

May 2021

Dear Brethren:

Warmest greetings to God's people who are using God's Holy Spirit. This will be a meat-in-due-season letter for the Day of Pentecost. In this letter we are going to focus on why man needs God's Holy Spirit.

The Spirit of God is the most powerful force in the universe. By it, God created the entire universe and renewed the earth (Genesis 1:1–2; Psalm 104:30). When the Word, the One who used this Spirit to create, became a fleshly human being, it was the power by which He was begotten into Mary's womb (Matthew 1:18). He had a full measure of it (John 3:34) through which He conquered Satan and sin and thus qualified to rule the earth at His Second Coming.

But perhaps most impressive is that this Power can enter a carnal human mind (a mind initially hostile toward God's Way) and make it subject to God's Law (Romans 8:7) and make it capable of living by every word of God.

Humans were put on earth, in fact, to become eternal members of God's Family. First, though, they must prove that they are worthy of such life—such power. God gave the first man, Adam, a choice, symbolized by two trees. One represented the Holy Spirit. God explained all of this to Adam, but Adam still rejected God's Holy Spirit.

Herbert W. Armstrong wrote in *Mystery of the Ages*, page 99:

God PRONOUNCED SENTENCE!

God said, in effect: "You have made the decision for yourself and the world that shall spring from you. You have rejected me as the basic source of knowledge—you have rejected power from me through my Spirit to live the righteous way—you have rebelled against my command and my government—you have chosen the 'GETTING,' 'TAKING' way of Satan."

Here is the most valuable lesson this story could teach us: To keep a spiritual law, man needs a spiritual power! Man needs the Spirit of God. What if man had only the law and not the Spirit? To answer that question, ancient Israel was actually God's "guinea pig."

Once again from *Mystery of the Ages*, page 140:

He [God] was going to prove to the world that without his Holy Spirit their minds were incapable of receiving and utilizing such knowledge of the TRUE WAYS OF LIFE. He was going to demonstrate to them that the mind of MAN, with its one spirit, and without the addition of God's Holy Spirit, could not have spiritual discernment—could not solve human problems, could not cure the evils that were besetting humanity. The nation Israel would be his guinea pig to demonstrate that fact.

They were certainly given God's Law that we must keep to receive eternal life, for God had codified on physical tables of stone, and in ten major points, the way by which God wanted them to live. This actually happened on the Day of Pentecost. But Israel was not given the Spirit to keep this Law or to develop God's nature. Why? It is because in Eden, the Word cut off access to the Spirit. Thus, He would prove to man how essential and necessary the Spirit was in law-keeping.

On physical Israel's first Pentecost, when God gave the Israelites the Law, there was a tremendous display of His Spirit of Power. "And mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke [completely wrapped in smoke], because the [Eternal] descended upon it in fire: and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly" (Exodus 19:18). The impact on Israel that day is a type of the impact of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost in A.D. 31.

For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest, And the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which voice they that heard intreated [begged] that the word should not be spoken to them any more: (For they could not endure that which was commanded, And *if so much as a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned, or thrust through with a dart* [arrow]: And so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I *exceedingly* fear and quake:) But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect (Hebrews 12:18–23), [emphasis mine].

All this speaks eloquently of the nature of God and His Law and power. It is a revelation of God's righteous requirements and of His wrath against sin. A true Christian needs power in his or her life: power to fight a spiritual warfare, power to overcome what

we are by nature, power to overcome and defeat the influences of Satan, self and society, and power to live a righteous life!

There is a cause for every effect—every consequence. The effects are what we see in this terminally sinful world around us and in our own lives as we struggle against sin. What is the cause? It is a lack of power to live righteously. How often are we relying on our own willpower, and not the power of God's Holy Spirit? The fruits in our lives, or lack of them, tell us the whole story—if we are willing to take an honest look at ourselves. Pentecost provides us the perfect time to think on, and to emphasize, the important lesson of using God's power to conquer our sinful natures. A display of power occurred in the New Testament on spiritual Israel's first Pentecost. Luke writes of a "rushing mighty wind" (Acts 2:1–2).

Pentecost is about the Law and the Spirit of Power, and about how those two are intertwined. God proved this by giving the Law on the first Pentecost with ancient Israel and not giving the Spirit until the first Pentecost with spiritual Israel. You cannot keep God's Law without God's Holy Spirit, and you cannot retain the Spirit without the Law (for God gives His Holy Spirit only to those who obey Him—Acts 5:32). All this shows is that the Law given to physical Israel on physical tables of stone was, in fact, spiritual. "For we know that the law [God's Law] is spiritual [immutable, eternal—it stands forever—Psalm 111:7–8]: but I am carnal, sold under sin" (Romans 7:14). We are carnal by nature, but the more spiritual we become, the easier it is to keep the Law—to live this spiritual Way of Life.

And how do we become more spiritual? "There is therefore now no condemnation [no adverse punishing sentence] to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (Romans 8:1). Why is that? It is because of God's Holy Spirit in us now leading us. It has given us a new nature. Our new man is leading us. The Holy Spirit witnesses with our spirit and is leading it. We become more apt to keep the Law, more spiritual, because of the Holy Spirit—the nature of God, defined in the Law.

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 (Romans 8:3).

For man, the Law is not enough. God designed it that way. He made it dependent upon His Holy Spirit—His very nature and power! So, God had to send His own Son to make available the Spirit of God to those called as firstfruits.

But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken [make immortal] your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you (Romans 8:11).

The Spirit that raised Jesus Christ from the dead is what dwells in us, and it is the power that will change us into Spirit Beings.

"For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify [make a corpse of] the deeds of the body, ye shall live" (Romans 8:13). If we use God's Holy Spirit, we can indeed have the power to mortify the deeds of the flesh. What a power! That is why we need the Spirit of God, so that we can live righteously. Without it, we cannot be in obedience to God's Law, or conquer what we are by nature. "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the [begotten] sons of God" (Romans 8:14). If we are led by the Spirit, if we are making it active and operative in our lives, then we are the begotten sons of God.

God will make us *born* Sons when—and only when—He proves that He can truly trust us to live His Way of Life and use His power properly. Then the ultimate, supreme purpose for our lives finally will be achieved. The laws, this nature, will be a permanent part of our perfect minds, just as God prophesied:

For this is the covenant that I will make with the [new] house of Israel after those days, saith the [Eternal]; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people (Hebrews 8:10).

God never did this with the ancient Israelites; for them He only wrote the Law on physical tables of stone. But God plans to write it in our hearts and minds. What a magnificent accomplishment for God the Father: to make beings just like Him, begotten with His Spirit and, through the Spirit, empowered to live as He lives, with His exact nature and mind. God's mind can come into ours! His mind enables us to put out wrong thoughts. Through the faith of God, we can think and act like Him: "Let this mind [the Father's mind] be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 2:5). Having the mind, or mental attitude, of God requires the power of God's Holy Spirit! Few people fully grasp how truly great is the mind of God. Even more astounding is the fact that God makes that mind available to us—we can actually have the mind of God.

No man hath seen God [the Father] at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his [law-abiding] love is perfected in us. Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit (1 John 4:12–13).

Mr. Armstrong taught us that God's Holy Spirit is our spiritual umbilical cord. Here is what he wrote in *Mystery of the Ages*, page 98:

I like to compare this [God's Holy Spirit] to the umbilical cord connecting the newborn baby with its mother. Its human life and physical nourishment has been supplied during gestation from the mother to the child. God's *spirit LIFE* is imparted to the Christian through the Holy Spirit. Also, spiritual knowledge is imparted by God but through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit (I Cor. 2:10). Full comprehension of God's LAW (his way of life) is imparted by God through the Holy Spirit. But the law of God requires action and performance, and LOVE is the fulfilling of God's law (Rom. 13:10), and it can be fulfilled only by the love of and from God (Rom. 5:5) [emphasis mine].

This is the means by which God is reproducing Himself—expanding His Family. And yet, as powerful as God's Spirit is, of and by itself, it does not develop righteous character in us without our consent. It will never force its influence upon our minds. Instead, it leads and guides us in God's Way, without forcing us. You must make the decision to go God's Way through the power of choice. How thankful we can be for what God is creating in us through the power of His Spirit. Remember that "the way of man is not in himself" (Jeremiah 10:23).

We need God's Holy Spirit to lead us in every step of our lives. Let us make sure we never quench God's Holy Spirit. It is our *power* to live righteously.

Your devoted servant in Christ,



Robert J. Litz



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