

# **TRANSMISSION**

or

***“WHOSE SPIRIT CAME FROM THEE?”***

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(or, “WHOSE SPIRIT CAME FROM THEE?”)

Words can carry immense power.

The reason for this is more than simply the meaning of the words themselves; they can also act as channels carrying and transmitting the spirit of the speaker. One man may speak certain words with very little or no spiritual impact. Another may utter exactly the same words with very powerful consequences.

In this study I wish to try and give the Biblical reason for this by explaining that phenomenon sometimes known as transmission.

An outline is given below of the approach used.

1. God's Word as a transmitter of the Holy Spirit
2. The words of man as transmitters of his spirit
  - a) Transmission of the *Holy* Spirit
  - b) Transmission of the *human* spirit
  - c) Transmission of an *unclean* spirit
  - d) Transmission of *another man's* spirit
3. Conclusion: Transmission in the wider sense

## THE WORD OF GOD AS A TRANSMITTER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

We are told that Jesus is called *The Word of God* (Rev 19.3), and that *out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword that with it he should smite the nations* (Rev. 19.15). This sword is not literal but is the Word of God, the sword of the Spirit.

In 2 Thessalonians 2.8 we are told of the destruction of the man of sin, *whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth*. From this we see that Jesus shall destroy his enemies merely by the Word which proceeds from his mouth.

This Word is not called the sword of the Spirit just because the Spirit uses it to accomplish His work, however. The Word is not merely the tool used by the Spirit; it is the carrier and impartor of the Spirit — yea more, the Word and the Spirit are one.

This explains Jesus' words to His disciples: *the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit* (Jn 6.63). This is why Thessalonians tells us the man of sin is consumed by *the spirit of his mouth*, whereas Revelation speaks of the destruction of the Lord's enemies by the sharp two-edged sword which is the **Word**.

Jesus' words are so filled with the Breath of God that the very words themselves convey the Spirit. His very speech imparts the Spirit. When Jesus said to His disciples, *Peace be unto you* (Jn 20.21), the Spirit Who imparts peace accompanied the words. The very act of His breathing upon them imparted the Spirit (Jn 20.22).

## THE WORDS OF MAN AS TRANSMITTERS OF HIS SPIRIT

Now the principle explained above is not restricted to the words spoken by the Lord. The words spoken by a man may also impart spiritual power.

The difference is, however, that man's words are not only capable of carrying the *Holy Spirit*, they can also convey the speaker's *human* spirit (whether in a sanctified or an unholy state) and even an *unclean* spirit.

I wish to emphasise again that this is not simply a question of the source which prompts and inspires the words spoken. It is a question of the very words themselves being carriers of that inspiration source, with varying effects on the listener depending on the nature of that source, whether holy, human or unclean. A grasp of this principle will assist significantly in the spiritual warfare.

Before proceeding to illustrate how a man's human spirit can be transmitted by his words, let us firstly clearly establish from the Scriptures that this is a divine truth. In the book of Job we read the following:

*For I am full of matter (Margin = words), the spirit within me (Margin = the spirit of my belly) constraineth me. Behold my belly is as wine which hath no vent; it is ready to burst like new bottles. I will speak that I may be refreshed: I will open my lips and answer. (Job 32:18-20)*

Elihu here states that his spirit is straining to express itself and to find release. In verse 20a he indicates the means whereby this can be achieved: by speaking forth. The literal Hebrew rendering of the words *be refreshed* is "breathe" or "give forth breath". The breath referred to in this context is not the simple inhaling and exhaling of air from the lungs. The Hebrew word for "breath" is identical to that translated "spirit".

So, by speaking Elihu would not only be giving release to the *words* which his spirit within was compelling him to give forth, as described in verse 18. He would also release his *spirit*. His spirit gave rise to and compelled the words; but the words also gave expression to his spirit.

Once we understand that a man's words may also express his spirit, we can understand how the state of his spirit at any given time will "colour" his words, and transmit to others, with the appropriate effect.

Unless the listeners are strong in spirit, therefore, they will suffer the ill effects of any defiling or unsanctified influence in the speaker's spirit. Conversely, a man whose spirit is sanctified and united with the Holy Spirit will impart the beneficial effects of the Spirit in his speaking. Thus the spirit of the speaker can markedly determine the effects of his words. This explains why two different men can utter the same words with differing effects on the listeners.

### **(a) Transmission of the Holy Spirit**

Let us now consider the beneficial effects that can be produced by a man's words when his spirit is in intimate communion with the Holy Spirit.

The Scriptures say: *he that is joined to the Lord is one spirit* (1 Cor 6.17). It is therefore possible for the believer's spirit and the Holy Spirit to be one. When a believer who tastes deeply of the communion of the Spirit speaks, therefore, his words will transmit the wholesome effects of the Holy Spirit Who is joined with that believer's human spirit. Not only, for example, is he able to preach on the theme of the Holy Spirit; his very words will have the power actually to impart the Spirit Himself, simply by virtue of their being uttered.

In Acts 2.4 we read: *They ... began to speak in foreign languages according as the Spirit gave them words to utter* (Weymouth). This demonstrates plainly the truth shown in other verses (e.g. Matt 10.20, 1 Cor 2.13, 2 P 1.21) that individual words can be directly inspired by the Holy Ghost.

But, not only may a believer's words be imparted by the Spirit, however; his words may impart the Spirit. This is a very beautiful truth. A believer who walks in the Spirit can not just say *Peace be to this house* (Lk 10.5); he can also speak that peace into the house. His very words can impart the Spirit Who creates the reality of those words.

It is possible to be as full of the Holy Ghost as Stephen, of whom it is said: *they were not able to resist the wisdom and the Spirit by which he spake* (Acts 6.10). Christians' words can be so charged with the Anointing that they seem to issue forth like streams of fire, just like the two witnesses:

*And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies.* (Rev. 11.4)

This fire is not literal fire, but the powerful effect of the words they speak under the inspiration of the Spirit of prophecy. (Compare Jer 5.14: *I will make my words in thy mouth fire, and this people wood, and it shall devour them.* Cp. Jer 20.9.) And yet this fire is more than just the effect of the words. It is the effect of the Spirit, the Breath of God which not only inspires the speaker with the words which are to be spoken but which also issues forth like a fiery stream in the words spoken.

The effect of the words of the Lord Himself are described by Isaiah in an identical fashion:

*his lips are full of indignation, and his tongue as a devouring fire... the pile thereof is fire and much wood; the breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it* (Isa 30.27,33).

In the one verse we are told that it is the breath (or, Spirit) of the Lord which is the agent of the fire, and in the other that it is His tongue (i.e. the organ of speech). The very words spoken are themselves the transmitters and carriers of the Breath.

How beautiful to know that the words from a believer's mouth can be so charged with the Spirit that they have the very same effect as if they had been spoken by the Lord Himself.

### **(b) Transmission of the human spirit**

So far I have merely touched on the possibility of a believer's spirit not being wholly purer and consequently of his words imparting unwholesome influences instead of

beneficial ones. It is now time to enlarge on this topic as it is of considerable relevance.

If a believer fails to maintain the close communion of the Spirit, then his words will be channels and transmitters of his own human spirit. Even when uttering words which in themselves are good, they will often be coloured by his own spirit. It is possible, for example, for a man to preach about an inspiring subject, and yet to leave his listeners with a heavy or depressing effect. (Conversely, it is possible to preach on a solemn subject and yet to leave the listeners inspired and with a lightness of spirit.)

This is why preachers need more than simply to impart good words; they need to experience continually the communion of the Spirit in order that their words would carry that Spirit with them. Otherwise, their words will carry their own spirit, in whatever state it is. Hence, for example, a man may preach on love, yet minister hardness; or preach on grace, and yet minister law.

A Christian may suffer deeply from a condemning conscience, and be badly affected by *the spirit of bondage* (Ro 8.15), not partaking deeply of *the Spirit of adoption* (Ro 8.15), and the inner freedom this brings. Thus even if he preaches on the evangelical doctrines of salvation by faith through grace alone, etc., the bondage and fear of his own spirit will transmit to the listeners. Those who are strong in spirit will discern this without being affected, but the weak in spirit can be affected and troubled by it. Hence the strange effect of listeners some-times feeling condemned after hearing a sermon on grace.

Once it is clearly understood that a man's spirit can "colour" his words and be carried by them to others, many other paradoxical situations will become clear. One man may speak of heart-rending persecution and sufferings endured, and leave the hearers with a grief which depresses. Another can describe similar sufferings, and yet despite their inner grief, the listeners feel strengthened and uplifted. Why is this?

The answer may lie in the spirit of the speaker (it may also, of course, lie in the listener's own spirit). He may have a *spirit of heaviness* (Isa 61.3), or a *sorrowful spirit* (Isa 1.15), or be *grieved in spirit* (Isa 54.6). The sorrows endured may even have led to a *broken spirit* (Pro 15.13; 17.22). This is a serious condition of spirit, for we are told: *The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmities, but a wounded spirit who can bear?* (Pro 18.4) The important thing is that the speaker's sorrowful spirit will transmit with his words.

Likewise with other conditions of spirit. There are those who have no rule over their own spirit (Pro 16.32; 25.28). Consequently they are *hasty of spirit* (Pro 14.29, Eccl 7.9). When they are present, therefore, there is an atmosphere of impetuosity and rush about them. Quiet spirits will very rapidly sense this over-active spirit. Conversely, those with a *quiet spirit* (1 P 3.4) will transmit a soothing, calming atmosphere when they speak.

An important thing to realise is that a man's spirit transmits irrespective of the content of his words. He may be preaching about the glory and supremacy of Christ, and yet a listener may have an acute consciousness of (for example) treachery. It seems that every-thing in the listener is crying out betrayal and treachery, and yet the speaker's words are magnifying Christ. Why? Because the listener has discerned that the speaker's *spirit was not steadfast with God* (Ps 78.8). He is not a man of a *faithful spirit* (Pro 11.13), *in whose spirit is no guile* (Ps 32.2). There is a deep awareness that the speaker has much need to take heed to his spirit (Mal 2.15,16).

Despite his sermon about the glory of Christ, therefore, there is within the speaker the capacity to betray Him.

I referred earlier to those who were strong and weak (not to be confused with poor) in spirit. The Bible teaches that we may not only grow in body, but also in spirit (Lk 1.80; 2.40). The strength of our spirit has much to do with our capacity either to be affected by or to resist the transmission of another man's spirit. We need to be strong in spirit to wage effectively our spiritual warfare, for it is possible for our spirits to be overwhelmed (Ps 77.3), or to fail (Ps 143.7). Rahab said to the spies: *our hearts did melt, neither did there remain (margin = rise up) any more courage (Hebrew = spirit) in any man* (Jos 2.11; cp 5.1). This graphically explains that "sinking feeling" we experience when our spirit sinks, and is unable to rise up in the face of words we hear or things we see.

This principle is clearly seen in the following verse about the tongue: *perverse-ness therein is a breach in the spirit* (Pro 15.4).

Words, therefore, have the power to breach the defences of a listener's spirit. It is not so much the words themselves as the spirit of the speaker that breaches his defences, thereby laying his spirit open to be affected by the transmission of the speaker's spirit.

This is why this topic is important. It is not simply a question of discerning the state of the speaker's spirit. It is important to realise that the latter's spirit may also affect in some detrimental way the spirit of the listener, either by causing him to partake of the same spirit (where there is an underlying community of feeling) or to be in some way depressed, troubled or affected by it.

### **(c) Transmission of an unclean spirit**

One reason why a clear understanding of the effect on a listener is necessary is because it is possible for the speaker's spirit to be demonically affected. The Biblical basis for this is explained in some detail in "*Mystery Babylon the Great*" (pp 18-21). It is briefly summarised again here.

It is possible actually to *have fellowship with devils* (1 Cor 10.20). 2 Corinthians 6.14-7.1 warns both of the fact of communion with the unclean and foul spirits of demons, and also of the effects of it. By the disobedience of Christians to the command: *touch not the unclean thing* (2 Cor 6.17), their own human spirit may be in some degree sullied by the uncleanness of the demonic spirits contacted. Hence Paul refers to the need for a cleansing from *all filthiness of the ... spirit* (2 Cor. 7.1).

Even without the clear and explicit example given above, there are other indications in Scripture of the possibility of the human spirit's defilement. Otherwise why is our spirit in need of sanctification as well as our bodies and souls (1 Thess 5.23)? There is a clear implication that the spirit may be not blameless. This explains Paul's prayers for the Lord Jesus Christ and His grace to be with the spirits of those to whom he writes (Gal 6.18; 2 Tim 4.22; Phile 25). From 1 Corinthians 7.34, that *she may be holy both in body and spirit*, it is evident that holiness of spirit is not automatic or to be taken for granted.

For a long time I had supposed that a Christian's spirit was automatically sound, but that it was his flesh that was unsanctified. I assumed from Matthew 26.41 (*the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak*) that just because the spirits of the three

apostles were willing on the particular occasion in question, therefore the spirits of all Christians were automatically always sanctified.

Then one day I had a new insight on a well-known verse:

*The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other (Gal 5.17)*

I suddenly realised that the fact that the Holy Spirit desired the things of God did not mean that our own spirit did so. The Spirit is not the spirit. The human spirit is not automatically inclined Godwards. For example, we read of those that erred *in spirit* (Isa. 29.24), have a *haughty spirit* (Pro 16.18), and are *proud in spirit* (Eccl 7.8), which are certainly not godly characteristics.

Let us now relate this to our main theme. Words can convey the spirit of the speaker. This applies not only when his spirit is in a healthy state, but also in its unsanctified state. In Proverbs 29.11, for example, we read: *a fool uttereth all his mind*. The word "mind" in Hebrew is literally "spirit". A foolish man, as much as a sanctified man, releases his spirit by his utterances. In so doing he may affect his listeners more than they realise.

Even more significant, however, is the fact that those whose spirits are in some way being demonically affected or defiled may also transmit that demonic defilement to others in their words. The consequences are many and varied, but all have a spiritually weakening and suppressing effect. Though I have only touched on this facet briefly here, many actual examples could be given.

#### ***(d) Transmission of another man's spirit***

So far we have considered how God transmits His Spirit in His words, and also how men's words like-wise may express and convey their own spirits, whether in a sanctified or unholy condition.

One of the strangest facets of this power of transmission, however, lies in the ability of one man to transmit the spirit of another. A general indication has already been given of this by showing how a man's spirit may be a channel for the Holy Spirit, or alternatively may transmit the defiling effects of an unclean spirit.

Job indicated his awareness of the power of a man's words actually to carry the spirit of someone other than the speaker when he asked Bildad: *To whom hast thou uttered words? and whose spirit came from thee?* (Job 26.4). The clear implication of Job's question is that he had discerned that someone's spirit was coming forth from Bildad, and that it was not the spirit of Bildad. Bildad was his friend, and Job clearly recognised that the spirit of Bildad's words was different from normal.

How can this happen? It is the effect of a man being so badly affected by the transmission from another man's words, that he then actually acts as a carrier of that transmission to others. In this way it is possible for a single man whose spirit is strongly defiled or affected by evil to affect others, who in turn (though not themselves the sources of the evil transmission) act as carriers of this man's spirit to yet others.

On one occasion, in Poland, I was in the company of a man who was a stranger to me. Even so I felt repeatedly an unusual consciousness of the presence of another

man who was doing great evil to the work of the Lord. I found this very perplexing since this stranger was certainly not the man of whom I felt so conscious, and in any case we were miles away from his residence. Despite this, it was impossible to shake off the consciousness of that evil man's presence there with me. Everything within seemed to cry out his name. At the first opportunity I enquired who the stranger was, and discovered to my astonishment that he was a very close associate of the evil man of whose presence I was so conscious. Evidently the stranger was so affected by the presence of his evil associate that he walked in the same spirit. It was a kind of perverted example of Paul's words about himself and Titus: *walked we not in the same spirit?* (2 Cor 12.18).

Often when words are spoken, there is a consciousness of someone other than the speaker inspiring the words. This is not simply a matter of the actual words used coming from another source; the spirit of that other source also accompanies them. Thus there are occasions when, without any factual basis or knowledge to justify it, there can come a discerning of the spirit of a man other than that of the speaker accompanying the words being spoken. Later discoveries then fully substantiate what could initially only be known by discernment. This frequently happens without the speaker even being aware that he is acting as a transmitter for someone else's spirit.

So far we have established that it is possible for a man to utter words which actually transmit the spirit of another man. This means that the transmitter has been in some way affected by the other man's spirit.

There is an even more advanced form of this phenomenon whereby a weaker man's spirit may actually (albeit unconsciously) be brought under the sway and control of another man's spirit in a more enduring way, rather than just as an occasional thing. The weaker man thereby reflects the wishes and thoughts of the stronger. Let us investigate further.

One of the spiritualistic powers referred to in Scripture is "charming". (Dt 18.11.) Perhaps the most well known example of this is snake charming (Ps 58.5, Eccl 10.11, Jer 8.17). Let it be clearly understood that this power is no mere fairground amusement; it is a very real and a very powerful force. It is no coincidence that it is the spiritualistic Hindus who are the most famous examples of such practices. Charming has far wider applications, however. Exactly the same sway may be exercised over other human beings as over snakes by those who are equipped with this ability. The very context of the word "charmer" in Deuteronomy 18.11 should make it abundantly clear that this is a very real spiritualistic power, not merely a pretended one.

What then, precisely, is charming? The Hebrew word means literally "to join a joining". It is often used in non-specialised senses such as to couple or join together (e.g. the taches which linked the tabernacle curtains), or to make a league or alliance with. It can also be translated to have fellowship, or to be a companion. All these senses indicate how the power of a charmer is exercised.

The underlying sense of all these different renderings of the same Hebrew expression is a binding together of two separate items or persons. And this is precisely how charming operates. The charmer's spirit, charged by evil spiritual energy, is able to overcome and exercise influence and power over the spirit of another, not necessarily with his concurrence or conscious will. It is an ensnaring and capturing of the will of another. This power is sometimes known as animal magnetism. Mesmerism and hypnosis work on the same basis. The mesmeriser seeks to get into a sympathetic relationship with his patient, and a spell is wrought by

gazing fixedly into the eyes. Mesmerism basically means that a spirit and will, other than that of the one being mesmerised, takes possession of all the mechanism of the being. Telepathy is another related phenomenon, except that whereas mesmerism is exercised by gazing into the eyes, telepathy is the action of one mind on another from a distance.

What is the application of this to believers? The New Testament clearly teaches that false doctrine is the fruit of seducing spirits and of the spirit of error. Those who pass on false teachings, therefore, are in grave danger both of progressively coming under the sway of the inspiration of those teachings and also of themselves being channels and transmitters of that inspiration. One of the effects of false teaching therefore can be to charm the listeners, thus blinding their eyes and bringing their minds into subjection. This is the reason for Paul's unusual words to the Galatians.

*O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you that ye should not obey the truth? (Gal 3.1)*

The word "bewitch" means to charm, bring evil upon by an evil eye, bewitch by spells, cast an evil spell upon. The word the Holy Spirit gave Paul was neither exaggerated nor sensational. The spiritual power of the words of the false teachers was exceedingly strong so that even Paul was astonished by the suddenness of the change in the Galatian believers. Doubtless the false teachers did not consciously seek to bewitch and charm. Nonetheless because of the evil spiritual power, which inspired their doctrines, they were in reality in possession of the power to charm and bewitch by means of the transmission of the inspiration spirit of their doctrine.

The effect of the bondage of one spirit by another man's spirit is not limited to false teachers. It is also possible for one man to hold an invisible sway over another as though his spirit has overpowered that of the other man. This is not an example of *the unity of the Spirit*, nor of the *fellowship of the Spirit*, mentioned by Paul (Eph 4.3; Phil 2.1), in which believers are of *one spirit* (Phil 1.27). It is the control, to a lesser or greater degree, of one man by another. Far more Christians are under the invisible and unconscious sway of others than is generally realised, and are thereby restricted from breaking into the freedom of the Spirit which they desire.

## CONCLUSION: TRANSMISSION IN THE WIDER SENSE

This study has chiefly been concerned with the power of the spoken word to communicate the speaker's spirit.

It has been shown how God's words impart also His Spirit, and that the words of men likewise transmit their spirit. In the latter case the effect can be very different depending on the condition of the speaker's spirit. His words can act as transmitters of the Holy Spirit, of the speaker's own human spirit, or of an unclean spirit. Finally, they can act as channels for the spirit of someone other than the speaker. In this latter connection, the ability of one man's spirit to influence and control that of another man was briefly introduced.

It is not only words, however, which can act as spiritual transmitters. There are many other means which cannot be properly expanded on this occasion. Provided the scriptures expounded in this study are clearly seen, however, there should be little difficulty in understanding the wider applications.

I shall briefly give one example. I mentioned earlier meeting a stranger who left me with a distinct impression of the presence of another man. On this occasion it was not his words which had this effect. In fact, he said nothing in my hearing. It was purely and simply his being there which had this effect.

This is very significant. Paul spoke of something similar in 2 Corinthians 2.14-16 when he referred to the ability of believers actually to carry with them to others the conscious sense and awareness of the Presence of Christ. It is possible to be so filled with the Spirit of Christ as to cause other men to be conscious of His Presence simply by our own physical presence. Similarly, some are so deeply affected by the unclean spirits of demons that their presence has a chilling effect on a Spiritual man. Even without prior knowledge of the demonic connections of the former, the Christian discerns the spirit which he is of. (Jesus referred to the influence of an alien spirit when He said: *Ye know not what spirit ye are of.*) Just as with our words, then, our very presence can transmit the Presence of Christ, the presence of an unclean spirit, or the presence of another person.

Many of the things considered here are very sobering. But, for me, the most beautiful thing is that our words, and even our very presence, can act as vehicles for imparting the Spirit. How wonderful to know we can not just speak to men about *the powers of the world to come* but that we may also carry the Life of that world with us, imparting it to whoever will receive.