

SPECIFIC AUTHORITY

The very term "specific" denotes something which is restricted or is in some way to be handled with certain provisions. We specify what color we wish when we purchase a pair of shoes or buy paint for our house. If we don't fully understand, we sometimes ask the person with whom we are communicating to be "specific."

It is even so regarding the revelation of God's will. God often expresses His will in a general way, but either at that time or perhaps later informs us of specific details which must be observed. Therefore, very many of the generic commands of God have their own specific limitations.

Adam and Eve were told to "*be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth*" (Gen 1:28). They were the only two humans in existence, so God's righteous will regarding fornication and adultery did not at the time need to be stated. When the human population began to grow, however, it then became necessary for God to reveal certain limitations to sexual activity and child birth. This is noted as early as Genesis 12:18 when Pharaoh would have taken Abram's wife but was prohibited by God's intervention. We note in many later passages God's amendment to His original statement of authority.

The Scope of Matthew 28:19

In Jesus' general instructions to His disciples, "*Go ye therefore and teach all nations*" (Mat 28:19) is the beautiful and powerful authority under which Christians throughout the ages have shared the message of salvation. This message has been carried over desert sands, through dense jungles, across vast seas, and even to the frozen North by those dedicated souls, often unknown and who never sought glory, to share the glorious story of God's grace and the Savior's death with those who would listen.

Not by a modern-day clergy, but mostly by the common man was this cause promoted. In Acts 8:1 is found the means used by God to cause the spread of early Christianity - persecution. You will note that the apostles remained but the church was scattered. "*And Saul was consenting unto his death. And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles*" (Acts 8:1).

Then verse 4 informs us, *"Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word"* (Acts 8:4). Men and women alike, slaves and their masters, parents to their children, prisoners to their prison-keepers - these were the ones who most effectively caused the spread of the Lord's cause. Aquila and Priscilla, a husband and wife team, taught the eloquent Apollos (Acts 18:26). Onesimus, a slave converted by Paul returned to his master (Philemon). Timothy was taught by his mother and grandmother (2 Tim 1:5). The jailor and his family were converted by his prisoners, Paul and Silas (Acts 16:30-33). These all served effectively under the generic command, *"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations."* The result was indeed marvelous.

The Limitations of Matthew 28:19

Sinners are converted as a result of hearing the truth taught. But there were then and there remains today certain limitations in teaching the Master's message. Those who were converted and became spiritual children of God enjoyed a relationship known as the church. This family of believers gathered upon the first day of each week in what the New Testament refers to as the assembly (Acts 20:7, 1 Corinthians 16:1-2, Hebrews 10:25, James 2:2). As individuals the early Christians taught everywhere they found opportunity, but as an assembly they had specific limitations. In 1 Corinthians 14 these restrictions are found:

- ▶ Tongue speakers are restricted. *"If any man speak in an unknown tongue, let it be by two, or at the most by three, and that by course; and let one interpret. But if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church; and let him speak to himself, and to God"* (1 Cor. 14:27-28). We follow this same injunction in foreign lands today.
- ▶ Teachers are limited to one after the other to an undivided assembly. *"For ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted"* (1 Cor. 14:31).
- ▶ Women are not allowed to address the assembly or even ask questions. *"Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law. And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church"* (1 Cor. 14:34-35).

It is to be noticed, therefore, that the generic authority of Matthew 28 is qualified by the SPECIFIC authority when the church assembles. Many women are excellent teachers and have been most effective in spreading God's word. It was through the influence of a kind and concerned Christian woman that I was

converted. That is not the issue. God has specified a beautiful role for the woman as opposed to that of the man. The restrictions here simply serve to agree with Paul's explanation in 1 Timothy 2:11-15. *"Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression. Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety."*

Every assembly recorded in the New Testament was conducted in harmony with these limitations. Popular social trends are often the source of problems to those who would maintain a Bible-patterned church. Some teach that the "Go teach" of Matthew 28 is general in nature and not affected by the specific found in other passages. But contrariwise, the specific would not have been given if it had no meaning or place.

As It Concerns Submission to Civil Authorities

In a general way, Paul in Romans 13:1 instructs the Christian to obey and be in submission to those he refers to as "the higher powers." *"Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God"* (Rom. 13:1). But as in most instances, the generic is qualified by the specific. Sometimes those in positions of higher power require that which a Christian cannot conscientiously perform. Peter and John were faced with just such a situation when they answered, *"Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than to God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard...We ought to obey God rather than men"* (Acts 4:19-20, 5:29).

Application of What We Have Learned

God has spoken! His speaking is recorded in the pages of Holy Scripture and is unmistakably meant for our learning and obedience. Sometimes God has revealed His will in a general sense, but most often He has qualified the general by the SPECIFIC. He has not left man's obedience to man's own preference. Let us be extremely careful in not overlooking or neglecting that which God has revealed.

HARRY COBB
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DOES THE HOLY SPIRIT WORK DIRECTLY IN THE HEART?

It is often taught that the Holy Spirit will operate (work) directly in the heart (thinking) of the sinner. However, the Bible indicates that the Holy Spirit does not work "directly" in the heart (thinking) of the sinner. Let us consider what the Bible teaches about the Holy Spirit.

We find that the world cannot receive the Holy Spirit. *"Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you"* (John 14:17).

The Holy Spirit was NOT found as a result of John's baptism - ONLY baptism into Christ. *"Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost: (For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.) Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost"* (Acts 8:14-17).

The Holy Spirit is received by "hearing of faith". In Galatians 3:2 it is written, *"This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?"* Faith comes by hearing the word of God. *"So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God"* (Rom 10:17). Faith is a work. *"Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God? Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent"* (John 6:28-29). Faith without works is dead. *"What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him? If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit? (James 2:14-26). Therefore, we receive the Holy Spirit when we DO WHAT GOD DIRECTS US TO DO AS FOUND IN THE BIBLE.*

In 2 Tim 3:16-17 Paul tells us that the Holy Spirit directed hearts of men in the writing of the Bible. *"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."* Ephesians 6:16-17 tells us that the Bible or word of God is the SWORD OF THE SPIRIT, *"Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery*

darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:" (Eph 6:16-17).

When we follow the Bible, we are doing what the Holy Spirit had inspired for us to do in order to be saved.

The Holy Spirit is a gift to those who have already been saved as seen in Acts 2:38, *"Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."* In verse 37 of Acts chapter 2, the people were pricked in their hearts after being taught by men - not directly by the Holy Spirit. They asked what THEY MUST DO. When they did what they were supposed to then, and only then, did they receive the Holy Spirit as a GIFT. Please carefully note in Acts chapter 2 that the Holy Spirit fell on the Apostles. "They" began to speak with other tongues as the Holy Spirit gave them "utterance" because "they" were filled with the Holy Ghost. *"And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance"* (Acts 2:4). The "they" in this verse is talking about the Apostles. In Acts chapter 2, the miraculous operation of the Holy Spirit worked directly in the Apostles. The MIRACLE was in the SPEAKING of the Apostles, not the hearing of the sinners. Note plainly that those present heard them speak in their own tongue, not a tongue they didn't already know. *"Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language"* (Acts 2:6).

The Holy Spirit is given to those who "obey" God. (Acts 5:32) *"And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him."* Phillip was baptized and thus had the gift of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit spoke to Philip and told him to join himself with the chariot where the Eunuch was sitting (Acts 8:26-40). Notice that the Holy Spirit did NOT speak to or lead the Eunuch; the Holy Spirit did NOT work directly in the heart (thinking) of the Eunuch; the Holy Spirit did NOT tell the Eunuch what to do to be saved; the Holy Spirit did NOT save the Eunuch; the Holy Spirit did NOT do anything UNTIL the Eunuch was baptized for the remission of his sins! The Holy Spirit was given to the Eunuch AFTER he was baptized (Acts 8:26-40).

The people who knew what to do to be saved during the "Restoration Movement" DID NOT receive a DIRECT operation of the Holy Spirit. They knew what to do to be saved by the plain and simple teaching as found in the Bible. We notice in Matthew chapter 28 where Jesus gives the Great Commission that the Apostles were told to take the gospel to the world. "Go ye

therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen" (Mat. 28:19-20). The same was true for the preachers of the Restoration Movement who took the gospel to the people NOT by direct operation of the Holy Spirit.

The Bible does NOT teach that HOLY SPIRIT works directly in the heart (thinking) of the sinner. Therefore, the Holy Spirit does NOT teach, lead, or save sinners.

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GOSPEL MEETINGS

<u>DATES</u>	<u>PLACE</u>	<u>SPEAKER</u>
Sept. 2 - 4	Antioch Church Livingston, TN	J.D. McDonald (Woodbury, TN)
Sept. 9 - 11	Fayetteville Road Atlanta, GA	Sam Dick (Cave City, KY)
Sept. 11 - 16	Junction City Church Junction City, KY	J.D. McDonald (Woodbury, TN) & Joe Hill (Hager Hill, KY)
Sept. 18 - 23	Hopkinsville Church Hopkinsville, OH	Joe Hill (Hager Hill, KY)
Sept. 19 - 23	Estesburg Church near Eubank, KY	Wilbur Bass (Auburn, AL)
Sept. 26 - 30	Mt. Zion Church Crab Orchard, KY	J.D. McDonald Woodbury, TN & Joe Hill (Hager Hill, KY)

SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES

1. Who did Philistine King Achish appoint as his bodyguard for life?
2. Where did the prophet Daniel look to find the number of years Israel would be in exile?
3. According to 1 Peter, what will love cover?
4. According to Psalm 34, who is close to the brokenhearted?
5. What did the Kinsman remove when he gave Boaz permission to buy Naomi's land?

ANSWERS NEXT MONTH . . .

and remember last month's questions?

1. When Abram left the land of Ur, he took his nephew with him. What was the nephew's name? LOT (Gen. 11:31 & 12:4)
2. According to Isaiah 53, in the prophecy about Christ, why was He pierced? FOR OUR TRANSGRESSIONS (Isa. 53:5)
3. What does Romans 3 say we become conscious of through the law? SIN (Rom. 3:20)
4. For what does the writer of the book of Job say man is born? TROUBLE (Job 5:7)
5. When Hanna asked the Lord for a son, what two things did she vow? THAT SHE WOULD GIVE HIM TO THE LORD FOR ALL HIS LIFE, AND THAT NO RAZOR WOULD TOUCH HIS HEAD (1 Sam. 1:11)