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# Is It So? Reconsidering The Ministry of the Spirit

## Session 11: Intercession of the Spirit

*by Dr. Randy White*

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#### A. Romans 8:26–27

(KJV)

“Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.”

- Describes the Holy Spirit’s aid to a particular group of believers in a state of deep anticipation.
- Their “infirmity” is not knowing precisely how to pray regarding future deliverance.

#### B. Transition from Groaning to Intercession

- Romans 8:22: “the whole creation groaneth” introduces a universal suffering and longing.
- Romans 8:23 narrows the focus to those who have “the firstfruits of the Spirit,” specifically Jews awaiting adoption.

#### C. Significance of “Firstfruits”

- References Israel’s Feast of Weeks (Pentecost) in Leviticus 23:15–21.
- Acts 2:1 confirms the Holy Spirit was given “when the day of Pentecost was fully come.”
- Shows the Holy Spirit’s outpouring is rooted in Israel’s redemptive narrative.

#### D. Future-Looking Salvation

- Romans 8:24–25: “we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope . . . if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.”
- Indicates an eschatological rescue, not the already-finished work of Ephesians 2:8 (“by grace are ye saved through faith”).
- Parallels Israel’s future expectation of the Messiah’s coming reign.

#### E. Need for the Spirit’s Intercession

- Romans 8:26: “Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities.”
- Believers are unsure how to pray regarding details of the coming kingdom.
- The Spirit translates their groanings “which cannot be uttered” according to God’s will.

#### F. Jewish Context in Romans 8 and Beyond

- Romans 9–11 discusses Israel’s calling, covenants, and adoption.
- The momentum from Romans 8:23–25 to chapters 9–11 highlights Israel’s national restoration.
- These verses align with a specifically Jewish setting (“firstfruits,” “Pentecost,” and adoption pertaining to Israel).

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## **G. Conclusion of This Section**

- Romans 8:26–27 addresses Jewish believers at Pentecost who await national redemption.
- The Spirit’s intercession matches Israel’s eschatological need for the final fulfillment of covenant promises.

## **Prayer for the Jew**

### **A. Romans 8:22–23 and Groaning**

- Creation as a whole suffers (8:22), but Paul narrows the groaning to “ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit” (8:23).
- These groan for “the adoption,” an idea directly linked to Israel in Romans 9:4.

### **B. Pentecost and the Jewish Calendar**

- Pentecost (Leviticus 23:15–21) marks a celebration of firstfruits.
- Acts 2:1 connects the giving of the Holy Spirit with Israel’s feast day.
- Underlines that the original context is specific to Israel.

### **C. Longing for Future Fulfillment**

- Romans 8:24–25 shows this promised redemption has not yet arrived.
- The hope focuses on national and Messianic promises.

### **D. Eschatological Perspective**

- Israel awaits a future kingdom when the Messiah will reign.
- The Spirit intercedes for those unsure of the details of God’s plan.

## **Prayer for the Believer**

### **A. We Know How We Ought to Pray**

- Ephesians 6:18: “Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit . . .”
- 1 Thessalonians 5:17: “Pray without ceasing.”
- 2 Timothy 3:17: Scripture furnishes believers to all good works, including prayer.

### **B. We Bring Requests to God Directly (Philippians 4:6)**

- Philippians 4:6: “Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.”
- Ephesians 3:12: “We have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him.”
- No second-tier intercessor is required for the believer today.

### **C. Do We Need an Intercessor?**

- 1 Timothy 2:5: “There is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.”
- Christ’s finished work grants direct communion with God, rendering additional mediators unnecessary.

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## Conclusion

### A. Romans 8:26–27 in Historical Context

- Speaks of Jewish believers possessing the “firstfruits of the Spirit” at Pentecost.
- They await fulfillment of national promises; the Spirit assists their groanings.

### B. Distinction of Present Believers’ Prayer Life

- Christians are taught *how* to pray and *what* to pray.
- Believers have no need for special intercession beyond Christ’s mediation.

### C. The Blessing of Direct Access

- We approach the Father in prayer through Christ alone.
- Philippians 4:7: “the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”