

THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH AND THE TRUTH

*When He, the Spirit of Truth is come,
He will guide you into all truth*

John 16:13

*Ye shall know the truth and the
truth shall make you free*

John 8:32

Bro. Theodore Reginald

SECTION-I

This is not an exhaustive study of the person and work of the Holy Spirit. Nevertheless a humble attempt has been made, based on Scripture, to answer some questions often asked about the Holy Spirit. In this section we shall try to find answer to four such questions.

1. When does an individual receive the Holy Spirit?

The first and foremost work of the Holy Spirit in an individual's life is to convict him, using God's word, of his depraved sinful condition, of God's righteousness and of the judgment to come (John 16:8-11). If he responds to this convicting work of the Holy Spirit correctly by repenting of his sins and longing for forgiveness and cleansing, then He teaches him from God's word about the great sufferings, death, burial and resurrection of Lord Jesus Christ and enables him to receive Him by faith as Lord and Savior (John 16:14). Thus he is born into the family of God (John 3:5) by the Holy Spirit through God's word. ("Water" in John 3:5 is God's word as we see in Ephesians 5:26 and 1Peter 1:23). Instantaneously, five things happen.

- (i) By the Holy Spirit he is baptized into the Body of Christ, which is the Universal Church consisting of all the believers throughout the world (1Cor. 12:13)
- (ii) He receives the anointing (2Cor. 1:21) (We are going to see the Baptism of the Holy Spirit and Anointing in detail later).
- (iii) He is sealed with the Holy Spirit (2Cor. 1:22 & Eph. 1:13).

- (iv) He is given the earnest of the Spirit (2 Cor. 1:22 & Eph. 1:14)
- (v) He is indwelt by the Holy Spirit and his body becomes the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 6:19).
- (vi) He is recipient of adoption or adult-standing in the family of God (Rom.8: 15).

Let us see, what is meant by “adoption”.

According to the Roman custom then in vogue, a son was treated at par with a slave till the time of his maturity. Only at the time of the initiation ceremony of adoption, he is raised to the status of a son, enjoying all the rights and privileges. Unlike the Romans of the first century, our loving Lord gives the rights and privileges of adoption the moment a person is born-again, thereby enabling him to enjoy the following seven things:

(i) Victorious life (Rom.8:13), (ii) Leading or guidance (Rom.8:14, John 14:26, 1John 2:27), (iii) Prayer (Rom.8:15,26), (iv) Witnessing (Rom.8:16), (v) Inheritance (Rom.8:17), (vi) Privilege of suffering with Him(Rom.8:17) and (vii) Being glorified. All these are possible by the power of the Holy Spirit available to the believer from the time of his rebirth. That is why it is wrong to wait or tarry for the Holy Spirit, participate in such “tarrying” meetings or to teach others so.

The commandment to “wait” in Acts 1:4 was given when the Holy Spirit was not yet given. “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”(Jn.7:39). After the Holy Spirit was poured forth in

the first century, He lives within each believer. "If any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his (Rom.8:9). Hence every believer who is Christ's has the Holy Spirit. There is not an iota of doubt about it.

Some passages in Acts have to be explained:

- 1) In Acts 8:12, the Samaritans believed and were baptized. But in Acts 8:17 they received the Holy Spirit afterwards. Many quote the above two verses to prove that at the time of becoming believers we do not receive the Holy Spirit, and that after baptism only we receive Him. But it is quite wrong. The Samaritans had great aversion for the Jews and they had nothing to do with them. In the discipline of the Church they had to come under the leadership of the Apostles. To make them realize and accept God-ordained apostleship of Peter and John, as an exceptional case, God did so. But in the case of the household of Cornelius in Acts 10, we come to know from verses 44 and 48 that they were baptized after they received the Holy Spirit. It is wrong to make conclusions without comparing Scripture with Scripture.
- 2) Misinterpreting Acts 19:2, "Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?", many are deceived into thinking that being a believer and receiving the Holy Spirit are two different experiences. The question in Acts 19 was put to the disciples of John the Baptist who knew only his baptism unto repentance but did not believe on the Lord Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord. They did not even know the suffering, death, burial and resurrection of Lord Jesus Christ and they were unbelievers. That is why they had to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and be baptized again (V5). Hence Paul had to ask such a question.

2. What is 'being filled with the Spirit'?

In Eph.5: 18 we have the command to "be filled with the Spirit". Firstly, this is not an once-for-all filling. The Greek word for "Be filled" is in present continuous tense. The correct translation should be "Be being continuously filled with the Spirit".

The Christian characteristics that follow the "filling" such as the joy of the Lord(Eph.5:19), giving thanks always for all things(v.20) and submission(v.21) are the same found in Col.3:16,17 and 18 following "the word of Christ dwelling in us richly". That goes to prove a life filled with the Spirit is nothing but the one filled with God's word and obedient to His word. "The Holy Ghost whom God hath given to them that obey Him" (Acts 5:32). With the help of the Spirit of God, searching our heart, setting things right with God and man in humility, surrendering to Him wholly and unconditionally our all and by faith claiming the fullness of the Holy Spirit, let us live a life of rest, peace, joy, power and victory. "It is not that how much of the Holy Spirit I have that matters but it is how much of the Holy Spirit I have that matters but it is how much of me He has that does matter". The eyes of your understanding being enlightened that ye may know.... What is the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe" –Eph.1:18,19.

"When you believe in Christ, you will have all of the Spirit all of the time. Then you are to let His Spirit have all of you all of the time".

3. What is the "Baptism with the Holy Spirit" or "Holy Spirit's Baptism"?

Some people insist that we should receive the "baptism of the Spirit" with the sign of speaking in tongues. Those who

call themselves as “Full Gospel” group blame others as having only two – “salvation” and “immersion baptism” and whereas they have all the three – “salvation”, “immersion baptism” and “Spirit-baptism”, as per full counsel of God. We shall see what the word of God has to say about “Baptism of the Holy Spirit”. In the New Testament there are seven places in which this expression occurs. In the following five places: Mat.3:11, Mark 1:8, Luke 3:16, John 1:33 and Acts 1:5 this is expressed as a future event since the ‘Holy Ghost was not yet given’ according to John 7:39. But in the sixth place in Acts 11:16 and the seventh in 1Cor.12:13 this is expressed as an event that had already taken place. When we were born-again Lord Jesus Christ had baptized us by the Holy Spirit into His body, the Church (1Cor.12: 13). This is the only baptism of the Spirit found in all the other six verses. The cause of confusion is the improper translation. The same Greek word “en” used in all the seven places in the original text is translated as “with” in the first six places and “by” in the seventh place. In all the seven places it should be translated as “by”. Then the confusion would not have been caused. Bro. Billy Graham in his book “The Holy Spirit” in page 93 says: “I too have wanted an ‘experience’. But I want every experience to be Biblically-based. The Biblical truth, it seems to me, is that we are baptized into the body of Christ by the spirit at the conversion. This is the only Spirit Baptism. At this we can and should be filled with the Holy Spirit and afterward be refilled and even filled into all fullness. As has been often said “One baptism, but many fillings”. I do not see from Scripture that this filling by the Holy Spirit constitutes a second baptism, nor do I see that speaking in tongues is a necessary accompaniment of being filled with the Spirit”.

4. What is meant by the “Anointing of the Holy Spirit”?

“Anointing” is mentioned only twice in the New Testament. One is in 2Cor. 1:21,22 and the other in I John 2:27. In these

two places, the expressions “hath anointed us” and “the anointing which ye have received of Him” are given in the past-tense to show that this had already happened. “Christ” means “the Anointed One”. In these two portions, the expressions “in Christ” and “of Him” respectively both go to prove the fact that when a believer is born-again and is baptized by the Spirit into the Body of Christ. He receives the anointing from Christ, the head of the Body, the Church. “Christian” is one who have been anointed in Christ.

Preaching or praying to receive the anointing of the Holy Spirit as an experience apart from conversion is unscriptural.

SECTION-II

5. What does the Scripture teach about speaking in tongues?

To arrive at any conclusion on matters of spiritual importance, we must look into the unchanging word of God and not to consider the ever-changing experiences of people however spectacular or appealing they may be. Experiences vary “but the word of the Lord endureth forever” (1Pet. 1:25) “The word of God which liveth and abideth forever”(1Pet. 1:23). We should not look at the attractiveness nor consider the popularity nor even take into account the great crowds applauding and approving of a particular doctrine. We have to use the touchstone of God’s word and see “whether those things were so” (Acts 17:11). “And when they shall say unto you, seek unto them that have familiar spirits....If they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them” Isa.8:19,20.

“In the latter times some shall depart from the faith.”

Giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils”
1Tim.4:1.

“From such turn away.... But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of “
2Tim.3:5,14.

“Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world” 1Jn.4:1.

As we are expressly warned of God, let us build up our faith not on experiences but on unchanging, ever-abiding and non-compromising word of God. There are only four passages in the New Testament which mention about tongue-speaking. In all these four, speaking in tongues only means speaking in languages known to human beings and not any meaningless repetition of gibberish or ecstatic utterances. In all these four passages, in the original Greek, the word “unknown” is not at all found. Only the translators had interpolated the word and that is why, in King James Version, the word “unknown” is given in italics. We will consider one by one these scripture references.

- (1) Acts 2:1-11: In this passage, in V4, the word “other tongues” only means the languages which are spoken dialects. There were sixteen language groups mentioned in V.9-11 who could understand what was spoken in these “other tongues”. Thus the languages spoken on the day of Pentecost were not “angelic languages” neither heavenly languages not any ecstatic, gibberish utterances without meaning. Those were languages which were real and the same could be identified and understood by the ones who heard them.

- (2) Acts 10:46: In this passage the “tongues” spoken, could be understood by those who came with Peter and they could say that they did “magnify God” in those languages! These again were not un-understandable languages.
- (3) Acts 19:6: Here too the word “tongues” means languages spoken by human beings and only spoken dialects. The same word used in Acts 10:46 is also used here in the original Greek.
- (4) 1Cor.12, 13 & 14: In the church at Corinth only earthly, real and spoken languages are meant by the word “tongues”. The Greek word translated as “tongues” is “Glossa” and the same is found 33 times in the Greek Old Testament with the same meaning.

The city of Corinth was an idolatrous and immoral one. In the pagan worship of devils and oracles by ‘prophetesses’ ecstatic utterances were extensively used. Following this pagan practice, in the church at Corinth, they started speaking in “tongues” without any restraint. Paul the Apostle was very much burdened about the confusion in the Corinthian church and he wanted to bring about order and discipline in the church. Desiring that “all things be done decently and in order”(1Cor.14:40), he wrote these three chapters. He puts forth the following conditions for regularizing of speaking in tongues:

- 1) As we have seen in the forgoing passages, it should be a language which is spoken on earth by human beings(1Cor.14:8-12). (But most of the “unknown” languages spoken now-a-days are mere meaningless, gibberish, ecstatic, loud utterances repeated many times over and over again, akin to the language of the speaker but not of any particular language pattern known.

Language experts like William E. Wilmers have expressed, after examining many of the modern “unknown” tongue-speaking, that these are not languages known to the human race nor are spoken in any part of the world. In churches when many “interpreters” interpreted the same “tongue” speaker, they were lengthy and of different meanings for the same word or group of words. Thus today ‘s tongue-speaking are mostly contrary to this first condition laid out in God’s word).

- 2) It was a sign for the unbelieving. (1Cor.14: 21,22; Isa.28: 11,12).
- 3) It should be used in public and not in private (1Cor.12: 7,14:12). (In 1Cor.12: 7 the Greek word “Sumphero” means “profit together”- not for personal profit).
- 4) Without translation it should not be spoken (1Cor.14: 28).
- 5) It should stop with at the most three speakers (1Cor.14: 27).
- 6) One by one and not together they should speak (1Cor.14: 27). (Not competing or vying with one another in shouting together and creating commotion and confusion as we see now-a-days!).
- 7) There should be only one translation (1Cor.14: 27). (In some “tongues”- meetings, we see many interpreters for one tongue- speaking).
- 8) Women should not speak and only men should speak (1Cor.14: 34). (Mostly the “unknown” tongue- speakers are women in these movements and meetings).

- 9) If the congregation cannot understand the language spoken, it is better to keep quiet (1Cor.14: 18,19).
- 10) Should be done decently and in order (1Cor.14: 40). (Unconsciously jumping so as to have the garments slip away or to fall down in unbecoming postures are not at all scriptural).

Kindly check sincerely and honestly whether all these conditions are fulfilled by any of the modern day “tongue-speaking” group. It is sad to say that we cannot find a single such group.

Some people teach that we should receive the Holy Spirit with the sign of “unknown” tongues. Let us see carefully the following scripture portions. In Acts 2, just 50 days after Christ’s resurrection, the sign of tongues- speaking in real languages not learnt by them, was given to show that God’s revelations given so far only in the Hebrew language exclusively to the chosen nation Israel, were in the church era, extended to the Gentile nations in their languages too.

In Acts 10, seven years later, the people who gathered in the house of Cornelius were all gentiles. God wanted Peter and the Jewish Christians who went with him to accept the Gentiles readily, as part of the church at par with the Jews. God gave them the tongues as a sign that He had accepted them equally at par with the Jews, made the disciples to exclaim that they “have received the Holy ghost as well as we” (V47)! In Acts 19 after a period of thirteen years, the Lord gave those people at Ephesus who were far away from Jerusalem, the same sign to show that God had accepted the apostleship of Paul to the Gentiles. Two years later, Paul had to admonish the Corinthian believers about tongue-speaking following pagan practices and prevent them from creating confusion in the church!

From 1Cor.13: 8-13 we find that the gift of tongues “shall cease”. Till the first century, prophecy, tongues and knowledge were needed to give the counsels of God to the church. After the completion of the book of Revelation, these three were not needed. God speaks through His written word after the completion of the New Testament. Prophecy and the knowledge of God’s new revelations would end suddenly (Gk: katharego) according to 1Cor.13: 8; whereas about tongues we read in the same passage that it shall disappear slowly (Gk: Pauo). That is why we hear about the tongues upto 1Corinthians and no more there- after. In the epistles such as Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and as on, not even a single mention of tongues is there! In the lists of the gifts in Rom.12: 4-8 and Eph.4: 8-12 we do not find tongues being mentioned. Augustine and Crysostom who lived in the fourth century said that tongues had ceased by that time. In Acts, all in the group spoke in tongues. But in Corinthian church only a few spoke in tongues (1Cor.12: 30). That is why we can clearly see that the tongues “disappeared slowly” (“Pauo”).

John Mc.Arthur, a noted Bible teacher says: “After spending seven years studying this question and reading all sides of the issue that are in print, and often spending many hours discussing it with charismatics and trying to evaluate it from their perspective, I am convinced, beyond all reasonable doubt, that tongues ceased in the apostolic age 1900 years ago” (the Truth about Tongues- Word of Grace 1984 P 10).

An evangelist at Madurai says: “Once I spoke in tongues. I used to call the sick by their names in meetings. After I had read the Holy Bible prayerfully and deeply, I came to know that these “experiences” were not from God and I left these since then”.

It is sad to see many people insisting that “tongue-speaking” is the only sign of being filled with the Holy Spirit and all should seek for it. Whereas mighty men of God such as Luther, Calvin, Wesley, Whitfield, John Knox, Spurgeon, Finney, Moody, Torry, Billy Sunday, William Carey, Bakhtsingh, Billy Graham and John R. Rice never spoke in tongues. If tongue-speaking is the sign of being filled with the Holy Spirit then these men who did not speak in tongues would not have been filled with the Holy Spirit, which is absurd! Paul lists these gifts as the least in 1Cor.12: 30. Again, he mentions about this being “childish” in 1Cor.13:1. The Corinthian church was carnal, having court cases, opposing the authority of the Apostles, in publicly-known detestable sins, in drunkenness, not observing the Lord’s table properly, having wrong doctrines and full of divisions. If the only church in the New Testament which spoke in tongues was full of these failures, how can we say truthfully that tongue-speaking is the greatest gift, and should be sought-after by all?

There are a few passages we should know in their proper perspective. In 1Cor.14: 4 we read “He who speaks in tongue “edifies himself”. This is not mentioned as a commendation but only as a comparison with prophesying. One should edify the church because gifts are given to edify the church and not to glorify an individual. Paul the Apostle does not recommend this kind of praying in tongue with “unfruitful understanding” and he says that he would pray with understanding also (1Cor.14: 14,15). Hence ‘tongues’ is not a prayer-language. Secondly in 1Cor.14: 5 Paul says, “I would that ye all spake with tongues (spoken dialects or real languages)”. After implying that all do not speak with tongues in 1Cor.12: 30, how can he contradict himself saying ‘ye all speak with tongues?’. This is but a personal desire of Paul as he spoke in different languages to evangelize the various

language groups. "I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than ye all"(1Cor.14: 18). The same kind of expression he uses in 1Cor.7: 7 "I would that all men were even as I myself". It was his personal desire that all could be celebrate like him but he adds "every man hath his proper gift of God" (to marry or not to marry). Hence it is not an instruction to follow. In 1Cor.14: 39 Paul writes, "Forbid not to speak with tongues" because the New Testament was not completed and revelation of God in any languages- Jewish or Gentile, was necessary then. After the completion of the New Testament, this is not necessary.

We have to be very cautious of counterfeit experiences. The soul power in man is hidden in his subconscious self. Using this, both the mesmerists and the pelmanists perform many miracles. In the same way, the charismatics bring people to a subconscious state by clapping fast, singing with speed, beating the drums in increasing tempo, or repeating some words like "Hallelujah, Hallelujah" or "glory, glory" etc., While others pray, or sing, they scream or mutter funnily in the middle, thereby making it to drift from meaningfulness to mere emotional outbursts under the control of the subconscious self. People who indulge in emotional activities such as speaking in tongues may however experience great mental and emotional release and momentary 'bliss' in their soul realm and they falsely attribute it to the work of God.

It is surprising to know that people who belong to non-Christian circles and even un-Christian groups also speak in tongues. D.C.Graham says that he met a non-Christian girl in China who spoke in tongues. Edward Langton who labored in East Africa heard a group of people possessed by evil spirits speaking in tongues. In a church in London, one spoke in Chinese and another in Arabic but those who knew these languages and were present said that these were

speaking blasphemies and vulgarities. In a church in Chennai three Hindu women brought another woman to us and said "she went to a charismatic meeting and started speaking in tongues. Our neighbor who knows the languages says that she is speaking all obscenities and blasphemies. Kindly pray for her". As we prayed, the evil spirit screamed and went away. Poor woman! Without receiving the wonderful free gift of salvation, she was led astray by the enemy to receive some emotional ecstatic experience from the evil-one who comes as an angel of light.

"In the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also than ten thousand words in an 'unknown' tongue" (1Cor.14:19).

SECTION-III

1) Are the healing campaigns scriptural?

Now, concerning signs and miracles, C.I.Scofield says that they are for a particular period of time. In the Holy Bible, the miracles performed in Egypt to bring His people from bondage were not needed in the wilderness. The miracles in the wilderness came to an end when the Israelites crossed Jordan. If the Israelites prayed for the pillars of fire and cloud to continue in Canaan it must have been contrary to God's will. The healing campaigns conducted now-a-days, claiming that God heals every one is unscriptural. All were healed in Acts 5:16 (AD 35). But His chosen servants like Epaphroditus in Phil 2:25-28 (AD 60). Trophemus in 2 Tim 4:20 (AD 67) and Paul the Apostle himself in 2Cor. 12:8,9 were not healed. This does not mean that God's power or desire to heal is deteriorating but miracles of healing cannot be claimed en-masse. Scripture warrants that a sick believer should call for the elders of the church who would anoint him with oil and

pray (James 5: 14,15). Let us not indulge in or encourage such unscriptural practices, as the healing campaigns.

2) **What is meant by Baptism with the Holy Ghost and with fire?**

In Matthew 3:11 and Luke 3:16 we find “He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire”. Already we have seen about baptism by the Holy Spirit. Now about baptism with fire: Many misunderstand and misinterpret the meaning of these verses and insist that we should pray for and receive the “baptism of fire”. Baptism by fire is the judgment of God, according to the scripture. See the next verses Mat.3: 12 and Luke 3: 17 which speak of judgment. About this we again read in Luke 12:49,50 where Lord Jesus Christ speaks of the judgment to come on the world and the judgment of sin He is taking upon Himself. Please find the same thing mentioned in Malachi 4: 1 and 2 Thes. 1: 7,8. He baptizes the believers into the body of Christ (Church) by the Holy Spirit and the unbelievers with the fire of judgment. In Acts 2:3 “cloven tongues as of fire” (not fire but like fire) signifies here the word of God which is compared to fire. (Jer. 20: 9, 23:29). The word “cloven” means that the word of God is for both the Jews and Non-Jews. The same thought is found in Eph. 4: 12 as ‘two-edged sword’. Based upon the experiences of some individuals, we cannot go contrary to God’s word. Hence the “baptism of fire” is God’s judgmental fire on unbelievers.

3) **Is the foretelling by so-called “prophets” scriptural?**

Like the non-Christians approaching sooth-sayers and fortune-tellers, some so-called believers, not grounded on God’s word, approach so-called “prophets” and “prophetesses”. To guide His children, our Lord has already given His Holy Spirit to guide them through His word. Knowing the guidance of God is the privilege of every believer

(Psalm32:8). Many have shipwrecked their life of faith by following the so-called visionaries and prophets. Many ask, "Are they not doing these things in the name of Jesus"? Please pay heed to what our Lord has said "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy Name? And in Thy Name have cast out devils? And in Thy Name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from me, ye that work iniquity" – Matthew 7:22,23.

In 1Timothy4: 1,2 Paul explicitly says that these false-teachers are energized by the devil himself and it is dangerous to dabble in these things. He also warns us that these false teachers cause us to deviate – from the spiritual to the emotional, from the eternal to the temporal and from Lord Jesus Christ to their own selves, so that they get all the importance and glory. Many vulnerable people have become victims of these "demi-gods" who capitalizes on them. May our loving Lord protect us from such deception of the devil! May our eyes and attention be only upon our beloved Lord Jesus Christ!

"Abstain from all appearance of evil" – 1Thes.5: 22.

"Hold fast the form of sound words" – 2Tim1: 13.

NOTE:

After having presented with much limitations the above important facts, kindly note that all this is irrelevant, meaningless and unnecessary if you do not have the assurance of salvation or the experience of new birth. You must come to Lord Jesus Christ, as you are, repenting of your sinful life and believing that He took the punishment of your sins upon Himself on the cross (Isa.53: 5). In prayer, ask Him to forgive you, to come into your heart and cleanse you from every sin by His precious blood (1John1: 7,9). The blood of Lord Jesus has power to give you forgiveness of your sins and freedom from your sins (Eph.1: 7). Dedicate your life to Him. What He has promised, believe He has done (Rev.3: 20). Live for Him and labor for Him. If you have made this commitment please inform us.