

The Holy Spirit in the Epistle to the Romans

by Arno Clemens Gaebelein

Arno Clemens Gaebelein preaches on the salvation of God going forth to the Gentiles as revealed in the Book of Acts and the epistle to the Romans. Romans emphasizes the need for salvation for both Jews and Gentiles, the sacrificial work of Jesus Christ, and the believer's justification by faith leading to peace with God. The Holy Spirit's role in salvation is highlighted, showing that while essential, the Spirit does not save but points to Christ. The believer's identification with Christ, sanctification, and future redemption are all made possible through the indwelling Spirit.

Description

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Transcript

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Spirit is needed in the salvation of a sinner, but He is not the one who saves." - q: "What is the significance of the Holy Spirit's mention in Romans 5:5?" a: "The Holy Spirit's mention in Romans 5:5 shows that the sinner is not saved by the work of the Spirit, but by the work of the Son of God." - q: "What is the role of the Holy Spirit in the believer's sanctification?" a: "The Holy Spirit is the power of sanctification, but He is not the believer's sanctification. The believer is sanctified by the work of Christ." - q: "What is the significance of the Holy Spirit's mention in Romans 8:2?" a: "The Holy Spirit's mention in Romans 8:2 shows that the believer has the power to live according to the Spirit, rather than the flesh." - q: "What is the role of the Holy Spirit in the believer's adoption?" a: "The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of adoption, producing in the believer the reality of divine sonship and all that appertains to this relationship." quotes: - "For He shall not speak of Himself. He shall glorify Me, for He shall receive of Mine. and shall show it unto you." - "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ; by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in the hope of the glory of God" - "What a sweet and strengthening thought, that when God searches the heart, even if we are burdened with the sense of the misery in the midst of which the heart is working, He finds there, not the flesh, but the affection of the Spirit; and that the Spirit Himself is occupied in us, in grace, with all our infirmities." applicationPoints: - "The Holy Spirit is not the Saviour, but the Lord Jesus Christ is." - "The Holy Spirit is the power of sanctification, but He is not the believer's sanctification." - "The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of adoption, producing in the believer the reality of divine sonship and all that appertains to this relationship." keywords: - "Holy Spirit" - "Salvation" - "Sanctification" - "Adoption" - "Intercession" - "Witness" - "Power of the Spirit" - "Spirit of Adoption" - "Spirit of Christ" ---

THE last statement in the Book of Acts, coming from the lips of the Apostle to the Gentiles, is, that the salvation of God is to go forth to the Gentiles. What this salvation of God is and what it includes is the great revelation of the epistle to the Romans. In the first place Romans shows that Jews and Gentiles, with the law and without the law, need salvation, because both are guilty before God and therefore lost and under condemnation. Then we learn if man is to be saved, God must do it for him. After this we read how the salvation man needs is given to man through the blessed sacrificial work of the Son of God. It is in His great sacrificial work that God declares His righteousness in saving guilty and lost sinners. God justifies, that is, acquits, all who believe on Jesus, that He died for our sins and was raised from among the dead. Then we read, "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ; by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in the hope of the glory of God" (v:1-2). But we read more than that. The believer who has believed on Christ is not only justified, in possession of peace with God, accepted by Him and having the hope of the glory of God, but he is also identified with Christ, one with Him, who is the head of the new creation, the last Adam. The believer has received a new nature and is saved from the power and dominion of indwelling sin.

It is significant that in the opening chapters of the epistle of our salvation not a word is said about the work of the Spirit. It is true, of course, that the Holy Spirit is active in the sinner's salvation. He quickens because man is dead in his spiritual nature. In the fifth chapter the Holy Spirit is mentioned for the first time.

Romans 5:5

Chapter 5:5. "And hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who is given unto us." The first mention of the Spirit is only incidental, but it shows conclusively that the sinner is not saved by the work of the Holy Spirit, but by the work of the Son of God. While the Holy Spirit is absolutely needed in the salvation of a sinner, the Holy Spirit is not the Saviour, but

the Lord Jesus Christ is. That the Holy Spirit is not mentioned in these great opening chapters of this epistle illustrates the words of our Lord in John 16:13, 14. "For He shall not speak of Himself. He shall glorify Me, for He shall receive of Mine. and shall show it unto you." He is the blessed author of this great document, yet He bears the first witness to Christ, and His blessed redemption work. He gives Him the first place.

We notice, then, that Romans 5:5 shows conclusively that the Holy Spirit shedding the love of God abroad in the believer's heart is given by the grace of God in redemption. Each justified believer has received this gift. We shall find in the eighth chapter what this gift includes. According to the twisted teachings of Pentecostalism, Perfectionism and other Holiness "isms," the Holy Spirit and the baptism with the Holy Spirit should occupy the most prominent place in the very foreground of this epistle. Paul, according to their conceptions, should have told them that they were justified, had their sins put away, but what they needed now was to seek the Holy Spirit. Instead of it there is just this passing statement that the Holy Spirit is given to those who are justified by faith. Equally significant is it that no other mention of the Holy Spirit is made till we reach the eighth chapter. In the next two chapters we are told how God has dealt with sin (our old nature) in the sacrificial work of His Son; in the preceding chapters we learn what was done with our sins, the fruits of our fallen nature. The justified believer is both dead with Christ and risen with Christ. He is under grace and the assurance is given him that sin is not to have dominion over him. He is to reckon himself dead unto sin and alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. This means the sanctification of the justified believer. In all this, the deliverance of the justified believer from the power and dominion of sin, the Holy Spirit does not mention Himself. We are sanctified by the work of Christ. He is not only our righteousness, but our sanctification. The Holy Spirit is of course needed to make this real in our hearts and lives. He is the power of sanctification, but He is not our sanctification. We now turn to the eighth chapter.

Romans 8:2

Chapter 8:2. "For the law of the Spirit, of life in Christ Jesus, hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh. That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit." It is not the question here of our sins, but of being identified with Christ risen from the dead. We have in Him the new life and the power in that new life, risen with Christ, is the Holy Spirit. This law of the Spirit, operating in the new life, delivers, if permitted to operate, from the law of sin and death which before reigned in the old nature, producing its fruit unto death. As in Christ, risen with Him, one with Him, in possession of His life, the Holy Spirit dwelling in our hearts, walking by faith, we walk after the Spirit and as a result the righteous requirements of the law are fulfilled in us. We are, as in Christ, perfect before God without any righteousness of the law whatever. But as we walk according to the Spirit, as risen with Christ, the law is fulfilled in us, though we are not under the law. This is the gracious result of the Holy Spirit dwelling in our hearts. He has the power, if we let Him, to manifest His energy in our lives in giving us power over in-dwelling sin; in the resurrection of the believer (or the promised change in a moment, when He comes) the energy of the Spirit will deliver from the law of death.

Romans 8:5

Chapter 8:5. "For they that are after the flesh mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit." The natural man desires the things which his nature craves; the spiritual man, in

whom the Spirit of God dwells, desires the things of the Spirit. The carnal mind is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Therefore the affection of the flesh is enmity against God, and they that are in the flesh, who live according to the old nature, cannot please God. The Spirit of God dwells in the believer so that he can be spiritually minded.

Romans 8:9

Chapter 8:9. "But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His." God looks upon those who have believed on Christ, who are in Him, as no longer in the flesh. They are a new creation and old things have passed away. The flesh certainly exists for there is as long as we are in the body the conflict between the flesh and the Spirit, but in God's sight we are no longer in the flesh, but having received the Holy Spirit, and having life of the Holy Spirit we are before God in the Spirit and no longer in the realm of the old nature, the flesh. The Holy Spirit indwelling the believer is the power to realize this and to act as no longer 'n the flesh. "Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of His." The possession of the Spirit of Christ makes a man a Christian. All who believe on Christ become His and immediately the Spirit of God seals them. This verse disposes of the false teaching that a man may be a Christian, belong to Christ, know that he is saved, and yet have not the Spirit. A man is a Christian because He has the Spirit of Christ.

Romans 8:11

Chapter 8:11. "But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit who dwelleth in you." This is one of the star-texts of divine healers. They teach that the Holy Spirit dwells in the believer to quicken his body in case of illness. The quickening refers to resurrection. When the Lord Jesus Christ was raised from among the dead the Holy Spirit was active. (see note on 1 Peter 3:18). He is the Spirit of Him who raised up Jesus from among the dead. C)n account of the Spirit dwelling in the believer the same will also be accomplished for the mortal body of the believer. He will raise up our mortal bodies. Then the question, "Who shall deliver me from this body of death?" will be fully answered. The passage does not teach that the Holy Spirit quickens now our bodies, and is in our mortal bodies to give them perfect health and immunity from sickness. Some of the choicest saints, filled with the Spirit, mightily used by Him, have been frail in their bodies and troubled with much sickness. Paul had his thorn in the flesh and Timothy oft infirmities, though both were filled with the Spirit.

The "Synopsis by J. N. D." calls attention to the designation of the Spirit in verses 9-11. "He is designated in three ways: the Spirit of God, in contrast with sinful flesh, the natural man; the Spirit of Christ, the formal character of the life which is the expression of His power; the Spirit of Him that raised Jesus from the dead. Here it is the perfect and final deliverance of the body itself by the power of God acting through His Spirit. We see that Christian life in its true character (that of the Spirit) depends on redemption. It is by virtue of redemption that the Spirit is present with us."

Romans 8:12-13

Chapter 8:12-13. As redeemed, indwelt by the Spirit, believers are not debtors to the flesh, the old nature, to live after the flesh. We do not owe anything anymore to that old nature, which was put to death in the death of Christ. If we live after the flesh, we are on the road to death (about to die), but if the believer through the Spirit mortifies, puts into the place of death, the deeds of the body, the old nature, he shall

live. The Spirit of God is the power, which makes it possible not to live after the flesh, the power which enables the believer to mortify the flesh and live unto God.

Romans 8:14-16

Chapter 8:14-16. Here the Spirit of adoption, of Sonship is made known. They are the sons of God, who are led by the Spirit. The Spirit of God is in the believer as a Spirit of adoption. We have not received a spirit of bondage to be again in fear, as it was with the Old Testament believers, but a spirit that answers to our sonship in Christ, and by that Spirit we cry, Abba, Father. He is called a Spirit of adoption because He produces in the believer the reality of divine Sonship as well as all which appertains to this relationship. The Holy Spirit does not make believers sons, but He is given to them, and is in the believer as the Spirit of sonship, because they are sons. It must be noted that believers are spoken of as children of God and also as sons of God. In our relationship we are children, born into the family of God; in our position and future glory we are sons. Indwelling the believer the Holy Spirit bears witness "with our spirit, that we are the children of God." The witness of the Spirit is in the Word of God, and because the believer has accepted His witness as to redemption he knows therefore that God is His Father, and, being born again, that he is in the family of God. He produces in the believer the consciousness of being a child of God, as well as the affections of a child. "We have this testimony in our hearts in our relationship with God; but the Holy Spirit Himself, as distinct from us, bears this testimony to those in whom He dwells. The true believer knows that he recognizes in his heart God as his Father, but He also knows that the Holy Spirit bears the same testimony to him. That which is founded on the Word is realized and verified in the heart." The witness of the Spirit is more than "a good feeling," it is the deep consciousness produced by believing the Word in the power of the Spirit of God that we are the children of God.

Romans 8:23

Chapter 8:23. In the context the future is revealed to the children of God, the heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ. A day is coming when groaning creation will be delivered and share the glorious liberty of the children of God. All is awaiting the manifestation of the sons of God, which comes with the Return of the Lord Jesus Christ. The same Spirit who reveals to believers through the Word that they are children and heirs, gives intelligence as to the coming glorious deliverance, and therefore those who have the first fruits of the Spirit (elsewhere called the earnest of the Spirit), in possession of this knowledge given by the Spirit of a coming redemption, groan within themselves, waiting for the full adoption, the fullest manifestation of their sonship, which is the redemption of the body. This groaning and waiting is the effect of the indwelling Spirit (see note on Gal. v:5).

Romans 8:26-27

Chapter 8:26-27. Another blessed and deep activity of the Holy Spirit in the believer is revealed in these verses. He not only witnesses to us that we are the children of God, but He enters into the life of the children of God in connection with their infirmities, their weaknesses and their sorrows, in infinite grace and sympathy. He acts as intercessor, so that the believer has two intercessors, Christ in the presence of God and the Holy Spirit dwelling in the believer. The Holy Spirit takes part in us in our sorrows in the midst of suffering creation and helps our infirmities,

and then He pleads in our hearts in groans which cannot be expressed in words, while we do not know what to ask for as a remedy. "And He (God) that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because He maketh intercession for the Saints according to God." While He acts in divine sympathy

in us, in the infirmity of our body and the suffering of creation, in the midst of which the children of God still are, His intercession and pleading with unutterable groans, becomes through us the voice of this suffering before God. "What a sweet and strengthening thought, that when God searches the heart, even if we are burdened with the sense of the misery in the midst of which the heart is working, He finds there, not the flesh, but the affection of the Spirit; and that the Spirit Himself is occupied in us, in grace, with all our infirmities. What an attentive ear must God lend to such groans!" 3

Romans 9:1; 14:17; 15:13, 19 and 30

Chapter 9:1; 14:17; 15:13, 19 and 30. These passages contain statements showing the activities of the Spirit of God in the believer. The apostle Paul, in deploring the condition of his kinsmen, and expressing his deep love for them, speaks of his conscience bearing witness in the Holy Spirit, a different thing from the natural man, who has also a conscience, but not the Spirit of God. The Holy Spirit gives joy as well as peace in believing and if we abound in hope it is through the power of the Holy Spirit (15:13). In chapter 15:19 Paul speaks of his own God-given ministry which was attended by mighty signs and wonders by the power of the Spirit of God. But the Spirit of God produced also in the great instrument a great and Christ-like humility, for he wrote "I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ hath not wrought by me." Finally in asking the Roman believers to pray for him, he beseeches them for the sake of the Lord Jesus Christ and for the love of the Spirit (Chapter xv:30). It is interesting to find that not a word is said in this epistle about the "Baptism with the Spirit" nor a word about the gift of tongues and other supernatural manifestations of the Spirit.

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