

# Written in Our Hearts

by Steve Santini

Westfield, Massachusetts

As Christian believers we are blessed with all spiritual blessings in Christ. When the holy spirit convinced us of our need we called out to the Lord Jesus Christ and we believed that God had raised him from the dead. At that moment we were changed forever - all things became new. As Paul said, we were "regenerated" and, as John and Peter said, we were "born again." Our hearts were set free to live this new life in Christ - having been born of the Father before the foundation of the world.

Can we take of the residue of the old knowledge of good and evil to live this new life? The written word provides the answer. Although the Galatians had begun by the spirit they were turned in their minds to this slain nature and corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. Their minds were diverted to believe that of their own selves they could form systems to attain Christ. These systems or programs became the standards by which they judged themselves. They ended up biting and devouring each other. The cross of Christ became of no effect and Christ was not being formed in them.

Jesus said, "New wine must be put in new wineskins." How then are our mental faculties made new? Through the holy spirit Peter provides one cord of truth when he says, "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the spirit ..." (I Pet. 1:22 KJV).

In Paul's epistles many cords of this truth are woven together. In Romans 12:2 he uses the passive voice for the verb "transformed" to indicate that the action of transforming is taken upon the subject "ye". In Ephesians 4:23, a pivotal verse between the old nature and the new, he uses the dative case of the noun in the phrase "in the spirit". Without the given preposition in the text the phrase is better understood to mean "by the spirit." Thus the soul, of which the mind is a part, is purified by submissively hearing the truth through the spirit. Hereby, we "work out our salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure" (Phil. 2:12-13).

Throughout the written word patterns of truth are interwoven to display the all truth of the living

tapestry of the sufferings and glories of Christ. One central pattern is the holy spirit's functional relationship with Christ. Jesus Christ promised that the comforter or holy spirit would come to testify of him (15:26). The comforter would receive of Christ and show it unto Jesus' followers thereby glorifying Christ. He would not speak of himself but only of Christ (John 16:13-15).

With the coming of Jesus Christ the work of the holy spirit become vivid. It was the work of the holy spirit that brought forth Jesus Christ in the womb of Mary. It was by the holy spirit that Elizabeth confirmed that it was the Lord's Christ in Mary's womb. It was the holy spirit that revealed to Simeon that he would not see death until he had seen the Lord's Christ. It was the holy spirit that descended on Jesus as a dove when he was baptized of John that revealed whom he was. It was the holy spirit that led Jesus into the wilderness to face the devil's temptations, his final test as to whom he was. And, it was the holy spirit upon Jesus "without measure" that made him known.

It was important to Jesus that his followers know whom he was. He asked them shortly before he went to Jerusalem to be crucified whom they said he was. Peter responded correctly when he said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God." Likewise, Jesus made it clear that this had been revealed to Peter by the spirit and that it was upon "this rock" that the church was to be built (Matt. 16:16-18).

As Jesus finished the last supper and walked with his apostles and disciples to the place where he would be taken for crucifixion, he spoke the foundational truths of the coming mystery of godliness. He told them to believe he was in the Father and the Father was in him. And he asked that if they couldn't believe on his words to believe for his works' sake. Moments later as he walked forward he said that he, who was in the Father, was to be in them and that they would know it on the day he lived (John 14:19-20).

During this time with them, Jesus also taught them on five occasions either the purpose or the character of the holy spirit who was to dwell in them. The holy spirit was to guide them into all truth, to teach them all things, to testify of Jesus Christ, to reprove and to be "the spirit of truth" or

"the comforter." In short, the holy spirit was *with* them and would be *in* them.

On the day of Pentecost, Jesus Christ ministered the gift of the holy spirit from the Father. Through the holy spirit the twelve apostles were taught, empowered and set apart to proclaim Jesus Christ, the foundation stone of Israel. Years later Stephen, at the end of his declaration to the leaders of Israel, proclaimed, "ye do always resist the Holy Ghost ... " He was subsequently stoned to death. Here the Father's exclusive calling for Israel to become a nation of priests was summarily rejected. As the cloaks of those who stoned Stephen were laid at the feet of one Saul of Tarsus the Father's building program began its expansion from the foundation stone of Jesus Christ laid in Israel.

It was given to Paul as a wise masterbuilder to take this foundation of Jesus Christ crucified and resurrected in Israel and build upon it with height, depth, breadth and length. Paul showed that the church was raised through the heavens into its position in the ascended Christ where each member

is crucified, resurrected and seated together in him. This consummate, inclusive plan without boundary or separation - where all are one in Christ - is the mystery hid in God from before the foundations of the world. Thus, the best wine is saved for last.

The holy spirit is guiding us day by day into this all truth of Christ's habitation. Now from faith to faith, from patterns of things seen to the unseen of the heavenlies, we move from our faith in him to his faith in us. In him, who is in the Father, we have our life, being and movement. The holy spirit is receiving of him and is writing on our hearts the life of Christ within. In Christ are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge and through the holy spirit he shares that part of himself that is needed to individual souls. In this manner our humble hearts grow together in the knowledge and understanding of ourselves in Christ and Christ in us. In this way Christ is formed in our souls and he is ever living through the new creation of his body.

[Steve Santini publishes his own newsletter *Ekklesia* in Westfield, MA]