



## The Work of the Spirit

To those who reside as aliens, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, who are chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with His blood ... (1Peter 1:1-2)

No prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God. (2Peter 1:21)

Who is the Spirit (**Genesis 1:1; John 14:26; Matthew 28:20**)? What does the Spirit do for Christians?

There is much confusion in the religious world regarding the Spirit and the work of the Spirit. Much of this results from the failure to examine what the Spirit Himself says. The apostle Peter was one of those upon whom the Spirit came (**Acts 2:4**) as Jesus had promised (**Acts 1:5**). The words of his first inspired sermon are recorded in **Acts 2**. He was speaking the words of God as Jesus had promised (**John 14:26-28**). Peter continued to teach and to write about many subjects directed by the Spirit. He wrote a couple of very profound things about the Spirit—that His sanctifying work is a factor in salvation (**1Peter 1:2**) and that He moved men to speak the words of God (**2Peter 1:21**). Questions continue to arise. What does the Spirit do now? Does He do the same things He did in the past?

Peter mentions the “*sanctifying work*” of the Spirit. Paul writes that Christians are washed, sanctified, and justified by the Spirit (**1Corinthians 6:11**). How had the Spirit done this for the Corinthians? It had been done by revealing instructions to the apostles to be told to the people (**1Corinthians 2:9-13**). The Corinthians received and obeyed these instructions (**Acts 18:8**). Those, to whom Peter wrote, had been sanctified by the Spirit. They had obeyed the truth which had been revealed through the Spirit (**1Peter 1:22**). This included being baptized (**1Peter 3:21**). Likewise, when those of Galatia received the word of truth [not the law of Moses] they were said to have received the Spirit (**Galatians 3:1,2**). We conclude, therefore, that the Spirit makes people Christians in the sense that He gave the instructions which, when followed, make one a Christian. If not, why not?

But, what does the Spirit Himself say about His work with Christians? The Spirit works with Christians today by leading them (**Romans 8:8,9; Galatians 5:18**). But how? In **Galatians 5:18**, being led by the Spirit refers to being led by the gospel as opposed to being led by the law of Moses. In **Romans 8:8-9**, being led by the Spirit refers to being led by a message which is other than the message of the law or of the flesh. Look at it! So, when men are led by the Spirit today, they are led by the message which the Spirit gave (**1Corinthians 2:9-13**). The message was written so that all might understand (**Ephesians 3:3-5**).

Furthermore, the Spirit works with Christians today by dwelling in them (**1Corinthians 6:19; Romans 8:8-11**). This dwelling is described as causing a “*speaking to one another*” and “*always giving thanks*” (**Ephesians 5:18-20**) How does the Spirit dwell in Christians today? There are some

things that the Spirit is clear about this dwelling NOT being. He does not dwell by a baptism of the Holy Spirit. That was promised only to the apostles and was not commanded, but fulfilled (**Matthew 3:11; Acts 1:5-8**). He is not in Christians by the laying on of hands by the apostles like at the beginning (**Acts 8:14-18**) which was to establish and confirm the words of God. The words of God resulting in faith have already been delivered (**Jude3**).

The Spirit is dwelling in Christians and controlling them to the extent that His message, the truth, is in them and controlling them. The word is NOT the Spirit. The word is the MESSAGE of the Spirit which, when followed, guides the follower. It ought not to seem such a strange thing that the Spirit is dwelling in Christians—God dwells in the Christian (**1John 4:12-16**) and Christ dwells in the Christian (**Colossians 1:27**). This is by His word (**Ephesians 3:17**). That is the way the Spirit is in the Christian, too.

The Spirit speaks of His work with Christians in another way, as well. The Spirit makes intercession for the Christian (**Romans 8:26-28**). The Son is also spoken of as man's intercessor (**Hebrews 7:25**), however, in one sense they serve two different functions for the same cause. The Spirit is also said to be especially helpful with Christians in their prayers. But, whatever the Spirit is doing in this regard, it is apparent that this does not change man's responsibilities and this does not take the place of any of them.

We also see something of the Spirit that was revealed to John. The Spirit also invites (**Revelation 22:17**). Have you listened to His invitation? He invites in the same way he dwells in and guides—by His word. Will you hear and obey His call?