

HOLY SPIRIT - THE GIFT AND PROMISE

Holy Spirit has an unchanging mission throughout human history—to bear testimony to the revealed truth of God by open demonstration of supernatural power.

He is central to the working out of the plan and provision of God for all men. He worked mightily in the prophets of old, and even more mightily in New Testament ministries such as Peter's and Paul's. Jesus spoke of this coming work of the Holy Spirit to be given after His resurrection.

John 7:37-39 *On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water." But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.*

The gift could not be given while Jesus was still on the earth. He would first have to be received in heaven and enter into His glory. Certainly the Holy Spirit was already present, but Jesus was pointing to an obvious distinction between the then current ministry presence of the Holy Spirit and what Jesus would send as The Gift and The Promise.

It should be noted that Holy Spirit has a dual presence in believers. Scripture teaches that He is within every believer and He is "upon" those who are "baptized in the Holy Spirit". The distinction is that He is in every born again child of God to mature the character of Christ and also will come upon those who seek and receive by faith His empowerment to mature the ministry of Christ through us.

Calling on God to save us and accepting Jesus as Savior and Lord brings Holy Spirit into our "hearts", our innermost being. Asking Jesus to baptize (immerse) us in the Holy Spirit is what releases power or ability from heaven to do the work assigned to us by God.

Thus, it is possible to be a church-going believer but not be baptized in the Holy Spirit. In Acts chapter 8 we see that those believers who had not been baptized in the Holy Spirit were prayed over and the Holy Spirit who was already in them also came upon them.

There are three features to be aware of in the vast difference of Holy Spirit's presence and ministry before Jesus ascended and after He ascended. When He returned to heaven, He birthed the church and a new day of grace was opened. Thereafter:

1. The gift of the Holy Spirit is personal. He is not an influence on your life; not a manifestation in your life. He is a distinct Person of the Godhead who seeks to come to each individual in a personal way. The new birth is the reception of the distinct Second Person, the Lord Jesus Christ. The baptism of the Holy Spirit is distinctly the reception of the Third Person. (Since Jesus is the baptizer here, one needs Him first.) These are each specific transactions between a person and God.
2. The gift of the Holy Spirit is indwelling. Before Jesus returned to heaven, the Holy Spirit would sometimes come 'upon' them and 'move' them but He was always a visitor. Since Jesus ascended, Holy Spirit comes to dwell within and to exercise control of the entire personality from that position which is described in Scripture as the heart.
3. The gift is permanent. Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would abide with them forever. Therefore, the Holy Spirit couldn't be given for two reasons. First, while Christ was here He was the personal representative of the Godhead. Only when Jesus left earth, would Holy Spirit replace Him as the personal representative of the Godhead. Second, the gift, and therefore the claim to the Holy Spirit, rests upon Christ's death and resurrection. It is not a gift given on merit,

but solely on the basis of the atonement, the saving work of Jesus finished on earth and consummated in heaven.

Gal. 3:13-14 *Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree"), that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.*

Christ's redemptive purpose was so that the blessing of Abraham might come upon us, that blessing being that we might receive "the promise of the spirit through faith." Take note of the three facts brought out in this passage:

1. It is only by redemption. Jesus purchased us, having secured the legal right to bestow the Spirit. It is by faith and therefore of grace and not by works or personal merit. We simply believe in what He has done.
2. It is by promise. The promise is to you!

Lk. 24:49 *"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."*

Acts 2:38-39 *Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call."*

3. The promise and the blessing of Abraham are linked in Galatians as one. Recall in Gen. 15, God made a covenant with Abraham. That covenant was sealed by the blood of animals and its follow-up was Ishmael, son of Abraham's flesh. But in Gen. 17, God speaks of an everlasting covenant and seals it with the blood of a man by circumcision. Its follow-up was Isaac, son of God's promise.

The original covenant was not identified by any particular time period, while the second was everlasting. The first covenant was to Abram while the second was to Abraham, a name change God made by inserting the Hebrew letter 'heh' (the breath) into the center of Abram's being.

The promise was to the seed of Abraham. Paul explained that this was specifically Christ who died on a cross. The cross alone, however, did not, in and of itself, consummate God's redemptive act. It is true that the Lord had provided Himself, a lamb for the sacrifice. It is true that the Lamb of God was enough. It is true that in the shedding of blood there is remission of sins, complete forgiveness... but the blood has to be applied.

Heb. 9:11-12 *But Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation. Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption.*

Heb. 12:24 *For Christ has not entered the holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.*

This is the heavenly sanctuary where Jesus' blood must be sprinkled. Abel's blood was left on earth. Christ's entered into heaven. Abel's blood cries out for vengeance; Christ's for pardon. The Holy Spirit could not be given until this blood was sprinkled. He does not come due to your merit. He is given on the basis of Christ's perfect redemption. Thereafter, the Holy Spirit is given

as God's personal testimony that court is out and man is freed by the blood. The giving of the Holy Spirit is the joint testimony of Father and Son that you are clean forever.

Christ purchased your redemption, your salvation, on earth through His death and resurrection. He then ascended to heaven, presented His blood, received the promise of the Spirit and as Peter says, **Acts 2:33** *"Therefore being exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out this which you now see and hear."*

Thus, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit were all instrumental in this greatest of all gifts starting on the Day of Pentecost. From God's point of view, *"It is finished."* Every man who will ask can receive this gift. That is called grace.

Let's remember Gal. 3:14, *"through faith"* we receive the promise of the Spirit.

Gal. 3:2 *This only I want to learn from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?*

Gal. 3:5 *Therefore He who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you, does He do it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?*

These verses underscore that it is never our works of human effort that receives from God; it is always simply believing by faith. That's the reception of grace. However, faith can never be seen apart from obedience. This applies to receiving the Holy Spirit and to all that is of grace. In other words, if it is tied to redemption, it is automatically by grace through faith.

Acts 5:32 *"And we are His witnesses to these things, and so also is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey Him."*

There are six things scripture introduces as needed for reception of the Holy Spirit. From Acts 2:38, first of all, repent; second, be baptized.

The third is from John 7:37-39, already quoted, *"If any man thirst, let him drink."* (Matthew 5:6, *"Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness for they shall be filled."*) The point is, if you don't thirst for the Holy Spirit you won't drink. Drinking is voluntarily internalizing a thing. In other words, the 'good' person who is sound in all his doings but who doesn't drink won't receive this gift. On the other hand, the unsound person who does thirst for this gift can receive it. You may think that isn't fair but grace can only come through faith.

Fourth, from Luke 11:13, ask. It is an obligation to do so. The attitude, 'God knows where I live; if He wants to save me, He is bigger than I am' is wrong.

In John. 7:37 we saw drinking. Now, fifth is receiving. To drink is to satisfy thirst. I am satisfied when I drink but I get thirsty again and therefore drink again. The verb tense of Ephesians 5:18, *"be filled with the Spirit,"* is continuous present tense, which equates to 'be being filled' at all times. Thus, we are to be receiving regularly.

Sixth, according to Romans 6:13, is yielding. Surrender yourselves and your bodily members. This is total and unconditional. It is one thing to submit the will and another to give over the body. It is one thing to submit to God in rational service and another to offer one's body. This surrender is progressive, starting as an act of will in fully yielded to the service of God, and then growing in that attitude of surrender until our body and its members is a testimony to the good, more acceptable, and perfect will of God. Thus, we must 'be being filled with the Holy Spirit.'

Some, indeed, receive the gift without following these six steps. They are under the sovereign hand of God. However, if the sovereignty of God has not done this in your life, the obedience of

faith will. Romans 4:16 says the promise is guaranteed through faith. I urge you then, to submit today to the desire of the Lord to pour out this gift. Repent, be baptized, drink, ask, receive, and yield.