



The Holy Spirit Our Teacher

“I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you” (John 16:12-14).

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“But the wisdom that is



from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy” (James 3:17).

Often we come across situations in life where we have to make major decisions that have significant consequences but without having all the facts for adequately assessing the options; or we are required to undertake groundbreaking initiatives that we have no prior experience. It is in these and similar situations that the role of the Holy Spirit as our teacher becomes invaluable to ensure that we take a right course of action that will bring blessings. In His role as a teacher, the Holy Spirit assesses the truths that we are ready for as well as prepare us in advance prior to the teaching. He often does this through the preparation of the heart, the answer of the tongue and the control of circumstances and events of our life (Proverbs 16:1). The council at Jerusalem (Acts 15:1-32) and Peter's mission to the gentiles (Acts 10:1-48) provide two New Testament examples of the Holy Spirit's work as a Teacher.

The Council at Jerusalem (Acts 15:1-32).

Paul's mission to the gentiles had been so fruitful that many were saved; however an issue arose that could have damaged the church if not satisfactorily resolved on time. Paul took the right step of referring the matter to the church elders at Jerusalem where the Holy Spirit taught them on the right decision which they took. The following key points should be noted:

1) Verses 1 and 5: The controversy that erupted abroad and in Jerusalem was not a small matter that could be “swept under the carpet” nor of the type that would easily go away with time. Rather it was a hot religious and emotional issue that could destroy the church if not handled properly immediately.

2) Verse 2 and 7: Logical reasoning, diplomacy and rational analysis based on human wisdom, skills and understanding failed to resolve the issue. Note that even among the apostles, there was “much disputing” (verse 7) on the issue, so without divine intervention the church could have been in tatters. When we are at our wit's end, the Holy Spirit can help if only we will let Him.

3) Verses 7-11 and 13-21: Peter's and James' speeches were not from positions of power or authority but through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit (Proverbs 16:1). This is a salient lesson, that if we will surrender our members to the Holy Spirit, He can use us to shed light on major issues and bring out spectacular solutions.

4) Verses 12 and 13: Calm descended as the Holy Ghost took over. Arguments stopped as they listened to the wisdom of the Holy Spirit. There must be calmness and willingness to listen if we are to be taught by the Holy Spirit. “The meek will he **guide** in judgment: and the meek will he teach his way” (Psalms 25:9). **“I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye. Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understand-**

ing: whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle, lest they come near unto thee" (Psalms 32:8,9).

- 5) The resolution bore the marks of the nature of the Holy Spirit "But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace" (James 3:17-18).

Mission To The Gentiles (Acts 10:1-48).

The Ministry of Jesus had centred in Israel as a starter though He ministered to a few gentiles, which served as illustration that the ultimate scope of His mission was worldwide. However, the disciples were slow to understand this. Even after the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20) they still preached only to the Jews (Acts 11:19). They had misinterpreted Jesus' earlier tactical command in Matthew 10:5-6 "Go not into the way of the Gentiles... But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" to be God's will. If things were left unchecked the gentile world could have been left without the Gospel. It was now time for the Holy Spirit to teach the disciples what Jesus knew that they needed but were not ready for as at the time of John 16:12-14. There are sermons that are better preached practically by the Holy Spirit than by the eloquence of man. We learn from this that:

- 1) Mankind is an animal of habit, and once attitudes are formed they have the potential of becoming the subconscious laws that screens out everything that does not conform to them, even if they are essential for the present and eternal benefit of the man.
- 2) Such habits can keep us going around in circles, doting about letters of the law (e.g. doctrines, rules, regulations, etc) but missing out on the life and essence of our being. "... the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life" (2 Corinthians 3:6).
- 3) The net result of the above is respectable and rigid religion that lacks the life of God.

- 4) It takes the teaching of the Holy Spirit to change character, thinking, deeply seated beliefs and behaviours.

- 5) Verses 1-6: Note the impressive and pious qualities and attributes of Cornelius:

- Devout and feared God
- Feared God with all his house
- Gave much alms
- Prayed to God always

Despite these impressive qualities and devotion, he was not saved because he did not know Jesus the only saviour of mankind. Jesus declared "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6). The apostle confirmed "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). Without Jesus, all our religious devotions is nothing more than filthy rags before God (Isaiah 64:6). The Holy Spirit stepped in to teach Cornelius the way to genuine salvation.

- 6) Verses 7-8: Cornelius acted on the divine guidance received.
- 7) Verses 9-22: The Holy Spirit prepared Peter for the mission. Without this preparation, Peter would never have gone to preach to Gentiles. The preparation made him ready to fulfil His ministry and mission in life.
- 8) Verses 23-48: Peter's obedience to the Holy Spirit brought salvation to the gentiles through the preaching of Jesus. It also at the same time opened the door to gentile ministry.
- 9) Verse 45: Astonishment came on the Circumcised. God is always bigger than our dreams, understandings, petty projects or vision. Let us let God have His way in our lives through the Holy Spirit!

The Holy Spirit is waiting to teach us. Are we ready, willing, open, meek and sensitivity to receive His teaching. Only by being taught by the Holy Spirit can the limitations be removed enabling us to achieve God's plan, purpose and mission for our lives.