance into paradise brings attention to the fact that before Jesus Christ actually DIED on the cross of Calvary, no one was ever born again!

You must understand that the NEW BIRTH is a NEW TESTAMENT doctrine. The new birth was not preached nor required by the law of Moses, nor was it contained in the Old Testament covenant. Who could possibly argue that the plan of salvation underwent a complete overhaul from the Old Testament to the New?

The thief on the cross's conversion took place under the Old Testament timeframe. It is a simple fact. Until Jesus Christ died, there was NO New Testament!

## **The thief on the cross was not born again.**

He was saved under Old Testament jurisdiction.

## **Doctrine of the Living Water**

You will remember the story of the Samaritan woman at the well to whom Jesus made this offer in John 4:10, "If thou

*knewest the gift of God, and who it is that sayeth to thee, give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of Him, and He would have given thee LIVING WATER."*

In a few moments he added, "*Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst, but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life."*

Notice that Jesus was offering to this woman WATER OF LIFE.

## **This water of life is preached all over the world as the new life.**

It is the new birth. Nearly any fundamental preacher will agree to that. But what does Jesus say that water is, exactly? What is the water of life, and how do you drink it? First, let's let Jesus define what it is.

In John 7:37, Jesus speaks about that water again. Listen! "*In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow RIVERS OF LIVING WATER."*

This great promise of Jesus Christ has been made to all who would believe upon him.

Peter used these words: "For THE PROMISE is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call."

"But wait!" you say. "Peter was talking about the Baptism of the Holy Ghost. But JESUS was talking about the New Birth!"

In fact, they were both speaking of the same identical experience! The WATER that Jesus offered to the woman at the well was nothing less than the very BAPTISM of the Holy Ghost which was experienced by the 120 disciples of Jesus Christ. Let me prove it to you.

## **The Water of Life is the Holy Ghost**

You must understand one outstanding fact about Jesus' encounter with the woman at the well.

Even though He was offering her this water, she could not possibly drink it until first Jesus Christ went to Calvary and purchased the PROMISE.

If there is any doubt in your mind that this is a fact, then read John 7:38 and 39. "He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water..."

## **"...but this spake He of the Spirit,**

which they that believe on Him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified."

You MUST examine that statement carefully! The WATER of life is the HOLY GHOST, and it was NOT yet given while Jesus was yet alive.

There can be no argument that Jesus and Peter referred to the same identical experience when referring to the waters of Life. John 7:39 says plainly- "this spake he of the Spirit which they that believe upon him should receive"!

John also adds the fact that the Holy Ghost was not yet given because Jesus was not yet glorified!

The Old Testament prophet Joel described in some detail what would take place when that Spirit would finally come. Joel 2:28 declares "and your sons and daughters shall prophesy."

## **Peter wasted no time on the day of Pentecost**

**making the connection** between the Old Testament prophecy about God pouring out His Spirit and the PHENOMENON that had taken place before their very eyes in the Upper Room.

He boldly declared in Acts 2:16-18, "*But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy.*"

It was the manifestation of the Baptism of the Holy Ghost with the prophetic evidence of speaking in unknown tongues that was identified by the Apostle Peter as being the outpouring of God's spirit, which in turn then was referred to by Jesus Christ in John 7:39 as the "RIVERS OF LIVING WATER."

### **The \$64,000 Question...**

If both Jesus Christ, Peter, and Joel equated the outpouring of the Holy Spirit with the Pentecostal experience then *what grounds do we have for telling anyone that they are PARTAKERS of the WATERS of eternal life IF THEY HAVE NEVER received this Pentecostal experience of the Baptism of the Holy Ghost?*

It was the Pentecostal experience that fulfilled the commandment that Jesus gave to Nicodemus when he said "Marvel not that I say unto you, you must be born again. For *except a man be born of the WATER and of the SPIRIT, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God.*"

If you will look closely at the Pentecostal experience, you will see the fulfilling of both of the above prerequisites -- Water and Spirit!

The crowds that gathered around the house where the Holy Ghost had fallen began to inquire of the apostles, "Men and Brethren, what shall we do?"

"Then Peter said unto them, repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost," Acts 2:38.

We then have the exciting historical account of the fact that: "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls (Acts 2:41).

**For the first time in the New Testament we have scriptural proof and evidence that anyone was actually born again.**

Now some would have us believe that it is possible to receive the Spirit of Christ BEFORE receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost.

They argue that the Spirit of Christ comes to the believer prior to the Baptism of the Holy Ghost, and that the Baptism of the Holy Ghost is thereby relegated to the position of being a separate and distinct work apart from the New Birth. I must say in no uncertain terms that the New Birth AND the Baptism of the Holy Ghost are both references to the same identical experience! When a person ever comes to the realization of the nature of God and the inseparability of the ONE SPIRIT of God then it becomes evident that to receive the Spirit of Christ IS THE SAME ACT as receiving the HOLY GHOST.

### **Don't run from the Second Chapter of Acts.**

You must come to terms with the fact that the Baptism of the Holy Ghost was accompanied by the physical evidence of speaking in other tongues by the believer – not ONLY for the 120 on the day of Pentecost, but by EVERY subsequent group that followed in the Apostolic doctrine.

We have evidence that not only did Peter and the Apostle's speak with other tongues, but so did the Apostle Paul. Paul clearly taught in I Corinthians 13:5 "I would that ye all spake with tongues...". The fact that he esteemed prophesying in one's native tongue even higher, in no way takes away from the fact that he taught that all should speak in tongues.

**Isaiah** prophesied tongues speaking as one of the tools of evangelism in the church age in 28:11 "for with stammering lips and another tongue will he speak to this people".

**Jesus** prophesied that one of the signs of a true believer is that he would "speak with new tongues" Mark 16:17

**The 3000 Jews** of the early church were obedient to Peter's message, thereby we know that they were Baptized in water in the Name of Jesus Christ, and spoke in tongues.

**The Gentiles of the early church**, beginning with the house of Cornelius did too, as Acts 44-48 tells, "*While Peter yet spoke these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all those which heard the word. And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the Gift of the Holy Ghost. For they HEARD THEM SPEAK WITH TONGUES and magnify God. Then answered Peter, can any man forbid WATER, that these should not be baptized, which have RECEIVED THE HOLY GHOST as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the NAME of the Lord.*"

Here we see the evidence of the new birth. Born of Water and of the Spirit.

Without water baptism in the name of Jesus Christ your claim to a Born Again experience is unfounded, because it is unfinished. Without the Pentecostal experience of the Baptism of the Holy Ghost with the evidence of speaking in other tongues, your claim to a Born Again experience is unfounded, because it is unfinished.

Jesus Christ made an astonishing claim to his disciples in the book of John, chapter 14: it had to do with the very essence of the Spirit of God.

### **Who is the Comforter?**

Jesus said, "If ye love me, keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever; EVEN THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH..."

Let us focus on this claim.

Jesus Christ, the Son of Man, said that he would ask God, His Father, to send ANOTHER COMFORTER.

Why? Because the Son of Man was going away! This would be the purpose of Calvary. The PHYSICAL EMBODIMENT of the INCARNATE GOD would be glorified and received up into heaven.

Jesus furthermore declared than IN HIS PLACE the SPIRIT OF TRUTH would come.

Listen to these comments about the SPIRIT OF TRUTH found in John 14:17: 'Whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him.'

Do you understand that statement?

**Jesus said that the Spirit of Truth was not known by the world yet.**

But read on. Jesus said also in verse 17, "BUT YE KNOW HIM, FOR HE DWELLETH WITH YOU..." This could refer to no one other than himself.

Paul told the Colossians in 2:9 that "in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily". In Colossians 1:15, he declared Jesus to be the "IMAGE of the INVISIBLE GOD". In speaking of the Spirit of Truth, Jesus said to the disciples, "But ye know Him for he dwelleth with you." The Spirit of Truth was housed in the body of Jesus Christ! He was the fulness of God bodily.

**He that is WITH you shall be IN you**

Take note of Jesus' remaining statement: "but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you," John 14:17.

Are you picking up on what Jesus is saying? "He that dwelleth WITH you shall be IN you!" That means that the Holy Ghost was Jesus, returned to them!

Anyone knows that the Flesh and Blood body of Jesus Christ the Man has been glorified, and is presently standing as a glorified human being at the right hand of the Eternal Invisible Spirit on the Throne of God.

But the most important thing we need to see in this is that Jesus Christ was and IS the Spirit of Truth.

**Jesus Christ was the Holy Ghost INCARNATE!**

Some preachers would have us believe that the Spirit of the Father is the first person of the Eternal Godhead, and that the Spirit of Jesus Christ is the second person of the Eternal Godhead, and that the Holy Spirit is the third person of the eternal Godhead, but unfortunately that JUST IS NOT SO. God is not composed of three eternal spirits.

Jesus Christ did not come to this earth with only one person out of three dwelling in Him. No, sir!

The fact stands that Jesus Christ is the incarnation of the only One Lord, One God and One Supreme, Sovereign Deity.

In Him dwelled all the fullness of God BODILY!

I John 5:7 says, "There are three that bear record in Heaven," There are three what?

Three persons? IT DOES NOT SAY THAT!

Three deities? No, it does NOT SAY THAT!

God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost? NO! It doesn't say that either.

It says that there are three that bear record in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost.

And it emphatically declares: THESE THREE ARE ONE! The Father IS the Word. The Word IS the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost IS the Father.

**Jesus Christ is the invisible Father robed in flesh.**

Jesus is the fullness of God come down from Heaven to earth.

Thomas called Him, "My Lord, and my God." That is a doctrinal statement for a Jew who only believed in the Father.

Stephen saw the glorified Son of Man standing at the right hand of the Father, but John saw that same man sitting down ON the throne, and in Revelation 22:1 he called it the throne of "God AND the Lamb."

Jesus is both the Shepherd and the Sheep. He is both the King and the Prince. He is both the Father as Spirit, and Son

as Man. One Lord. Two natures. One God. Spirit and Human.

**That is why we preach that if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His.**

That is identical to saying that if you do not receive the Holy Ghost you are not born of the Spirit.

You CANNOT make a difference between the Spirit of Christ and the Holy Ghost.

Peter then taught us HOW to know that a person has received the Holy Ghost: "BECAUSE WE HEARD THEM SPEAK WITH TONGUES AND MAGNIFY GOD."

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