

SEED & BREAD

FOR THE SOWER ISA. 55:10 FOR THE EATER
BRIEF BIBLICAL MESSAGES FROM

THE WORD OF TRUTH MINISTRY

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"SPIRITUAL"-A WORD STUDY

In the previous study, the word "spiritual" was shown to be an adjective used specifically by the Spirit to designate things produced by the Spirit of God, which came directly from God without any human instrumentality or natural processes intervening. I believe that this definition will shed light on every passage in which the word is found, and it is my plan to demonstrate this in this second study.

To emphasize this definition further, let me say that it is my firm conviction that when Adam was created, he had a spiritual body. No man and woman came together in order to produce him. He did not pass through the birth processes, even as you and I. He was never a babe, had no father or mother; but he was every inch a man. Since he was produced entirely by God without human instrumentality or natural processes, he was spiritual. We will now see how this definition fits in the passages where the word *pneumatikos* is found.

Romans 1 :11. "Some spiritual gift." The message which was proclaimed by Paul was not according to man; he had not received it from men; he was not taught it in, any school; nor did he learn it from other apostles (Gal. 1: 11, 12). It was therefore a «spiritual gift" which he desired to pass on to those in Rome.

Romans 7 :14. "The law is spiritual." Many prohibitions and directions in the law of Moses were not new. Men had seen the need of these restrictions; conscience told them they were right; and rulers before Moses had decreed them for their subjects. However, the law of Moses was a divine

production. Even Moses was only the deliveryman. Indeed, the law was spiritual. It came from God apart from any human instrumentality.

Romans 15 :27. "Their spiritual things." Israel's spiritual things, of which the nations became partakers, were entirely out of God. They had nothing worthwhile to give to anyone except what they had received from Him.

1 Corinthians 2: 13. "Comparing spiritual things with spiritual." In the context of this passage, Paul tells of speaking «wisdom among them that are perfect" (1 Cor. 2:6). Here he speaks of matching that which is spiritual with those who are spiritual. He took God-produced truths and gave them to God-produced believers.

1 Corinthians 2 :15. "He that is spiritual." The contrast here is between the soulish (*psuchikos*) man and the spiritual (*pneumatikos*) man. The chief characteristic of the soulish man is that he rejects the things of the Spirit of God, neither can he know them for they are spiritually discerned. In contrast, the God-produced believer receives the things of the Spirit of God.

1 Corinthians 3:1. "I could not speak unto you as unto spiritual." As believers who had been produced by the Spirit of God, they were spiritual. Yet, because of shortcomings, Paul could not speak to them as such.

1 Corinthians 9:11. "If we have sown unto you spiritual things." The things that the apostles had planted in these Corinthians were most certainly things produced by the Spirit of God.

1 Corinthians 10 :3, 4. "Spiritual meat. . . spiritual drink . . . spiritual rock." This passage is the basis for my definition of the word "spiritual." In John 6:1 - 14, we read of the feeding of about five thousand men. Our Lord began with five barley biscuits and two sardines, a boy's lunch. This was material food, produced by natural means, which, in the case of the barley biscuits, required the planting of seed, time for growth, harvesting, threshing, grinding, and baking. The Lord Jesus produced barley biscuits apart from all this. Those biscuits which the boy brought could not be called spiritual. Those which the Lord produced could be called spiritual. They were produced by Him apart from all natural processes.

1 Corinthians 12:1 and 14:1. "Spiritual gifts." The word "gifts" in both of these passages is supplied by the translator. Some noun is certainly needed to complete the sense. "Gifts," "endowments," "manifestations," and "persons" have been used by various translators. The word "endowments" appeals to me more than any other. But whatever Paul may have had in mind, we know he was speaking of something produced solely by God's Spirit.

1 Corinthians 14:37. "If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual." I do not think that I am a prophet, and neither do I claim to be spiritual. Many men are prone to think of themselves as being spiritual, and they readily ascribe spirituality to others who conform to their mold. I do not claim spirituality for myself, and neither will I ascribe it to any other man. However, I do claim that as a theogenic believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, I am in possession of many things that are very definitely spiritual. I have faith in the record God has given of His Son. I have a forgiveness that is entirely of God. I have redemption and all that comes under the heading of salvation, and these are things of which God is the author and for which He is entirely responsible. No priest has absolved me; no blood of bulls and goats has redeemed me. The things I claim as a believer are entirely spiritual. They are out of God. In the present dispensation, one person cannot be more spiritual than another. Some are more devoted, more faithful, and more diligent, yes, even more prayerful and careful; but all believers are now in Christ Jesus and none can claim spiritual possessions that are not the joint property of all.

1 Corinthians 15:44 - 46. "Raised a spiritual body. . . there is a spiritual body." If we try here to read the Platonic concept of "immaterial" into the word "spiritual," then the two words "spiritual body" flatly contradict each other. It would be like saying "cold heat" or "hot ice." There are no such things. When Jesus Christ was raised from the dead, He invited His disciples to handle Him, saying, "A spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see Me have" (Luke 24:39). Thus, in resurrection He had a material body; and we can expect to have the same.

Galatians 6:1. "Ye which are spiritual." These were men of flesh; yet, they are described as spiritual.

Ephesians 1 :3. "All spiritual blessings." The usual cliché, which men utter when they come to this passage, is that, "Our blessings are spiritual in the heavenlies, while Israel's blessings are to be material upon the earth." Such a statement implies that the opposite of spiritual is material and that Israel is to have no spiritual blessings. How can these men make such a declaration in view of the words spoken by Jeremiah: "I will put My law in their inward parts and write it on their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be My people" (Jeremiah 31: 33)? These are most certainly great spiritual blessings. The Ephesian passage speaks of "every spiritual exaltation," and designates exaltations of which God alone is the author - exaltations that will be our portion apart from any human agency or process. The Pope of Rome may be very highly exalted by men now, but will he ever be so exalted by God?

Ephesians 5 :19. "Spiritual songs." This would have to mean songs of which God is the author. Truly, He "giveth songs in the night" (Job 35:10).

Ephesians 6 :12. "Against spiritual wickedness in high places." It would seem as if all I have said as to the meaning of "spiritual" is contradicted by the occurrence here. But not so, for there is a very faulty rendering of the Greek here. "Spiritual" is *pneumatika*, which is accusative, plural, neuter. "Wickedness" is *poneria*, which is genitive, singular. These two words do not agree in case and number and cannot be used together. Since there is no substantive here, one needs to be supplied. The phrase should read: "**with the spiritual forces of wickedness among the most elevated.**" It is these forces against which we wrestle. Understanding the word "force" to mean the power to act effectively and vigorously, or the power to persuade and influence, and seeing Satan as the prime example, it is not difficult to understand the use of the word "spiritual" here. Where did Satan get his wisdom, skill, and ability? Was he not endowed with these when he was created as one of the cherubim? Did he lose all these when he fell? As much as we dislike to admit it, we must acknowledge that Satan is in possession of forces of which God was the author and giver. God never intended that these abilities should be used by him the way they are being used today. Satan has prostituted all his God-given powers in ways that are contrary to the will of God. These are the forces against which we must now wage war.

Colossians 1:9. "Wisdom and spiritual understanding" Solomon urged his children saying: "Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding" (Prov. 4:7). Wisdom can be

obtained in many ways by natural processes. We can memorize passages in the Bible and quote them freely; but if we ever understand them, understanding will have to be given by God. And as Paul declares: "For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but by the Spirit of God" (1 Cor. 2:11). Such knowledge and such understanding are indeed spiritual.

Colossians 3:16. "Spiritual songs." See comments on Eph.5:19.

1 Peter 2 :5. "A spiritual house." A good commentary on this will be found in Hebrews 3:1 - 6.

1 Peter 2 :5. "Spiritual sacrifices." A spiritual sacrifice would be one provided wholly by God.

There are two occurrences of the adverb that need to be considered. In 1 Cor. 2:14 we are told that the things of God are "spiritually discerned." This means that comprehension and understanding of that which is divine is wholly dependent upon God and must come from Him. In Revelation 11:8 we are told that Jerusalem "**spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt.**" This means that this is a divine designation. It is called this by God.

It has not been my intention to expound or explain all these passages. I have deliberately avoided trying to do so. My purpose has been to show that my definition of the word "spiritual" is in harmony with, and is not contradicted by, any passage in the New Testament.

We commit an offense against the Word of God when we take the word "spiritual" and force it to serve us, making it mean what we want it to mean. To a certain extent, this word is a Pauline word, since practically all its occurrences are found in his epistles. Let us use it as he did and give it the meaning which he gave it. In doing so, we will be holding fast the form of sound words which we have learned from him (2 Tim. 1:13).

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