

A Look at the Spirit of Man And the Spirit of God

(And how they work in man)

By

Kenneth Fortier

This article should be read in conjunction with the Article entitled “The Breath of Life” found on this same Web page. Many who write about the “spirit”, whether of man or of God, find that it is a difficult subject to speak on. The term itself is undefined and its use in the Bible causes a lot of confusion among Christians, not to speak of its use among the secular society of our time.

Any study on the “spirit of man”, the “Spirit of God, Christ, truth, life”, etc., and the “spirit” in all “living creatures” — fish, fowl animals and creepy-crawly things — needs to be considered and understood in the context of any verse or passage found in both the Old and New Testaments of the Bible.

For example, Ecclesiastes 3:19 which speaks of the death of man and all living creatures, tells us

*“For that which happens to the sons of man happens to animals; even one thing happens to them: as one dies, so dies the other; **yes, they all have one spirit**; so that a man has no preeminence above an animal: for all is vanity.”*

As you can see from the above verse, all living creatures, man included, have a spirit that animates them. This “spirit” or “breath of life” from God is what makes His creatures come alive, i.e., become “living souls/creatures/beings,” etc. (See Genesis 1:20, 21, 24, 30 and 2:7.) However, there is an aspect of this “spirit” that is only found in man: man was “Made in the image and likeness of God.” This aspect of the “spirit” is never applied to any of the other creatures God created. And it is this aspect that enables mankind to think, feel, love, design and create things, etc.; an aspect no other “living creature” has.

Job 32:8, in the LXX, literally tells us *“But there is a spirit in mortals, and the breath of the almighty is the one teaching.”* This “breath” of the Almighty (God) is what gives man (mortals) awareness and intelligence through this spirit in us by His spirit working on and with our own spirit.

This is what the Apostle Paul reveals to us in I Corinthians 2:9–14 —

“But as it is written: ‘eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart (mind) of man **the things** which God has prepared for those who love Him.’ But God has revealed (the things) to us through His spirit. For the spirit (of God) searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. For what man knows the things of a man **except the spirit of the man which is in him**? Even so no one knows the things of God except the spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is from God, that we might

know the things that have been freely given to us by God. These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the holy spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man does not receive the things of the spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know (the things) because they are spiritually discerned." (Notice the mention of **TWO** spirits — God's and man's!)

Then in Romans, Chapter 8, verses 5–8, Paul tells us that

“Those who live according to their sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires; but those who live in accordance with the spirit (of God) have their minds set on what the spirit (of God) desires. The mind (heart) of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the spirit (of God) is life and peace, because the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. Those controlled by their sinful nature cannot please God.”

However, Paul goes on to tell us in verses 9–11 that

“You, however, are controlled not by your sinful nature (the spirit of man) but by the spirit (of God), **if** the spirit of God lives in you. And **if** anyone does not have the spirit of Christ (same as the spirit of God!), he does not belong to Christ. But **if** Christ (God's spirit) is in you, your body is dead because of sin, yet your spirit is alive because of righteousness. And **if** the spirit of Him (God) who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His spirit, who lives in you.”

In addition to this Good News Paul tells us in verses 14–17 that

“Those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the spirit (of God) who makes you sons. And by Him (Christ's spirit) we cry, ‘Abba, Father’. The spirit (of Christ/God) Himself testifies with **our spirit** that we are God's children. Now **if** we are children, then we are heirs — heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, **if** indeed we share in His sufferings in order that we may also share in His glory.”

Yes, the Apostle Paul tells us that the spirit (of God) Himself bears witness with **our spirit** (the one God created in us), that we are the children of God, **if** we have really put on the spirit of Christ to control our **own spirit**. (Notice the highlighted **IF** in the above quotes from Paul.)

Both the Old and New Testaments make it plain that God has placed within every living creature a “spirit” which animates its body. (See the Genesis 1 and 2 references already given.) There are many verses of Scripture which reveal that mankind has a spirit which gives them something other living creatures do not have — the ability which

makes one aware of spiritual things, and which makes it possible for **the spiritual things** of God, through God's spirit, to interact and allow a spiritual understanding of things that are not possible without God's spirit working in or on our **own spirit**.

“The spirit of God which a person can **put on** allows that person to have a one-on-one relationship with our Creator.” This is a “hard saying” to most people. If one does not have the spirit of Christ within one's self, one does not belong to Christ, and thusly faces an eternal death. This is the gist of what Paul taught in his letters — and is very plain and direct, subject to no objection. But, one may ask, “How does one ‘put on’ the holy spirit of God or Christ?”

The Apostle Peter gives us some insight on this in the sermon he preached to his fellow Jews after they saw what appeared to be tongues of fire resting on the Apostles and heard them speak in a multitude of different languages. This crowd of men came from all the nations in the world, and each of them heard the words spoken in their native language — and they were amazed and marveled to hear the great deeds of God being spoken by the Apostles who were Galileans. They asked one another, “What does this mean?” Some, (which always seem to appear at gatherings of all kinds throughout the ages) naturally, mocked them and said that they were drunk! (See Acts 2:1–13.)

Peter, hearing this, was quick to stand up and address the crowds to explain what was going on. He said that they were not drunk this early in the morning, and what they see and hear is the fulfillment of the prophecy spoken by the prophet Joel (Joel 2:28–32). He then proceeded to give the first sermon of Christianity and the founding of the first “Church of Christ” on the earth! (See Acts 2:14–36.)

This sermon really struck the hearers with fear! “What shall we do?”, they asked. Peter replied and said, (Greek literal translation.)

“Repent, and let each of you be immersed on the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the holy spirit.”

Peter continued to say much more that is not recorded, but it is said that he warned and pleaded with them to “Save yourselves from this perverse generation.” Those who believed his words got immersed in water in Christ's name and were added to the church that same day: about 3,000 people were saved! And more were added on a daily basis, the holy spirit working in and on their own spirit. (See Acts 2:37–47.)

This same type of sermon was proclaimed by Philip to the Ethiopian Eunuch as you can read in Acts 8:26–40. Philip was asked who Isaiah was talking about in chapter 53, verses 7–8 by the Eunuch. Philip started from that very same place and told him the good news about Jesus Christ. Part of what Philip told him was the initiation into the Church of Christ via immersion in water for the forgiveness of his sins and to receive the holy spirit, for when they came to a pool of water the Eunuch said to Philip, “Look, here is water, why shouldn't I be immersed?” Philip responded: “If you believe with all your heart, you may.” And the Eunuch said: “I believe that Jesus Christ is the son of God.” That was enough for Philip — they both went down into the water and Philip immersed the Eunuch. When they came up out of the water the spirit of the Lord (Christ Jesus)

caught up Philip and the Eunuch saw him no more. However, the Eunuch now had the spirit of Christ within and went on his way rejoicing (in his salvation, most likely).

The conversion of Saul (later named Paul) also shows us the way one is to put on the spirit of Christ. Saul was a persecutor of the followers of Christ. One day while he was on the way to Damascus, Syria, to bring back to Jerusalem the Christians who had been captured, a light from the heavens shone around him, he fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, "*Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?*" Amazing, isn't it — persecuting Christians is just like persecuting Jesus the Christ! Saul then asked, "*Who are you Lord?*" The voice answered: "*I am Jesus whom you are persecuting. Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do.*" (Acts 9:4–6.) Let's find out what Saul had to do to put on the spirit of Christ.

"In Damascus there was a disciple named Ananias. The Lord called to him in a vision, 'Ananias!' 'Yes, Lord,' he answered. The Lord told him, 'Go to the house of Judas on Straight Street and ask for a man from Tarsus named Saul, for he is praying. In a vision he has seen a man named Ananias come and place his hands on him to restore his sight.'

'Lord,' Ananias answered, 'I have heard many reports about this man and all the harm he has done to your saints in Jerusalem. And he has come here with authority from the chief priests to arrest all who call on your name.'

But the Lord said to Ananias, 'Go! This man is my chosen instrument to carry my name before the Gentiles and their kings and before the people of Israel. I will show him how much he must suffer for my name.'

Then Ananias went to the house and entered it. Placing his hands on Saul, he said, 'Brother Saul, the Lord — Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you were coming here — has sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the holy spirit' Immediately, something like scales fell from Saul's eyes, and he could see again. He got up and **was immersed**, and after taking some food, he regained his strength." (Acts 9:10–19.)

So, Saul got baptized. Did he receive the spirit of Christ before he got baptized, as various churches teach, or was it like the 3,000 who received the holy spirit after they got baptized? We will let Saul, whom, after many years, was called Paul, tell us the meaning of being immersed, i.e., baptized. (Romans 6.)

"Don't you know that all of **us** who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? **We** were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life." (Verses 3–4.)

"Because anyone who has died has been freed from sin." (Verse 7.)

“In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus.” (Verse 11.)

“But thanks be to God that, though you used to be slaves to sin, **you wholeheartedly obeyed the form of teaching to which you were committed.**” (Verse 17.)

Paul used the terms US and WE in reference to being immersed in water, and that immersion was symbolically a death, burial, and resurrection just as Christ Jesus was crucified unto death, buried and resurrected from the grave and death. This symbolic act was the FORM OF TEACHING each one of us followed in obeying the command of Christ Jesus as taught to us by the Apostles Peter and Paul. To the Christians of Galatia Paul had this to say about this **form of teaching**: (Galatians 3:26–29.)

“You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were united with Christ in baptism have been **clothed with Christ**. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.” (NIV) [The KJV puts the above bold words as **put on Christ**.]

When Paul preached Christ at Jerusalem he told them how he got his sins removed. You can read this in Acts 21:40–22:21, in which is found in 22:16 — “And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be immersed (baptized) and wash your sins away, calling on His name.” It seems very clear that Paul believed, got baptized to wash away his sins, and, although not stated, received the holy spirit just as did the 3,000 who believed, got baptized to receive the forgiveness of their sins, received the holy spirit and were added to the ekklesian of believers that very day — an assembly or congregation, which is the word ekklesia can be translated as: and is incorrectly called “church” by most people.

While many churches teach that baptism can be done by having a few drops of water either sprinkled or poured on a person head, there is no way that either of those acts portray a death, burial or resurrection, nor are they true to the terms used by the writers of scripture. Baptizo, as referenced in the above quoted verses, simply means the act of “dipping” or “immersing” a person into water. All churches, and history, agree that the act of baptism is a complete immersion into water, and that it was the only baptism practiced by the church in the first few centuries. Anyone can read church history, if they so will, and will quickly see the truth of what is just said. One should also be aware that there are at least another 7 or 8 aspects of the act of baptism one can derive from the Bible: chief among them is “obedience” to Christ’s command and to, as Jesus Himself tells us, “to fulfill all righteousness” (Matt. 3:15).

However, regardless of the above paragraph, what the Apostles taught about putting on Christ’s spirit is what we are talking about. Baptism just happens to have an important part in what the writers of scripture have to say about this connection with the holy spirit working on and in our own spirit.

Man has a “spirit”, and he is told to “put on” or be “clothed” with the “spirit of Christ — does this mean that one has “Two spirits when putting on the spirit of Christ? Is this “holy spirit” something that one can put on like a piece of clothing?

We have already seen and read that man has a “spirit” as an aspect of the “breath of life” breathed into him when born, or perhaps even earlier when conceived in the womb. Paul let us know this fact about the “spirit of man”: “For what man knows the things of a man except (through) the spirit of the man which is IN him” (I Cor. 2:11)? We can also interject this little thought in this question Paul raised (let’s re-quote it): “For what man knows the things of a man (how can man know or think and understand and perceive and have consciousness of himself) except (through) the spirit of man which is in him?” Do you begin to see the need of another spirit to see spiritual “things” of God?

God, through the writers of Scripture, makes it plain that He has placed WITHIN mankind a “spirit” which allows one to have self awareness, and makes it possible for one to have a possible relationship with God. As we have seen and read, “this spirit in man” is not aware of the things of God, that is, the spiritual things of God, it is possible for the mind of God, through His holy spirit, to connect, somehow, with this spirit in man and allow an understanding that would not be possible without this connection.

After all, we were created “in His image” to be able to think, feel, love, design and create many things as we grow in knowledge of God’s creation and our place in it. It is this aspect that we do not find in any of God’s other creatures on this earth. Animals do not carry on a conversation with us, or have created art, designed things, or planned anything spectacular as humans do. Yes, some animals build or create all the time, like birds, ants, bees, etc., but a bird can’t build an ant-hill or a bee hive and neither can an ant or bee build a bird nest, or an ant built a bee hive and vice-versa. They only can do what they were created to do, and have no ability or free will to do anything else.

The spirit God put in each man or woman give us the possibility to communicate in an intelligent way with each other, and allows for each man and woman the possibility of connecting with the spirit of the Creator (an aspect of man’s spirit in one’s life — a one-on-one relationship with the Creator: God Himself.

Even though this “spirit in man” is not actually aware of the things of God, nor can it be alive apart from ones life, it is possible for the mind of God, through His spirit, to make a connection with this “aspect” of man’s spirit, and provide a spiritual understanding not possible without it. There is an interesting example of the difference between a man who has this spiritual connection and then to have it withdrawn. In the book of Daniel, Chapter Four, one can read about King Nebuchadnezzar who was punished for 7 years when this connection was broken by God Himself: and experienced the life of an animal without what God specifically gave to man — a spirit capable of connecting with the spirit of God! After the 7 years, God restored reason to Nebuchadnezzar and caused him to come to his senses about God. Here is what he said about God and His power over creation:

“His dominion is an eternal dominion; his kingdom endures from generation to generation. All the peoples of the earth are regarded as nothing. He does as he pleases with the powers of

heaven and the peoples of the earth. No one can hold back his hand or say to him: ‘What have you done?’

At the same time that my sanity was restored, my honor and splendor were returned to me for the glory of my kingdom. My advisers and nobles sought me out, and I was restored to my throne and became even greater than before.

Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and exalt and glorify the King of Heaven, because everything he does is right and all his ways are just. And those who walk in pride he is able to humble.” (Dan. 4:34c–37).

The “spirit in man” makes all the difference between us and all the other creatures God created. It makes us able to think, reason, be self-aware and most importantly to connect to the “spirit of God” to understand the “spiritual things” of God. It is God’s spirit working on our spirit that can save us through faith in Jesus, the Christ (or anointed one) of God. Listen to what the Apostle Peter realized about Jesus when God’s spirit connected with him: “You are the Christ, the son of the living God” (Matt. 16:17). This is what we should all come to realize, and really believe it until our last day of life.

This “spirit in man” is not merely “breath” as some would say, but if that was the case, why would the writers of Scripture personify it on many occasions? Should the term “spirit” be capitalized as “personal noun”? Any study on what the “spirit in man” and the “spirit of Christ, God, truth, life,” etc., and the “spirit” given to all “living creatures” must be understood in order for us to define its use in the Old and New Testaments. The word “spirit” comes from the Latin “spiritus” which means “breath or wind”. This same definition is found in the Hebrew term “ruach” and the Greek term “pneuma.”

The Creator is called “The God of the spirits of all flesh” (Num. 16:22), and “The father of spirits” (Heb. 12:9). It is by the Creator’s spirit that a Christian serves and worships God. The Apostle Paul testifies: “For God is my witness, whom I serve with **my spirit** in the Gospel” (Rom. 1:9). Jesus states: “God is a spirit; and they that worship Him **must worship Him in spirit and in truth**” (John 4:24).

Man has a “spirit”; and he is told to put on or “cloth” one’s self with the “spirit of Christ” — Does this mean that one has “two” spirits when being “clothed” or when “putting on the spirit of Christ”? Just in what English terms are we supposed to think of this word “spirit”? [See the following listing of the usage of the word “spirit”!]

Would you “put on” the spirit of **humility** as you put on the spirit of Christ? What about the spirit of the **world**, can one put that on too? How about putting on the spirit of **bondage and adoption, truth, grace, holiness, meekness, faith, promise, slumber, error, prophecy, fear, power, love, sound mind, wisdom and revelation, infirmity, divination**, or (shudder!) **antichrist**? Which ones are of the spirit of God? Do any of these “spirits” also come from God, or do some come from Satan? What about the “spirit of man”? Think about this...How many spirits are there? What does the word “spirit” really mean to you?

Spirit of:

God — Matt. 3:16, 12:28; Rom. 8:11, 8:14; I Cor. 2:12, 2:14, 3:16, 6:11, 7:40, 12:3;
II Cor. 3:3; Eph. 4:30; I Pet. 4:14; I John 4:2

The Lord — Luke 4:18; Acts 5:9, 8:39; II Cor. 3:17, 3:18; II Thess. 2:8

The Father — Matt. 10:20 **Jesus Christ** — Phil. 1:19; I Pet. 1:11

Truth — John 14:17, 15:26, 16:13; I John 4:6 **The Son** — Gal. 4:6
The devil — Luke 4:33 **Antichrist** — I John 4:3 **Divination** — Acts 16:16

Infirmity — Luke 13:11 **World** — I Cor. 2:12 **Bondage & Adoption** — Rom. 8:15

Man — I Cor. 2:11 **Slumber** — Rom. 11:8 **Error** — I John 4:6 **Grace** — Heb. 10:29

Holiness — Rom. 1:14 **Meekness** — I Cor. 4:21; Gal. 6:1 **Faith** — II Cor. 4:13

Promise — Eph. 1:13 **Glory** — I Pet. 4:14 **Life** — Rev. 11:11; Rom. 8:2

Prophecy — Rev. 19:10 **Wisdom & Revelation** — Eph. 1:17

Fear, Power, Love, Sound Mind — II Tim. 1:7

The other occurrences of the use of “spirit” in the New Testament are all in the “neuter” sense — i.e., neither feminine nor masculine, nor are they connected with any particular word as the above list mentions.

This little exercise is here to get one interested in growing in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus, the Christ of God — just as the Apostle Peter urges us to do!

.....
Copyright © 2009 by Kenneth Fortier. Permission is granted to reproduce and distribute copies of this article provided that acknowledgement is given to the author. All other rights reserved. This notice must remain with this article.
.....