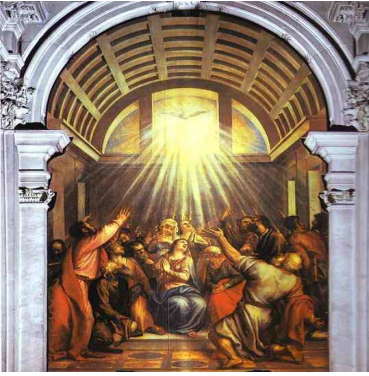


The Holy Spirit



Of the three persons in the Godhead we give less recognition to the Holy Spirit than we do to the Father and Son. There are many mysteries about the Holy Spirit but we need to be aware of the truths that are given, especially in view of the false claims concerning Him.

Following are five fundamental truths about the Holy Spirit. If we can grasp these truths we should never have a problem of being misled in our understanding of Him.

First, the Holy Spirit is a person. Jesus speaking to His apostles said, "However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak of His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come" (John 16:13, 14).

Seven times in these **two verses** we have the personal pronoun, masculine gender, singular number. The Holy Spirit then is not an "it" or a "thing." He is a Divine being, the **third person** in the Godhead.

Jesus commands us to be baptized in "The name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:19). Paul invoked "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ...the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit" upon the Corinthians. (See 2 Corinthians. 13:14).

The Holy Spirit is of the same nature and essence as God and Christ. All are co-eternal and coequal persons yet they are but One God. While difficult for our finite minds to grasp nevertheless we accept it by faith.

Second, the baptism of the Holy Spirit was a promise and never given as a command. Expressions such as, "baptism of the Holy Spirit" and "I will pour forth of my Spirit" **are** figures of speech.

The Holy Spirit is not a liquid. There is no literal pouring. It was an overwhelming of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles.

Jesus told his apostles; "For John truly baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now" (Acts 1:5).

The results of this baptism was twofold. (1) It enabled the apostles to do miraculous things. For example they could speak in languages other than their own native dialect. (2) It enabled them to speak the truth.

Jesus had promised them, "He (the Holy Spirit) shall guide you into all truth" (John 16:13). We see this being fulfilled in Acts 2:11.

As the apostles spoke, each person could understand in his own native language. This was a fulfilment of a promise Jesus made to the apostles in Luke 24:49 "And behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high."

Jesus promised in Acts 1:8, "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth"

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The baptism of the Holy Spirit was promised only to the apostles. It never made anyone a Christian.

Third, there were the gifts of the Holy Spirit. These gifts were bestowed for a specific purpose - to confirm the spoken word. Since the New Testament had not been written yet the Holy Spirit taught people through the spoken word. He gave the speakers certain gifts to prove that what they spoke was truth.

In **Mark 16:17, 18** Jesus speaks of these gifts. "And these signs will follow those who believe; in my name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it shall not hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover."

The important thing to note is, "these signs shall follow them." The gifts would be their credentials. These gifts were proof they were preaching the truth. Later the New Testament would be completed thus the gifts would no longer be needed. They would pass away according to **1 Corinthians 13:8, 9**.

Today we can know if one is speaking the truth by comparing what he says with what the New Testament teaches.

One of the gifts was healing the sick however it was not intended for everyone. Paul wrote, "Trophimus have I left at Miletum sick." Since Paul had the power to heal why didn't he heal Trophimus? Obviously because the purpose of this particular gift was not for every sick person.

It was to verify or confirm (prove) to unbelievers they were speaking the word of God. Even Paul had an affliction that he asked the Lord to remove but God refused (**2 Corinthians 12:7-9**). Healings were for confirming the word.

In **1 Corinthians 12:4**, Paul said there were a "diversity of gifts" given by the Holy Spirit to the church. He names nine specific miraculous gifts. It is interesting that among those today who claim the gifts of the Holy Spirit usually claim to have only two of the nine (healing and speaking in tongues).

What happened to the other seven gifts? The so called "healings" of today are not anything like the miracles we find in the New Testament. It is perfectly right to ask God to bless us but in answering our prayers today God works through natural laws.

Today, He does not circumvent these laws to bring about supernatural events or miracles, which happened in the time of the apostles.

It should also be observed these gifts were received by the laying on of the hands of the apostles only. (See **Acts 8:15-17; 19:6**). When the last apostle died these gifts could no longer be bestowed. With the completion of the New Testament scriptures there was no longer any need for these gifts.

Fourth, there is the gift of the Holy Spirit. There is a distinction to be made between the "gifts" of the Holy Spirit and the "gift" of the Holy Spirit. There were a variety of gifts but these are different than the "gift of the Holy Spirit."

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This gift is promised to all baptized believers. Peter commanded, "Repent and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38).

According to Acts 5:32, He is given "to those who obey Him." Again he says, "Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? (1 Corinthians 3:16).

Then Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 6:19, "Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you." In 1 Thessalonians 4:8 Paul said that God "gives His Holy Spirit to you."

How does the Spirit dwell in us? Just as Christ dwells in us "through faith" (Ephesians 3:17). Also "God dwells in us" (1 John 4:12). The Spirit dwells in us in the same way God and Christ dwell in us by faith.

The only evidence I have that they dwell in me is that God's word says they do. I know they are there by faith. I believe what God has said.

This is not a miraculous dwelling anymore than my mind dwelling in my physical body or my dwelling in the body of Christ - the church, (See Ephesians 5:30, 32.) It may be a mystery but certainly not a miracle. The knowledge that the Holy Spirit dwells in me is not a result of any subjective feelings.

I know He dwells in me by faith. God says He does and I believe what God has said.

What for sure does the Spirit do for us? Paul says we are "strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man" (Ephesians 3:16). Christ does the same (Philippians 4:13).

According to Romans 8:26 he helps our weaknesses by making intercessions for us to God. "Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered" (Romans 8:26).

We are strengthened and encouraged when we know that Deity dwells in us. It helps us restrain from doing things with our bodies that are wrong, such as fornication. (See 1 Corinthians 6:19).

Fifth, the gospel (inspired by the Holy Spirit) is the instrument through which the Holy Spirit works on the hearts of men in conversion. James 1:21 says, "Receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls."

Paul said the gospel is the "Power of God to salvation for everyone who believes" (Romans 1:16). Our salvation must be based on God's Word, not on subjective feelings, experiences, or asking the Lord to "come into my heart." Salvation is a result of hearing and obeying the truth. (See Romans 10:17.)