

THE WAY AND WONDER OF THE HEALING CHURCH

Further notes for Study No 5 December 7th 2009

THE SPIRIT POSSESSES THE CHURCH

THE ETERNAL SPIRIT AND THE CHURCH CREATED

- a. Our God is without beginning and without end. He is uncreated and is the Creator of all things including the church. Eph 2v10 compared with John 1v1-5
- b. The church had a beginning; it is therefore not greater than the Spirit Who is the Eternal Spirit. Heb 9v14
- c. Therefore the proper way to understand the relationship of the Spirit to the church is to know that He must possess the church, not the church possess the Spirit.
- d. If the church thinks it possesses the Spirit it will make human spirituality central, along with feelings, sensations and so-called “personal words from God; the Christian life practiced in such an atmosphere will be individualistic, false, self-centered and breed a sense of self-importance in both the individual and the church. It will grieve the Holy Spirit.
- e. When a church and those people in it understand more increasingly that the Holy Spirit possesses them, this puts the Spirit central, where He should be, He will be known as the Creator Spirit for He predates the church. Their prayer will be, “Come, Creator Spirit, Come.” Their dependency upon the Spirit as bringing the reality of Christ in the midst will be established more and more and the Spirit will not fail to be their guide, bringer of life, teaching and all things needed. See John’s gospel chapters fourteen through sixteen for Jesus’ exposition of the ministry of the Spirit; there He defines what the church should enjoy as she becomes the place of God’s Spirit, His empowering presence.
- f. We must become Holy Spirit people. I Corinthians and Ephesians unfold the doctrine of God’s ownership of the church.
- g. Paul defines the Spirit, ‘Holy,’ Eph 1v14, 4v30 ‘His’ Spirit, Eph 3v16. In both Ephesians and First Corinthians Paul mentions “the Spirit” frequently.
- h. Where the life, leadership and empowerment of the Holy Spirit is not known in the churches they will be sustained by the powers of the souls of prominent human beings in their midst. If there are gifts of the Spirit present they will be worked by human psychic energy and the often good intentioned ministry of those endeavoring to carry forward God’s purposes will always manifest elements of manipulation, domination and at times, intimidation.

THE SPIRIT IN OWNERSHIP THE PARAMOUNT NEED

- a. Read Ephesians chapter one from verse three to fourteen. Paul unfolds the eternal nature of God’s purposes. All began “before the foundation of the world.” Eph 1v4.

- b. Note that the Spirit is introduced in verse fourteen and prior to this the action is that of the Father working all things through the Son. All is therefore thoroughly Trinitarian and because God is eternal has that sense of eternity about it.
- c. The church did not begin on earth, but in God's heart. It is heavenly. Paul's writing anchors us firmly beyond the 'now' moment in history, in the eternity of God's heart, in His choice. Paul roots our thinking beyond the 'earthly' and sets us in 'the heavenlies.' His use of words like 'predestined' bring us beyond time. Eph 1v3,10,11; 2v6 Jesus did the same. Matthew 16v17-19
- d. Churches possessed by the Spirit will realize that they are living in the 'now' time but are part of what began far back in history and that they are moving towards the climax which is beyond time. They will not be dominated by the passing fads, fashions, contemporary styles and crazes that come sweeping through the Christian scene. The Spirit will root them in the ancient paths of the unchanging Word of God. The influence of 'charismatic' personalities who are not truly men and women of the Holy Spirit will lead to the over use of electronics and music in the attempt to bring the congregation into the presence of God and make the Spirit move to do something in the meeting. Manipulation by various means will be commonplace.
- e. The Spirit brings with Him a sense of eternity; God's will has been going on since the beginning of time and before. The mystery of His will has been unfolding through centuries of time. The church has been in existence since Pentecost. She is indestructible, continues through every trial because she is God's new creation. The Spirit brings this consciousness to us, it humbles us, makes us realize that God did not start doing things when the 'charismatic movement' came along. (Eph 1v11) 1Cor 14v36 Shows us that this was the attitude of the Corinthian church and Paul rebuked them soundly.
- f. Note the words 'we,' 'you' and 'our' in Paul's mention of the Holy Spirit in chapter one verse fourteen. Paul is writing as a Jew, he says 'we,' (that is the Jews) were the first to hope in Christ, (v12) then he mentions 'you,' (this is the Gentiles) also, when they heard the word of truth believed in Christ and so God sealed them with the same sealing of the Holy Spirit. (v13)
- g. The word 'seal' was a common one used in the purchasing and sale of objects and in other ways too. It signifies ownership, authenticity and genuineness. God first publicly 'sealed' people from the Jewish nation as His people in His church on the day of Pentecost. He gave them the Holy Spirit. No hands were laid on them. God did it from heaven. They were sealed into the eternal purpose of God decided before the foundation of the world, settled and secured by the life and death of Jesus and all will continue on till it is finished at the end of time when the New Creation begins. These Jews were sealed into what God is doing, and began to properly participate with Him in His purpose. Acts 2 onwards!
- h. They spoke with tongues, prophesied, preached, living holy lives in fellowship with one another. Acts chapter two shows these things clearly.

- i. The first pure gentiles to be sealed by God by the giving of the Holy Spirit were Cornelius and his household. Acts 10. Note that there was no laying on of hands there either, God did it from heaven. They too spoke in tongues and prophesied. God did for them exactly the same as He did for the first Jews. Acts 15v8 Equal blessedness. Equal sealing, equal action by God; thus showing that God was no respecter of race and persons. Acts 10v28
- j. Note the absence of the laying on of hands. Be careful of all ideas of transference. Where the Holy Spirit is possessing the church He is well able to do His work, although there may be men and women present and they may even lay hands on another at the time when God is sealing that person with His Spirit. Transference of gift, ministry, power and the like is associated with the occult realms where psychic powers run rampant. God alone conveys and imparts His Spirit. He owns the church and does not give power to men to 'give the Spirit.'
- k. Sometimes God may be pleased, by His Spirit, to give a gift to someone when prayers are being offered, such as by a group of elders praying over a person, but this is not to be regarded as in any way a transferring of anything from one to another by the laying on of hands. It is God the Spirit, possessing the church that does the true giving. He must be known as the Lord and giver of life in the church. Ministers must be careful not to intrude but to work together with Him. 1 Tim 4v14 and Numbers 11v16-30
- l. Paul uses the word 'our' inheritance showing the equal inheritance that people of all backgrounds; both Jew and Gentile receive in Christ. The Holy Spirit is the "guarantee of our inheritance." This means that the Holy Spirit possessing the church causes everyone in it, to receive a down payment of the spiritual riches that shall be theirs in their eternal inheritance. We have now, part of what we shall have in fullness when Christ comes again in glory. Eph 1v14 2 Cor1v22
- m. It is at this point that the error of "divine health" has its root. We do not have at this time the full inheritance of a new body free from all possibility of sickness and disease. God's gifts of healings though, are part of the 'down-payment' and are a promise pointing us to the fullness that shall come.
- n. So, we see that the Holy Spirit makes us aware of eternity past and eternity to come, locating us firmly in the eternal purpose of God, making us conscious of the history of God's workings. Holy Spirit people have great respect for the people that have gone before, the Christian leaders of generations past. The musicians who really are being taught of the Holy Spirit will have great respect for the great church songs of centuries gone by and will and show it by introducing the churches of today to some of them. They are not simply interested in the new styles and songs of recent days.
- o. There is an important corrective here to the current preoccupation with 'new' doctrines, songs, interpretations, ideas, visions and dreams. Always this attitude includes a disrespect manifested by many towards the things that have gone before in two thousand years of church history.

- p. The Holy Spirit delivers us from the tyranny of styles, church fashion and the zeal to be a 'cool' church. He brings us in to the unchanging ways of God: He brings us into a consciousness of "the eternities."

THE CHURCH THE DWELLING PLACE OF GOD BY THE SPIRIT

- a. Note the two mentions of the Spirit in Ephesians chapter two. (v18&22) Both are in the context of His work with the Father and the Son. They are Trinitarian verses.
- b. The church is God's dwelling place, His temple on earth. He has no other.
- c. The Spirit brings churches into being by the will of the Father through the Son. When doing so he uses gifts and ministries. These are not permanent fixtures like stones in the foundation of a building. They are foundational ways of service in the beginnings of a church. Eph 2v20 Jesus Christ is the permanent one, the cornerstone of everything and its permanent foundation. 1Cor 3v11
- d. In Ephesus and Corinth there were many temples. They were familiar to the people. They had inner and outer parts as did the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem.
- e. These temples were not the dwelling places of God. The church in Ephesus and the one in Corinth made up of men and women who were Holy Spirit people were the dwelling place of God in those cities. 1Cor 3v16&17
- f. The word Paul uses throughout for 'temple' is the one used to describe the inner sanctuary, where the god was supposed to be and not the outer precincts where people could gather. This fact shows the priority of the Spirit in church life.
- g. Both our bodies and inward man are parts that are the place of the dwelling of God on the earth. We are corporately God's temple; made up of many 'little temples' as individuals come together. Compare 1 Cor 3v16 and 2 Cor 6v16-18
- h. When God seals us by giving us His Spirit He takes up residence in us. We are to learn to be intelligently possessed by the Spirit in all things so that we become a location point of His particular presence on the earth in that particular place where He has set us. In all our powers we are to know increasingly the Spirit's possessing of us. This is not a 'take over', it is a partnership of agreement and happy service.
- i. A church should be a place where God is to be found! 1 Cor14v25
- j. The absence of the Presence is the great emptiness in man.
- k. Consider the history of God's particular presence on earth. First in the garden with the man and woman. Then, because of sin they were cast out and were at a distance from the Presence, afraid and guilt-ridden. God then presenced Himself on the Mount Sinai. (Book of Exodus). When the children of Israel came out of Egypt He had them build Him a temple (tabernacle) made of skins. He came and lived there in the midst of them behind the veil. Exod 25v21&22 This became more permanent in the temple Solomon built in Jerusalem though look carefully and you will find the tabernacle is in the temple. 1 Kings 8 However; because of sin the presence of God departed from the temple. Ezekiel chapters one through

ten. The children of Israel went into exile in Babylon and the empty temple is destroyed. But Ezekiel sees a new temple, he sees the Lord returning, this all begins in chapter thirty-six. From chapter 40 through 48 the theme is the Presence of God with His people. There is a river running out from the temple, it brings healing. Ezek 47. What does this mean?

- l. Jesus came. He replaced the temple because He is the true temple. He said that the temple of His body would be destroyed but it would be raised up in three days. John 2v19. His accusers mocked Him with this saying. Mark 14v58 and 15v29. Whilst He was on the earth He had already begun to replace the temple made with hands. He gave forgiveness to those who came to Him. God had commanded that people had to go to the temple of stone and offer sacrifices to meet Him and receive forgiveness and covering for their sin. Jesus changed everything. He is the temple of God in the midst. He is the temple made of skin!
- m. He is pierced at Calvary and the river of forgiving love runs out from His side bringing healing to the nations! John 19v34
- n. He promised us, “out of our innermost parts would flow rivers of living water.” John 7v37. We are the church; the dwelling place of God by His Spirit, this river is the river of forgiving love through the gospel. Remember how Jesus said to the disciples that their ministry was linked with forgiveness. John 20v22&23. Note how this is joined to the fact that they must be Spirit breathed people.
- o. We must not let divisions come into the temple, nor attempt to build with natural powers. There is a terrible reward for those who do so. 1Cor 3v17 The church in Corinth was divided, destruction was entering in. False teaching was present and these teachers were destroying the temple. Let us beware lest wrong spirits bring in wrong teachings and manipulations.
- p. We do not have to use various techniques to invest the church with the Spirit’s presence. These are the practices by which heathen priests by many mantras, certain methods of singing and songs and many techniques of meditation invest an idol with the presence of their false god. Something spiritual takes place. The church is not to use singing like this, or the waving of flags, no technique at all to ‘bring the Spirit in.’ He is here already. We bring Him as we gather if we are His in fellowship with Him day by day.

A FINAL UNDERLINING OF GOD’S OWNERSHIP OF THE CHURCH

- a. Go through the first three chapters of 1 Corinthians and observe the following.
- b. In chapter one from verses one through seventeen see how frequently Christ is mentioned.
- c. In chapter one from verses eighteen through thirty-one see how many times God is the central Person about whom Paul is writing.
- d. In chapter two see how many times the Spirit is mentioned along with the word spiritual, and with this, the Spirit’s ministry is defined.
- e. In chapter three verses five through twenty-three see how God is again the center of all. The church is God’s building; God’s field and we are God’s fellow workers.

- f. The Corinthians had forgotten these things. May we not forget but live in the joyful reality of them and so become the church, the temple of God, the place of His presence on earth in our various localities and from us may the river of the gospel of the forgiveness of sins through Jesus flow freely bringing life to the nations.