

**Ezekiel 36:26-27** I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them.

**Ephesians 1:13-14** In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.

**2 Corinthians 1:22** Who also has sealed us and given us the Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.

**Galatians 5:25** If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

### **The Holy Spirit and Regeneration**

When regenerated, man's spirit is made alive through the incoming of God's life. The Holy Spirit is the prime mover in this task. He convinces the world of sin and of righteousness and of judgment (John 16:8). He prepares human hearts to believe in the Lord Jesus as Savior. The work of the cross has been fulfilled by the Lord Jesus, but it is left to the Holy Spirit to apply this finished work to the sinner's heart. We ought to know the relationship between the cross of Christ and its application by the Spirit. The cross accomplishes all, but the Holy Spirit administers to man what it has accomplished. The cross grants us position; the Holy Spirit gives us experience. The cross brings in the fact of God; the Holy Spirit brings about the demonstration of that fact. The work of the cross creates a position and achieves a salvation by which sinners can be saved; the task of the Holy Spirit is to reveal to sinners what the cross has created and achieved so that they may in fact receive it and be saved. The Holy Spirit never functions independently of the cross: without the cross the Holy Spirit has no proper ground from which to operate: without the Holy Spirit the work of the cross is dead, that is, it produces no effect upon men even though it is already effective before God.

While it is the cross which achieves the whole work of salvation it is the Holy Spirit Who operates directly upon men for their salvation. Hence the Bible characterizes our regeneration as a work of the Holy Spirit: "that which is born of the Spirit is spirit" (John 3:6). The Lord Jesus explains further on that regenerated man is "every one who is born of the Spirit" (v. 8). Believers are born anew because the Holy Spirit brings to bear the work of the cross upon them and communicates God's life to their spirit. He is none other than the Executor of God's life. "We live by the Spirit: (Galatians 5:25). If whatever men know comes through their brain without the Holy Spirit regenerating their spirit, then their knowledge will help them not one whit. If their belief rests in man's wisdom and not in God's power, they are merely excited in

their soul. They will not last long, for they are not yet newly born. Regeneration comes just to those who believe in their heart (Romans 10:10).

Besides bestowing life to believers at new birth, the Holy Spirit executes a further work of *abiding* in them. How regrettable for us if we forget this! “A new heart I will give you and a new spirit I will put within you . . . and I will put my Spirit within you” (Ezekiel 36:26-27). Note that immediately after the clause “a *new spirit* I will put within you” there follows this one of “I will put *my Spirit* within you.” The first statement signifies that believers shall receive a new spirit through the renewal of their deadened spirit by the incoming of life. The second has reference to the indwelling or the abiding of the Holy Spirit in that renewed spirit of theirs. Believers at new birth obtain not only a new spirit but also the Holy Spirit dwelling within. Is it not sad that many fail to understand the newness of their spirit *and* the abiding of the Holy Spirit in their new spirit? Christians need not delay many years following regeneration and then suddenly wake up and seek the Holy Spirit; they have His entire personality *abiding* in them-not just visiting them-at the moment they are saved. The Apostle exhorts us on this wise: “Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, in whom you were sealed for the day of redemption” (Ephesians 4:30). The use of the word “grieve” here and not “anger” reveals the Holy Spirit’s love. “Grieve” it says and not “cause to depart,” for “he dwells with you and will be in you” (John 14:17). While every born-again believer does have the Holy Spirit permanently residing in him, nevertheless the plight of the indwelling Spirit may not be the same in all saints-He may be either grieved or gladdened.

We should understand the relationship between regeneration and the indwelling Holy Spirit. Unless a new spirit is available to Him the Holy Spirit cannot find a place to abide. The holy dove found no place whereon to set her foot in the judged world; she could take up her abode only in the new creation (see Genesis 8). How positively essential regeneration is! Without it the Holy Spirit cannot at all dwell in man. God’s children receive within them the permanent abiding of God’s Spirit. Just as this new spirit emerges through a life-producing relationship with God and is therefore inseparable from Him, so the abiding of the Holy Spirit is eternally unchangeable. Few are those who know they have been born anew and thus possess new life; but fewer still are those who know that from the moment they believed in the Lord Jesus they have the Holy Spirit indwelling them to be their energy, their guide, their Lord. It is for this very reason that many young Christians are slow in spiritual progress and never seem to grow. This sad state reflects either the foolishness of their leaders or their personal faithlessness. Until God’s servants dissolve their prejudice which holds that “the indwelling Holy Spirit is but for the spiritual,” they can hardly lead people on to any degree of spirituality.

The regenerative work of the Spirit of God embraces far more than convincing us of sin and leading us to repentance and faith in the Savior. It verily confers upon us a new nature. The promise of the Holy Spirit indwelling us follows closely the promise of having a new spirit. Actually they form two parts of one promise. In convincing men of sin and leading them to

believe in the Lord, the Spirit is just preparing the groundwork for His Own indwelling. The singular glory of this dispensation of grace is that God's Spirit indwells believers in order to manifest the Father and the Son. God already has imparted to His children His Spirit; they now should faithfully acknowledge the Holy Spirit and loyally submit themselves to Him. Both the Day of Resurrection and that of Pentecost have passed; the Spirit has long since come. But many simply experience new birth without knowing in addition His abiding in them. They are living on the wrong side of Resurrection and Pentecost!

Regardless the dullness of Christians in recognizing the indwelling of the Person of God's Spirit in them, God nonetheless has given Him to them. This is an immutable fact which no condition of the Christian can gainsay. Because they have been regenerated they automatically have become a holy temple fit for habitation of the Holy Spirit. If only these would claim by faith this part of God's promise as they did the other part, they would gloriously experience both. But if they should stress new birth and be content merely with possessing a new spirit, they shall forfeit the possibility of experiencing a vigorous and joyful life and miss many blessings which God has provided them in the Lord Jesus. If on the other hand they accept God's promise in its totality, trusting in the divine fact that at regeneration God has given a new life *plus* the indwelling of the very Person of the Holy Spirit, then their spiritual life shall advance tremendously.

By faith and obedience believers may experience the abiding presence of the Spirit on the same day they receive their new spirit. The Person Who dwells within shall reveal Christ in them, sanctify them, and lead them on to true spiritual heights.