

The Holy Spirit

by
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“And Peter said to them, “Repent, and let each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” Acts 2:38 NAS

“And Ananias departed and entered the house, and after laying his hands on him said, “Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road by which you were coming, has sent me so that you may regain your sight, and be filled with the Holy Spirit.” And immediately there fell from his eyes something like scales, and he regained his sight, and he arose and was baptized.” Acts 9:17, 18 NAS

In these verses we see the natural, beginning steps of one who comes to believe in

the Lord Jesus Christ. First he receives forgiveness for his sins by repenting of his sins and by trusting in Jesus as his Savior. Then in order to declare his faith and to publicly identify himself with Jesus, he submits himself to baptism in water. A third step or experience for the new believer is to receive the infilling of the Holy Spirit. These three steps are three different experiences. In the early Church these three steps were experienced by all believers. All were first saved by grace through faith, and then as a second step some were baptized and as the third step they received the Holy Spirit. Others, after being saved, received the Holy Spirit and then were baptized in water as the third step. The order is not important, but rather the fact that the three experiences were considered the normal process for all believers.

In the history of the Church we have seen great apostasy that has hidden many precious truths from God's people. In times of spiritual darkness many truths are corrupted and ignored. One of these precious truths that has suffered greatly because of years of apostasy is the experience of personally receiving the Holy Spirit. When a truth of the Word of God suffers, so do the people of God. Although the great majority of the Church has ignored this powerful experience, there has always been a small remnant of believers that has enjoyed the blessing

of this truth. Truth is truth and does not change. Those who seek God for truth will find it if faith is found in the heart.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, there was a real revival in the United States and around the world of this truth of receiving the Holy Spirit as an experience distinct from that of being forgiven of our sins. Since that time many have embraced this wonderful truth. However, even today it is not accepted by the majority of the Church as a normal and necessary step for every believer. In your personal studies notice that when the Apostles wrote their epistles to the saints of the early Church, they seem to assume that they all had already received the Spirit, that being the normal process. I believe this is why many today make the mistake of thinking that upon being saved one automatically receives the fullness of the Holy Spirit. But upon comparing Scripture with Scripture it becomes clear that there is an experience to be had by saved individuals that involves receiving the fullness of Holy Spirit. It is an experience that is presented in the Bible as being distinct from salvation.

The receiving of the Holy Spirit does not make us “more” saved or “more” forgiven or “more” loved by God. It does not automatically make us spiritual or mature. There are always those who ask, “Is it possible to do this thing or that thing or to have this reward or that one, if one

has not received the infilling of the Spirit?” There are those that compare believer with believer and say, “This one never experienced the infilling and look how good and spiritual he is.” “And look at that one who claims to have had the experience yet he is so carnal.” We should not waste our time with such questions or comparisons. Instead we should ask ourselves, “What has God said in His Word?” God declares in His Word that this experience is a normal, essential step for every believer and it leads us to His fullness. *“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.” Acts 2:39 (Acts 8:14 - 17)* For one with an open heart, the declaration of God is sufficient.

The work of the Holy Spirit in this Church age is immense. He is the active member of the Trinity here on the earth. He reveals to us Jesus and His fullness and enables us to be faithful witnesses to the reality of the Gospel. We see the importance of receiving the Holy Spirit in *Luke 24:44 - 53*. The disciples were already saved, they understood many truths and had performed many miracles, yet Jesus told them not to do anything else until they had received the Spirit. The Holy Spirit was always with them but was going to be in them. (*John 14:17*) The phrase “shall be in you” speaks of a fuller measure and work of the Holy Spirit than what they had experienced to that

point in their walk with the Lord.

There is nothing more important in your Christian experience at this time than to receive the infilling of the Spirit. Seek Him with great desire. Take advantage of every opportunity to seek this experience. If you do not receive Him immediately, do not get discouraged because God even uses our searching to do a glorious work in our lives.

How does one receive the infilling of the Holy Spirit? The first step is found in ***Luke 11:11 - 13***. We do not have to beg our Heavenly Father in order to try to convince Him to give us this experience because He has already given us the promise of the gift of the Holy Spirit. But we do have to come to the place where we say, "Father, I desire my personal portion that you have reserved for me. I recognize the value of the gift and I want to enter into the fullness of your riches in order that I may glorify your name to the greatest degree."

There is no set way as to how one receives the infilling of the Spirit, but we do have some examples in the Bible. In ***Acts 8:14 - 20*** we see that some have the gift of placing their hands on those who desire to receive and they receive. In ***Acts 10: 44 - 48*** we see others receiving the Spirit while listening to the preaching of the Word. But the majority of those that I know, including my personal experience, have been filled while in an

environment such as was found on the day of Pentecost. (*Acts 1:14*) There is a special blessing when believers gather together to worship the Lord. It is a little taste of heaven here on earth. *Psalms 133:1 - 3* describes such gatherings as being like the anointing oil. Oil, in the Bible, is symbolic of the Holy Spirit and His work in our lives.

The evidence of having received the Holy Spirit is found in the following passages of Scripture: *Acts 2:4*, *Acts 19:1 - 7*, as well as others that have already been mentioned. Speaking in tongues is mentioned in 3 of the 5 accounts in the book of Acts where believers were filled with the Spirit. The other two accounts indicate some outward manifestation that was observed by those looking on. Many reject this experience because they feel that speaking in tongues is foolish. Nevertheless, those who receive the Holy Spirit will speak in other tongues as the Spirit gives them utterance. Do not doubt or argue with God's purposes. The infilling of the Holy Spirit is one of the sweetest experiences of the Christian walk and is an essential step in continuing to grow in the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. The evidence of being continually full of the Holy Spirit and yielded to His leading is the fruit of the Spirit being seen in our daily lives. (*Ephesians 5:18 / Galatians 5:22—25*)



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