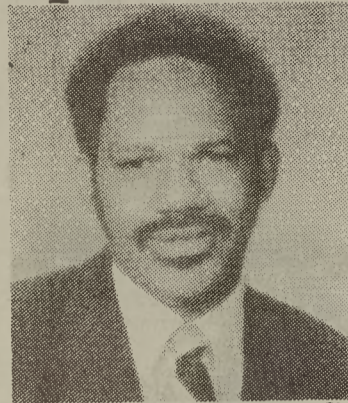


## Welcome The Holy Spirit



**JOHN ADAMS**  
**INSIGHTS**

Is the Holy Spirit welcome in our churches?

We ask ourselves whether or not the Holy Spirit is welcome in our churches. The Holy Spirit has for quite some time been allowed to come to our churches under the umbrella of denominationalism. He is not given the liberty to function as He would like. From the pulpit to the pew, the Holy Spirit has been restricted. In preaching, sometimes the Holy Spirit has been mistaken for being present in the moaning and groaning. He is often believed to be "on" the sister or brother who shouts and hollers the loudest. Charismatic circles or neo-pentecostal congregations have been giving the Holy Spirit permission to function as tongue only. For the most part, cults do not

*We can welcome the Holy Spirit in our churches as well as in our lives when we are willing to be led by Him.*

Romans 8:14 states "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." Individual denominations may try to restrict the Holy Spirit to their basic church doctrine and forfeit being a son of God. Charismatic or neo-pentecostal congregations may insist on speaking in tongues but can reject being led by the Holy Spirit and still not be considered a son of God.

The Holy Spirit has always been the "dark side of the moon." Stanley M. Burgess writes, "In Christian theology He has been long ignored and His work largely unrecognized." The result has been that the very heart, plan and resources of God have been rejected by the church. For years ministers have preached without His instruction, anointing, grace and power. Today, because the Holy Spirit is seldom welcomed in our churches, we have sermons with sayings but not substance. We have empty churches, dead, cold formalism of ritual and a host of defeated Christians sitting in churches on Sunday morning and yes even on Wednesday nights. They are spiritually bankrupt in their prayer life, praise and love relationship with God as their Father.

Thomas Arnold once wrote, "He who does not know God the Holy Spirit cannot know God at all." No doubt the Holy Spirit, if He were truly welcome as God in our churches, would be our helper, comforter, counselor, intercessor, advocate, strengthener and standby. He would change us and our churches to know the will of God for our lives. Why not say today "Holy Spirit you are welcome, your ministry we receive."

## Wedding Bells To Ring For Tramaine

**Wedding Bells:** Tramaine Hawkins is getting married. But not as some of you may have thought to ex-husband Walter Hawkins. Instead, Hawkins has formally announced her engagement to Oakland educator Tommy Richardson. The wedding, which will be private, is being slated for an undisclosed location sometime before the end of the year. In the meantime, Hawkins is working on her seventh solo album next year on Columbia Records.



**TRAMAINE**

**The Voice Is Back:** For nearly three decades, she was the voice behind the success of the Staple Singers, who racked up a steady stream of hits in the '70's including "Respect Yourself" and "I'll Take You There," but went bankrupt with the onslaught of disco. In 1987, she went solo, hooking up with Prince and signing to his Paisley Park record label. Today, Staples is 54 years old. As hard as it is to believe, it's true. And while times have changed, Mavis retains a great deal of popularity. Something that became most evident as she thrilled crowds across the country when she guested on Bebe & Cece's tour in their remake of "I'll Take You There." But Mavis is not living in the past. She has just released her second album, "The Voice." Yet while Staples is singing solo these days, it's not by choice. Says Staples, "the group is still together and whenever they get a gig, I go. It's just that no one would sign my family." That, she attributes to their ages. It was her father who urged her to go out on her own, admonishing "God gave you a gift and if you don't use it, he'll take it back." In April of 1987, she got call from Prince's man-

ager. They were doing a dusties concert in LA. "I got a call and they said Prince wants to come meet you." For Staples, Prince was a godsend. But since she signed with Prince, many in gospel were concerned with the direction she had taken. An earlier release, "Time Waits For No One" got her in hot water with gospel fans. Her second album, "The Voice," is just out. Just one listen to it with its strong, powerful message songs remove all doubts as to her direction. "The Voice is the Lord," she told one young fan. "The song is about a warning. Y'all better get your house in order, because the end may be coming soon so straighten up and fly right. Cause that's the

voice tapping on your window like a falling rain and it's going to keep on until you give up and give in to righteousness." Not surprisingly for Mavis, music is still a family affair. "Pops called one day," Staples reports, "and he said Mavis do you think your dad will play his guitar on your song, I said of course." In fact, Pops Staples is featured both musically and vocally on two of the selections. **Briefly:** One of the summer's biggest hits at Christian bookstores throughout the country is the new "African Heritage Bible." Check it out...

**This weeks' scripture:**



**STAPLES**

## SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON God's Response To Mankind's Sin

### Lesson Background

After hearing the confessions of Adam and Eve, God confronted the serpent. A curse was placed upon the serpent so that henceforth it would make its way by slithering across the ground on its belly. God stated that there would be continuing enmity between Satan and the human family, and that finally Satan would suffer a crushing defeat by one who would arise from among the seed of the woman.

A second curse was pronounced upon the ground. God announced that thorns and thistles would proliferate and make man's tilling of the ground a burden. With difficulty Adam and his offspring must gain the necessities of life, and it will be thus until man returns to the ground from which he was taken. The curses having been pronounced, it was time for God's action.

Adam and Eve did not become equal with God, as Satan had implied, but they did get something from their experience: they gained knowledge of good and evil. They should have known before that it was good to obey God and evil to disobey Him, but after their sin they know by experience. For the first time they knew the feeling of shame and fear. They knew that were sinners.

Satan constantly urges to know evil by experience. "Don't knock it till you've tried it," he says. Surely it is not necessary for Christians today to experiment with alcohol or illicit drugs, when the harmful effects of such practice is clearly seen in our

society. The dangers associated with promiscuous sex are well documented. Must one engage in such activity to understand the evil affect that it produces in one's body, mind, and spirit?

Since man had disobeyed God, God might have struck him dead on the spot. God could have made the fruit of the tree of life poisonous and death-dealing. What should He do?

God announced His decision. The first step He took was to drive man out of the garden. The lovely surroundings that man had enjoyed at first were no longer to be his home. At the same time his physical labor was to become more difficult. Now he would have to live by the sweat of his brow. Some time after our first parents were driven from Eden (we are not told how long), two sons, Cain and Abel, were born to them. In time both offered sacrifices to God. Because Abel's sacrifice was acceptable to God and Cain's was not, Cain became filled with envy toward his brother. In spite of God's warning of the danger of sin that was before him, Cain permitted his envy and hatred to control him, and he murdered his brother. As a result, he was condemned to leave the productive land he had tilled and become a wanderer in areas where the earth would not readily yield her fruits for his labor.

After Cain murdered Abel, Adam and Eve had other children, sons and daughters. It must have been one of the latter who became the wife of Cain. The descendants of Cain multiplied.

Some were inclined to city life, other to that of nomads. Some developed musical talents, others became skilled workers in bronze and iron. But it seems that the civilization developed by the descendants of Cain became increasingly wicked and depraved.

God blessed Adam and Eve with a son to replace Abel, and they named him Seth. When, in turn, a son was born to him, "then began men to call upon the name of the Lord." This suggests that the descendants of Seth did worship God. Even so, as mankind began to multiply, ungodliness and wickedness increased upon the earth.

Most Bible students understand "the sons of God" to be the descendants of Seth, who had maintained the worship of God, and "the daughters of men" to be the goddess races around them, of whom the line of Cain may have been the chief representative. When those of Seth's family began to intermarry with the heathen population, the salt of society lost its savor, and the total corruption of mankind ensued. God saw. The moral depravity of the age did not go unnoticed. The heart of men and women are always an open book to God. Man's wickedness was so pervasive that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

God was heartbroken over man's all-pervasive sinful condition. In language that man can understand, the author says it repeated the Lord that he had made man.

## Warning To Those Who Turn Back, II

Man is like a grasshopper; he sings all summer and when winter comes he perishes. My friend, summer is almost ended and you are not saved. Just think! A fit subject for hell and you think you are being mistreated, the just treatment, and fair treatment which you deserve is the bottomless pit of Hell! If you had your rights you'd be in Hell. Most souls will never know the folly of fighting Almighty Sovereignty until you lie in the dust. God has given you space to repent and you are complaining about being mistreated. What a tragedy! Dear soul, your so-called good times will soon be over. You are closer to eternity than you were a year ago. Walking on the brink of Hell and complaining about being mistreated. You don't see your need for the mercy of God. If you did, you'd be crying for mercy day and night; "Oh, God be merciful to me the sinner I am." You've never seen yourself as a lost sinner, dear soul, you'll see it here though or in Hell. I tell you something else, now get it all of you, you are going to acknowledge that I'm teaching the truth before you are saved. I'll stake my hope of Heaven on that one eternal truth. You are going to see these truths here or in Hell! I know I am teaching the truth and you will to, when the Holy Spirit opens your old, wicked, deceived heart, if He ever does open it here in time. If He doesn't open it here, you

are going to Hell. You can go on like you are going, if you do you'll bust Hell wide open.

Dear soul, as nothing and foolish you think these commentaries are, at the judgment you are going to follow you, not only for the remainder of this life, but throughout eternity. Even in Hell you'll face it, dear heart. The Lord says go after them, young Timothy.

My heart sinks within me to think of the tragedy you poor souls face. Oh, dear soul, you don't know what lies ahead for you. You are drifting out the judgment! The only Hope is Christ. When I was under Holy Spirit Conviction, I knew the Holy Spirit was only dealing with a few. I was so afraid He would leave me. I knew that if the Holy Spirit left me I was gone with no hope. If the Holy Spirit leaves you, my friend, you are gone. I was scared to death. Afraid to go to sleep at night, afraid of being hit by a car. Oh, dear soul, think on these things. Why do you think God continues to let His servants hammer on your heart week after week? One day, dear soul, God is going to tell the Holy Spirit to shut the door. Where will you be?

When the world's on fire, don't you want Christ's bosom to lay your head on? Now is the day of salvation. There is a temporary happiness in the world, believing a lie and being damned! What is our hope? My Hope is Christ.

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By J. M. Little