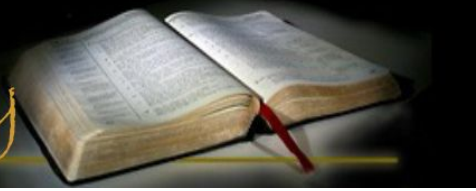


# Fullness Bible Study



## The Fullness of the Holy Spirit

By Louis Warren Salvesen  
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He lived in Mt. Vernon, Washington, USA

The writer taught the Bible in a series of articles he called "Fullness Bible Study". He was definitely one who held

The 'Acts-28 Belief' like myself. Jan Lilleby.

Today we see and hear on the radio and TV, much talk about "getting the Spirit". Usually the emphasis is put upon physical activity and runs all the way from the conservative idea of being kind and doing good, to "talking in tongues", or "healing", or even "driving out demons".

But these people fail to distinguish between what in the Bible applies to us today, and what applied to other people at other times. The physical work of the Holy Spirit, which consisted of visible miraculous acts was in effect when God was dealing with His physical nation, Israel. Then things were on a physical or sensual level. As was stated in the last issue, people then, and in fact all the way back to Adam, saw the miraculous physically, and in turn needed to respond in a physical way. Justification was by faith plus works. Faith was a formal thing and needed to be proven by doing good works.

But God ceased to deal with the nation of Israel, the final signal of this, being the destruction of the temple in 70 A.D. after the classic 40 year period (30-70 A.D.) of trial and testing for Israel, many instances of which occur throughout the history of that nation.

One instance of the physical aspect of the Holy Spirit's work in that past era is found in Acts 1, where just prior to the ascension of Christ, He tells His disciples in V. 9,

that they "shall receive power after the Holy Spirit has come upon you...". We see that this happened at the Jewish feast of Pentecost in chap. 2 where a miraculous manifestation took place. The book of Acts records many instances of the miraculous.

But in God's present administration, the work of the Holy Spirit is totally invisible. It consists of giving knowledge to those who choose to attune themselves to it, and though invisible, is actually the greatest work and fullest accomplishment of all. To take advantage of all the spiritual knowledge available today would place the believer in a better relationship to God, and be more truly self-satisfying than if he could do all the miracles of that bygone age. In the book of Ephesians, which with Colossians explains about this present administration, Paul prays in Ephesians 1:17, that God would give them, "the spirit of wisdom in the revelation of him...". No more are miracles spoken of; here is something greater. It is now, "to know the love of Christ, and be filled with all the fullness of God." Ephesians 3:19.

Should we desire to "get the Spirit"? We certainly should. There is more to getting it now than there was in any other administration of God. But it is vital to understand the work of the Spirit now. There are many people trying to live as in a past age, believing they have powers which have passed away. Some naively believe they can work miracles, and some have been deceived by pretenders who take advantage of the gullibility of the public. Some try to take the place of Israel with its temple. They build large ornate churches, thereby symbolically rebuilding that temple, and dress the ministers on colorful flowing robes, unconsciously symbolizing the priests of Israel with the sacrifices, but the Bible says that all this is now an empty form. Time has passed it by and the present reality as far as Scripture is concerned is that now the key to true communion with God lies not in the form but in the faith based on understanding.

"Getting the Spirit" today consists of obtaining an understanding of certain deeper truths. In the Bible story those who "got the Spirit" did become capable of miraculous works and inspiration, but today the stories one hears of miracles do not stand analysis. An example of the foolishness of those looking for miracles today is shown in today's paper which carries the story of a group in Arkansas where "25 persons are closeted in a small brick house waiting for the second coming of Christ...the vigil began 70 days ago with believers abandoning their homes and jobs." These people should be intelligent enough to know that groups and individuals are doing this sort of thing constantly with no success at all. Yet they go ahead and try it again. They are like the one who touches a hot stove

even after watching others burn themselves.

Today the Holy Spirit operates not through the spectacularly miraculous, but through what is apparently the normal. If we wish to be in harmony, we need to work through the normal rules of procedure which means the recognized tools of study, and a mental attitude conducive to correct inquiry. We must subdue our own ego to the rules and regulations of investigation. It is very important to accept the authority, for instance, of the dictionary. So many Bible students are inventing their own definitions of words, definitions which suit their own purposes.

If the Bible is true, it must be relatively clear. So it has to be that most "theological" differences are really severe egotistical battles between determined personalities. These men are admittedly intelligent persons. If they sincerely can't agree, then is the Bible beyond comprehension? It is submitted that the fault lies with the "scholars".

The fact is that "getting the Spirit" must include subduing one's own ego. When one does this, one can begin to see things as they really are. It should not take genius to see that the many miracles spoken of in the Bible as occurring in apostolic times are not going on today. Neither is it hard to see that Christianity at that time was dominated by those among whom it started, the Jews. It should not be hard to see that the situation we have today is a domination by Gentiles which was started by the Apostle Paul. The Jews today point this out, for they say flatly that Christianity was not started by Christ at all, but by Paul. If this seems obvious to them, must there not be something in the Bible story giving rise to this idea?

It is constantly stated in this paper that Ephesians and Colossians are unique in that they present a new message different from the program of that day when the Spirit was working in a visible, formal way. That this uniqueness is quite evident can be seen from the notes on these books in a certain Bible, which says regarding Ephesians: "Very similar in theme and language to the Epistle to the Colossians...this Epistle's central thought is the Church regarded as the mystical body of Christ..." Regarding Colossians: "The Epistle to the Colossians bears a remarkable resemblance to the Epistle to the Ephesians...The two Epistles should be read and studied together."

What Bible is this quoted from? Interestingly, it is from the notes in the Roman Catholic New Testament known as the New Catholic Revised Version published in 1941.

This can be considered quite a neutral source, since the Roman Catholic Church in no way considers Paul to be

introducing anything different from what Peter or the other apostles had been teaching all along. But you see here that they recognize something quite distinct about these epistles and they use the word "mystical" which would indicate a difference from what can be considered "material" or visible.

There was a travelogue on TV recently about the Holy Lands. The speaker was not a churchman, but he made a very interesting statement. He said "When Saint Paul traveled on his journeys, he always went into the synagogues first and preached to the Jews." The speaker stated this not as a "theological" point, but as a simple historical fact. Yet those who are saying this is a theological point are considered "radicals" because they say the period covered by the book of Acts is related to the hope of the nation of Israel, and is not the program for today.

The role of the Holy Spirit today, is directly related to the overall program which is in force now. We cannot understand this role unless we know the difference between this present program and the one before. We need to see the destruction of the temple as a landmark in the Bible.

The program today consists of a silent heaven as far as the miraculous is concerned, and this is the role of the Holy Spirit now. His role now is in the realm of the abstract, it is to lead us into the knowledge of God. But knowledge is really the greatest power in the universe. God Himself is only as close as is our knowledge of Him. Understanding makes all the difference, and understanding is what this present dispensation is all about. We now have the completed Word and almost unlimited scientific knowledge, things undreamed of in other ages. This is the age of Knowledge.

While the world makes use of the scientific knowledge for its own material purposes, the believer may use this knowledge to help understand the things taught in the completed Word. It is the work of the Holy Spirit today, to guide the believer into a correct use of this information, so he may interpret what he sees around him in a balanced way, not becoming over emotional or too coldly logical.

One key word which can be used to describe the Biblical administration today is the word depth. The apostle Paul uses this word in Ephesians when he prays that the believers may "know the depth of the love of Christ...". In this way they could "be filled with all the fullness of God."

This word depth is very important because it is the opposite of what we see all around us, which is superficiality. People are looking at what is on the surface, and accepting that, instead of digging underneath for the whole truth. It

is very important to realize that in every false story a certain amount of truth is included to make it look reasonable. We see this on every hand. It is a false face which is put on but underneath that face is something of a different nature.

It is interesting to note that most all of those claiming some kind of Biblical "authority", tell their adherents not to read or listen to opposition material. This is in direct opposition to the nature of the present administration of God, and the work of the Holy Spirit, which is based on guiding a person into truth by an observation and study of all of the phenomena around him. There can be no depth to one's knowledge if all one ever hears is one side of the story.

The editor believes he "got the Spirit" when he made that firm decision to "turn from man" years ago. It left him with a feeling of deep security which has not receded. It was not accompanied by any desire for physical extroversion. It was not at any emotional "rally". not based on anyone being "healed", but rather based upon very careful, solitary, meditation. It was not without emotion, for that is necessary; the key word is balance. It is by this means we, today, attune to the Holy Spirit.