



Lesson 30

Theme: The Sovereign Work of the Holy Spirit

Scripture: Hebrews 6:7-8

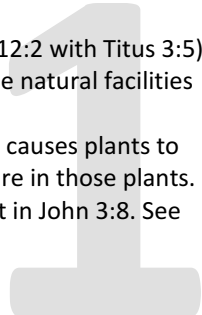
How Is It that Unregenerated Men Can Be “Partakers of the Holy Spirit” and NOT Be Regenerated?

The Warning (Hebrews 6:4-6)

- These three verses are designed as a **wake up** call for lazy, nominal persons who call themselves Christians.
- They show us that a man can experience much and yet be unsaved. (Remember Luke 12:48)
- John Bunyan wrote at the end of *Pilgrim’s Progress*, “Then I realized that there was a way to hell even from the gates of heaven . . .” See Luke 13:24-28; Matt 25:1-12; 22:13.
- Matthew Mead, (1629-1699) wrote *The Almost Christian Discovered*, to show how far one may go and yet only be **almost a Christian**. (See Lesson 30a)

The Work of the Holy Spirit on the Unsaved!

- We want to answer the question, “How can a man be ‘a partaker of the Holy Spirit’ (Hebrews 6:4) and not be saved?”
- ALL men (and women) have been blessed with natural facilities of understanding, will, and affections.
- With the “elect” the Holy Spirit **RENEWS** (See Rom 12:2 with Titus 3:5) and with the “unelect” the Holy Spirit raises these natural facilities to the highest level.
- ILLUSTRATION: The sun beaming down on a garden causes plants to grow but this sun does not implant a “new” nature in those plants.
- Christ spoke of the sovereign work of the Holy Spirit in John 3:8. See handout “Wind and Spirit”



Three Workings of the Spirit on All Men

① The Spirit restrains (controls) the sins (evil) of men.

- Genesis 20:6 – God withholds Abimelech from sinning against Sarah and Himself.
- 2 Peter 2:20 – these “having escaped the pollution of the world through the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ” – Peter likens these to pigs returning to the mud – they had been “washed” but their nature had not be changed!
- 2 Peter 1:3-4 – these are those who are “partakers of the Divine nature and escape the corruptions of the world through lusts (inward change).

② The Spirit moves men to turn naturally toward a ‘higher being’.

- When men are told that they will suffer in hell because of their sins there is a “natural” turning to a mediator, priests, preacher, etc..
- Just like pagan education teaches a Muslim that Mohammad is the one mediator, so too, many will turn to or *believe* in Christ.
- There is a natural tendency in man to turn to a “higher” being when in trouble. See Psalm 78:34-35
- SELF-LOVE is the predominant principle in the natural man. When “educated” or “enlightened” about a DANGER, men will naturally seek help – because of self-love and not the love of another.
- ILLUSTRATION: John 6:33-41; Jonah 1:5-6

③ The Spirit raises the natural faculties of man.

- Just as fire will raise the temperature and level of water, causing it to bubble and ascend into steam, though the principle of HEAT is in the fire and not the water, for when the fire is withdrawn the water returns to its natural coldness again.
- The Spirit raises the *natural* understanding of man. See Numbers 24:2-5.
- The Spirit raises the *natural* emotions of man. 1 Samuel 11:1-6; Matthew 13:20-22.
- The Spirit elevates the *natural* will of man.
 - The Holy Spirit is the Author of all righteousness here in the world.
 - i.e. the spirit stirred up the spirit of Cyrus to cause the release of the Jews from captivity and the re-building of His Temple. (Ezra 1:1-2; Isaiah 44:28)

- i.e. the Spirit moved Caiaphas to prophesy of Christ (John 11:51)
- These two passages ought to convince us that God is sovereign over man's will – NOT man!

What Is God's Purpose in the Use of the Spirit in These Ways?

- ① To show forth the excellency of His Grace. (Ephesians 1:6, 7; 2:6-7; Rom 9:23)
 - In nature, there are precious stones and "common" stones. So with faith; there is a **natural faith** (John 2:23-24; James 2:19) and there is a **supernatural faith**, "the faith of God's elect" (Titus 1:1) which is called "precious faith" (2 Peter 1:1) So with the power of the Spirit, there is the "common" workings of the Spirit of God, and there is the "**exceeding greatness of My power**" (Ephesians 1:19) toward the elect.
- ② To show the deceitfulness of the human heart (Jeremiah 17:10) The conscience can be convicted, the understanding enlightened, the emotions raised, and the will moved, yet it still remains that "every man at his **best** state is altogether vanity" (Psalm 39:5)
- ③ To limit sin. It is the Spirit who restrains the evil of man. One day the Spirit will be taken from the world and evil will be unrestrained! 2 Thess 2:7
- ④ To protect the elect.
 - Consider the leaves of a tree: "The leaves of a fruit tree are not fit for the table, **are** serviceable to the fruit, and ornamental to the tree, for without them the fruit would be exposed to ripen on bare twigs." God has seen fit to "reform" (not "regenerate") many for the protection of the few.

How Serious Are You?

- As one studies the teachings of Jesus Christ, Paul, and other writers of the New Testament, he/she has to come to conclusion that to be a follower of Jesus Christ is **serious business – the most serious business in the world.**
- We have been warning that **many** will and do believe that they are Christians only to learn **after death** that there really were not! (Matthew 7:21-23)
- Many will be **convinced** in their hearts but in reality still will not be.
- Scripture is for our learning! Have we learned!

