



**“And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins,”**  
Ephesians 2:1

## **Salvation**

**Covenant:** Having been led, as we believe, by the Spirit of God, to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Saviour . . .

**Aim:** To emphasize the work of the Holy Spirit in our salvation

**Text:** Acts 16:13-14; Ephesians 2:1-10

INTRODUCTION — The next thirteen lessons aim “to make a comprehensive study of the commitments of each orderly believer as expressed in the Church Covenant.” This raises questions concerning the Church Covenant. What is it? Who wrote it? What churches subscribe to it? How authoritative is it?

The movement toward writing a Covenant for Baptist churches began on June 24, 1830, at the annual meeting of the New Hampshire Baptist State Convention. A committee of three brethren was selected to prepare a systematic statement of Baptist doctrines to be issued under the title of “A Declaration of Faith.” The committee composed of William Taylor, W. N. Williams and I. Pearson worked through the year. In 1831 the committee was discharged and the final work of completion was left to Bro. Pearson. He reported back in the annual meeting in 1834. The report was approved and placed in the hands of a select committee of four brethren which made some slight alterations in wording and approved it. The actual work of revision was done by Dr. J. Newton Brown and a Bro. Stow. It was sent out to the churches as a recommended Declaration of Faith.

The Church Covenant was written by Dr. Brown as an appendage to the “New Hampshire Declaration of Faith.” It was intended to be the practical application of Baptist doctrine to Baptist conduct. It sets out how

members of Baptist churches should act in view of the doctrines they profess to believe.

“Being only recommended to the churches, it was never intended to be an iron-clad creed and covenant to be binding upon any church, as Baptist believe and teach the Bible alone to be their authoritative standard of faith and practice.” — D. N. Jackson. Only Baptist churches subscribe to it and some of them largely ignore it. There is no obligation upon any church to subscribe to the Covenant. However, any member of any Baptist church should be willing to live according to its principles. It is a practical expression of what Christian conduct really is.

## EXPOSITION

### I. WHY IS THE HOLY SPIRIT NEEDED IN SALVATION?

The Holy Spirit of God leads men to salvation because they would not be saved without Him. It is no mere careless statement, therefore, when we say we have been led “by the spirit of God, to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Saviour.”

1. Depravity.—The Holy Spirit must lead men to salvation because they are depraved. Baptists believe in “the total depravity of man.” This means that every part of man’s nature is warped and debased by sin. Emotions, mind, and will are all turned out of the way. Therefore there is nothing in man that makes him desire God or seek after God. Jesus said, **“Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin,”** John 8:34. A man who is a servant (“bondslave”) of sin will be unable to seek the Lord. If he is saved at all, God must seek him and draw him to Jesus. Without this drawing on the part of God, no person would ever be saved.

2. Inability.—Not only is a sinner unwilling to turn to God, he is unable to do so. Jesus distinctly says, **“No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day,”** John 6:44. We readily agree that the unredeemed sinner is “dead in trespasses and sins.” How can one who is dead bring himself to life again without a power outside himself acting upon him? One could as well expect a valley of dry bones (Ezekiel 37) to live of their own accord as to expect a sinner to seek the Lord before the Lord dealt with him.

3. Divine working.—Salvation is God's deed. It was God’s purpose in preparing the way of salvation to save man in such a way that no flesh could boast before Him. So He decreed all self righteousness and deeds of the flesh to be “filthy rags” before Him, Isaiah 64:6. He decreed that salvation

would not be through works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy, Titus 3:5. So He came to us in the person of the Holy Spirit to call us to a consciousness of our sins and to the offer of salvation in Christ Jesus. When a penitent believer responds to the call of grace, God performs a redeeming miracle in his soul. Thus from the beginning to end salvation is the work of God and no man can glory in himself because he has been saved.

4. Divine impartiality.—God is not partial in His offer of redemption. While it is true that no one can come to Jesus unless the Father draws him. It is equally true that God draws all men, though only some respond. Jesus said, **“And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me,”** John 12:32. So the man who is still unsaved has no right to accuse God of partiality. Each person is responsible for his response to the call of God.

## II. HOW DOES THE HOLY SPIRIT WORK IN SALVATION?

1. Revelation of sin.—The Holy Spirit reveals sin to the sinner's heart. He makes a man see that sin is high-handed rebellion against God, I John 3:4. As a consequence of this revelation, sin appears “exceeding sinful” to the sinner, Romans 7:13.

With the revelation of the nature of sin comes a revelation of the consequences of sin. The Spirit shows a man that the end of sin is death, Ezekiel 18:20; Romans 6:23. He reveals that the sinner will surely perish in hell (Matthew 5:30), otherwise called the lake of fire, Matthew 25:41; Revelation 20:15. In this manner He leads a man to see his need of the Saviour.

2. Conviction.—The Holy Spirit convicts the sinner of personal guilt. Under this instruction of the Spirit one comes to see the sinfulness of unbelief, the valid demand of God for true righteousness, and the certainty of eternal judgment, John 16:8-11. For the first time the sinner sees himself as God sees him. He is enabled to see his spiritual bankruptcy that he may be willing to flee to Jesus for salvation. Only through this ministry of the Spirit will a man see himself and cry out, **“O my God, I am ashamed and blush to lift up my face to thee, my God: for our iniquities are increased over our head, and our trespass is grown up unto the heavens,”** Ezra 9:6. Yet, when he so abhors himself he is coming to the place of salvation,

3. Revelation of Christ.—The Holy Spirit enables men to see the full significance of Jesus. This is why a person who has been reared in church and heard much teaching concerning sin and salvation suddenly finds it has meaning as he sees himself in relation to Christ. Jesus repeatedly stated that

the Holy Spirit would come to bear witness of Him, John 15:26-27; 16:14; I John 5:6. The natural man does not receive the things of God and cannot know them of himself because they are spiritually discerned, I Corinthians 2:14. It is equally true that God is not partial in His offer of redemption. The same Jesus who said, **“No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him,”** (John 6:44) said also, **“And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me,”** John 12:32. All men are drawn but not all men respond. Those who do respond to the drawing of the Spirit are saved.

5, Divine miracle.—When a person is saved, the Holy Spirit does something to his soul which is the miracle of regeneration, This change within the soul is likened to a birth, John 3:6; to a resurrection, Ephesians 2:1; to a new creation, II Corinthians 5:17; and to a partaking of the divine nature, II Peter 1:4. The very mystery of the regenerative experience makes it difficult to describe yet definite in experience. Man is not saved by external reformation but by internal regeneration. Even so, this change is not produced by the ability of men but by the grace of God.

6. Divine ministry.—The Spirit seals. The Spirit not only redeems, but also He seals the souls of those who repent and trust Jesus, Ephesians 1:13; 4:30. He takes up a permanent residence in the believer, Romans 8:9. He gives assurance of salvation to the believer, Romans 8:16. He produces good works through the believer, Ephesians 2:10, He keeps the believer secure in grace by the power of God, I Peter 1:3-5, He empowers the believer's witness concerning the Lord Jesus and makes him a soul-winner, Acts-2.

Salvation is the work of God through the Holy Spirit. The Bible order sets out the Spirit's redemptive work in this manner: illumination, conviction, regeneration and indwelling. Praise God for His blessed Spirit's ministry among us!

### **III. WHAT MEANS DOES THE HOLY SPIRIT USE IN SALVATION?**

1. Mercy and Grace.—Salvation is provided in mercy because the Father is a God of grace. Being a work of God, it is not performed by man. Being a gift of God, it is not merited by man. Neither rituals, self-righteousness, ordinances of the church, nor any other human accomplishment is sufficient. This is holy ground where only mercy and grace hold sway.

And yet, the Spirit does use means in convicting sinners. He uses the Word of God as the basis of His illuminating work. He uses the lives of believers as living examples of what it means to be saved. But the work of

illumination, conviction and conversion are all acts of grace and wholly undeserved by men.

2. Jesus Christ.—Jesus Christ is the Anointed Saviour. Salvation is not in the name or the merits of the Holy Spirit. He only seals to our hearts the benefits secured for us in the sacrifice of Jesus. Jesus is the propitiation for our sins and for the sins of the whole world, I John 2:1-2. It is in Jesus that we have redemption through His blood, Ephesians 1:7. It is through Jesus alone that we may approach to God the Father, John 14:6. The hope of the believer lies not in men or angels but in Jesus Christ.

**“Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved,”** Acts 4:12. **“He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life,”** I John 5:12. The Holy Spirit secures to our hearts the benefits secured by Jesus the Saviour.

3. No deeds of merit.—Salvation comes without deeds of merit. No amount of human goodness can atone for sin. **“. . . without the shedding of blood is no remission,”** Hebrews 9:22 specifically states. No one is saved because he does good things or lost because he fails to do good things. He is saved solely through a right relationship to Jesus. If he is lost it is because he has rejected Jesus.

How much goodness would it take to atone for one evil deed? Even the best of man's deeds are unworthy to merit eternal life. How can one be saved by the deeds of his flesh? He cannot! Listen to Paul: **“Now to him that worketh (for salvation) is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness,”** Romans 4:4-5.

#### **IV. WHAT IS THE HOLY SPIRIT'S PURPOSE IN THOSE WHO ARE SAVED?**

**“For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them,”** Ephesians 2:10.

Read this verse again carefully. It makes four distinct statements concerning the believer. (1) He is the workmanship (meaning, “the masterpiece”) of God. That is, it is God who has saved him. (2) He is created anew in Christ Jesus. (3) He is saved for the purpose of producing good works. (4) It was God's predetermined purpose that all the saved would walk in this manner of life. Is this the kind of relationship you enjoy with God through Jesus Christ in the Spirit? This is what God intends for every person

who accepts Jesus as personal Saviour.

CONCLUSION—Look- again at the portion of the Church Covenant studied today: “Having been led, as we believe, by the Spirit of God, to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Saviour. . .”

The Holy Spirit is in the world today to lead sinners to Jesus and to direct the saved in the way of God. It would be a most serious sin to know of His leading and refuse to follow it. The Bible warns us to quench not the Spirit's leading (I Thessalonians 5:19) and to grieve not the Spirit by sinful rebellion, Ephesians 4:30.

The Holy Spirit of God is a Spirit of grace. If you lack in any matter, you will find Him ready to supply your need. God will supply every need by the riches He has in Jesus Christ. Resolve today to live in the light of the Spirit that His blessed ministry may be exercised through you to the glory of God.

## QUESTIONS

1. What is the Church Covenant?
2. Where did it come from?
3. What does it say about the Holy Spirit?
4. How did the Spirit lead us to salvation?
5. Why do we need the Spirit in order to be saved?
6. Are we saved by Jesus, by the Spirit, or both?
7. What means does the Spirit use to call us to Christ?
8. How does Ephesians 2:10 show God's purpose in the believer?
9. How can one quench and grieve the Spirit?
10. What benefit has this study been to you?