

# The Truth Concerning the Mingling of God and Man

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Mingle is a scriptural term that describes an inner union between God and man. To know the nature of this union we need to experience the reality of the following verses in the Bible: “Now the Lord is the Spirit” (2 Cor. 3:17

); “The Lord be with thy spirit” (2 Tim. 4:22); and “He that is joined [Greek: joins himself] unto the Lord is one spirit” (1 Cor. 6:17). The truth concerning the mingling is found in these three verses.

1. *The identification of the Lord with the Spirit.* The Lord is identified with the Spirit according to 2 Corinthians 3:17. This identification is made by the Apostle Paul in the context of experiencing the Lord within the heart. The heart is to *turn* to the Lord in verse 16, and then we are to *behold* the glory of the Lord in verse 18. This turning and beholding issues in our being transformed [Greek: *metamorphosis*] into the same image of Christ, who is identified as the Lord, the Spirit. The reason for this identification is not theological, but practical. The Lord here is not defined in metaphysical terms, but experienced as a Person. He so mingles Himself in our being while we behold Him that we actually are transformed into His image. This spiritual metamorphism takes place *from* the Lord, the Spirit.

As the Lord Jesus in His incarnation became flesh (John 1:14) in order to accomplish redemption for man, so now in His resurrection, He became a life-giving Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45) in order to penetrate man with His life and mingle Himself as the Spirit with our spirit. In fact, it seems that Paul is totally occupied in his Epistles with being in the experience of the risen Christ as the life-giving Spirit in contrast to reflections on the earthly life of Christ in the flesh. He says: “...even though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet *now* we know him so no more. Wherefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature...” (2 Cor. 5:16-17). The phrase “in Christ” or “in the Lord” appears 164 times in Paul’s writings. This strongly indicates Paul’s intimate experience of inner union with the Lord. This union is possible because the Lord is the Spirit in Paul’s experience.

David Somerville’s book, *St. Paul’s Conception of Christ* (pp. 117-118, 121-122), which was the William Cunningham lectureship (1897) of the Free Church College, Edinburgh, also speaks of this truth:

But Paul not only identifies the Spirit of God with that of Christ, he identifies both with the very *Person of Christ*. “The Lord is the Spirit,” we read; and, again, “we are changed into the same image by the Lord, the Spirit.” The intention of the apostle in this passage is evidently to bring out the fact, that He whom Christians acknowledged to be the Lord was...one who was Spirit, ruling men by a Divine power at the centre of their lives. Being “in Christ” and “being in the Spirit” are the same thing; and in the thought of the apostle, “Christ,” the “Spirit of Christ,” and “the Spirit of God” are practically synonymous. At the Resurrection Christ became a Life-giving Spirit to mankind,...This practical identity of Christ and the Spirit of God is the ground or reason of that union between Christ and His people that is so characteristic a feature of the experience of the Christian life described in the Epistles of Paul, and that sets his thought of Christ in so original a light. Inasmuch as His Spirit is in them, and is the source of their life, and His Person is in a true sense one with the Spirit, He Himself is said to be and to live in them, and they in like manner are said to be and to live in Him. Everyone is aware of the frequency with which the phrase “in Christ” is used by the apostle in reference to the inner life of the believer. It points to a union with Him as Spirit or Pneuma, in virtue of which He is the very principle of their lives, so one with all that is most deeply personal in them that He moulds and determines their activities, and reproduces in them what is most deeply personal to Himself. Quickened at the centre of their being by the very Spirit of God that formed the principle of His Personal life, and having Christ thus dwelling in them, believers are enabled to live His life over again; or, rather, they are the agents by and in whom He lives over again His own life, reincarnating Himself, as it were, ever anew in the flesh of His people.

2. *The location of the Lord with our spirit.* The truth concerning the mingling is further seen by Paul’s final word in 2 Timothy 4:22: “The Lord be with thy spirit.” This verse specifically locates the Lord who is the Spirit in 2 Corinthians 3:17 with the spirit of man. The place of Christ’s indwelling in the believer is the human spirit.

The human spirit is mentioned over 75 times in the New Testament, and 46 occurrences are in Paul’s writings. Such phrases as “thy spirit” (2 Tim. 4:22); “his spirit” (2 Cor. 7:13); “my spirit” (1 Cor. 16:18); and “our spirit” (Rom. 8:16), all refer to that part of our being that was born of God when we received Christ (cf. John 1:12-13 and 3:6).

Our spirit is an organ of our being that belongs to us in the same way the various members of our physical body belong to us, such as our eyes, mouth, arms or legs. This is why the Bible uses personal pronouns like “thy,” “his,” and “our,” when speaking of the human spirit. Thus, *our* spirit is as much a part of our makeup as a human being as our physical parts and psychological parts of conscience, mind, emotion, and will.

The Bible reveals that we even have control over our spirit similar to the control we may exercise over the other parts of our being. First Corinthians 14:32 says: “And *the spirits* of the prophets *are subject to the prophets.*” This indicates that *we can take the initiative* with the faculty of our spirit to contact the Lord any time and any place. *We can activate* our experience of the Lord by exercising our spirit to pray, sing, call upon His Name, and speak forth with the Word of God. The literal Greek translation of Ephesians 5:18 through 20 says: “...be filled in spirit; [while] *speaking* to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, [while] *singing*

and making melody in your heart to the Lord; [while] *giving thanks* always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.” It is *while* we speak, sing, and give thanks that our spirit is exercised to contact the Lord and be filled with Him.

It is to our spirit that the Lord comes and locates Himself in us. It is in our spirit that we can locate the Lord to experience Him all day long. Our regenerated human spirit is where Jesus lives in us. Therefore, our spirit is mingled with the Lord, the Spirit. The two spirits are mingled into one. This is the marvelous inner union that exists within every child of God.

3. *The mingling with the Lord as one spirit.* The truth concerning the mingling is clearly revealed in 1 Corinthians 6:17: “He that is joined [Greek: joins himself] unto the Lord is one spirit.” The joining mentioned in this verse is of such a nature that the two spirits joined together become *one spirit*. This is the revelation of the mingled spirit. This mingling of the Divine Spirit and the human spirit exists in the realm of experience, that is, the experience of joining ourselves to the Lord.

It is important to see at this point that the faculty of our human spirit that is joined to the Lord has at least four stages. Firstly, it was originally created by God (Gen. 2:7; Prov. 20:27; Zech. 12:1). Secondly, it was deadened by sin (Gen. 2:17; Rom. 5:12; Eph. 2:1). Thirdly, it was made alive and born again through receiving Christ (John 1:12-13; 3:6). Fourthly, it is mingled with the Lord, the Spirit, in the experience of joining ourselves to the Lord (1 Cor. 6:17; Rom. 8:15-16).

In the stage of the mingling of our human spirit with the Lord, the Spirit, it must be understood that the nature of the oneness of the two spirits does not destroy the independent existence of either of them. But, rather, both have their separate existence in themselves. However, in the experience of the mingling of the two spirits there is a mutual interpenetration that the Bible describes as “one spirit.”

An example of this type of mingling is found with the burning bush in Exodus 3:2. The bush that Moses saw was fully penetrated with fire, yet it was not consumed. The bush remained the bush and the fire remained the fire; yet these two entities moved into one another and fully penetrated each other. There was a mingling of the fire with the bush, and the bush with the fire, without destroying the distinction of each. This is the way the mingling of the two spirits must be understood according to 1 Corinthians 6:17. The Lord, the Spirit, can be likened to the fire dwelling in the bush, and our human spirit can be likened to the bush. Both fire and bush remain as two things while they mingle and interpenetrate one another. According to existence they *are* two, but according to experience they *are* one. Hallelujah for such an experience! “He that joins himself to the Lord is one spirit.”

Christ today not only is seated at the right hand of God in the heavens (Rom. 8:34), but also is available to have constant contact with as the life-giving Spirit. This means that on the level of experience we should identify the resurrected Christ with the Spirit. The effect this kind of realization has on your Christian life is momentous. It will cause you, like Paul, to live and move and have your being “in Christ.” It will infuse you with fresh faith that Christ Himself is

indeed living His very life in and through you. You can locate the Lord in your experience because you know the reality of 2 Timothy 4:22: "The Lord be with thy spirit." You can also take the initiative to join yourself to the Lord and be mingled with Him as "one spirit." You will consider yourself as a person mingled with Another Person who not only indwells you, but grows in you, and even makes His home in your heart to the extent that you can be filled with all the fullness of God. This is the truth concerning the mingling.

*This is the fourth of five articles in this series.*