

# The Love of God Poured Out in our Hearts?

*by Bryan Gibson*

“Now hope does not disappoint, because the **love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us**” (Romans 5:5).

Before we jump to conclusions about some mystical, “better felt than told” influence of the Holy Spirit, let’s ask this two part question: How exactly has the love of God been poured out in our hearts, and what role does the Holy Spirit play in that?

The following passage answers that question, so read carefully, especially the words in **bold**: “In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, **that we might live through Him**. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be **the propitiation for our sins**. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has seen God at any time. If we love one another, God abides in us, and His love has been perfected in us. By this we know that we abide in Him, and He in us, because **He has given us of His Spirit**. And **we have seen and testify** that the Father has sent the Son as Savior of the world. Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. And **we have known and believed the love that God has for us**. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him” (1 John 4:9-16).

Did you see it? The love of God is in our hearts because “we have known and believed the love that God has for us.” And we know and believe the love God has for us because we have heard (or read) the testimony, the testimony of the apostles (like John) and New Testament prophets. It’s only through their testimony that we know Jesus died so “that we might live,” that He became “the propitiation for our sins.” And **who** revealed that testimony to them? The phrase, “He has given us of His Spirit” (4:13), indicates the source, and if that’s not clear enough, read 1 John 5:6-13, especially this statement about the source of their written testimony: “It is the Spirit who bears witness, because the Spirit is truth” (5:6).

Nothing mystical or “better felt than told” here. The Holy Spirit revealed “all truth” (John 14:25-26; 15:26-27; 16:13) to the apostles and prophets, including everything we need to know about the love of God. They wrote down everything that was revealed to them (Ephesians 3:1-5), and so we now have their testimony in the New Testament Scriptures. The love of God is poured out in our hearts when we know and believe their testimony. And this testimony is irrefutable, because it is the testimony of God himself (“he who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed the testimony that God has given of His Son”—1 John 5:10).

Understand this, too. When we know and believe the love God has for us, we also know and believe the love we should have for others (see 1 John 3:16-18; 4:7-12). That same love which has been poured out in our hearts should now be shown to others. The nature of that love, the expression of that love, and the reward for that love have all been revealed by the Holy Spirit, through the testimony of the apostles and prophets. Using the very language of

Scripture, “you yourselves have been taught by God to love one another” (1 Thessalonians 4:9). How well we learn is up to us.