

## The Online Study Course – Lesson 9

# WHY YOU NEED THE HOLY SPIRIT

*Mankind is engaged in a frustrating search for answers to the problems of humanity. Yet the real answers have eluded this world's greatest thinkers. Only the Creator God has the ultimate answer – if we are willing to seek and accept it!*

WHAT is the Holy Spirit? What does it do? Why do we need it anyway? The answers to these questions are vitally important to everyone, for the Holy Spirit is the only real, permanent and lasting answer to the problems of every human being!

Jesus said: "... I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (John 10:10). One reason Christ came into this world was to teach humanity the true values in life – the way which would bring true happiness and joy into our lives. But more importantly, Christ came to reveal the way to receive God's gift of eternal life. Jesus taught that unless we receive and retain the Holy Spirit, we can never hope to enter the Kingdom of God.

Why?

**Because it is only through God's Spirit that we develop the lasting character of God in this life, and are resurrected to glorious eternal life at Christ's return.**

### **Holy Spirit Now Available**

Jesus Christ came to herald the coming of the Holy Spirit – to make this precious gift freely available to every person whom God would call and who would truly repent and believe. "He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said," proclaimed Jesus, "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...)" (John 7:38-39).

After teaching His disciples for three and one half years, Jesus Christ prepared to offer Himself as the ultimate sacrifice. Soon, He would be crucified and murdered by His contemporaries. After three days and three nights in the tomb, He would be resurrected to sit at the right hand of His Father in heaven. His twelve apostles would then spearhead the Work He had personally begun.

These men would have to face the sobering prospect of carrying an unpopular gospel message to a hostile world. They would have to contemplate years of persecution, ridicule and possibly even martyrdom. A discomfiting prospect to say the least!

The apostles would need strength, encouragement and wisdom. They would need love, patience and endurance to follow in Christ's steps and carry out His commission.

## **Jesus Promised Special Help**

The apostles would also need to recall the lessons taught to them by Christ during His earthly ministry. As generally "unlearned" [uneducated] men, they needed wisdom to face the philosophers, scholars and intellectuals of that day. They needed faith and courage to confront the seething hostility of religious leaders who would attempt to stamp out the fledgling Work of God time after time.

And Jesus knew it!

He said to them shortly before His trial and crucifixion: "I am not going to leave you alone in the world--I am coming to you" (John 14:18, Phillips trans.). Christ intended to continue to teach and support the twelve, but not in the flesh. His Father in heaven possessed a means by which the apostles would be aided miraculously in their efforts to spread the true gospel.

"But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit," said Jesus, "whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I have said unto you" (John 14:26, RSV). The word translated "counselor" in the Greek is *parakletos*, which in the Gospel of John has the meaning of "helper, advisor, intercessor." God's Spirit was intended to help and support the apostles in their work. And it would remind them of the lessons they had learned from their Master – Jesus Christ.

## **A Help and Comfort to Every Christian**

But Christ did not limit the help of the Holy Spirit to the apostles alone. Notice the apostle Peter's bold promise in Acts 2:38: "... Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (RSV).

And as we learned in a previous lesson, only those who possess the Holy Spirit are recognized by God as being true Christians (Rom. 8:9-11). You can have the resources that will enable you to live the kind of life God intended from the beginning, and to ultimately attain eternal life. But these gifts can come only from above – from the Holy Spirit of God – not from the within [the self] or the around [the world].

The apostle James was inspired to remind us that "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights ..." (James 1:17). Our Creator stands ready to impart these wonderful resources through the vehicle of His Holy Spirit – if we will only abide by the conditions outlined in His Word.

The Holy Spirit is indeed the key to the spiritual blessings of God. It is the only ingredient which will enable man to fulfill his inner craving for the love, joy and peace he so desperately needs for true happiness and accomplishment in this life, and for all eternity. Let's begin to understand much more about why we need the Holy Spirit in our lives today.

## What the Holy Spirit Really Is

Spiritual qualities and entities seem so unreal to most people. And no wonder. Spiritual things are invisible, not discerned by the senses except as revealed in writing in the Bible. When we speak of the Holy Spirit, it is difficult to grasp its nature. Yet the Bible reveals a great deal about God's Spirit.

In previous lessons, we proved conclusively from our study of the scriptures that the Holy Spirit is not a "third person" of a limited "trinity." We discovered that the Spirit of God is the power and energy of the God Family, as well as the very nature, life and mind of God.

Let's review some of those essential scriptures and study a few new ones as we lay the foundation for understanding one of the most crucial subjects of the Bible.

1. What is the composition of God? John 4:24. But do the Father and Christ have definite form and shape? Gen. 1:26; John 14:9; Rev. 1:13-16.

COMMENT: The God Family is composed of divine, immortal spirit essence. Spirit is the very life of God. Yet the Father and the Son have definite shape. From one end of the Bible to the other, we are told about the shape and the parts of each member of the God Family. **The Father and the Son each have a head, hair, eyes, nose, mouth, arms, fingers, a torso, legs, feet, plus inward parts. Man, as we know, was created in the image of God. But we are composed of temporal, corruptible matter. We do not have eternal life inherent within ourselves as does the God Family.**

2. What is another great difference between God and man--what is God's characteristic attitude and general mental makeup? Ps. 99:9. Is there anyone as "holy" as God? 1 Sam. 2:2. Would you consider man, of himself, as being "holy"? Rom. 3:10-18, 23; 8:7; Jer. 17:9.

COMMENT: **The word holy means pure of heart or free from sin.** The two beings presently composing the God Family possess a sinless, "holy," spiritual attitude and mind. The Holy Spirit therefore expresses the very mind and character of God.

3. What are some other characteristic attributes of God's Spirit? Isa. 11:2-3. What additional characteristics or "fruit" does the Holy Spirit manifest? Gal. 5:22-23; 2 Tim. 1:7.

4. Does God's Spirit fill the entire universe? Ps. 139:7-8; Jer. 23:24.

COMMENT: The Holy Spirit, like matter, exists in various states. It not only composes the members of the God Family, it also flows out from them to accomplish their will.

5. Is the Holy Spirit also the power by which God – the ultimate source of all power – created all things? Jer. 32:17; Ps. 104:30. How did the Eternal God utilize His Spirit of power to bring His various creations into being? Ps. 148:1-5. Notice the word "commanded" in verse 5. Also read Psalm 33:6-9 and Genesis 1:1-3.

COMMENT: Even though the Father and the Son are described specially as being in definite locations with respect to each other, spirit proceeds from them and, as David said, fills the entire universe--much like air is everywhere present on earth. The Spirit is actually the instrument or vehicle by which the God family creates!

Christ – the Logos, or "Word" (John 1:1) – "spoke and it was done." It was by the Spirit of God that the creative energy of the Father and Son was transformed into the physical creation we see around us (Heb. 11:3). And it was by His Spirit that He reformed the surface of the earth (Gen. 1). Man has no such inherent spiritual attribute of creative power. God has purposely limited man's creative abilities to dealing strictly with the physical world around him. And so man has learned to work with and use the physical laws which God set in motion – now to a degree seemingly bordering on the miraculous, but physical nonetheless.

God's original purpose for putting man here on earth was to train him for rulership in the Kingdom of God. The earth is the training ground, so to speak, to prepare mankind for greater responsibilities once born into the universe-ruling Family of God – which will include use of the creative power of God!

6. Is the very creation all around us mute testimony of the miraculous creative power of God? Rom. 1:20. (Also read the entire, but short, 26th chapter of Job for more vivid illustrations of God's infinite power. You might also like to read chapters 36:22 through to 42:6 to see how great the power of God really is!)

7. Does God sustain, preserve and rule His vast creation? Neh. 9:6; Heb. 1:2-3; Ps. 66:7.

COMMENT: God sits at the controls of the entire universe, so to speak; He rules and sustains everything by the awesome power of His Holy Spirit!

## **The KEY to Glorious Immortality**

Man is mortal, subject to death. We do not possess eternal life and great powers inherently within ourselves. Eternal life and spiritual power are gifts of God – attributes of the Holy Spirit. Let's notice how **having the Holy Spirit within us now is the key to receiving glorious immortality at the resurrection.**

1. According to the biblical account, what happened to Jesus Christ after having been dead and buried for three days? 1 Cor. 15:3-4. How did the Father raise Christ from death? Eph. 1:19-21. (Note that verse 17 tells us it is God the Father and Christ who are being discussed here.)

COMMENT: Clearly, it was by the miraculous power of the Holy Spirit that God the Father raised Christ from death to glorious immortality, authority and power.

2. Is there any proof of Christ's resurrection from the dead? 1 Cor. 15:5-8.

3. Was Christ the first of many who are to be resurrected to eternal life? Acts 26:23; Col. 1:18; 1 Cor. 15:22-23; Rom. 8:29.

4. Does the Father promise true Christians that He will also raise them to immortality – to be partakers of His divine nature and power – as He did Jesus? 1 Cor. 6:14; 15:49-53; 2 Pet. 1:4. (We suggest that you also read the entire 15th chapter of 1 Corinthians together with Galatians 3:29; 4:7; and Titus 3:7.) How essential is it to have the Holy Spirit dwelling in us now in order to receive eternal life at the resurrection? Rom. 8:9-11, 14-17.

COMMENT: The Scriptures make it abundantly clear that God desires to elevate mortal man to the God-plane of existence – to become literal spirit-born members of His spirit-composed Family! It is also evident that only those who presently have (or did have before they died) God's Spirit will be granted the gift of eternal life at Christ's return. These individuals – true Christians – have been begotten by the Spirit of God and are manifesting the "fruit" (Gal. 5:22-23) of the Holy Spirit in their lives. (The "fruit of the Spirit" will be discussed later in this lesson.)

We, if we are begotten of the Father and have the Spirit of Christ, are declared to be "heirs" (future inheritors) of the divine nature – of the very mind – of God and of immortal, incorruptible, perfect, all-powerful God-life!

5. When and how quickly will a spirit-begotten person's change to immortality take place? 1 Cor. 15:51-52.

6. What type of body did Jesus receive at the time of His resurrection? 1 Cor. 15:44-45. Will those who are changed at the coming resurrection be given the same kind of glorious body Jesus Christ has today? Phil. 3:20-21; 1 John 3:2.

COMMENT: They will then be given a spirit-composed body like Christ has now. Their natural, mortal bodies will suddenly be changed to bodies of spirit, if they are yet alive at the time of the resurrection. If dead, they will be resurrected from the grave with new, spirit bodies (1 Thess. 4:14-17).

7. Was Jesus, with His spirit-composed body, able to suddenly appear and disappear? Luke 24:36-37, 31. Was He able to pass through barriers or walls? John 20:19. Can one composed of spirit transform (or manifest) himself into mortal flesh and bone if necessary? Luke 24:37-39.

COMMENT: When one becomes a spirit being, he will also be able to perform all types of miraculous feats as Christ did. Of course, as spirit-born members of God's Family with the character of God, all will be done according to the will of the Father who will always be in charge over all.

8. Are spiritual bodies capable of traveling through space at tremendous speed? Compare John 20:17, 19 with Matthew 28:9.

COMMENT: Notice that Christ traveled to the Father in heaven and returned to earth on the same day!

9. Once a person has been changed into spirit, can he ever die again? Luke 20:35-36.

10. Was Jesus to be "glorified" after His resurrection? John 17:4-5; Heb. 2:9. How do Christ's and the Father's glorified bodies appear when manifested to human beings? Rev. 1:13-16. (The "Son of Man" mentioned here is the glorified Christ.)

COMMENT: Jesus Christ had a glorious, resplendent, spiritual body that was equal to His Father's before He took the human form. After His resurrection, He was restored to the same power and glory. Even when manifested in a mere shadow of its spiritual glory – so that mortal men might receive some idea of its magnificence – Christ's glorified, powerful spirit body radiates light as bright as the sun!

11. Will God also "glorify" all of His spirit-begotten children at the resurrection by giving them this same great power and glory? Rom. 8:17; Col. 3:4.

12. How did Jesus give His disciples a fleeting glimpse of this future glorified condition? Matt. 17:1-2. What other scripture gives us an idea of the future glorified state of those who shall be born again at the resurrection? Dan. 12:2-3.

COMMENT: The ultimate glory that spirit-begotten children of God are to receive at the resurrection will be so great it will make them shine as the brilliant stars of the heavens. All this can come about only by having God's Spirit working within us now!

## **Our Spiritual Creation Now Possible!**

When Jesus said to Nicodemus that one must be "born again" to enter God's Kingdom, as shown in John 3:1-8, He explained that He was speaking of a SPIRITUAL birth and not a physical one. We learned that true Christians are already – in this life – the spiritual children of God the Father (1 John 3:1-2). But even though considered God's children, they are now only heirs (Rom. 8:14-17) – ones who shall, in the future, become inheritors.

Why?

Because they are **now only begotten** children. It is only when they are born of God that they become inheritors of God's Kingdom, having become divine, eternal members of the Family of God. Before the second phase of man's creation – our spiritual creation – can begin, God the Father must first beget each of us spiritually. Whenever we become a begotten member of God's Family, at that moment we receive a portion – a seed or germ – of the Father's Holy Spirit. "...on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 10:45). This gift is "poured out" from the Father in heaven and, like physical life-giving sperm, unites with the "human" spirit in each of our minds upon conversion. Each human mind is like the nucleus of an egg with which the seed of the Holy Spirit unites.

Thus, we are impregnated, so to speak, by the "seed" or germ of eternal life (1 Pet. 1:3-4, 23; Jas. 1:18. The phrase "born again" in 1 Peter 1:23 should have been correctly rendered "begotten again.") This impregnation is the begetting of the spiritual life of God within our minds, making us literal children of God (though yet unborn), for we are going to be like our heavenly Father when finally born into His Family.

We have also learned that the portion of the Holy Spirit which a person may receive as a begetting does more than impart to us the possibility of eternal life. It imparts to us characteristics and attributes of the Almighty, the all-powerful God the Father in heaven, just as the physical sperm of a human father transmits the father's attributes to his newly conceived offspring. And just as a newly begotten physical embryo must begin to grow in its mother's womb, we also must begin to grow spiritually after being begotten by God's Spirit.

If you are truly the kind of Christian described in the Bible, then you are now a begotten child of God. You were impregnated with the spiritual germ or sperm of eternal life so you could begin the process of spiritual growth. But you are not yet born of God – not yet composed of spirit – obviously not yet immortal. And if you are not yet begotten of God – a genuine Christian by Bible definition (Rom. 8:9) – then you have not yet begun this process!

Now, let's look a little further into the matter of spiritual growth, once an individual is begotten by God's Holy Spirit.

## **Spiritual Growth**

Before a spirit-begotten child of God can be born into the divine Family of God, the Bible shows he must grow spiritually. While still mortal, he is to become more God-like – developing more and more of the very character of Jesus Christ. Let's study the scriptures showing how this miraculous change and growth can be accomplished.

1. Must spirit-begotten Christians change their former ways of living which were contrary to God's law? Rom. 12:1-2. What is this changing process producing in true Christians? Eph. 4:22-24. Be sure to also read verses 25-32 of chapter 4, and verses 1-12 of chapter 5.

COMMENT: One's basic attitude of mind must be changed – converted. This transformation is a tremendous undertaking. It requires a miracle! The receiving and indwelling of the Holy Spirit is the power needed to help renew one's mind.

2. Therefore, are begotten Christians admonished to grow spiritually? 2 Peter 3:18. Are they to be like humble little children growing up – this time spiritually? 1 Peter 2:1-2; Matt. 18:2-3.

COMMENT: As explained before, once we have repented and received God's Spirit, divine life has been begotten in our minds. Our spiritual life has begun as a very small "seed" which must then grow. To grow spiritually, we must take in spiritual nourishment. Just as the embryo in a mother's womb must be nourished with life-giving food through the placenta, so we must be nourished by the Word of God. "... The words that I speak unto you," said Jesus, "they are spirit,

and they are life" (John 6:63). Those words are recorded in the Bible – and Jesus said we are to live by every word of God (Matt. 4:4). We drink in these life-giving words from the Bible through reading, studying and meditating (thinking) on what we read. We also absorb spiritual nourishment through personal, intimate, daily contact with God in prayer and through regular Christian fellowship with God's other begotten children in His Church. (More about this later.)

3. Are we to work toward developing the very character of God? Matt. 5:48. COMMENT: Since it is impossible for any human being (with the exception of Jesus Christ who became mortal flesh and blood) to achieve absolute spiritual perfection in this life, the obvious intent of Jesus' statement is that we should strive to become "perfect" – like our Father in heaven. Only when born again at the resurrection will this process be complete, for then we will actually be perfect as the Father and Christ are now (1 John 3:2,9). But in the meantime, Jesus tells us to strive toward that end, growing toward spiritual perfection while still mortal beings!

**But what, exactly, is spiritual growth? It is the development of the spiritual character of God!** The impregnation of your mind by the Holy Spirit will plant within you the seed of the divine nature of God. It will make possible the development of His character in you. Thus, once spirit-begotten, we are to gradually grow to become more and more like God in the way we think, act and do things.

We develop the very character of God by obeying Him and by giving of ourselves to others in serving and helping our fellowman. This kind of character is developed in Christians through independent free choice combined with learning, experience, trial and test.

It is interesting to note that years of experience with people of every social level and walk of life have shown that every Christian who is truly growing and developing in spiritual character has his heart completely in the Work of God, which the living Christ has called His servants to do as His instruments. One's "works," therefore, also include his part in helping to spread the good news of Christ's true Gospel to all mankind (Matt. 24:14; 28:19-20).

4. According to the apostle Paul, whom must all spirit-begotten Christians strive to emulate? Eph. 4:15. What is to be the end result of this growing process? Gal. 4:19; Eph. 4:13.

5. Will Christ "live" in a spirit-begotten Christian to help him grow spiritually? Col. 1:27-29; Gal. 2:20; 1 John 4:2-4; Heb. 13:20-21. Exactly how will Christ dwell in us? Phil. 1:19; 2:5; Rom. 8:8-10; Titus 3:5-6.

COMMENT: Not only must the words of God flow into our minds through Bible study, but spirit must also flow into our minds. Recall that each spirit-begotten Christian has received the Holy Spirit of God, which unites with the "human" spirit that is in everyone's mind. That is what begets us. But that new spiritual life must grow spiritually, much like the fetus in a mother's womb, until it is finally born.

Added to the germ of spiritual life which proceeds from the Father, there must be a continual supply of Spirit sent from Jesus Christ (Phil. 1:19) so that our minds can grow spiritually. Only



in this way can our minds become more and more spiritual, growing toward the maturity of the spiritual character of Christ.

Jesus Christ is the Word personified – Christ is the Bible in action. If we have the "mind of Christ" – if Jesus Christ, so to speak, lives His life in us by means of the Holy Spirit – we have at hand the power to grow spiritually as we yield to His Spirit. We have the capacity to grow toward perfect, God-like character. Let's draw another analogy to further understand. The Spirit we may receive can be compared to a current of electricity flowing through a light bulb. We are that bulb. But there could be no light without a filament inside of the bulb. The filament is comparable to the spiritual seed from the Father. The Spirit from Christ can be compared to the electricity flowing through the filament. And so as we receive more Spirit from Christ, we emit more "spiritual light"!

The expression "filled with the Spirit" (Eph. 5:18) does not mean to be filled with emotional manifestations which come from the flesh and not from God's Spirit. It means that we are imbued with the Spirit of God which is administered through Jesus Christ in His office as High Priest. Notice again how Paul explained this when he addressed spirit-begotten Christians in the Church at Rome: "But ye are not in the flesh" – not motivated by fleshly passions – "but in the Spirit" – motivated and guided by the Holy Spirit – "if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you" – that is, the Holy Spirit from God the Father transmitting His characteristics. But notice what Paul adds: "Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his" (Rom. 8:9). He does not belong to Christ – he is not a true Christian!

Paul was talking about the Holy Spirit from God the Father which begets us as children of God, and the Spirit of Jesus Christ, which fills our minds so we can grow spiritually, and be able to resist sin by giving us the strength to overcome the attitude of the devil which leads us to sin. This begettal and growth through the Holy Spirit has unfortunately never been understood by most people.

## **Great Spiritual Benefits Now**

We've already seen that many marvelous blessings are made possible through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. But there are yet other great benefits available through the Spirit of God.

1. Just how many things does God make available to spirit-begotten Christians through His divine power? 2 Peter 1:3.

2. Can the human mind – having only the "human" spirit which imparts only human understanding – understand the spiritual things of God? 1 Cor. 2:9.

14. What must be added before a person can comprehend spiritually revealed knowledge? Verses 10-13.

COMMENT: The Holy Spirit gives you the capacity to understand and grasp spiritual concepts and principles--the very truth of God! In John 6:63 Christ revealed that His words are spiritual

in nature: "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit...." God also revealed in Romans 7:14 that His law is spiritual. Therefore we see that the Bible and the laws and principles it contains are spiritual in makeup. And spiritual things cannot be comprehended by one who does not possess the Spirit of God.

This is not to say the Bible cannot be understood in an academic sense. Many are thoroughly familiar with what it says – some can even recite large portions of God's Word from memory. But God inspired Paul to say that spiritual things are beyond the comprehension of human intellect alone! Spiritual things simply cannot be seen with the eye, heard with the ear, felt with the hands. The human mind, which can receive knowledge only through these physical channels, can never really comprehend spiritual concepts and principles without the aid of God's Holy Spirit. The greatest scientific and philosophical minds simply cannot really come to know and understand spiritual truths with their natural minds. Just as surely as no animal brain – such as that of a cow, for example – can comprehend or understand human affairs, so no human mind can have comprehension of spiritual things on the divine plane unless and until it has received the Holy Spirit of God!

Without the Holy Spirit a person cannot really understand the Bible. And so the average individual is hostile and unreceptive to the truth of God and looks upon those who understand and practice it as peculiar! As Paul said, spiritual things are "foolishness" to the unconverted (1 Cor. 2:14).

Before their conversion, God's begotten children did not understand the Bible and God's way of life. But then God began to draw them (John 6:44) to Christ by His Spirit – He began to grant certain spiritual understanding. They were led to understand the depths of true repentance. After baptism and the receipt of the Spirit of begetting from the Father and the Spirit of Christ, they began to truly keep the laws of God and to comprehend and understand their greatness. And the more they yielded to God and His law, the greater became their spiritual understanding. Notice what God inspired David to write in this regard: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that DO his commandments..." (Ps. 111:10).

3. Is the "carnal" (fleshly) mind with which we were all born therefore unable to comprehend the true spiritual intent of God's law, and therefore unable to obey it – unable to really love God and man? Rom. 8:7-8; Jer. 17:9; Gal. 5:19-21.

4. But what are the capabilities of a spiritually motivated mind? Rom. 8:6; Gal. 5:22-23. Will the Holy Spirit in us grant us the strength to do good works – to literally obey God? Phil. 2:13; Heb. 13:20-21.

COMMENT: It is important to understand that the Holy Spirit will not possess you as does a demonic spirit being of the devil's kingdom possess a person. And God's Spirit in you will not force you to live righteously. But it will strengthen you spiritually, and even physically when necessary, to do God's will as you exert your will and determination to follow God's Spirit as it leads you to see and understand God's way.

5. Do begotten children of God also have direct access to the Father and Christ in heaven? Eph. 2:13-14, 18; Heb. 10:19-20; 4:14-16. What are the special advantages of this close relationship? Matt. 21:22; Heb. 4:16. Why may we receive what we ask? 1 John 3:22-24; 5:14.

COMMENT: A Christian may come boldly to the Father and Christ the Son in prayer to request help in whatever form necessary and can expect to receive it according to God's will, if he is striving to please God in the way he conducts his life. Divine guidance, intervention, wisdom, understanding, inspiration, as well as protection, legitimate needs and power to do God's will – all these and more are available through contact with God as made possible by His Spirit.

6. In what other way does the Holy Spirit help a Christian? Rom. 8:26-27.

7. Does God also grant His human instruments the spiritual power needed to conduct His Work on earth? Acts 1:8; Matt. 28:18-20.

COMMENT: The gift of the Holy Spirit provides the power by which to carry out Christ's great commission of preaching the Gospel to the world. That power is active and working dynamically in the collective body of Christians God has called to do His end-time Work today!

## The "Fruit of the Spirit"

Recall that the presence of God's Spirit in one's mind, or the lack thereof, is the sole factor in determining whether or not an individual is really a Christian (Rom. 8:9). Therefore, it is imperative that we understand just how the Holy Spirit is to be manifested in a Christian's life.

1. Did Jesus Christ clearly indicate that a person is known by his "fruits," or works? Matt. 7:20. In what way did He characterize Himself, His Father and their followers? John 15:1-8. Does God expect Christians to bear only a little fruit? Verses 5, 8.

COMMENT: This is the reason Christ calls and chooses His disciples – to bear fruit! "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain..." (John 15:16). Jesus was **not** talking about a momentary sensual thrill or experience – coupled with a "testimony" – to prove you are one of His. You must be led by the Holy Spirit to be Christ's (Rom. 8:14) and bear spiritual fruit! But what will God's Spirit lead and guide you to do? What spiritual "fruit," or results, does the Holy Spirit produce in one who is striving to do the will of God?

Fruit is classified as the edible, usable portion of a plant or vine. Christ is the "vine," and we – if we are God's begotten children – are the "branches." Our fruit is what we produce as Christians that is usable to Jesus Christ. Now the good we produce comes from the vine – from Christ! Let's understand. A vine produces grapes, not thorns. An apple tree produces apples, not thistles. The vine determines what fruit should be borne. By this simple analogy we see that it is

Christ who determines what kind of fruit we should bear as Christians. That fruit is a result of having the mind of Christ at work in us as made possible by the Spirit of God.

2. How did the apostle Paul, who was inspired of Christ, outline the fruit which the Holy Spirit produces in a Christian? Gal. 5:22-23.

COMMENT: The Holy Spirit imparts to you the traits of God's character. If we lack these characteristics in our lives, then we are likely to be producing many of the opposite fruits called the "works of the flesh." These undesirable works are described in Galatians 5:19-21. They include strife, division, and various objectionable states of mind. All the works of the flesh contribute to the general misery and unhappiness of the individual, being thoroughly unsatisfying and unfulfilling.

3. What is the very first fruit Paul lists? Gal. 5:22; Rom. 5:5. Is love the basic characteristic of God's nature? 1 John 4:16. Is it the greatest attribute God transmits to us by the Holy Spirit? 1 Cor. 13:13. (Be sure to read all of chapter 13.)

COMMENT: The first and most important fruit of God's Spirit dwelling in the minds and hearts of converted human beings is LOVE. It is not just another form of human love, but the divine love that comes directly from God!

4. Is this the same love that will enable us to "fulfill" – to obey – God's laws? Rom. 13:10.

COMMENT: The love of God – imparted to human beings by the Holy Spirit – runs down the riverbed of God's law – the Ten Commandments. It is manifested first of all in adoration and worship of God and literal obedience to Him; then in outgoing concern, compassion, kindness and service toward other human beings (see Matt. 22:37-40). The original Greek word for the word "love" (in Gal. 5:22) is *agape*. In context it means devotedness or kindly concern – an intense desire to serve God and man. John said: "By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep His commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments..." (1 John 5:2-3). Notice the two necessary elements: 1) love God, and 2) love the children of God – human beings.

5. What is one of the principle ways in which love manifests itself toward our neighbors? Rom. 13:10.

COMMENT: Did you notice that? The kind of love imparted by God's Spirit works no ill to anybody! Rather, God's love is just the opposite – a deep concern and an intense desire to serve, help and encourage others. When you receive the Holy Spirit, this is the very first fruit you should begin to show. You should think or work no ill toward anyone, but rather learn, develop, think on and act on a profound concern and a fervent desire to serve God and man.

Now that's a tall order! But over a period of time – not all at once – you can begin to exhibit this wonderful fruit in your life as you exercise and use God's Holy Spirit. The other fruits of the Spirit, mentioned by Paul in Galatians 5:22-23 and which we will now cover, amplify the

attitude of love. They are simply added expressions of this divine love given to an individual whom God begets with His Holy Spirit.

6. What is the second fruit that Paul lists in Galatians 5:22? Is it God's will that we be literally filled with joy? Rom. 15:13.

COMMENT: Some people think of "joy" as the end result of some kind of self-gratification – a new toy, new car, new girlfriend, new home, new baby, etc. Physically speaking, when things go "your way," the emotion you feel is "joy."

7. Does the Bible give rich, deep meaning to this vital fruit of God's Spirit? Luke 15:7, 10.

COMMENT: What causes the angels to have joy? Is it something personal they receive? Is it adding to or gratifying the self in some way? It is none of these. Their joy is in seeing others receive something good for them – in this case as a result of peoples' repentance, which eventually leads to becoming eternal inheritors in God's Kingdom. The angels delight in seeing human beings begin to learn the way of life that will result in the good, lasting, permanent blessings of God's Kingdom.

8. What kind of joy does Jesus Christ experience? Heb. 12:2.

COMMENT: Christ was willing to suffer in anticipation of the real joy he would afterward experience in seeing fellow heirs born into God's Kingdom. This was made possible only through the sacrifice of His life! "Joy" received from personal gratification is only temporary. The car wears out, the ball game is over, the baby grows up, the stomach empties. None of these physical things – though perfectly all right to enjoy for the time – can bring permanent, lasting joy. Christ and the righteous angels receive joy from the outgoing giving of themselves to God and others! This "kind" of joy lasts for all eternity and does not require constant bolstering and rejuvenating with more and more objects and things.

9. What is the third fruit which God's Spirit will manifest in a Christian's life? Gal. 5:22.

COMMENT: Peace of mind is what everyone would like to have, but what so few really possess. Many vainly attempt to achieve peace of mind through escape into alcohol, other drugs, bizarre activities, etc. A person who truly has peace of mind has greater control over his emotions – even in trying circumstances. He enjoys greater tranquility and calm, quiet serenity, together with orderliness of mind.

10. Does peace of mind come from keeping the Ten Commandments? Ps. 119:165.

COMMENT: No one who consistently breaks God's law can have real peace of mind. He will have fears and frustrations, as well as a guilty conscience. Notice how David's words in Psalm 119 apply: does a thief have peace of mind when he sees a police car driving by? Is he calm and serene? If he's a good actor, he may appear to be outwardly, but inside he is a seething cauldron, hotly activated by his adrenal glands. Always he has to be prepared to run and escape. This man

can never find real peace unless and until he repents of – QUILTS – breaking God's Ten Commandments, especially the eighth!

A liar is no better off. He must continue to lie in order to cover up the lies he has already told. Solomon wrote: "Bread of deceit is sweet to a man; but afterwards his mouth shall be filled with gravel" (Prov. 20:17). The liar must always be on the alert to avoid having to "eat his words." And when he finally does, they will taste like gravel. One can never have peace of mind with this type of pressure weighing on him all the time.

The person who keeps God's laws knows he is doing the right thing. His goals and purposes are stabilized. His life isn't fraught with frustrations. He has no guilty conscience. He is at peace with God, with himself and with his neighbor. He has "the peace of God which passes all understanding" (Phil. 4:7).

11. What is the fourth fruit of the Holy Spirit? Gal. 5:22.

COMMENT: "Longsuffering" is an old English word for patience. It is also forbearance and clemency – which is the ability to have mercy. One who is short-tempered and easily upset with the faults and inabilities of others is inviting real trouble for himself – physically as well as spiritually. Emotionally induced illnesses can result from the lack of longsuffering. Patience is that steadiness of mind by which you wait for the result to be achieved. One who is patient does not become frustrated because problems don't always lend themselves to immediate solutions. Godly longsuffering (or patience) can only come from exercising the Holy Spirit.

12. Is gentleness also an important fruit or result of having the Holy Spirit? Gal. 5:22.

COMMENT: Gentleness means first of all usefulness, then willingness, graciousness, affability--one who obliges. A gentleman knows how to attend to other people's needs; he has taken the time to learn the social graces; he is courteous. But gentleness is much more. Notice Paul's statement to the Thessalonians: "But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children" (1 Thess. 2:7). The apostle used this analogy to describe how he and others of God's ministers dealt with the members of God's Church. A nurse must be firm and loving, kind and sure, able and compassionate – all at once! She must clothe, feed, train and clean up the messes of her charges. It takes a qualified as well as a willing person to be a good nurse. The gentle person is willing to take extra steps to look out for the needs of others. He or she is willing to dirty the hands to do whatever is necessary.

13. Is goodness also a remarkable attribute of the Holy Spirit? Gal. 5:22.

COMMENT: Goodness describes a person possessing God-like qualities of virtue, uprightness and true character. This fruit of the Holy Spirit could probably be described as a summary fruit – summing up the character of a person who is exhibiting the other nine fruits listed by Paul and as a result is daily becoming more God-like.

14. Is faith one of the vital fruits of the Spirit of God? Gal. 5:22. What is God's definition of "faith"? Heb. 11:1. Did righteous men and women of old possess this kind of faith? Read this entire chapter.

COMMENT: Faith is the "substance" – more accurately the assurance or confidence – "of things hoped for...." Before you receive what you hope for, you already have it in substance and that substance – that assurance or confidence that you shall possess it – is faith! Faith is your evidence that you shall have what you do not yet see.

15. Is it possible to please God without faith? Heb. 11:6. Must obedience to God and other good works clearly accompany one's faith in order to make it alive and acceptable to God? Read James 2, verses 14-26.

COMMENT: As Hebrews 11:6 explains, faith toward God is expressed in absolute recognition that God exists and that He blesses the obedient. This faith is acquired. You cannot cause yourself to have that kind of faith through autosuggestion!

16. Is the faith which all Christians must possess, and which comes as a free gift from God (Eph. 2:8) through the Holy Spirit, in reality the faith of Jesus Christ? Phil. 3:9; Rom. 3:22.

17. Did Paul plainly state that Christ lived in him? Gal. 2:20. How did Christ live in him? Phil. 2:5; Rom. 8:9-10. Then did Paul live by the very faith of Christ? Notice Galatians 2:20 once again.

COMMENT: Paul did not live by his own faith. Jesus Christ dwelt in Paul through the Holy Spirit, and the Spirit of God from Christ implanted in Paul's mind the same kind of faith that can be in your mind! That faith – the very faith of Jesus Christ – will enable you to live a life of obedience to God as did the apostle Paul and all of the righteous men and women of God. If we were able, of ourselves, to supply the faith to obey God, we would earn our own salvation. It would be the result of self-righteousness that are as "filthy rags" to God (Isa. 64:6).

But the above scriptures speak only of the faith of Christ. Yes, Christ's faith – not your faith. And Christ in us imparts to us His own strong faith that trusts God to make our spiritual obedience possible, thus enabling us to please God. (Much more about this Godly faith will be covered in the next lesson.)

18. Will meekness also be one of the traits of a Spirit-led individual? Gal. 5:23. Who set an outstanding example in this regard? Num. 12:3.

COMMENT: Many falsely assume that meekness is always synonymous with weakness. Before his conversion, Moses was a self assured and forceful individual (see Exodus 2:16-17 and Josephus, the 1<sup>st</sup> century Jewish historian, who reported on Moses' military prowess as an Egyptian general). But after his conversion, Moses became so dedicated to God and filled with the Holy Spirit, he was considered to be the meekest man on earth (Num. 12:3). No longer did he seek to exalt himself, but became lowly and humble in attitude.

When God was about to disinherit and destroy the children of Israel because of their many rebellions, Moses – in spite of many false personal accusations against him – entreated God to save them (Num. 14), and in meekness he instructed those who "opposed themselves" (a required trait of a servant of God – see 2 Tim. 2:24-25). A meek person is not a revengeful person!

19. What is the last, and one of the least understood, fruits of the Holy Spirit mentioned by Paul? Gal. 5:23.

COMMENT: The world has often misunderstood the meaning of the word "temperance." Temperance does not mean abstinence! Temperance means self-control, continence, self-government, moderation – particularly in reference to sensual appetites. The proverbs of Solomon are replete with exhortations about temperance – a vital attribute of God's Spirit which must also be exercised.

20. When one receives God's Holy Spirit, will these precious fruits suddenly appear overnight – almost all at once? 2 Peter 3:18; Eph. 4:15.

COMMENT: Fruit does not appear overnight on a tree. It takes time, water, the nutrients of the soil and sunlight to grow. Likewise, it takes time for one to grow spiritually and manifest the "fruit of the Spirit"!

21. How can a person start down the road toward possessing the wonderful fruits imparted by the Holy Spirit of God? Acts 2:38.

## **Spirit Must Be Used and Renewed**

One is spiritually minded to the degree that he produces the fruits of God's Spirit in his daily life. But merely having the Spirit as a begettal will not make you spiritually minded unless you draw on and USE the Holy Spirit every day! Let's notice how the example of the Corinthian Church in Paul's day bears this out.

1. Were the members of the Church of God in Corinth begotten by the Holy Spirit? 1 Cor. 3:16. Yet were many of them not really showing the fruit of God's Spirit? Verses 1-3.

COMMENT: Notice that Paul was addressing the Church of God. They were converted. They were the body of Christ, "brethren" with Paul. But they were acting like the average man on the street would act, conducting themselves in an unspiritual manner. They had strife and arguing, debating and contentions. There was division and party spirit among them. These are some of the very same things listed as the "works of the flesh" in Galatians 5:19-21!

What was their problem? Since they were converted and had God's Spirit, which makes one a member of the Church (1 Cor. 12:13), why were they producing these unspiritual, fleshly works?



2. Must the Holy Spirit be put to use? 2 Tim. 1:6-7.

COMMENT: Even though the members at Corinth had the Spirit as a begettal, they seemed to have lost sight of the fact that it must be used and drawn upon to produce its fruit. They were producing works of the flesh – "doing what comes naturally" – simply because they were not "stirring up" the Spirit of Christ and drawing on it to produce the results of the mind of Christ! (Phil. 1:11.) Another probable and perhaps obvious reason some were acting "carnal" was because they were lacking the Spirit of Christ. Notice how the following scriptures would bear this out.

3. Would Christ's analogy in John 7:37-39 indicate that His Spirit flows into and out from one? Notice also Isaiah 44:3; Jeremiah 17:13 and John 4:10, 13-14 in this regard. (Recall from previous studies we learned that the "LORD" referred to in Isaiah 44 and Jeremiah 17 is none other than the Christ of the New Testament before He became a human being.)

4. Therefore, does one receive all at once enough of the Spirit of Christ to last as long as he lives, or must the "supply" be replenished every day? Phil. 1:19; 2 Cor. 4:16.

COMMENT: The Spirit of God, which is administered by Christ, is active – DYNAMIC! It is a moving force that can't be bottled up within you. Jesus compared it to living waters which come into you, and then flow out from you in "good works" – love, joy, peace, obedience, etc. It circulates like electricity in a complete circuit – from God, into you, and then out from you as the "fruits of the Spirit," and then back to God.

Since the Spirit must flow into and out from us, then obviously it must be continually supplied. Therefore, the supply of the Holy Spirit must be renewed in us daily through contact with God in believing prayer (Luke 11:13). To put it in the vernacular, our "spiritual battery" must be continually "charged up." We must daily "plug in" to the POWER SOURCE. That source of the Holy Spirit is GOD!

## **Not Generally Available Before Christ**

1. Did God initially offer the first human beings opportunity to receive His Holy Spirit? Gen. 2:8-9, 16-17.

COMMENT: Adam and Eve were freely offered access to God's Holy Spirit and resultant eternal life, which were symbolically represented by the fruit of the "tree of life."

2. But from which tree did they choose to eat? Gen. 3:3-7.

COMMENT: Though their Creator warned them of the dire consequences of eating fruit from the "tree of the knowledge of good and evil," Adam and Eve were persuaded by the devil's clever arguments to partake instead of the fruit that leads to death!

3. What was their punishment for disobeying God? Gen. 3:16-19. Were they denied further access to the Holy Spirit? Verses 22-24.

COMMENT: God's express intention from the beginning was to give man the Holy Spirit. It was only after our first parents directly disobeyed a specific command from their very Creator that the Holy Spirit was denied. And so, it is truly self-evident that God gives His Spirit only to those who strive to obey Him (Acts 5:32).

4. Did our first parents' transgression set a pattern for the entire human race? Rom. 5:12.

COMMENT: Had Adam and Eve partaken of the tree in the Garden of Eden that represented God's Holy Spirit – the "tree of [eternal] life" – they would have been begotten of God, and ultimately received eternal life, if they had continued to obey God. But Adam and Eve had to desire the Spirit of God and surrender themselves to God's will in order to receive His Spirit – exactly as all must do today. Instead, they chose not to receive the Spirit. They listened to Satan and pursued the way that leads only to death (Gen. 2:17). And because of this sin, God withheld His Holy Spirit of love and eternal life from mankind.

From the very moment mortal man disobeyed God, he was cut off from access to the Spirit of God and the gift of eternal life. Ever since then, God has permitted man to go his own way, setting apart 6,000 years during which He has allowed mankind to learn the painful results of following the dictates of the carnal mind. And mankind has continued choosing the way of disobedience to God (Rom. 3:23), which has resulted in untold suffering and death!

An atonement, therefore, had to be made for mankind – which was to be the sacrifice of Jesus Christ approximately 4000 years later. In the meantime, the Holy Spirit could not be offered to mankind in general in the face of such not atoned for disobedience. But there were some notable exceptions.

5. Did the Patriarchs and Prophets of antiquity have access to the Holy Spirit? 1 Peter 1:10-11.

COMMENT: Notice that "the Spirit of Christ...was in them." From Adam to Christ, apparently none were called to spiritual salvation except those called to perform a special mission. From Adam to Noah we have the record of Abel, Enoch and Noah – some 1900 years! From Noah to the calling of Israel out of Egypt there was Abraham, Lot, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph. And then, of course, there was Moses and a few others. These few had the Holy Spirit and will be born into God's Kingdom, as we're clearly told in Hebrews chapter 11.

6. Did Caleb have the Holy Spirit too? Num. 14:24, 30. What about Joshua? Num. 27:18; Deut. 34:9.

7. Did the Patriarch and Prophet David also possess the Spirit of Christ? 1 Sam. 16:13. (Remember that the "LORD" was Christ.) What did David say that further proves he did indeed have the Spirit dwelling in him? Ps. 51:11.

COMMENT: Jesus Christ, before His human birth, was the member of the Godhead who administered the Holy Spirit to all the faithful men of old. He sent the Spirit to be in them – to give them faith and power. Notice: "And all these, though well attested by their faith, did not receive what was promised [God's Kingdom], since God had foreseen something better for us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect [at the first resurrection]" (Heb. 11:39-40, RSV).

Perhaps the New Testament "technicalities" of how one is begotten and born into God's Kingdom were not fully revealed to the Patriarchs and Prophets as they are to us today. However, they knew that through the One who would come in the human flesh to give His life as a ransom for many, they too would inherit eternal life.

8. Did God promise long ago that He would again make His Spirit available to man? Ezek. 36:26-27. Will it make obedience to His laws possible? Same verses and Hebrews 8:8-11.

9. Did Jesus specifically promise that the Holy Spirit would dwell in His disciples after His death? John 14:16-19.

10. Is the way of salvation and receipt of the Holy Spirit now open to all who are called by God? John 6:44; Acts 10:43; 13:26; 2:38.

COMMENT: Today, all who are called of God can have His life and characteristics as a very part of their being, enabling them to overcome and grow spiritually toward the Kingdom of God.

11. Will the knowledge of God and opportunity to receive the Holy Spirit ultimately be made available to everyone? Isa. 11:9; Joel 2:28-29.

## **Spirit Arrives On Pentecost**

1. What did Jesus promise His disciples regarding the receipt of power from heaven? Luke 24:49. Where did He tell them to wait for this power? Same verse and Acts 1:4-5,8.

2. What miraculous display of power did the Holy Spirit cause upon its initial arrival in Jerusalem? Acts 2:1-12.

COMMENT: The Spirit of God came with a sound as a mighty rushing wind, with the appearance of divided – equally distributed – tongues of fire; it filled the disciples, speaking through them in such a manner that every man there from every nation heard them in his own language! (The miracle was in the hearing as well as in the speaking – verses 6,8).

3. What was the name of the day on which this great display of the Holy Spirit's power occurred? Acts 2:1.

COMMENT: The word "Pentecost" is a Greek word meaning "fiftieth." The Holy Spirit came on the day of Pentecost (a Sunday), fifty days after Jesus' resurrection. The sudden, spectacular and awe-inspiring exhibit of divine power working within Christ's disciples on that day of Pentecost heralded to the whole world the beginning of the time when all who would thirst for the Holy Spirit could receive it. It marked the beginning of the crowning act of God's supreme creative work in man – the development of Godly character. It was a forerunner of the era foretold by God long ago when He said to His ancient nation Israel (and through it to the whole world): "...the days come...that I will make a new covenant with the House of Israel, and with the House of Judah...I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts..." (Jer. 31:31,33).

This mighty manifestation of the Spirit marked the coming of the power which God would use to engrave His law within the hearts of those who surrender themselves to Him. That is why God made this such a spectacular and momentous event. It was of tremendous import to all mankind, never to be forgotten and apparently never to be repeated in the same way.

## **How to Receive the Holy Spirit**

1. Is the Holy Spirit a gift from God? Acts 10:45; 2 Tim. 1:6.
2. How readily will God give us His Holy Spirit today if we ask for it? Luke 11:10-13. But how do we know God will hear us when we ask Him in prayer? 1 John 3:22-24.
3. Are repentance and baptism clearly initial steps in our obedience to God by which He is bound to keep His promise to give us (beget us by) His Holy Spirit? Mark 1:14-15; Acts 2:38; 5:32.

COMMENT: Notice the stress placed upon obedience, upon submission to the will of God – to the law of God. God will give His Holy Spirit only to those who have demonstrated – both by attitude and actions – that they want to obey Him. Jesus said, "Not my will, but thine be done" (Luke 22:42). God wants to see a submissive, obedient attitude in us before He gives us His Spirit. How plain it is that the Holy Spirit is the spirit of humble submission and obedience to the Father. If we submit our wills unconditionally to God, He will give us His Spirit!

The subjects of repentance and baptism were covered thoroughly in Lessons 7 and 8. Suffice it to say, by way of review, that repentance means to turn around and go the other way – to forsake all of our ways which have been contrary to God's law, and turn to **God's way which is the way of His law, the way of love and giving**. To "believe the gospel" means to believe the very message Jesus brought – the good news of the coming Kingdom of God, which most assuredly includes belief on Him as personal Savior.

God makes it very plain that no one who continuously practices sin (as a way of life) will ever be born into His universe-ruling family (Gal. 5:19-21). All who desire to become born-again members of God's Family and co-rulers with Jesus Christ in the Kingdom of God must stop

practicing sin now – stop breaking His laws! All must REPENT of rebellion against God; must desire and actually begin to literally OBEY His Word, submitting to His authority over their lives – keeping His commandments!

After belief and sincere, heartfelt, deep repentance of sin, the next step toward becoming a Christian is water baptism. **Baptism is an outward symbol** of our repentance of our old sinful, disobedient life – of our complete departure from our old sinful way of living – and of our willingness now to obey God in every way.

Once you have taken these two steps, then you are unconditionally promised the Holy Spirit **through the laying on of hands of one of God's called and chosen ministers**. God has bound Himself to perform His part if you first perform yours. God says: "... You shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." It is an absolute promise of God! There is no "perhaps," "probably," or "maybe." You WILL RECEIVE the Holy Spirit because God promised it! You can ask God thereafter to direct you, through His Holy Spirit, to lead a new life in conformity with His revealed Word – the Bible.

## The Spirit and God's Church

1. Once we have truly repented, been baptized and received the miraculous begetting of God's Holy Spirit, do we automatically become part of a "body"? 1 Cor. 12:13. What body is Paul talking about? Verse 27; Eph. 1:22-23; Col. 1:18.

COMMENT: In 1 Corinthians 12, the apostle Paul has drawn an analogy between the human body and God's Church. And as we discovered in past lessons, in verse 13 he is speaking about being baptized – put into – the spiritual "body" or Church of God. Therefore, "joining" a group that calls itself a church – having one's name on the membership roll of some group – does not make one in true fact a member of the Church Jesus founded. We cannot become a part of the body of Christ by simply making a decision to "attend" a church service. The stamp of a member of the true church of God is the begetting of the Holy Spirit. Those who have not received this Spirit are simply not a part of the true body of Christ – they are not real Christians! (Rom. 8:9.) God promises His Spirit only to those who repent of sin and are baptized (Acts 2:38; 5:32).

But after we are baptized and begotten by God's Spirit – what then?

2. What did Christ commission His ministers to do for those He has put in His Church? Matt. 28:19-20; John 21:15-17; 1 Peter 5:1-3. (Notice the last three words of each of the three verses in John 21.) For what purpose are God's ministers to "feed" Christ's "sheep"? Eph. 4:11-15.

COMMENT: God has set His called and chosen ministers in His Church to "feed the flock" so they may grow spiritually – "For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ [the Church of God]: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and

of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect [fully mature, full grown] man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" (Eph. 4:12-13).

As mentioned previously, in the human realm it is the father who begets children. He does not "bring forth"; the mother does that, later. After the father's part, which initiates the process, there is always a lapse of time leading to final birth. So just as a human mother feeds her begotten child within her womb through the placenta and umbilical cord, God's children are nourished with spiritual food within His Church.

The parallel is very similar. Spiritually, God's Church – "Jerusalem above" – is the "mother" (Heb. 12:22-23; Gal. 4:26) of all who have been begotten by His Holy Spirit. Christ has given His ministers the responsibility to instruct, teach and counsel the members of the Church (Heb. 13:17). And as the human mother carries her unborn baby in that part of her body where she can best protect it from physical harm, the function of God's Church is to also protect the begotten children of God from the false doctrines of false ministers.

Through this "feeding" process, each Christian receives the spiritual nourishment necessary to grow spiritually until he or she is ready to be actually born at the resurrection as a very member in the joyous, ruling Family of God!

## **Finding the True Church**

We have just seen that the true Church of God is that body of believers who individually have the Holy Spirit. **Therefore, this church is a spiritual organism.** And Jesus Christ is its head. The true church understands God's plan of salvation and is fulfilling Christ's commission to preach the true gospel as a witness to all nations.

And as we also learned, the church is nurturing the spiritually begotten children of God whom He has put into it. Knowing this, it then becomes all important for you to definitely locate the true body of Christ. But exactly how does one go about finding God's Church and His ministers? Just where is the Church that God is working through today? Don't all of the churches of denominational Christianity claim to be part of the true body of Christ? Will any church say it is not the church Jesus founded? Of course not! What, then, are some of the signs that would lead us to the true body of Christ?

1. Would the true Church of God follow Christ by upholding God's law? Matt. 5:17; 19:17-19; 28:19-20; John 15:10. Would that Church be striving to literally keep the Ten Commandments of God and other instructions of Christ? John 14:15; Rev. 3:7-8; 12:17. (Chapter 12 of Revelation personifies God's true Church as a woman.)

COMMENT: The true Church upholds God's law. It recognizes that God set in motion a law that, if obeyed, would bring humanity every good thing – abundant well-being – a full life.

God's Church boldly proclaims that His law is not done away but has been spiritually expanded by Christ (Isa. 42:21) to cover every aspect of human activity.

The true Church says with David: "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path" (Ps. 119:105). It recognizes that God's law is one of His greatest gifts to mankind. Very few churches today can claim to teach obedience to every one of God's Ten Commandments. Those few who do acknowledge these commands refuse to obey other instructions of God found in the Bible. So don't assume that a church professing the name of God or Christ is necessarily a church that literally obeys Christ!

2. Would God's Church be attempting to discredit or devalue the Bible – relying on human traditions and ideas for its principal doctrines? Or would it deeply understand that the whole Bible – Old Testament and New – is the true Word of God? Luke 4:4; 2 Tim. 3:15-17; 4:2; Isa. 8:20.

COMMENT: The only "scriptures" accessible to Timothy were books of the Old Testament. God's Church believes all of the Bible to be inspired by God. The true Church uses the Old Testament as did Christ and the apostles, and believes it is also a part of God's Word for us today. (Obviously it must be understood in the light of the New Testament.) We have briefly touched on only a few of the unique characteristics of the true Church Jesus built. Others may be readily discovered by reading our literature shown on our website, [www.thebiblefund.com](http://www.thebiblefund.com).

## **The Holy Spirit and You**

Now let's be more specific as far as you are concerned. How do you know when you are repentant? How do you become baptized and receive God's Holy Spirit? How can you come in contact with one of the true ministers of God? These basic questions have already been answered in this and previous lessons.

So if you really desire water baptism and the receipt of God's Spirit – and/or you have further questions which need to be answered – please contact us via our website. And please be sure to mention this lesson of the Online Study Course.

Remember: when you do receive God's Holy Spirit, you will begin to personally sense a remarkably thrilling change in your mind – of your attitude and approach toward life. And as you grow spiritually, you will experience a steady perfection of your character, a new insight in your understanding, a rejuvenated zest for life and a fantastically happy outlook toward the future!

## **TEST YOUR MEMORY**

This quiz is designed to help you remember the important facts you learned in the lesson. You simply circle or underline each correct answer. After you've finished the test, check your choices with the correct answers at the end of this lesson, and then rate yourself.

1. The Holy Spirit A. is the "spirit in man." B. is simply our "inner consciousness." C. is the spiritual life and nature of God that we may receive from Him. D. is the spiritual power of God that we were born with.
2. Who is a true Christian in God's sight? A. One who professes Christianity. B. Most church goers today. C. Those who have been "born again." D. Only those who have been begotten by the Holy Spirit.
3. Why is it necessary to be begotten by God's Spirit? A. Because spiritual life and growth in us are impossible without spiritual begetting. B. It isn't necessary since we were already begotten spiritually at birth. C. So we can live perfectly in this life. D. So we can be born of God at the same time.
4. What does the Father promise spirit-begotten Christians? A. Just a slightly better life here and now. B. Riches, power and glory in this life. C. That He will one day change or raise them to immortality, power and glory. D. Nirvana.
5. Which one of the following is true? A. Spiritual concepts and principles are not beyond the comprehension of human intellect alone. B. The Bible cannot be understood in any respect. C. Only the greatest minds can understand spiritual truths with their natural minds. D. The Holy Spirit gives one the capacity to grasp the spiritually revealed truth of God.
6. How can one come to truly obey God? A. It isn't really possible. B. Through sheer human willpower. C. Through the Holy Spirit which forces you to obey. D. Through God's Spirit which will grant you the spiritual faith and strength to resist the devil and do God's will.
7. What is the love of God? A. Certainly not an attribute of His Holy Spirit. B. The chief character trait of God. C. It definitely has nothing to do with keeping His commandments. D. A sentimental feeling – another form of human love.
8. The true Church of God A. rejects the laws of God. B. is not fulfilling Christ's commission to preach the true gospel as a witness to all nations. C. upholds His Ten Commandments and strives to live by every word of God. D. is not interested in the spiritual welfare of His spirit-begotten children.
9. What makes one a member of the true Church? A. Having one's name on its membership roll. B. One's belief in Christ. C. One's baptism in water. D. One's spiritual begetting by the Holy Spirit.
10. What is the purpose for God's Church and His ministry? A. To make the members feel righteous. B. To take the members' tithes. C. To help the members become more Christ-like, and



to protect them from the devil's false ministers and doctrines. D. To make the members' decisions for them.

### TRUE OR FALSE

11. Since we can't become spiritually perfect in this life, there is no use striving toward perfection. T F

12. We should expect today the special manifestations of the Holy Spirit's arrival on the day of Pentecost. T F

13. The "fruits of the Spirit" are manifested by those who possess and use the Holy Spirit. T F

14. The Spirit of Jesus Christ in a true Christian must be renewed daily to produce spiritual "fruit." T F

15. There is no way to discern which is the true Church of God today. T F

### MATCHING

Draw a line from each phrase in the left-hand column to the correct or related phrase in the right-hand column.

- |               |                       |
|---------------|-----------------------|
| 16. Pentecost | A. Born again         |
| 17. "Vine"    | B. Agape              |
| 18. "Germ"    | C. Spirit-begotten    |
| 19. Heirs     | D. Spiritual fruit    |
| 20. Joy       | E. Parakletos         |
|               | F. Spirit arrives     |
|               | G. Spiritual growth   |
|               | H. Spirit of Christ   |
|               | I. Jesus Christ       |
|               | J. Spirit of begettal |

## ANSWERS TO QUIZ

### Rate Yourself

|            |            |             |             |             |
|------------|------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| <b>1-C</b> | <b>5-D</b> | <b>9-D</b>  | <b>13-T</b> | <b>17-I</b> |
| <b>2-D</b> | <b>6-D</b> | <b>10-C</b> | <b>14-T</b> | <b>18-J</b> |
| <b>3-A</b> | <b>7-B</b> | <b>11-F</b> | <b>15-T</b> | <b>19-C</b> |
| <b>4-C</b> | <b>8-C</b> | <b>12-F</b> | <b>16-F</b> | <b>20-D</b> |

19-20 correct = excellent

16-18 correct = good

13-15 correct = fair