

## THE SUPERNATURAL REALMS OF CHRISTIAN FAITH

In this church age, the Father is in Heaven, the Son of God is at His right hand and the Spirit of God is here on earth, with the church and in the church. Everything that comes to the church, originates in the Father, comes through the Lord Jesus Christ and is delivered by the Holy Spirit. Our contact with God is through direct contact with the Holy Spirit. If we reject God's messenger to the church, we are refusing God provision to the church.

Because of this unique position that God has given to the Holy Spirit, it would appear that He would have a very important and prominent place in the church. The sad fact is that most of those who identify themselves as Christians are total strangers with the Holy Spirit.

Christian means "the anointed ones". If you ask 90% of those who identify themselves as Christians if they are anointed, they will have no idea what you are talking about. If you say "The Holy Spirit is the anointing", they will still have no idea what you said. To most church people "the anointing" is an abstract term that has no meaning today.

Many have been told that these terms have no meaning for us but just applied to the Apostles. The sad fact is that many Pentecostal churches are ignorant of the person of the Holy Spirit. It was not until the Charismatic movement began that there was much teaching about the Person and the work of the Holy Spirit. Most of the teaching was received as information and collected as doctrine. It was not really applied to our lives.

Without the supernatural manifestation of the Holy Spirit, the church is just a religious group that believe in and talk about Jesus Christ. Little power is released so evangelism is by word only. Evangelism is trying to convince by argument and logic who Jesus is. The evangelist should be educated in philosophy and human behavior so he will be able to influence people to listen to his words and convince them to believe. If human logic is successful then they can pray by saying these words after the evangelist. If evangelism was by logic and a flow of convincing words, we would not need the Holy Spirit. We would just need a good education and a good course in oratory. Those who lean toward this kind of ministry usually reject the supernatural.

There has generally been two main emphasis in the church which are explained by two terms. "Pragmatism" is one and "Mysticism" is the other. These present two polarized views that are critical of each other.

Pragmatism means; All doctrine must stand the test of practical and personal experience. Pragmatism in religion means: The scripture can only be interpreted when seen in practical experience. My interpretation of scripture is based upon my own personal experience.

Let us take an example. ACT 8:39 And when they came up out of the water, the **Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away**; and the eunuch saw him no more, but went on his way rejoicing. ACT 8:40 But **Philip found himself at Azotus**; and as he passed through he kept preaching the gospel to all the cities, until he came to Caesarea. Phillip was caught up by the Holy Spirit and was translated to Azotus. I haven't experienced translation personally, therefore I must come up

with an interpretation that satisfies my own experience. I may explain that this was just a figure of speech to denote that the Holy Spirit inspired Phillip to go to Azotus.

Those who are "dogmatically pragmatic" will reject any concept that is Supernatural or a truth that they have not personally experienced. Most all of us are in some way affected by our own pragmatism. Some for example will accept the supernatural as it occurred in scripture but will not accept it as valid for their life. If they haven't experienced the supernatural, they will reject the supernatural or declare that it was only for the Apostles or the early church.

Mysticism says that it is possible to know God and experience God outside the five physical senses. Mysticism accepts and promotes that we can receive knowledge of God from God through faith, prayer, and Bible study. That communion with God is in another realm than what is experienced through the natural senses. That spiritual insight is the result of spiritual communion with God through the Holy Spirit.

Let us take an example. In the Book of Revelations, John experiences many things that are outside the realm of natural knowledge or of the five physical senses. Another: Jesus was teaching and perceived that the power of God was present to heal. Another: Jesus knew their thoughts. There are many, many examples of spiritual communication that are outside the natural realms of knowledge.

Those who are "dogmatically pragmatic" will say, " God has given us His word and that is all we are to know. If your knowledge does not come exclusively from the scripture it is wrong. They reject any intuitive knowledge.

If we would say "God spoke to me", that would be considered as heresy. Some pragmatists would ask " Does God speak with an accent"?

Dogmatism means to hold tenaciously to an opinion. To become inflexible in a doctrinal position.

Now the problem with " mysticism " is that it has so few restraints. It can easily get out into the wild and frenzied extremes and surpass what the scriptures declare. Since it moves in realms outside the logical and intellectual it can get weird. What is ascribed to the Holy Spirit can actually be in some realm far removed from the Holy Spirit and even into demonic realms.

Extreme Mysticism could include religions like " Inner Light", "Mind Science", "New Thought", "Christian Meditation" and cults that promote a mystical way of life. "A Mystical way of life" advocates an abnormal life style that elevates man into another realm of knowing that cannot be experienced by those who do not participate in that life style. By living a certain way, man may elevate himself into another realm of knowledge. A kind of "tree of knowledge" where you climb to the top limb beyond everyone else.

Both extremes are equally destructive. Ideally our experience should be somewhere between these two extremes. There are realms beyond the five physical senses that are "in the Spirit" but all experiences should be confirmed by scripture. Our faith should hold to the fact that everything

that God has promised can and should be experienced. What God has promised to the church is available to the church through out the whole church age and is not limited to the early church. We should stand in the truth that the Holy Spirit is the interpreter of all scripture and not our experience. If our experience is less than what the scripture describes, we should bring our experience up to where the scripture is rather than reduce the scripture to the level of our experience.

We should be mystical enough to accept that the Holy Spirit teaches, guides, comforts, speaks and corrects outside the five physical senses. That the Holy Spirit ministers outside the normal intellectual process. The Holy Spirit communicates outside the realm of the soul. He speaks and directs directly to our spirit and our spirit then communicates what He said to our soul. This is mystical and the pragmatist has a big problem with this kind of guidance. To the pragmatist, this kind of communication is weird. He can only accept what he can logically understand with the intellect. Most errors occur in these two extremes. If we can understand these two positions we will understand why there are so many different interpretations of the work of the Holy Spirit. We should gain some insight into why some reject the work of the Holy Spirit in the church. Then why others accept the work of the Holy Spirit and then get weird and spooky.

If we just carefully studied the 92 verses in the New Testament that specifically speaks of the Holy Spirit and His work, we would immediately understand that the Mystical approach is quite viable. If we carefully made a study of each of the 319 verses that speak of spirit or Spirit we should understand there is a realm outside the five physical senses that approach the supernatural. If we eliminate the supernatural from the scripture, we would have to erase some of every chapter in the New Testament. The Christian who walks by faith instead of sight will be much more mystic than pragmatic. The Christian who sticks to scripture as the only guide to experience will not get so mystic that they get weird. The pragmatist who studies the scripture and asks the Holy Spirit to help him will get more and more mystic. He will begin to accept the supernatural as normal.