

“Enter by the narrow gate; for the gate is wide, and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and many are those who enter it. For the gate is small, the way is narrow that leads to life, and few are those who find it.”

Matthew 7:13, 14

Carlsbad Caverns in New Mexico is an enormous cave system discovered in the 1800's after settlers were drawn to the spectacle of hundreds of thousands of bats rising into the evening from the entrance. Today, thousands of visitors tour underground chambers such as The Big Room, The Temple of the Sun, and The Hall of Giants. Visitors sometimes dress in rugged hiking boots and carry water and flashlights, not knowing that there are smooth paths, handrails, and lights.

It is not likely that you will find a real spelunker in the crowd. The true caver is not taking the easy path; he is not walking in familiar territory with the rest of the crowd. He searches for and finds the narrow gap; he squeezes through with great difficulty, often leaving comforts and friends behind. But his reward is great. He finds an unmapped chamber with a formation more spectacular than any ever seen...his bruised knees forgotten, his thirst delayed, he sits in humbled awe at the beauty that surrounds him.

In your search for spiritual fulfillment, are you a tourist or a true seeker?

There are many people who call themselves Christians, who in fact, may not be Christians at all. Some people say they are Christians because they believe in a god and live in the USA. Others believe that because their parents are Christians and they grew up in a Christian home means they are also Christians. **Still others say that they are Christians because they joined a church**

and perhaps were even baptized. Last but not least, some people believe they are Christians because they were christened as babies. The fact remains that the gate to salvation is narrow and we must be very careful as to which road we take. Jesus taught in Matthew 7:13-14, *“Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and*

there are many who enter through it. For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it.”

There are literally, millions of people who think they are Christians who in fact are not. In some cases, this is out of ignorance or a misguided understanding as to what it takes to have a relationship with God. In other cases, it is clear to mature Christians that many are not members of the family of God because their fruits do not bear them out. And there are many people who consider their churches an organization (like a club) to which they belong. These people have lied to themselves and have lied to others. **In this lesson we will gain an in-depth understanding of what it means to be a Christian.**

Luke provides us with a similar passage in Luke 13:23-27. This passage reads: *“And someone said to Him, ‘Lord, are there just a few who are being saved?’ And He said to them, / Strive to enter through the narrow door; for many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able. / Once the head of the house gets up and shuts the door, and you begin to stand outside and knock on the door, saying, ‘Lord, open up to us!’*

then He will answer and say to you, ‘I do not know where you are from.’ / Then you will begin to say, ‘We ate and drank in Your presence, and You taught in our streets’; / and He will say, ‘I tell you, I do not know where you are from; **DEPART FROM ME, ALL YOU EVILDOERS.**”

This passage (Matthew 7:13,14 and Luke 13:24) should cause us to pause and ask ourselves two questions. (1) Am I really a Christian? Have I been born again? and (2) Are the people I love and care about truly Christians? Let’s first examine two highly related concepts, conversion and regeneration.

Conversion means a turning toward or returning to God. As descendants of Adam, we were born without a spirit and our relationship with God had been broken. In other words, individuals without Christ have no relationship with God. In personal conversion, it means that we are seeking a relationship with God. This is demonstrated by turning from the ways of the world and turning toward God. Once this happens we become like infants or children in our initial relationship with Him.

1. Read Matthew 18:3 – Jesus is teaching that we must become spiritual children

2. Read John 12:37-50. “But though He had performed so many signs before them, yet they were not believing in Him. /This was to fulfill the word of Isaiah the prophet which he spoke: ‘LORD, WHO HAS BELIEVED OUR REPORT? AND TO WHOM HAS THE ARM OF THE LORD BEEN REVEALED?’ /For this reason they could not believe, for Isaiah said again, /’HE HAS BLINDED THEIR EYES AND HE HARDENED THEIR HEART, SO THAT THEY WOULD NOT SEE WITH THEIR EYES AND PERCEIVE WITH THEIR HEART, AND BE CONVERTED AND I HEAL THEM.’ /These things Isaiah said because he saw His glory, and he spoke of Him. Nevertheless many even of the rul-

ers believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they were not confessing Him, for fear that they would be put out of the synagogue; /for they loved the approval of men rather than the approval of God.”

In verse 44, Jesus is making a final cry or challenge to believe. “And Jesus cried out and said, ‘He who believes in Me, does not believe in Me but in Him who sent Me.’ /He who sees Me sees the One who sent Me. /I have come as Light into the world, so that everyone who believes in Me will not remain in darkness. /If anyone hears My sayings and does not keep them, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world, but to save the world. /He who rejects Me and does not receive My sayings, has one who judges him; the word I spoke is what will judge him at the last day. /For I did not speak on My own initiative, but the Father Himself who sent Me has given Me a commandment as to what to say and what to speak. /I know that His commandment is eternal life; therefore the things I speak, I speak just as the Father has told Me.”

We do not know the reason why some are blinded and not be able to see God and why God chooses others to receive Him. In Bruce Milne’s book, Know the Truth, he states, “The supreme underlying reality in all Christian experience of the Spirit is God’s sovereign grace. Grace means the free display of favor, particularly by a superior to an inferior. Referred to God, it is that free decision of God, apart from all constraint and in no way compelled by our merit, to have mercy upon his sinful creatures, saving his people from all the effects of their sin, through Jesus Christ.”

2.1. Ephesians 1:4-11

3. Conversion. Conversion is the act of turning or returning, to God. In the second edition of the New Bible Dictionary under the word conversion, the following conclusion is made. “Turning to God under any circumstances is, psychologically regarded, man’s own act, deliberately considered, freely chosen and spontaneously performed. Yet the Bible makes it clear that it is also, in a more fundamental sense, God’s work in him. The OT says that sinners turn to God only when themselves turned by God.”

- 3.1. See Jeremiah 31:18-25 “I have surely heard Ephraim grieving, ‘You have chastised me, and I was chastised, Like an untrained calf; Bring me back that I may

be restored, For You are the LORD my God. /For after I turned back, I repented; And after I was instructed, I smote on my thigh; I was ashamed and also humiliated Because I bore the reproach of my youth.”

3.2. Read Lamentations 5:21

3.3. The NT teaches that when men will and work for the furthering of God’s will in regard to their salvation, it is God’s working in them that makes them do so. Read Philippians 2:12-13.

4. Regeneration. Regeneration means born of the Spirit. It is the birth of our spirit as described in John 3. In the book, *The Holy Spirit*, by Charles Ryrie, he states that regeneration is; “that which begins the new life; it is the new birth.” The word regeneration is mentioned twice in the NT. These are Matthew 19:28 and Titus 3:5. Look up these scriptures and record your thoughts.

4.1. Matthew 19:28. And Jesus said to them?

4.2. Titus 3:5. *“He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit.”*

5. In Bruce Milne’s book ***Know The Truth***, he states; “Regeneration marks the moment and the means of our coming into union with Christ. It is an instantaneous change from spiritual death to spiritual life, a spiritual resurrection (Eph. 2:1,5), the once-and-



for-all event at the beginning of the Christian life, parallel to physical birth. It differs from conversion, with which it is closely associated, in emphasizing God’s action in giving new life; conversion is the human act of turning from sin to righteousness, which accompanies regeneration. Through regeneration the believer receives a new spiritual nature which will express itself in new concerns and interest. The regenerate are primarily concerned with ‘the things of God’, his Word, his people, his service, his glory, above all God himself. They will also experience new powers to resist sin and obey and serve God.”

5.1. How is regeneration accomplished? Read John 5:21-24. “For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son also gives life to whom He wishes. /For not even the Father judges anyone, but He has given all judgment to the Son, /so that all will honor the Son even as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him. /Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life.”

5.2. Romans 6:14.

5.3. This spiritual birth is instantaneous upon accepting Jesus as our Lord and Savior. This birth provides us with a new spirit, a new nature, a new life but it does not immediately modify your old ways. In addition it does not split the personality or soul. Men and women become three – (1) body, (2) soul and (3) spirit. The unregenerate person has only the capacity to serve sin while the regenerate person has a new nature with the capacity to serve righteousness.

5.3.1. Romans 6:20.



5.3.2. Romans 6:18. Set free from the enslaving powers of sin and attaching ourselves to God with the ultimate goal of becoming the person God wants us to be. _____

6. As Christians, we have a very special privilege; it is that the **Holy Spirit lives within us**. He communicates with our spirit that was born when we accepted Christ. As Charles Ryrie states in his book, *The Holy Spirit*; “The permanent and universal-among-all-believers indwelling ministry of the Spirit is at the heart of the distinctiveness of the Spirit’s work in this church age. Although He did live within some people in the Old Testament, that indwelling was neither permanently guaranteed nor universally experience even by all believers.” Ryrie goes on to say, “Today the **Holy Spirit lives in the beings of Christians only**, and He does so in all Christians. This was apparently not always well known by the church, for Paul **had to remind believers in the early days that this was a fact, just as it is necessary to instruct believers today of its truth.**” [Emphasis mine.]

6.1. 1 Corinthians 3:16; 6:19 “Do you not know that you are a temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? / Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own?”

6.2. Do you posses the Holy Spirit when you sin?

6.2.1. 1 Corinthians 6:19 _____

6.2.2. 1 Corinthians 3:1, 3 “AND I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual men, but as to men of flesh, as to infants in Christ. /for you are still fleshly. For since there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not fleshly, and are you not walking like mere men?”

6.2.3. 1 Corinthians 5:5 _____

6.3. Is the Holy Spirit a gift from Jesus?

6.3.1. Romans 5:5 _____

6.3.2. Acts 11:17 _____

6.3.3. John 7:37-39 *“Now on the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, ‘If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. / He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, “From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.” /But this He spoke of the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive; for the Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.”*

7. The Holy Spirit anoints those whom he calls for teaching and service. Anointing with the holy oil was an important event in the OT. When a person was anointed he became holy. Exodus 30:30 “And you shall anoint Aaron and his sons, and consecrate them, that they may minister as priests to Me.”

7.1. In the NT various people are anointed in order to help them in their ministry.
1 John 2:20 “But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you all know.”

7.2. All Christians are anointed. The primary purpose is to be able to discern the false teaching of people who are trying to deceive Christians. Once you are saved and have been born again, your anointing is permanent. It does not come and go. Our challenge is to become more spiritually mature so that we can recognize the teachings of the Bible so well, that when we hear counterfeit, we immediately recognize that something is wrong. Read 1 John 2:27 _____



8. **Baptism of the Holy Spirit.** This is the act of the Holy Spirit where He brings all Christians into one body. We are all part of the same family and are cared for and loved by God through the day-to-day, moment to moment work of the Holy Spirit.

8.1. Read 1 Corinthians 12:13 _____

8.2. Read Ephesians 4:3-6 *“being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. /There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; /one Lord, one faith, one baptism, /one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all.”*

8.3. Read Galatians 3:27 _____

8.4. The baptism of the Holy Spirit was never mentioned in the OT. Indeed, Christ Himself said that it was a future act given to new Christians only. This ministry may also be limited to only this age and will not continue, as it does now, when Christ returns.

8.4.1. Read Act 1:5 *”for John baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”*

8.4.2. Read Acts 11:15-17 _____

8.5. The purpose of baptism in the spirit is for each Christian to be able to identify with and associate ourselves with the crucifixion of Christ. We die to our old life, even though we maintain our capacity to sin. However, we are given power to overcome the old life and begin our new life. As Charles Ryrie states; “Being associated by baptism unto His death, burial, and resurrection is the basis for the crucifixion of the believer’s sin nature and his victory over sin. Crucifixion involves death, but death is not extinction; rather it



is separation. **So our co-crucifixion with Christ does not mean that our old nature becomes extinct; rather, we are separated from its domain and dominion so that we can live in a new way of life.**”

8.6. Baptism by water is not the same as baptism by the Spirit. Being baptized in water is an act of obedience. Baptism itself does not save, nor does it give anyone power; it is simply an act where one declares publicly and pictures outwardly what the Spirit has done for each believer inwardly.

9. **Sealed by the Holy Spirit.** In the past, when the written word was sent from one person to another, a fairly large drop of wax was placed on the document to indicate that this is not a forgery and it is indeed from the person indicated. Often, the sender would place his sign in the wax by pressing his/her ring into the wax so that it was clear to the person receiving the document that it was from the sender. **The Holy Spirit seals us into the body of Christ with a similar act.** Again, it demonstrates how serious God is in making us a member of His family. No one has the power to change this relationship. No one can break the seal of God.

9.1.2 Corinthians 1:21-22 _____

9.2. Ephesians 1:13 *“In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation – having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise...”*

9.3. The sealing last until the day of our redemption when we receive our resurrected bodies. Read Ephesians 4:30. _____

9.4. The purpose of sealing is to provide security. In addition, God has also given us The Spirit as an earnest pledge that all will be fulfilled. This is equivalent to earnest money given in a business transaction. It says that both the buyer and seller

are pledged to complete the transaction. Please note also by reading Ephesians 4:29-31 that we should not grieve the Holy Spirit by sins of the tongue.

10. **The Holy Spirit and speaking in tongues.** There is no question that God gave the early church the ability to speak in other languages. It must be clear that speaking in tongues is not just making up sounds, but speaking in clearly known languages without training or learning that language beforehand. This was a gift that God gave to the church in order for them to carry God’s teaching to thousands of others.

10.1. Mark 16:17

10.2. Acts 2:4; 10:46-47 *“And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit was giving them utterance.” Acts 10:46 “For they were hearing them speaking with tongues and exalting God. Then Peter answered, /’Surely no one can refuse the water for these to be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we did, can he?’”*

10.3. However, all did not speak in other languages. Read 1 Corinthians 14:5

10.4. The guidelines for speaking tongues are given in 1 Corinthians 14:26-40 *“What is the outcome then, brethren? When you assemble, each one has a psalm, has a teaching, has a revelation, has a tongue, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification./If anyone speaks in a tongue, it should be by two or at the most three, and each in turn, and one must interpret; /but if there is no interpreter, he must keep silent in the church; and let him speak to himself and to God. /Let two or three prophets speak,*



and let the others pass judgment. /But if a revelation is made to another who is seated, the first one must keep silent. /For you can all prophesy one by one, so that all may learn and all may be exhorted; /and the spirits of prophets are subject to prophets; /for God is not a God of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints. /The women are to keep silent in the churches; for they are not permitted to speak, but are to subject themselves, just as the Law also says. /If they desire to learn anything, let them ask their own husbands at home; for it is improper for a woman to speak in church. /Was it from you that the word of God first went forth? Or has it come to you only? /If anyone thinks he is a prophet or spiritual, let him recognize that the things which I write to you are the Lord's commandment. /But if anyone does not recognize this, he is not recognized. /Therefore, my brethren, desire earnestly to prophesy, and do not forbid to speak in tongues. /But all things must be done properly and in an orderly manner."

11. The **filling of the Holy Spirit**. This is one of the most important concepts concerning the relationship of the Christian with the Holy Spirit. The filling of the Holy Spirit is very different from the other ministries listed above because it is **conditional. It is based upon how we behave, how we pray, how we worship, how we sin and it is something that can be repeated over and over again.** The scriptural basis for the filling of the Holy Spirit is; Ephesians 5:15-20. *"Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, /making the most of your time, because the days are evil ./ So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. /And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit, /speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord; /always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father..."*

11.1. Based upon these verses, we learn three concepts of filling. They are:

11.1.1. **It is a Command**

11.1.2. **It is Conditional**

11.1.3. **It is Repeated**

11.2. The filling of the Holy Spirit is necessary for spiritual maturity. 1 Corinthians 3:1-3

11.3. **Filling of the Holy Spirit is essential for Christian service.**

11.3.1. Acts 4:31

11.3.2. Acts 9:17,20 *“So Ananias departed and entered the house, and after laying his hands on him said, ‘Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road by which you were coming, has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.’ / and immediately he began to proclaim Jesus in the synagogues, saying, ‘He is the Son of God.’”*

11.4. The concept of spirituality is shown in 1 Corinthians 2:15-16.

11.5. In order for us to be spiritual we must know the word of God. John 16:13 *“But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come.”*

11.6. **Filling helps us overcome the flesh.**

11.6.1. Romans 8:13.



11.6.2. Galatians 5:16-17. *“But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. / For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please.”*

12. There are two types of filling. The first one is a sovereign act of God. There are several examples of this type of filling.

12.1. Luke 1:15. _____

12.2. Luke 1:41 *“When Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting, the baby leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.”*

Luke 1:67: _____

12.3. The second type of filling is the pervasive influence and control of the Spirit in the Christian’s life. There are several examples of this type of filling.

12.3.1. Acts 6:3,5. *“Therefore, brethren, select from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may put in charge of this task. /The statement found approval with the whole congregation; and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas and Nicolas, a proselyte from Antioch.”*

12.3.2. Acts 7:55. _____

12.3.3. Acts 13:52. *“And the disciples were continually filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.”*



12.4. Spiritual filling is something every Christian can experience. Acts13:52.

12.5. But filling of the spirit is not something every Christian does experience. See Acts 6:3 above and Read Ephesians 5:18. *“And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit...”*

In the next lesson, ‘Developing Our Relationship With God’, we will examine more closely being filled with the Holy Spirit. We will learn that spiritual filling is key to spiritual maturity.

Summary. We learn that being a Christian is much more than belonging to an organization, being baptized or even being a part of the inner workings of a church. Your conversion and regeneration should, after a time begin to bear fruits in your life.

The Holy Spirit has come to live in you, provided you with a special spiritual gift (which we will learn about later) and you have experienced the anointing, baptism, sealing and filling of the Holy Spirit. All this will allow you to begin to show the fruits of the Spirit. Galatians 5:22-23 teach:

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.” We also have to be careful about who we listen to (false prophets) and who we are influenced by. Look at their fruits. Read Matthew 7:13-23 to obtain guidelines.

See a comparison of Baptism and Filling of the Holy Spirit in Appendix B.

During the week read/sing the following song as a reminder of this lesson.

Hoffman - [1878]Are You Washed In The Blood - Elisha A. Hoffman - [1878]

Have you been to Jesus for the cleansing pow'r? Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb? Are you fully trusting in His grace this hour? Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb? When the Bridegroom cometh, will your robes be white? Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb? Will your soul be ready for the mansions bright, And be washed in the blood of the Lamb? Are you washed in the blood, in the soul cleansing blood of the Lamb? Are your garments spotless? Are they white as snow? Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?