

The Holy Spirit

A

Simple

Introduction

The Holy Spirit

1. FACTS
2. INHERITANCE – What we are born for
3. THE KEY TO THE KINGDOM
4. EXPERIENCE – or often, the lack of it ! ?
5. . . . AND THE CHURCH

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The Holy Spirit

1. F A C T S

He is God	Not to be ignored or assumed
He is personal	Not "it" but "he"
He is eternal	'The eternal Spirit' (Hebrews 9:14)

His presence in Old Testament times

Genesis 1:2 "...and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters." He was involved in creation.

Genesis 41:38 "...one in whom is the spirit of God." Joseph was recognised by Pharaoh.

1 Sam. 10:10 "...the Spirit of God came upon him in power, and he joined in their prophesying." Saul, the future king, experiences the power of the Holy Spirit.

2 Peter 1:21 "...men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit." All the Old Testament writers were under the control and direction of the Holy Spirit.

B U T, in spite of this, there is something different about His presence in the New Testament

John 16:7 "Unless I go away, the Counsellor will not come to you."

John 14:26 "...whom the Father will send in my name..."

John 15:26 "When the Counsellor comes, whom I will send to you from the Father . . . he will testify about me."

John 7:39 "Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified."

Acts 2:33-36 "...exalted...received...poured out...Therefore... be assured of this: God has made this Jesus...both Lord and Christ."

Because Jesus is exalted at the right hand of the Father, the Holy Spirit is given/poured out. This is the ONLY basis upon which he IS poured out - "on all people".

In the Old Testament, he was only given to special people at special times. For us in the New Testament, he is given to every believer. See **Acts 2:17** and **2:39**.

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2. INHERITANCE - what we are born for

Awareness of the reality of God the Father **Galatians 4:6**

Not just addressing him as "God" or "the Lord", but finding that he really is my Father: I can call him "Daddy" (Abba).

Awareness of the exaltation of the Lord Jesus **Acts 3:16**

Knowing that he has been given the name above every name and that we have been given the authority to use it. Perhaps one of the main reasons that Satan tries to confuse and deny the work of the Holy Spirit is that the Holy Spirit's presence here on earth is the proof of the fact that Jesus has been exalted at the right hand of the Father.

Awareness of the power of the Holy Spirit **John 14:12**

Jesus makes it abundantly clear that, because he is going to the Father (and therefore the Holy Spirit has been poured out), those who believe in him will perform miracles equal to those he performed himself.

Growing knowledge of the mind of God **1 Corinthians 2:6-16**

The Holy Spirit 'searches out' the mind of the almighty God just as fingers 'search out' the recesses of a glove. In other words, the Holy Spirit who is given to us is fully aware of all the thoughts of God. According to **verse 12**, he is given to us so 'that we may understand what God has freely given us.' A really staggering reality!

Ongoing transformation ...not just **2 Corinthians 5:17**

... but also **2 Corinthians 3:12-18**

We are familiar (hopefully in life experience as well as New Testament teaching) with the fact that our lives have been changed - 'the old has gone, the new has come!' Was it just a single experience, now some time behind us? Through the work of the Holy Spirit, we are intended to be continuously 'transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory'. Ours is intended to be **A BEING - TRANSFORMED LIFE !**

Spiritual gifts to build up the Church **1 Corinthians 12:7-11**

A very NORMAL part of church life according to the New Testament. This too is part of our inheritance, that 'to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good'. In case we were in any doubt, the 'each one' theme is repeated in **verse 11**.

Ministry for preparation and building up **Ephesians 4:11-13**

The people listed here are people whose lives combine with their gifts to produce men and women who are themselves gifts to the Church, given by the glorified Jesus. Apostles - putting in the foundations of church life; Prophets - bringing the heart of God to the Church; Evangelists - declaring the great good news and bringing people into fellowship; Pastors and Teachers - caring for the Church and instructing

into a lifestyle that glorifies Jesus. All of these people are intended to be in the New Testament Church, today as well!

Being built together in the Spirit

Ephesians 2:21,22

Built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets (see above), with Jesus as the chief cornerstone, the Church is designed to be built together to provide a dwelling place for the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit leads us INTO all these aspects of our inheritance. This means being led into REAL PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE of them. ***John 16:12-15***

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3. The KEY to the Kingdom - He reveals what is ours in Jesus

The Holy Spirit unlocks facts and makes them real to us in our own experience.

UNLOCKING bondage to sin, death, the old nature **Romans 8:2**
Because of the liberty of 'the law of the Spirit of life':-

1. We no longer have to be in slavery to sin. (**Romans 6:18**).
2. We are set free from death and the fear of death. (**Hebrews 2:14-15**)
3. We are released from bondage to our old nature. This includes family weaknesses, emotional scars from the past and the faults in our personality which we say we 'just can't help'. (**Romans 8:3-4**)

UNLOCKING our relationship to God **Romans 8:15 Galatians 4:6,7**
Instead of being limited to a very remote, 'official' relationship with God, where all we can call him is 'God' or 'Lord', we have been brought by the Holy Spirit to be able to call the creator of all that exists our father, to call him "Daddy!".

UNLOCKING our development **Romans 8:29 2 Cor.3:18 2 Peter 1:3-9**
Are you satisfied with your personal development? Even modern business now considers personal development a high priority! Our father's development programme for each of us has the amazing goal that we will be like Jesus, and not just when we see him in person. The process has already started, the Holy Spirit is at work.

UNLOCKING our future **Romans 8:23 Phil.3:20,21**
When Jesus returns, not only will the personal transformation be completed and we receive our new bodies, but also the whole creation, which was subjected to the rule of man before the Fall (and therefore unable to experience the full potential which God had intended) will be released as the rule of 'the glorious freedom of the children of God' takes over. We who have received the first fruits of the Holy Spirit groan with the same eager anticipation as we look forward to the full harvest.

UNLOCKING our praying **Romans 8:26,27**
We have all met the frustration of not knowing how or what to pray. The Holy Spirit searches our hearts and releases us in our expression to Father, especially when words are inadequate.

UNLOCKING our knowledge:-
1) of Jesus **John 16:14-15 Ephesians 1:17**
The MAIN WORK of the Holy Spirit is TO REVEAL JESUS to us. He is not interested in his own glory but all the time seeks to increase our knowledge and appreciation of the Lord Jesus Christ in our ordinary daily lives.

2) of Jesus' word to us **John 16:12-13 2 Peter 1:20,21**

Amazing that Jesus said that there was more to be said to the disciples that they couldn't cope with at the time, but that the Holy Spirit would continue where Jesus stopped.

UNLOCKING our unity

Ephesians 2:14-18

Because of the oneness of our access to Father, we can be really one in the Spirit.

The Spirit of Truth = The Spirit of Reality

Correct Doctrine
without experience

→→→→→→→→→→
leads to

DEATH (like the Pharisees)
John 5:39,40

but our experience is
THE FREEDOM OF
THE LAW OF THE SPIRIT OF LIFE
IN JESUS
(Romans 8:2)

envelope. Each one was given £10. The £10 notes were not 'received' until the envelopes were opened. The cheque was not 'received' until it was paid into an account. The bank statement showed that the £10 was already there, but it was not effectively 'received' until the information in the statement brought realisation and then USE of the money. The 'fancy' envelope was attractive but irrelevant in the light of the contents. EACH ONE'S EXPERIENCE WAS DIFFERENT BUT THEY ALL RECEIVED £10.

b) Christmas and/or birthday presents; bought a long time before the day; perhaps sitting on the table for a long time before being opened; only really 'received' when the parcel is opened and the present put into practical use.

BEING GIVEN A GIFT IS NOT THE SAME AS RECEIVING IT !

"Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?"

POSSIBLE ANSWERS:-

1. "Yes, I did!" HALLELUJAH! This is what the New Testament calls normal experience.

2. "No, I didn't." This is part of the answer the Ephesian believers gave to Paul. They were honest enough to relate their own lack of experience and this honesty opened up the way to real experience.

3. "I don't know." There are lots of Christians who would have to say this is their own answer. Several different types of 'don't knows':-

a) "I haven't even heard of the Holy Spirit." This is the other half of the Ephesians' answer. Lack of information can prevent us from entering into the fulness of real experience of God by the Holy Spirit. In their case, information was available from Paul and their actions by identifying with the Lord Jesus in baptism demonstrated that these believers had come into a fresh appreciation of their oneness with Jesus through the information Paul gave them.

INFORMATION + INSPIRATION = REVELATION

b) "I don't know and I don't want to know." Is this really your response? Are you sure that you want to reject the amazing inheritance into which the Holy Spirit wants to lead you in experience?

c) "I must have - but my experience does not tally." This must be one of the commonest responses made by Christians from all sorts of backgrounds. Behind it is the confusion and fear that says, "If I say I haven't received the Holy Spirit, that would mean that I am saying I am not a Christian already." Don't be confused. **Romans 8:9** does not mean that if my experience of the Holy Spirit is limited then I am not a Christian. Like the £10 note inside the envelope, the Holy Spirit has been given. Have you 'opened the envelope'? Have you received him, taken to yourself the amazing inheritance which is already made over to you in the Lord Jesus?

d) "I'm not sure, maybe I did ... or did I?" Confusion caused by comparing with other people's experience, known, read or reported. For example: "New confidence in prayer", "A wonderful awareness of God", "Speaking in tongues", "Healings and miracles". Our Father deals with us

where we are, as individuals. Your experience of the Holy Spirit may not be what you expect. I expected a 'cash in the hand', really exciting experience. God showed me the 'bank balance'! The excitement followed on a little later! Receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit is not magic, it is real life.

MOVING FROM "DON'T KNOW" TO "YES!"

1. The gift has been given, on the only basis there is:- the Lord Jesus has been exalted at the right hand of the Father. There is a MAN in the position of authority. Our part of the 'deal' is that the Holy Spirit is poured out on us. In **Acts 2:33-36** Peter makes it clear that the pouring out of the Spirit proves that Jesus is exalted.

2. Receive the gift. Unwrap the parcel, open the envelope, bank the cheque and, most important, use it! Not the sort of present to be left gathering dust on the mantelpiece nor a cheque to be framed rather than banked.

3. Say 'thank you!' **Hebrews 12:28**. The surest proof that a gift has been received as well as given is when the receiver thanks the giver.

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5. . . . AND THE CHURCH

"May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all."
2 Corinthians 13:14

The word 'fellowship' here is the Greek word '*koinonia*', which means sharing, taking part, participation. The same word is used in **1 Corinthians 10:16** referring to our sharing in the bread and the cup of the Lord's supper. In the very simplest terms, the bread starts out as one piece; we each take and eat a piece; the food value of the bread is incorporated into each of our bodies. We each of us share in the life and strength that come from one piece of bread. In a similar way, each of us can share in the life and power of the Holy Spirit. As we share in the Holy Spirit, we are sharing from one source, and our lives begin to flow together.

The New Testament gives at least three clear illustrations of the Holy Spirit at work in the lives of believers, both individually and corporately:-

1. Totally Immersed in the Holy Spirit

Because of past confusion and controversy, there is a tendency to steer clear of the phrase 'baptism in the Holy Spirit'. However, John the Baptist was quite clear about the fact that Jesus was going to baptise (= totally immerse) in/with/by the Holy Spirit. The Greek word used here can be translated as 'in', 'with' or 'by', and is the same word used for the baptism in water.

All four gospel writers record it:- **Matt.3:11, Mark 1:8, Luke 3:16** and **John 1:33**. At the very least, it is clear that Jesus wants us to be thoroughly flooded with the Holy Spirit. In our baptism in water, we went down and then came up, in a picture of our death and resurrection with Jesus. In this baptism/total immersion in the Holy Spirit, I am under the strong impression that we are not intended to come up! The aim is that we will be continually soaked and flooded with the life and power of God the Holy Spirit. See **1 Corinthians 12:12 & 13**. This baptism has the effect of joining us to each other in one body.

2. Given to Drink of One Spirit

1 Corinthians 12:13

Jesus himself has much to say about the Holy Spirit, comparing him with water. In **John 4** he talks to the Samaritan woman who had to come to the well every day, probably several times, in order to satisfy her thirst and other domestic needs of water. In **John 4:13 & 14**, he compares this physical need with spiritual need, which can only be met by the gift of living water. In **John 7:37-39**, he explains the process in a bit more detail:-

i) "If a man is thirsty..." Thirst is a strong physical need, which rapidly becomes stronger if it is not met. This is our starting point, the admission of our own need. It

is here that God so often meets with us, as we become aware of our urgent needs and are prepared to admit them before him.

ii) "...let him come to me and drink." The Holy Spirit is the 'water' to meet our 'thirst'. (Have a look at the process: **Philippians 4:19** with **John 16:12-15** ... the Holy Spirit brings us into the reality of all the riches of the Lord Jesus.)

This is tremendous in itself, but there is MORE:

3. Streams of LIVING WATER

Continuing in **John 7:37-39**, we find a wonderful process taking place. As we come to Jesus in our desperate need, to taste and be refreshed by the living water of the Holy Spirit, we find that he meets our deepest need but also does something amazingly greater:-

iii) "Whoever believes in (trusts in, relies on) me ... streams of living water will flow from within him." My own need of the moment met by the living water of the Holy Spirit, I now find that as I trust Jesus to meet that need, the living water starts to spring up in me to meet not only my own need but the needs of others.

If we are looking for a way to meet the needs of others, to be able to help others to see the reality of the Lord Jesus, it is very likely that we will be brought to an awareness of our own need, find that need met through the work of the Holy Spirit, and then discover the streams of living water flowing up from within ourselves. Yes, that really is you and me, warts and all, being used as fountain of the Holy Spirit! Exciting, isn't it?

THEORY & EMPTY WORDS WILL NOT WORK !

John 6:63 Life and ministry in the Spirit are not optional. The alternative is totally worthless and we are only fooling ourselves if we think we can live for God and serve him without the reality of the Spirit who gives life.

2 Cor.3:6 The alternative to the reality of the new covenant, which the Holy Spirit writes on our hearts, is not just worthless - it is deadly! We need to realise that if we try to serve God according to natural ability, we will not just fail to help, we will actively hinder his purposes!

1 Cor.2:1-5 Paul was very aware of the need to proclaim Jesus "not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power", so that those who heard might have their faith resting on the power of God.

1 Peter 4:7-11 "If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides". In all our service/ministry in the Church, it is vital that we do it from the source of the Spirit of God, the well springing up inside us, whether we are exercising 'natural' or 'spiritual' gifts.