

# “Ready to Give a Defense”

## Answering Our Friends’ Religious Questions

### Lesson Seven - The Holy Spirit

**Introduction.** Before Jesus ascended into heaven He promised the Apostles that the Holy Spirit, whom He described as the “Helper,” would come upon them in power (Acts 1:8). This promise was fulfilled shortly after His ascension when the Holy Spirit fell upon the Apostles on the day of Pentecost, they spoke in tongues and began to act under the guidance and power of the Holy Spirit. There is much confusion in the religious world regarding the purpose, duration and effect of this event on Christians today. In this lesson we will briefly consider this event and its consequences.

#### I. To whom was the Holy Spirit promised?

- A. Jesus promises to His Apostles (Matthew 10:5a, 19-20; John 14:25-26; 16:12-14).  
Jesus tells His Apostles that the Holy Spirit will give them power, knowledge and ability to answer when they are questioned.
- B. The authority of the Apostles (Ephesians 2:19-22; I Corinthians 14:37). The Apostles were given authority to teach the commandments of the Lord. This authority allowed them to be considered part of the foundation of the church.
- C. The Laying on of Hands.
  1. Simon the sorcerer (Acts 8:14-20). This event shows that the Apostles possessed special authority to pass on the Holy Spirit in power through the laying on of hands. There is no indication that this authority passed on to anyone else.
  2. Paul’s instructions to Timothy (I Timothy 4:13-14; II Timothy 2:15). Even though Timothy had been given some type of spiritual gift, unlike the Apostles who did not have to study ahead of time what they should say, Paul tells Timothy to study & read to prepare himself. This shows that the effect of the Holy Spirit on believers, other than the Apostles, did not impart to them internal direction without study.

#### II. Were miraculous Spiritual Gifts to endure?

- A. What was the purpose of miraculous spiritual gifts?
  1. Miracles confirmed the word (Mark 16:17-20).
  2. God bore witness to the gospel through miracles (Hebrews 2:1-4).
  3. Miracles were not always applied to common problems of life.
    - a. Epaphroditus nearly died (Philippians 2:25-28).
    - b. Paul’s thorn in the flesh was not removed (II Corinthians 12:7-9).  
Miraculous spiritual gifts were never intended to take away all illness or infirmity but were a Divine witness to the reliability and Divinity of the gospel.
- B. Old Testament promises regarding miraculous spiritual gifts.
  1. The prophecy of Joel (Joel 2:28-32).
  2. The prophecy of Zechariah (Zechariah 13:1-5). While the prophecy of Joel promised the coming of miraculous spiritual gifts during the age when the Christ reigned over His kingdom, the prophecy of Zechariah promised the end of such gifts during the same period.

## Lesson Seven - The Holy Spirit

---

- C. “That which is perfect.”
  - 1. The Corinthians’ abuse of spiritual gifts (I Corinthians 12-14). Throughout this text Paul explains to the Corinthians the proper use and purpose of spiritual gifts. It is in the context of these instructions that Paul addressed the duration of such gifts.
  - 2. “That which is in part will pass away” (I Corinthians 13:8-10). In the context of First Corinthians, “that which is in part” refers to miraculous spiritual gifts. It follows then, that the “perfect thing” to which this text refers is not Jesus or heaven, but complete and full revelation.

### III. How does the Holy Spirit effect believers today?

- A. The Holy Spirit is the source of Scripture (II Peter 1:19-21). As a result, whenever Scripture “speaks,” it may be said that the Spirit speaks (see Matthew 22:43).
- B. Scripture is the “sword of the Spirit” (Ephesians 6:17; Hebrews 4:12-13; I Thessalonians 2:13). It is clear that the Holy Spirit works in believers through the word. There is no indication that the type of direct revelation and direction that was given to the Apostles was ever intended for all believers.
- C. Deity dwells in us “through faith.”
  - 1. The Spirit dwelling in us is the same as Christ dwelling in us (Romans 8:10,11).
  - 2. Christ dwells in us through faith (Ephesians 3:14-17).
  - 3. Living according to the Spirit is defined as “setting our minds” on the things of the Spirit (Romans 8:5-8).

**Conclusion.** The Bible makes it clear that the Apostles were promised things which were not general promises to all believers. Some of these promises involved the special work they carried out in the establishment of the church and the confirmation of the word which they taught. The Bible represents the full and final revelation of the Holy Spirit and is the means by which the Holy Spirit dwells in and works in believers today.