



THE HOLY SPIRIT

A short study on the work of the Holy Spirit and what this might mean for Christians and the local church.

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The Holy Spirit

Let's begin this study with statements made by Jesus, the Son, the ONLY BEGOTTEN of the Father who is full of grace and truth.

I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high." Luke 24:49

"When the Counsellor comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the **Spirit of truth** who goes out from the Father, he will testify about me. John 15:26

But **I tell you the truth**: It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counsellor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment: in regard to sin, because men do not believe in me; in regard to righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer; and in regard to judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned. "I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. But when he, **the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth**. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you. All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will take from what is mine and make it known to you.

John 16:7-15

Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. John 20:21,22

Spiritual or Carnal?

Jesus Christ was the Spiritual Man. Before Him many lived through faith in God but were limited to a human, fleshly way of serving. This is best seen in all the paraphernalia of worship in the Tabernacle. It is seen in the uniform that the High Priest had to wear in God's Presence. It is seen in all the physical things that had to be done – like sacrifices. All this was fulfilled in and by Jesus. So no longer needed. As we read in Hebrews – Jesus brought a better way. However, even the Corinthian Christians struggled to avoid being carnal instead of spiritual [see 1 Corinthians ch.2]

Truth and Freedom

To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and **the truth will set you free.**" They answered him, "We are Abraham's descendants and have never been slaves of anyone. How can you say that we shall be set free?" Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave to sin. Now a slave has no permanent place in the family, but a son belongs to it forever. **So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.**"
John 8:31-36

Where Do I begin?

While Apollos was at Corinth, Paul took the road through the interior and arrived at Ephesus. There he found some disciples and asked them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" They answered, "No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit." Acts 19:1,2

Questions that might arise from Paul's question

The questions that arise for us as individuals are:

1. Can I, as an individual, bring the Holy Spirit into someone else's life?
2. If faith in Jesus Christ saves me, what does receiving the Holy Spirit do?
3. Am I first saved and then, later, sealed by the Holy Spirit?
4. What is the connection between spiritual gifts (like tongues) and being saved?
5. Is receiving the Holy Spirit the same as being baptised with the Holy Spirit?
6. Is being filled with the Holy Spirit the same as being baptised with the Spirit?

It might be useful to study 1 Corinthians chapter 12 and search out what are your gifts from the Holy Spirit and how you might serve the local fellowship of believers as an active part of the body.

Before and After Pentecost

The Holy Spirit worked with humans before Pentecost. The disciples knew His power when they were able to heal and drive out demons. In the Old Testament numerous people are described as having the Holy Spirit "come upon them".

The seventy-two returned with joy and said, "Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name." He replied, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. I

have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you. However, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven."

Luke 10:17-20

The occasions when disciples performed miracles were temporary and related to when they were sent out by the Lord. Perhaps a foretaste of Pentecost? Their experience was similar to that of servants of God in the Old Testament.

But when they cried out to the LORD, he raised up for them a deliverer, Othniel son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother, who saved them. **The Spirit of the LORD came upon him**, so that he became Israel's judge and went to war. The LORD gave Cushan-Rishathaim king of Aram into the hands of Othniel, who overpowered him. Judges 3:9-10

[see also: Gideon, Jephthah, Samson]

Now **the Spirit of the LORD had departed** from Saul, and an evil spirit from the LORD tormented him.

1 Samuel 16:14

These are the last words of David: "The oracle of David son of Jesse, the oracle of the man exalted by the Most High, the man anointed by the God of Jacob, Israel's singer of songs: **The Spirit of the LORD spoke** through me; his word was on my tongue.

2 Samuel 23:1-2

Note the difference in this paragraph from Isaiah:

A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit. **The Spirit of the LORD will rest on him** - the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of power, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD--and he will delight in the fear of the LORD. He will not judge by what he sees with his eyes, or decide by what he hears with his ears; but with righteousness he will judge the needy, with justice he will give decisions for the poor of the earth. He will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth; with the breath of his lips he will slay the wicked.

Righteousness will be his belt and faithfulness the sash around his waist.

Isaiah 11:1-5

The distinction is being made between the temporary experience of God's power and the permanence that would be seen when the Messiah appeared. This permanence is what we receive in accord with the promise of God.

Also, we read of people like Balaam!

When Balaam looked out and saw Israel encamped tribe by tribe, the Spirit of God came upon him Numbers_24:2

It seems that God would speak through a renegade. Balaam is listed as one of the "great" sinners of Bible History (with Cain and Korah).

... and Caiaphas!

**Then one of them, named Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, spoke up, "You know nothing at all! You do not realize that it is better for you that one man die for the people than that the whole nation perish." He did not say this on his own, but as high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the Jewish nation,
John 11:49-51**

God spoke through Caiaphas because, as High Priest, he was anointed. Prophets, Priests and Kings in the Old Testament were all anointed with the Holy Anointing Oil.

There is one occasion in Acts that could be understood as, "the Spirit of the Lord coming upon" someone:

**When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord suddenly took Philip away, and the eunuch did not see him again, but went on his way rejoicing.
Acts 8:39**

Otherwise, after Pentecost, the term is not used. In fact "the Spirit of the Lord" is not a common title in the Epistles. The title, "Holy Spirit" is preferred and emphasises His personality where the Old Testament descriptions refer to a more neutral thing - such as Ruach - breath or breeze.

1. What do we think happened when the Spirit of the Lord fell, or came, upon a person?
2. What was the difference when the Spirit rested on Jesus?

3. What significance can we see from the change in reference to the Holy Spirit after Pentecost?

We can conclude that there are differences in the way the Holy Spirit engages with humans before and after Pentecost. There are similarities too. Gifts of the Spirit like prophecy are manifested in Christians as they were in the people of Israel. The difference is that all Christians are gifted with things from the Holy Spirit. In the Old Testament the Holy Spirit manifested gifts in special persons or groups (such as the prophets).

The Lord Jesus Christ changed everything. The Holy Spirit could rest on Him. Christians are accepted in Christ and have the privileges of sonship. The apostles wrote about being born of the Spirit, filled with the Spirit, manifesting the Spirit's gifts and growing the Spirit's fruit. We are warned about grieving the Spirit or quenching His power in us. All this demonstrates a very different experience to that of believers before Pentecost.