


S The **MINGLED** **SPIRIT**

by John Pester



To me, less than the least of all saints, was this grace given to announce to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ as the gospel and to enlighten all that they may see what the economy of the mystery is, which throughout the ages has been hidden in God, who created all things, in order that now to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenlies the multifarious wisdom of God might be made known through the church, according to the eternal purpose which He made in Christ Jesus our Lord, in whom we have boldness and access in confidence through faith in Him. Therefore I ask you not to faint at my afflictions for your sake, since they are your glory. For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father, of whom every family in the heavens and on earth is named, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit into the inner man, that Christ may make His home in your hearts through faith, that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be full of strength to apprehend with all the saints what the breadth and length and height and depth are and to know the knowledge-surpassing love of Christ, that you may be filled unto all the fullness of God. (Eph. 3:8-19)

For the sake of accomplishing the eternal purpose of God, Paul bowed his knees unto the Father and prayed that the believers in Ephesus would be strengthened with power through His Spirit into the inner man. With the eternal purpose of God being to gain a universal display of the multifarious wisdom of God through the church, it would be easy to conclude that this display primarily involves the objective acknowledgment and appreciation of God's divine attributes. In Paul's Epistles, however, wisdom is never regarded as just an attribute of God. Rather, wisdom

is a person. Christ is God's wisdom, and He also is wisdom to us from God. According to 1 Corinthians wisdom is the pneumatic Christ, as the life-giving Spirit, living and moving within the regenerated believers, starting from the center, the human spirit, and ultimately spreading to the circumference, the body. Wisdom is Christ as the justifying element in the regenerated human spirit, Christ as the sanctifying element in the transformed soul, and Christ as the glorifying element in the redeemed body. Having passed through the process of incarnation, death, and resurrection, Christ is now the Spirit, and through regeneration this pneumatic Christ is joined to our human spirit, forming a mingled spirit. The mingled spirit, as the inner man of Paul's prayer, is the focal point of the church's experience of the riches of Christ, and it is the means by which God consummates His eternal purpose. When the church expresses the unsearchable riches of the pneumatic Christ, having been filled unto all the fullness of God, there will be a wise display of all that God is through the church.

The church's universal display of the wisdom of God begins in the innermost part of our being—our human spirit—and so Paul carefully and accurately directed his prayer to the strengthening of the inner man for the fulfillment of God's economy. The human spirit of every regenerated believer is a mingled spirit. This is the heart's desire of God for man, and it is the issue of the processes of the all-inclusive Christ. The human spirit that is indwelt by and organically joined to the Spirit is a mingled spirit. Without providing much in the way of anthropological or even metaphysical explanation, the New Testament simply declares this divine reality. The mingled spirit is an aspect of God's economy that is realized in faith (1 Tim. 1:4). Once substantiated by faith, however, the mingled spirit becomes the means for accomplishing the eternal purpose of God by serving as the contact point for our experience of the pneumatic Christ with all of His riches.

The Mingled Spirit Being the Regenerated Human Spirit

The experience of Christ begins in a human spirit that has been regenerated by the Spirit. Every human being has a human spirit created by God for the express purpose of receiving and containing God Himself. Every believer in Christ has a human spirit that has been regenerated and made alive by the Spirit, who is the realization of Christ in our experience. And every regenerated human spirit is a mingled spirit. The mingled spirit is the crowning accomplishment of God's creation, Christ's redemption, and the Spirit's enlivening.

In creation God stretched out the heavens, laid the foundation of the earth, and formed the spirit of man within him (Zech. 12:1). With the formation of the human spirit, God amply provided us with the capacity to know Him in the most intimate and subjective way. The human spirit is the means by which humans can contact the Most High who does not dwell in that which is made by hands (Acts 7:48). The Lord Jesus Himself answered the Samaritan woman, who questioned whether true worship occurred in the mountain or in Jerusalem, that "true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truthfulness, for the Father also seeks such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truthfulness" (John 4:23-24).

Due to the fallen condition of humanity, the true worship that the Father seeks, worship in the human spirit, was not possible prior to the redemption of Christ on the cross. Offenses and sins were in the way, requiring God's righteous condemnation. Even though the wages of sin are physical death, in the eyes of God, humanity was already spiritually dead because of the effects of the fall on the human spirit. We were dead in our offenses and sins (Eph. 2:1). The pure vessel that God had specifically formed to have an affinity for and correspondence with the Spirit was damaged, corrupted, and in need of the redemptive power of Christ's shed blood on the cross. For true worship, there is a need for not only a new heart but also a new spirit, that is, a human spirit recovered from the effects of the fall by Christ's death and brought into function by receiving the enlivening Spirit (Ezek. 36:26-27).

Even when we were dead in offenses, our human spirit was made alive together with Christ by grace through faith (Eph. 2:5). Ephesians particularly focuses on our need to be recovered from the effects of death by receiving, enjoying, and being built up in the life of God.

In comparison with the book of Romans, the book of Ephesians does not consider us sinners; it considers us dead persons. As sinners, we need God's forgiveness and

justification, as revealed in the book of Romans. But as dead persons, we need to be made alive. Forgiveness and justification bring us back to God's presence to enjoy His grace and participate in His life, whereas being made alive causes us, the living members of the Body of Christ, to express Him. God made us alive by imparting His eternal life, which is Christ Himself (Col. 3:4), into our dead spirit through His Spirit of life (Rom. 8:2). He has enlivened us together with Christ. (Recovery Version, Eph. 2:5, note 1)

The enlivening of the human spirit with the Holy Spirit is the essence of regeneration. It is our re-generation with another life, the divine life; it is another birth, a divine birth. In the first birth of a human being, flesh enlivens flesh, but in the second birth of a believer, the Spirit enlivens the human spirit. Jesus rightly and succinctly spoke to Nicodemus, who was dead in his spirit despite the high morality of his character, saying, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit" (John 3:6). Flesh begets flesh, and Spirit begets spirit.

The regenerated human spirit is a mingled spirit. The mingled spirit is the human spirit that has been indwelt by and joined to the Spirit. The distinctiveness of both the human spirit and the divine Spirit is retained through regeneration, yet both, mysteriously, are one. Paul captures this mystery when he speaks of the Spirit bearing witness with our spirit but alternatively speaks of being one spirit with the Lord (Rom. 8:16; 1 Cor. 6:17). Just as humanity is mingled with divinity in the person of Christ without confusion and without producing a third substance, the human spirit is mingled with the divine Spirit without confusion and without producing a third substance. It remains the human spirit but it also has the enlivening presence of the Spirit. Being mingled with the divine Spirit, the human spirit is the first part of man to be separated from the old creation by the impartation of the divine life. It truly is a new spirit, as prophesied by Ezekiel, and it represents the first step in our movement toward fulfilling the high purpose of humanity in God's economy.

The Mingled Spirit Fulfilling God's Desire for Man

When God created humanity in His image and after His likeness, His actions reflected a deep desire in His heart that man would contain and express Him. To reach this high purpose, the Triune God formed a tripartite being composed of spirit, soul, and body. The formation of the human spirit was the first step in His work to satisfy His high purpose, and the filling of the human spirit was the second step. When He completed the first step, He rested. In order to fulfill the second step, God placed man in front of two trees, the tree of the knowledge of good and

evil, representing Satan, and the tree of life, representing God Himself. God desired that man would take Him in as life and then exercise dominion on His behalf through this life. Given the subtlety of Satan, this desire was temporarily frustrated when the corrupting element of Satan was taken into man at the fall. This corruption offended the righteousness, holiness, and glory of God, and the way to take God in as the tree of life was closed temporarily.

The fall of man corrupted God's chosen vessel and created a barrier that could be overcome only by God Himself coming as a man to be the perfect sacrifice for sin. When the purification of sins was accomplished by Christ on the cross, the barrier between God and humanity was removed, and the way was opened for the human spirit to be filled with the life of God. In resurrection the pneumatic Christ appeared before His disciples and satisfied God's desire for man by filling the human spirit with the Spirit. He appeared to the disciples and breathed into them, saying, "Receive the Holy Spirit" (John 20:22), finishing what was left unfinished in the garden. In resurrection and through regeneration, the Spirit fills the human spirit of every believer, and the human spirit becomes God's dwelling place of rest. The mingled spirit is the place of God's habitation, the place of His chosen rest. Even though heaven is His throne and the earth is His footstool, the human spirit is the place of God's rest (Isa. 66:1-2). God's longing in the age of the Old Testament is being achieved in the New Testament age as the believers are being built together into a dwelling place of God in spirit (Eph. 2:22).

The Mingled Spirit Being the Issue of Christ's Incarnation, Death, and Resurrection

The mingled spirit, the dwelling place of God in the regenerated believers, is a direct issue of Christ's incarnation, death, and resurrection. In the Old Testament God could dwell only among man within a tabernacle and a temple that had been sanctified and separated from the

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old creation through the high priest's daily sacrifices for his own sins and for those of the people (Heb. 7:27). God could not dwell in man, because sin and death had entered into the world through one man and had then passed on to all men (Rom. 5:12). Every person has sinned, and every unbeliever is dead in offenses and sins and in need of God mercy and grace (Eph. 2:1, 5).

God's grace came in the most unexpected and universally momentous way. Grace and reality came to us through Jesus Christ as the issue of His passing through the process of incarnation, death, and resurrection. In the first step of His process—incarnation—the eternal Word became flesh to bring God into man and to tabernacle among humanity, full of grace and reality (John 1:14).¹ Only God Himself becoming a man offered any hope for humanity.

The deep thought of the Gospel of John is that Christ, the incarnate God, came as the embodiment of God, as illustrated by the tabernacle (v. 14) and the temple (2:21), so that man could contact Him and enter into Him to enjoy the riches contained in God. Both the tabernacle and the temple had an outer court, a Holy Place, and a Holy of Holies. Therefore, John points out first that Christ was the Lamb (who took away sin—v. 29) offered on the altar, which signifies the cross, in the outer court of the tabernacle, and then that He was like the bronze serpent (which caused man to have life) lifted up on the pole (3:14), which signifies the cross. This shows how Christ in His redemption was received by His believers that they might be delivered from sin and obtain life and might enter into Him as the embodiment of God, typified by the tabernacle, to enjoy all the riches that are in God. (Recovery Version, John 1:14, note 2)

In the second step of His process—death—Christ, as the man Jesus, accomplished redemption by being the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. He also dealt with man's sinful nature and destroyed him who has the might of death, the devil (Heb. 2:14),

being the full realization of the type of the bronze serpent. His death terminated the old creation and accomplished redemption, typified by the flowing out of blood from His side on the cross. His death also released the divine life that was contained in His humanity like a grain of wheat, typified by the flowing out of water from His side on the cross (John 19:34). With His death the shell of His humanity was broken and the essence of the divine life that was present within Him as the tabernacling God was released for the producing of many grains of wheat (12:24).

Even though the divine life was released, one final step was necessary to bring the life of the incarnated Triune God into the human spirit of those who would look upon Christ with eyes of faith in order to live (Num. 21:8-9). In the final step of His process—resurrection—Christ became pneumatic for the purpose of dispensing the divine life that had been released by His death. On the eve of His betrayal, the Lord Jesus clearly spoke of becoming the life-giving Spirit, a development in the economy of God equally as momentous as His incarnation in the flesh, saying,

And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Comforter, that He may be with you forever, even the Spirit of reality, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not behold Him or know Him; but you know Him, because He abides with you and shall be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I am coming to you. (John 14:16-18)

The Spirit of reality in resurrection is the very incarnated Triune God who once could only abide with His disciples, but who now can dwell in them.

The Spirit promised here was referred to in 7:39. This Spirit is the Spirit of life (Rom. 8:2), and this promise of the Lord's was fulfilled on the day of the Lord's resurrection, when the Spirit as the breath of life was breathed into the disciples (20:22).

The very "He" who is the Spirit of reality in this verse becomes the very "I" who is the Lord Himself in v. 18. This means that the Christ who was in the flesh went through death and resurrection to become the life-giving Spirit, the pneumatic Christ. First Corinthians 15:45 confirms this. In dealing with the matter of resurrection, that verse says, "The last Adam [Christ in the flesh] became a life-giving Spirit." (Recovery Version, John 14:17, notes 1 and 2)

The promised Spirit of reality was received by the disciples in their human spirit through the breathing of the pneumatic Christ in resurrection (John 20:22). Despite our hopelessly deadened condition, grace and reality came through incarnation, were released through death, and

then dispensed through resurrection. This grace and reality were dispensed into the human spirit, forming a mingled spirit. The mingled spirit is therefore a direct issue of the wonderful process of the all-inclusive Christ. As the life-giving Spirit, He pneumatically supplies the believers with the riches of Christ so that God's dwelling place can be enlarged from a tabernacle into a spiritual house composed of living stones and ultimately into a holy city (1 Pet. 2:5; Rev. 21:10), which even today can be viewed from the vantage point of our mingled spirit. The indwelling Spirit of reality, who is the pneumatic Christ in resurrection, is now joined to our human spirit. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ is now in our human spirit (Phil. 4:23), and with this grace, the reality of God can be fully realized in our mingled spirit.

The Mingled Spirit in the New Testament

In the New Testament the reality of the mingled spirit is declared rather than explained,² in much the same way that the truths concerning the Triune God, the person and work of Christ, and the tripartite nature of man are declared rather than systematically explained.³ Some declarations concerning the mingled spirit occur in the midst of detailed discourses. In Ephesians, for example, the mingled spirit is prominently featured in every chapter as an integral part of our participation in God's economy for the fulfillment of God's eternal purpose. Other declarations occur in the simple blessings that conclude many Epistles. The variety and location of these declarations show both the centrality of the mingled spirit in the divine revelation and the simplicity of the experience of the mingled spirit that is available for every regenerated believer.

From the verses in the New Testament, it is clear that the mingled spirit is not described in terms that suggest that the Holy Spirit and the human spirit have been combined into a new entity. The mingled spirit is not a third entity which no longer displays the distinctive characteristics of the Holy Spirit and the human spirit. We are children of God because of our regenerated, mingled spirit, but in this mingled spirit, it is the Spirit Himself who is witnessing with our spirit (Rom. 8:16). The Spirit does not witness *to* our spirit, as if He is separate from our spirit and providing a spiritual witness that reaches into our spirit from without. Rather, the Spirit witnesses *with* our spirit. The witness spoken of by Paul is a witness of two, yet the witness of one. When the Spirit witnesses, our human spirit is witnessing, and when our human spirit witnesses, the Spirit is witnessing.

This witnessing in the mingled spirit is an issue of being joined to the Lord (1 Cor. 6:17). We are joined to the Lord, yet we are one spirit. In a chapter devoted to excesses in the use of the body related to both food and fornication, Paul nestles a short, direct, and seemingly disjointed reminder

that the human spirit is the paramount part of man because it is the focal point of our intrinsic, organic relationship with the Lord. Paul's short and direct declaration leaves little doubt that the mingled spirit should be the preeminent part in a regenerated believer's experience. Paul's declaration, however, also seems disjointed because it connects the one spirit with the Lord rather than the Spirit. This verse would be much more readable if the one spirit was connected with the Spirit (i.e., he who is joined to the Spirit is one spirit), or if our being joined to the Lord were connected with being one with the Lord (i.e., he who is joined to the Lord is one with the Lord). But Paul uses neither of these less problematic constructions. He starts with the Lord and ends with the mingled spirit.

This indicates the mingling of the Lord as the Spirit with our spirit. Our spirit has been regenerated by the Spirit of God (John 3:6), who is now in us (v. 19) and is one with our spirit (Rom. 8:16). This is the realization of the Lord, who became the life-giving Spirit through resurrection (15:45; 2 Cor. 3:17) and who is now with our spirit (2 Tim. 4:22). This mingled spirit is often referred to in Paul's Epistles, e.g., in Rom. 8:4-6. (Recovery Version, 1 Cor. 6:17, note 2)

The Lord in 1 Corinthians 6:17 is not the physical Jesus but the pneumatic Christ, the Christ who has passed through the process of incarnation, death, and resurrection to become the life-giving Spirit and who now indwells the regenerated believers in the mingled human spirit. The Lord is the Spirit, and we can turn from being ruled by the desires of our body to the leading of the Lord Spirit in our spirit (2 Cor. 3:17-18). When we exercise our mingled spirit, there is both the witness of the Spirit and the leading of the Lord. With such a divine opportunity available for all who believe, is there any wonder that such a fact would become the basis for common blessings and exhortations among the believers? Since the pneumatic Christ is with our spirit, there is an abundance of grace for us (2 Tim. 4:22). The grace of our Lord

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Jesus Christ is with our spirit because the Spirit, who is the realization of the pneumatic Christ, is joined to and mingled with our spirit (Gal. 6:18; Phil. 4:23; Philem. 25). The ease with which Paul connects the Lord with one spirit and the simple manner in which he points to it in his concluding blessings only serve to underscore the reality and experience of the mingled spirit in the economy of God.

The Mingled Spirit in Ephesians

Given the availability of the Spirit in our spirit, experiencing the mingled spirit is not a complicated matter. Even something as simple as calling upon His name brings us into contact with the Lord and makes Him rich to us in our experience (Rom. 10:12). It would be wrong, however, to equate the simple with the trivial. To dismiss the mingled spirit as an inconsequential theological point is as damaging to our Christian experience as disavowing the possibility of the mingled spirit without prayer, consideration, and study. The book of Ephesians, in contrast to such attitudes, places a high premium on the experience of the mingled spirit. In each of its six chapters, the mingled spirit is prominently featured as an integral means of knowing and attaining to the hope of His calling (Eph. 1:18).

In Ephesians the hope of His calling is intrinsically related to three fundamental factors: the Triune God, the economical dispensing of the Triune God, and the mingled spirit. In every chapter of Ephesians Paul presents a detailed discussion of each of these factors. The very structure of Ephesians, indeed the very structure of the divine revelation, is based upon the Triune God Himself. He is our source and our goal. In His economy He dispenses His riches into the regenerated believers in order to gain an eternal habitation and multifarious expression, the church. In His economy the Father initiates, the Son accomplishes, and the Spirit applies, and in the experience of the believers, the starting point of the application of God's economy is the mingled spirit.

Chapter one speaks of the spiritual blessings which have been given to the church, namely the Father's choosing (v. 4), the Son's redemption through His blood (v. 7), and the Spirit's sealing and pledging (vv. 13-14). These blessings form the basis for the dispensing of the Triune God into His chosen, redeemed, and sealed believers, which consummates in the heading up of all things in Christ (v. 10). Through this dispensing those who are dead in offenses and sins will be brought to the point of being to the praise of the glory of God's inwrought grace. Progress toward this high calling, however, requires both wisdom—the ability to understand spiritual matters—and revelation—the unveiling by the Spirit of the intrinsic significance of these spiritual matters. Consequently, Paul begins this Epistle by praying that the Father would give the believers a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the full knowledge of Him (v. 17). This spirit is the mingled spirit, the human spirit that has been regenerated and indwelt by the Spirit. Through his prayer Paul strongly indicates that the mingled spirit is the starting point for our experience of the economy of the Triune God.

Chapter two speaks of the producing of the church out of deadened and divided humanity that has been enlivened and joined into one new man through the economical operation of the Triune God. Prior to receiving Christ's redemption by grace through faith (v. 8), we conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, acting according to the desires of the flesh and the thoughts. By nature we were children of wrath (v. 3), and we were without hope and without God in the world (v. 12). We also were divided from one another because of religious commandments and ordinances (vv. 14-15). But God, being rich in mercy because of His great love toward us, did not give up on His desire to mold us into a masterpiece in Christ Jesus (vv. 4, 10). We were made alive in Christ through the release and impartation of the divine life (v. 5), and we were brought near to one another in the blood of Christ (v. 13). The middle wall of partition was broken down, abolishing religious and even cultural differences in Christ's flesh on the cross, and we were created in Christ into one new man (vv. 14-15). In death Christ became our peace, and in resurrection as the Spirit, the pneumatic Christ announced the gospel of peace to those who were far off and to those who were near (v. 17). Now we have access through Christ in one Spirit unto the Father. This economical access makes us fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, which is growing into a holy temple in the Lord and is being built together into a dwelling place of God in the mingled spirit (vv. 21-22). The dwelling place of God is our mingled spirit, which has been enlivened and joined to the Triune God.

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our spirit. Therefore, the dwelling place of God is in our spirit. Verse 21 says that the holy temple is in the Lord, and [verse 22], that the dwelling place of God is in spirit. This indicates that for the building of God's dwelling place, the Lord is one with our spirit, and our spirit is one with the Lord (1 Cor. 6:17). Our spirit is where the building of the church, the dwelling place of God, takes place. (Recovery Version, Eph. 2:22, note 4)

Chapter three speaks of our need to experience the economy of the mystery, which has been hidden in God in ages past, but which has been revealed to the apostles and prophets in the mingled spirit (vv. 5, 9). Paul begins by speaking of the stewardship of the grace which was given to him to minister the unsearchable riches of Christ. Through Paul's dispensing ministry, the mystery of Christ was revealed (vv. 3-4). According to revelation, all of the regenerated believers, both Jew and Gentile, are fellow heirs, fellow members of the Body of Christ, and fellow partakers of the promised blessing of the Triune God Himself (v. 6). Entering into the reality of this revelation, however, requires both enlightenment and experience (v. 9). As Paul recounts the gravity of the economy of the mystery, which causes the multifarious wisdom of God to be universally displayed, he is inspired and even impelled to pause and utter one of the deepest prayers in the Bible concerning our need to experience the economy of the Triune God. He begins by bowing his knees unto the Father and praying that the believers would be strengthened with power through His Spirit into the inner man so that Christ could make His home in their hearts through faith (vv. 14, 17). Our experience of God's economy begins with the strengthening of our mingled spirit to allow the pneumatic Christ to spread into our heart. This roots us for growth and grounds us for building in an environment of love, enabling us to be blended together with the saints to corporately apprehend the full dimensions of Christ. With the consequent impartation of the knowledge-surpassing love of Christ, God's economy culminates with the church being filled unto all the fullness of God (vv. 16-19). Our experience of the economy of the mystery utterly depends upon our being enlightened in the mingled spirit and upon our being strengthened with power into our mingled spirit.

Chapter four begins a section of Ephesians, including chapters four through six, which speaks to the need of walking worthily of the calling with which we were called (v. 1). The principal component of this walk is keeping the oneness of the Spirit in the uniting bond of peace (v. 3). This oneness is defined by Paul in relation to the Triune God (vv. 4-6).

In exhorting us to safeguard the oneness, the apostle pointed out seven things that form the base of our oneness: one Body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith,

one baptism, and one God. These seven “ones” are of three groups. The first three form the first group, that of the Spirit with the Body as His expression. This Body, having been regenerated and being saturated with the Spirit as its essence, has the hope of being transfigured into the full likeness of Christ. The next three form the second group, that of the Lord with faith and baptism that we may be joined to Him. The last of the seven forms the third group, the one God and Father, who is the Originator and source of all. The Spirit as the Executor of the Body, the Son as the Creator of the Body, and God the Father as the Originator of the Body—all the three of the Triune God—are related to the Body. (Recovery Version, Eph. 4:4, note 1)

The oneness of the Spirit allows for and even needs the varied functions of the members of the Body. These gifts, which are according to the measure of the gift of Christ (v. 7), include apostles, prophets, evangelists, and shepherds and teachers, all of whom function in coordination for the perfecting of the saints unto the work of ministry, unto the building up of the Body of Christ (vv. 11-12). Participation in this daily work of ministry safeguards the members from winds of teaching that can toss believers who are like little children and bring them into systems of error (v. 14). When the Body holds the Head, the Body builds itself up in love through the practical operation of each one part which conveys a rich supply of Christ that joins and knits the Body together (v. 16). A worthy walk corresponds to this high vision, but it depends upon the mingled spirit spreading into our soul to the point that our renewed mind draws its thoughts, directions, and appraisals from the mingled spirit (v. 23). The walk of the believers, as also the walk of the Gentiles, is directed by the mind. Unbelievers walk in the vanity of their minds, being darkened in their understanding and being alienated from the life of God (vv. 17-18). Believers, however, must put off the old man and be renewed in the mind by allowing the mingled spirit to spread into their mind (vv. 22-23). Without the mingled spirit serving as the

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Chapter five speaks of a further aspect of a walk that is worthy of our calling—walking in both love and light (vv. 2, 8). A walk in love is in the principle of an offering and sacrifice; it is apart from all uncleanness and does not participate in the unfruitful works of darkness (vv. 2-3, 11). Instead, time is redeemed for the fulfillment of the will of the Lord (vv. 16-17), principally through being filled in our mingled spirit by speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs and by giving thanks to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ at all times for all things (vv. 19-20).

To be filled in the spirit (our regenerated spirit, not God’s Spirit) is to be filled with Christ (1:23) unto the fullness of God (3:19). To be drunk with wine in our physical body causes us to become dissolute, but to be filled in our spirit with Christ, with the fullness of God, causes us to overflow with Christ in speaking, singing, psalming, and giving thanks to God (vv. 19-20) and also causes us to subject ourselves to one another (v. 21). (Recovery Version, Eph. 5:18, note 1)

Our mingled spirit is the source of a walk that is worthy of God’s calling, a walk that is in love and in light. To the extent that we exercise our mingled spirit through such practical means as speaking to one another and giving thanks, we have a proper living with proper relationships.

Chapter six speaks primarily of spiritual warfare against the stratagems of God’s enemy. This warfare is in the Body; it is not individualistic, and it requires the full armor of the Triune God. The armor is principally defensive. The only weapon that is offensive is the sword of the Spirit, which Spirit is the word of God (v. 17).

The Spirit is the word of God. Both the Spirit and the word are Christ (2 Cor. 3:17; Rev. 19:13). Christ as the Spirit and the word furnishes us with a sword as an offensive weapon to defeat and slay the enemy.

The [word is the] instant word spoken at the moment by the Spirit in any situation. The sword, the Spirit, and the word are one. When the constant word in the Bible becomes the instant word, that word is the Spirit as the sword that kills the enemy. (Recovery Version, Eph. 6:17, notes 3 and 4)

The Body receives the sword of the Spirit by means of all prayer and petition, praying in the mingled spirit (vv. 17-18). When we exercise our mingled spirit to pray, particularly using the constant word of God that has been wrought into our being, the enemy who seeks to frustrate the consummation of God's eternal purpose will be repelled, just as the Lord repelled him with the word of God during the time of His testing in the desert. The most effective prayer begins in our mingled spirit and activates the instant word of the Spirit.

The mingled spirit is mentioned in every chapter of Ephesians, and it is the means for actualizing the spiritual blessings with which we have been blessed. Through our mingled spirit, we obtain wisdom and revelation concerning the hope of His calling. In the mingled spirit, we are built together into a dwelling place of God. From the mingled spirit, we can begin to experience the full range of God's economy. Based on the mingled spirit, we can be directed in a walk that is worthy of our calling through our renewed mind. Drawing from the mingled spirit, we can be filled in our daily lives with a supply for ourselves and others. And finally, by exercising our mingled spirit, we can defeat God's enemy and advance the eternal purpose of God through prayer. Our entrance into the depths of the truth in Ephesians concerning the Triune God and His marvelous economy is utterly dependent upon our exercise and experience of our mingled spirit.

The Mingled Spirit and the Accomplishment of God's Eternal Purpose

Everything in the Bible speaks to the fact that our God is a God of purpose. He created with a purpose in view and He passed through the process of incarnation, death, and resurrection to accomplish this purpose. In His Trinity He desires to dispense all that He is into His regenerated believers to make Himself one with humanity and humanity one with Him. To this end He formed a human spirit in man to serve as His dwelling place, and then He first became flesh through incarnation and then became the life-giving Spirit through resurrection to regenerate this human spirit with the Spirit, forming a mingled spirit. From this mingled spirit, God's economy unfolds as the

unsearchable riches of Christ are progressively exhibited through the church. Eventually, there will be a multifarious expression of the riches of Christ, universally displaying the pneumatic Christ in and through the church that has been filled unto the fullness of God. This will accomplish God's eternal purpose, satisfying both God and humanity. [AC]

Notes

¹The discussion of the incarnation, death, and resurrection of Christ in this section is based on Witness Lee's outline and explication of the Gospel of John, contained in the Recovery Version of the New Testament. The two most basic divisions in the content of the Gospel of John are presented as "The eternal Word incarnated coming to bring God into man," 1:1—13:38, and "Jesus crucified and Christ resurrected going to prepare the way to bring man into God, and as the Spirit coming to abide and live in the believers for the building of God's habitation," 14:1—21:25.

²This section focuses on verses which contain clear references to the human spirit and which could be construed as referring to the Holy Spirit only through formidable efforts to twist the Scriptures (2 Pet. 3:16). There are many instances of the word *spirit* in the New Testament that clearly refer to the Holy Spirit, and there are many that clearly refer to the human spirit (Rom. 1:9; 1 Cor. 2:11; 5:4; 14:14-16; 16:18; 2 Cor. 2:13; 1 Thes. 5:23; Heb. 4:12; James 2:26; 1 Pet. 3:4). Of additional interest, however, are the instances in which the referent for the word *spirit* cannot be so easily distinguished, that is, there is a lack of clarity as to whether the referent is the Holy Spirit or the human spirit. In many of these instances, translations settle on the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:4-5, 9, KJV; Eph. 5:18; 6:18, NASB; Rev. 1:10; 4:2; 17:3; 21:10, ASV). Many of these verses, however, will enrich our understanding and experience when they are viewed from the perspective that the referent is both the Holy Spirit and the human spirit, that is, the mingled spirit.

³A lack of systematic explanations for certain declared truths does not mean that a rational comprehension of these truths is not possible and that these truths must forever be relegated to some vaguely defined, ineffable realm. Neither should this fact give license to interpretations of the divine revelation which are utterly at odds with other clear biblical declarations (2 Pet. 1:20). Truth always must be confirmed by the totality of the biblical data, but once a truth is established, there must be a willingness to accept the fact that acknowledgment and obedience to the heavenly vision cannot be contingent upon one's ability to systematically find or derive some explanation that accounts for all elements of the mystery of God and the mystery of Christ.

Works Cited

Recovery Version of the New Testament. Anaheim: Living Stream Ministry, 1991.