

THE HOLY SPIRIT, OUR TEACHER

TEXT: I CORINTHIANS 2:1-16

Introduction:

1. Before our Lord ascended to heaven, He gave detailed instructions to His disciples regarding the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit.
2. These instructions are recorded in John 14--16. For example...
 - Our Lord said in John 14:26, that the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, would teach them all things, and bring all things to their remembrance.
 - Our Lord said in John 16:13, "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth."
3. These Scriptures tell us that Holy Spirit is our teacher (cf. I Cor. 2:13).
4. This was taught in the Old Testament also. Nehemiah 9:20 says, "Thou gavest also thy good spirit to instruct them."
5. In his first epistle, John refers to this as the "anointing," and says in I John 2:27, "But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him."
6. The Greek word, *chrisma*, translated "anointing" in I John 2:27 is translated "unction" in I John 2:20 -- "But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things."
7. John is not saying that pastors and other preachers and teachers are unnecessary or unimportant. He is saying each and every Christian can be taught directly by the Holy Spirit.
8. He is our best teacher. Matthew Henry says, "Not that this anointing will teach you without the appointed ministry. It could, if God so pleased; but it will not, though it will teach you better than we can."

I. SPIRITUAL WISDOM (2:1-8).

1. The word "wisdom" is found eighteen times in I Corinthians, and seventeen of the references are in the first three chapters (1:17, 19, 20, 21, 22, 24, 30; 2:1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 13; 3:19).
2. Furthermore, the word "wise" is found twelve times in I Corinthians, nine times in the first three chapters (1:19, 20, 26, 27; 3:10, 18, 19, 20).
3. The apostle Paul is making a contrast: "the wisdom of men" (2:4) or "the wisdom of this world" (2:6) and "the wisdom of God" (2:7).

4. Spiritual wisdom comes from the Spirit of God. Worldly wisdom comes from men. First Corinthians 3:19 says, "For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God."
5. First Corinthians 1:22 that, "the Greeks (Gentiles) seek after wisdom."
6. The problem with worldly wisdom is that it is mixed in with worldly foolishness.
7. The problem with worldly wisdom is it leaves out the Word of God. Or it misinterprets the Word of God.
8. Proverbs 9:10 says, "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom." Therefore, according to God, unsaved people are not wise.
9. The Bible teaches that the Gospel of Christ is far better than the wisdom of this world.
10. First Corinthians 2:6 says, "Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world..."
11. Paul declared that the preaching of the cross was more powerful and more effective than all the oratory and philosophy of the heathen world (I Cor. 1:23, 24; cf. 1:18).
12. God has chosen "the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe" (1:21).
13. As Christians we need to be careful not to get caught up in worldly wisdom and worldly philosophies. This portion of Paul's first epistle to the Corinthians deals with this problem.
14. Two thousand years later, things have not changed.
15. The *Scofield Study Bible* says, "They were exulting (rejoicing) in human wisdom, which is foolishness in the things of God...They are reminded that the Christian revelation owes nothing to human wisdom."
16. Paul pointed out that his "preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power" (2:4).
17. Matthew Henry says Paul "had communicated to them truest and highest wisdom, such as exceeded all the attainments of learned men, such as could never have entered into the heart of man if it had not been revealed, nor can be received and improved to salvation but by the light and influence of that Spirit who revealed it."
18. Paul describes the wisdom of God as a "mystery" (2:7).
19. J. Vernon McGee said, "Mystery in the New Testament always means something undiscoverable by the activity of the human intellect but is revealed so that human intellect can apprehend it."
20. But human intellect has to first be regenerated by the Holy Spirit in order to apprehend spiritual truth (cf. 2:10, 14).

21. The Holy Spirit is our teacher, but in order to be taught by the Spirit of God, we first have to be regenerated by the Spirit of God.
22. Our Lord said to Nicodemus in John 3:7 and 8, "Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit."
23. Paul says in verse 6, "Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect..." "Perfect" in this context does not mean "sinless." In the Bible, the word means "full grown" or "mature." Spiritually mature.
24. In order to be fully grown or mature spiritually, you first have to be born again. Education is no substitute for regeneration.
25. Getting a BS is good. But make sure you get your "BA" (Born Again).
26. Some people complain that they cannot understand the Bible. Oftentimes the problem is they simply need to be born again.
27. So the first step is regeneration by the Holy Spirit. The second step is given to us in Hebrews 6:1, "Let us go on unto perfection."

II. SPIRITUAL ILLUMINATION

1. After spiritual initiation by the new birth, comes spiritual illumination (I Cor. 2:9, 10).
2. The word "inspiration" refers to the process whereby God "breathed out" His Word to the various writers -- Moses, David, Solomon, Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Paul, and the others.
3. Second Timothy 3:16 says, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God." This is what we mean by inspiration.
4. Second Peter 1:21 says, "holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."
5. "Preservation" means God has preserved His Word free from error down through the ages. Psalm 12:6 and 7 says, "The words of the LORD are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. Thou shalt keep them, O LORD, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever."
6. "Illumination" refers to the process whereby God imparts spiritual truth to you and me.
7. Stephen Olford said, "Following spiritual initiation there must be illumination, and the reason for this is that human contemplation and observation can never penetrate the deep things of God. In other words, the philosophical approach and the scientific method are

- limited by time and sense, and can only bring us to the end of human reasoning. But where human investigation fails, spiritual illumination prevails" (*The Christian Message For Contemporary Man*).
8. When Paul says in I Corinthians 2:10, "But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit...", he means, " "But God hath revealed them unto us (Christians) by his Spirit..." (cf. verse 14).
 9. When Paul says in verse 16, "But we have the mind of Christ," he means, "But we (Christians) have the mind of Christ."
 10. Spiritual illumination is for those who are indwelt by the Holy Spirit.
 11. Our Lord said in John 14:16 and 17, "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you."
 12. The Holy Spirit convicts lost sinners, but they can only know Him if they trust Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour.
 13. Our Lord said in John 16:8 that when the Holy Spirit would come, He would "reprove the world of sin."
 14. Sinners are convicted by the Holy Spirit. But in order to be illuminated by the Holy Spirit, they first need to be regenerated by the Holy Spirit.
 15. R.A. Torrey said, "Any profound book is immeasurably more interesting and helpful when we have the author of the book right at hand to interpret it to us, and it is always our privilege to have the author of the Bible right at hand when we study it. The Holy Spirit is the Author of the Bible and He stands ready to interpret its meaning to every believer every time he opens the Book. To understand the Book, we must look to Him, then the darkest places become clear. We often need to pray with the Psalmist of old, 'Open Thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law' (Psalm 119:18). It is not enough that we have the revelation of God before us in the written Word to study, we must also have the inward illumination of the Holy Spirit to enable us to apprehend it as we study" (*The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit*).
 16. Illumination is the divine quickening of the believer's mind by the Holy Spirit. This illumination enables us to understand the Word of God.
 17. The hymnwriter put it this way:
 18. *Open my eyes, that I may see
glimpses of truth thou hast for me;*

*place in my hands the wonderful key
that shall unclasp and set me free.
Silently now I wait for thee,
ready, my God, thy will to see.*

Open my eyes, illumine me, Spirit divine! (Clara H. Scott)

19. There are areas of truth that the human mind can never find out, except by the illumination of the Holy Spirit.
20. Acts 4:13 says that the religious leaders "saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus."
21. "They marvelled" because they perceived that Peter and John "were unlearned and ignorant men."
22. But the key is: "they had been with Jesus."
23. Our Lord said to Simon Peter in Matthew 16:17, "Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven."

III. SPIRITUAL DISCERNMENT (2:14)

1. We need to be born again by the Holy Spirit in order to be saved.
2. Furthermore, our minds have to be quickened by the Holy Spirit. We need to be illuminated by the Holy Spirit.
3. And there must also be spiritual discernment. First Corinthians 2:14 says, "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."
4. Some things cannot be learned by seeing, or by hearing, or by human reasoning. Certain things cannot be attained by human means.
5. These things must be attained by the Holy Spirit (2:10-14).
6. The Holy Spirit never teaches us or leads us contrary to the Word of God. We need to study God's Word, and as we study God's Word, the Holy Spirit opens it up to us (illumination) and gives us discernment.

*More about Jesus let me learn,
More of His holy will discern;
Spirit of God, my teacher be,
Showing the things of Christ to me (Eliza E. Hewitt)*

7. To develop spiritual discernment, we need to read our Bibles every day. Hebrews 5:14 says, "But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil."
8. Every now and then I hear about some Baptist who runs off and joins the Roman Catholic Church or the Jehovah's Witnesses, etc.
9. These people obviously have no spiritual discernment and have probably never been genuinely saved.
10. The true believer has "the mind of Christ" (2:16). This is the wisdom of God.

CONCLUSION:

1. "The spirit of man" (2:11) refers to man's God-given ability to study and reason and analyze and research, etc. "The spirit of man" allows a man to learn the fine arts, and mathematics, and history, and geography, and science, and any knowledge on a purely human and natural plane.
2. But there are spiritual truths that we can understand only if the Holy Spirit reveals them to us (2:12-14).
3. William Pitt the Younger was by all accounts a brilliant man. In 1783, he became the youngest Prime Minister of England at the age of 24.
4. Martyn Lloyd-Jones tells an interesting story about William Pitt the Younger in his book *Compelling Christianity*. He said that William Wilberforce and William Pitt the Younger were good friends. Wilberforce was a Christian who had started the abolition movement in England. He worked tirelessly as a member of Parliament to end the evils of slave trading. Pitt was a nominal Christian, but he was not saved. Wilberforce invited William Pitt to go with him to church to hear a preacher named Richard Cecil preach. Richard Cecil preached the Word of God with great power and anointing of the Holy Spirit. Wilberforce was greatly blessed and encouraged by Cecil's preaching.
5. Martyn Lloyd-Jones described it this way: "His (Wilberforce's) heart was moved and his intellect enlightened as that saintly Robert Cecil

expounded the Scriptures and unfolded the riches of God's grace in Christ. He was wondering what was happening to his friend. When the sermon ended, they walked out, and William Pitt turned to William Wilberforce and said, 'I haven't the faintest, the slightest idea what that man has been talking about.'