

## Paul, The Spirit and the People of God

### Questions on *Overture* (xiii-xv) and *Chapter 1: A Theology of the Spirit*

1. In Millard Erickson's popular theology textbook<sup>1</sup> we read,

The Holy Spirit is the point at which the Trinity becomes personal to the believer ...the Holy Spirit is active in the lives of believers, and resident within us. He is the [primary] person of the Trinity through whom the entire Triune Godhead currently works in us. We live in the period in which the Holy Spirit's work is more prominent than other members of the Trinity. The Father's work was the most conspicuous within the OT period, as was the Son's within the period [of the Gospels]. The Holy Spirit has occupied the center of the stage from the time of Pentecost on...

Current culture stresses the experiential, and it is primarily through the Holy Spirit's work that we feel God's presence within and the Christian life is given a special tangibility.

Calvin says this of the Holy Spirit:

The Holy Spirit is the bond by which Christ effectively binds us to himself... Until our minds are intent on the Spirit, Christ is in a manner unemployed, because we view him coldly [outside of] us, and so at a distance from us... [The Spirit] himself may be properly termed the key by which the treasures of the heavenly kingdom are unlocked...

Despite the central role of the Spirit in the life of the believer, Fee asserts "the Spirit has been largely marginalized both in the halls of learning and in the life of the church as a community of faith" (*Overture*, p. xiv, 1<sup>st</sup> par.). What does he mean by this?

2. What might Fee mean by "the Spirit as an experienced, empowering reality"? How does Fee think the "Spirit movements" (such as the twentieth century's third-wave charismatic movement in the mainline churches) lack balance?
3. What, for Fee, characterizes a "radically eschatological people" (xv, par. 3)? What must be balanced in such a people?
4. From chapter 1, in what ways does Paul see continuity between the old and new covenants, and Israel of the OT and the Church? What role does the Spirit play in this (dis)continuity?
5. What, according to Fee, belongs to the gospel in Paul beyond justification by faith? Is this at odds with Paul's statement to the Corinthians that "he decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and him crucified" (1 Cor 2:2)?
6. Fee lists, on page 6, four essential elements of the gospel as articulated by Paul. In his description, the word "Spirit" only appears once, in his restatement of the four elements. How is "eschatological" related to "Spirit" in Fee's understanding of Paul?
7. What reasons does Fee give for his assertion that "Paul's entire theology without the supporting pinion of the Spirit would crumble into ruins"? (p. 7, 1<sup>st</sup> full par.)

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<sup>1</sup> Which, you'll be glad to know, reviewers call "gently Calvinistic."