

## The Holy Spirit VI

In the last article it was discussed that many in the religious world believe that the Spirit works directly upon the sinner and the saint in order to convert them. While it is true that the Spirit has worked to influence some in the past in a direct way (i.e. Balaam's donkey, inspired men—II Peter 1:21; II Samuel 23:1-2; etc.) the Spirit's work upon an animal and inspired men did not change the nature of any of those involved. The reality is, God uses medium to influence the sinner and the saint. God does not work directly on the hearts of anyone in order for them to change their lives. The donkey remained the same afterwards as it had been before this action of the Spirit. The men were still as likely to commit sin after the action of the Spirit on them in the Inspiration process. For instance, while Peter did preach a perfect and infallible message, he later violated the word of God that he had been inspired to preach (Acts 10:34-35; Galatians 2:11-14).

In the conviction and conversion of alien sinners, the Spirit used only indirect influence. Words are the only things that can communicate messages to a person. These words are used to convey what the Spirit wants a person to understand. Just as a person cannot understand what is on another person's mind unless words are used to communicate what is on that person's mind, so the Spirit uses this medium (I Corinthians 2:11-14). One can understand what the Spirit communicates by one's study and understanding of the Spirit's message, the Word of God (I Timothy 4:1). When the Lord wants the hearts of individuals changed, he uses the message of the Scripture (John 3:16; Mark 16:15-16; I Corinthians 1:21; Romans 10:13-18; Isaiah 1:18; Hebrews 1:1-2; II Peter 1:20-21; Ephesians 3:1-11). The Word of God is completely sufficient/able ("informationally"[sic] and every other way) to do all that God desires to do to the hearts of the sinner or the saint (II Timothy 3:16-17; Acts 20:32; John 6:44-45). This truth is commonly accepted among those in the Lord's church (even though more and more of our brethren are rejecting the truth on the work of the Spirit in the conversion of the alien sinner); some accuse those of us that uphold this truth as being "word only" people. They apply this slur to us as it relates to the influence of the Spirit on the heart of the saint. The fact is, these people believe that the Spirit only operates on the heart of a sinner in this way. Are they therefore, "word only" people? Next time, we will take this truth (that the Spirit operates on the heart of a person, saint or sinner, only through the Word of God) and examine his work on the saint.

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