

THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE CHURCH



To provide a broad scriptural overview of the irreplaceable and often neglected work of the Holy Spirit with the church, the body of Christ

To illustrate just how powerful the early church was under the anointing of the Holy Spirit, please observe the excerpts from A.M. Hills' book *Holiness and Power*.

"When Jesus rose from the dead the whole Church of Christ could assemble in one upper chamber.

At the time of His ascension it numbered one hundred and twenty. Of all the ages of history it was the age of universal corruption.

Outside of Judea, idolatry reigned supreme. Gods and goddesses, representing every phase of vice, were openly worshiped in magnificent temples and at costly shrines.

All power was in the hands of a magnificent and heartless imperialism. The masses were sunk in hopeless degradation, without means, without learning, without protection, and sixty millions of them in the Roman Empire alone were slaves.

Aged parents were suffered to die of starvation, children were exposed and murdered.

Men fought each other as gladiators in the amphitheaters and died by thousands for the amusement of the cruel populace.

Every precept of the moral law was violated almost without conscience and without hindrance.

The early disciples had no wealth, no social position, no prestige, no Government aid, no help from established institutions.

They were in themselves a despised and feeble folk, without influence, without skill, without education, without a New Testament, or even the Old Testament in the hands of the people, without a Christian literature, or a single Christian house of worship. Pomp, power, custom and public sentiment were all against them.

They were reproached, reviled, persecuted, and subjected to exile and death.

But those early Christians had the help of an indwelling, sanctifying Saviour and the anointing of the Holy Ghost, and with that equipment they faced a hostile world and all the malignant powers of darkness and conquered.

Within seventy years, according to the smallest estimate, there were half a million followers of Jesus, and some authorities affirm that there were a quarter of a million in the province of Babylon alone.

In other words, with Holy Spirit power upon them, they increased more than four thousand-fold in threescore years.

Spurgeon said: "If we have not the Spirit of God, it were better to shut the churches, to nail up the doors, to put a black cross on them, and say, 'God have mercy on us!'"

If you ministers have not the Spirit of God you would better not preach, and you people would better stay at home.

I think I speak not too strongly when I say that a church in the land without the Spirit of God is rather a curse than a blessing.”

Without the enduement of the Holy Spirit there is a “sense of orphanage rather than sonship, of deadness to the things of God rather than to the things of the world, and of bondage rather than of liberty.”

Such is the experience of many and they seem to be comfortable there.

The Bible states ‘He that believeth in me, out of him shall flow rivers of living water.’ All this fullness ought to be the experience of every Christian (of the church) and especially of every preacher.

There is but one remedy. We must position ourselves in a sanctifying posture of faith in God, of holiness, of dependency on God, and of fasting and prayer until we are endued (clothed) with the Holy Spirit so that God’s power is manifest, and the Kingdom of God is enhanced.

It is easy to observe that many preachers have lost sight of the necessity of this enduement of power from the Holy Spirit.

It is easy to observe the spiritual deadness of the church.

In modern times the spirit of the world has crept into the church and taken control.

Even the disciples did not know nor fully understand Jesus or the work that He was performing. It took the Holy Spirit to guide them into all truth.”

In Acts Chapter One, our Lord gives instructions concerning the Holy Spirit and the confusion that existed with the disciples.

Text: Acts 1:1-8 *The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen: To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God: And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence. When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.*

In Acts Chapter One Jesus had spent forty days after His resurrection talking with various disciples about the kingdom of God

and just before His ascent to Heaven,

He reminded them to wait for the promise of the Father, the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

The disciples obviously were not fully understanding and put the cart before the horse and asked about the restoration of the kingdom to Israel.

Then the scolding came from the Lord as He said

“It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.”

The disciples were to keep a proper order in the work of the church.

1. They were first to be endowed with power from the Holy Spirit,
2. To be witnesses of Jesus to all the world.

- It is again obvious that the important thing was to first receive power from God so that their work would be effective.
- They were promised the presence of the Comforter and with the power of the Holy Spirit they would be able to be witnesses to all the world that Jesus saves sinners.

So they were to keep proper order. Wait for the Holy Spirit and then move as He would direct them. And the Holy Spirit would direct them as the head of the church directed Him.

John 16:13 “Howbeit when He, the Spirit of Truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth: for He shall not speak of Himself, but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak. And He will show you things to come.” “Whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak.”

The Holy Spirit will hear from the Head of the Church, the Lord Jesus Christ and consequently, He will guide the Church.

It is imperative that we understand the Holy Spirit’s ministry with the church today, and it is imperative that we do not allow any ideas or teachings to rob us of the power of God to do the Lord’s work that comes only from the Holy Spirit.

We must not allow our ministries to be spiritually disempowered because others are misinformed or misunderstand the important work of the Holy Spirit.

We must not react to others, but we must act on what we know is right. **Consider the following important statements about the Holy Spirit.**

- **The unique feature of Christianity is the Holy Spirit.**

All the religions in the world could line up across the stage and identify themselves. Without the Holy Spirit to reveal the Truth that Jesus is *the* Lord, *the* Savior, the audience would remain confused.

- **Jesus began “in the power of the Spirit.”**

Luke 4:14 Everything that Jesus did on earth, He did under the power of the Holy Spirit.

Beginning with His birth and continuing throughout His life, Jesus was full of and directed by the Holy Spirit.

- **Jesus told His disciples to tarry until they were “endued with power from on high”**

Luke 24:49. And so should we. We have no power within ourselves to convince anyone to become a Christian

- for each individual must be “born again,” and that is a spiritual birth that can only be accomplished by the Holy Spirit.
- The church is comprised of supernaturally and spiritually born again Christians.

- **Paul said that his ministry was “in demonstration of the Spirit and of power”**

I Corinthians 2:4. Paul provided the example for every Christian to know that the Holy Spirit would work through him to accomplish the work of God if allowed to do so.

Paul said that he was with the Corinthians in weakness, and fear and in much trembling. He certainly had no confidence in his own abilities to do the spiritual work.

- **The Holy Spirit is “the Spirit of truth.”**

John 14:17 He is the Spirit of truth because He guides the church into all truth (John 16:13), He teaches the truth, and He keeps from error.

The world, unlike the church, does not allow the Spirit to teach and guide.

The world walks by sight not by faith.

They do not have Him abiding within them, so they do not know the truth. The world is forever saying that there is no absolute truth and that truth is relevant. How could they say any different since they do not know the Truth, that is, Jesus.

- **The Word of God is “the sword of the Spirit”**

Ephesians 6:17. The Bible is the sword of the Spirit, and only He can take those precious words and divide asunder soul and spirit discerning the thoughts and intents of a person’s heart,

bringing that person under conviction in order to be born again and become part of the church.

No man has the ability to use the word of God with this kind of effectiveness. We should “study to show ourselves approved,” but only the Holy Spirit can do the work of conviction and salvation with the word of God.

Over all the operations of the church recorded in Acts, the Holy Spirit exercised constant and complete control.

CHURCH

The Holy Spirit is the COMMANDANT OF ALL THE WORK OF THE

“If ye love me, keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.” John 14:15-18

“Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you.” John 16:13-14

- The Holy Spirit is the commander sent by the Lord Jesus Christ to direct in His behalf.
- He did not come to be part of the work, He came to command the work, to take charge of all the work of the church.
- He is to be in charge of every activity of the church, every choir practice, every sermon, every youth activity, every meeting of any kind.
- The church is not to move without direction from the Commander, the Holy Spirit.

II. The Holy Spirit is the COMMON DENOMINATOR OF CHRISTIANITY

Without the Holy Spirit there is no Salvation

“There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him. Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit. Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be? Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify

that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness. If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things?” John 3:1-12

Nicodemus was drawn to the Lord Jesus Christ and he naturally spoke of the facts that he knew before asking any questions.

- He first acknowledged that he knew that Jesus was a teacher—sent from God.
- And he said that he knew that because, no man could do the miracles that Jesus was doing unless God was with him.
- From that point of the conversation, Jesus informed him that he had to be born again.
- Nicodemus could only think of the physical birth for he had no knowledge of any other kind.
- The idea of another birth just did not make sense to him. How could a man be able to go back into his mother’s womb and be born again?
- Jesus begin explaining to him that there was a physical birth and there was a spiritual birth by saying that a man had to be born of water and of the Spirit before he could enter into the Kingdom of God.
- That which is born of flesh is flesh and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.
- As they were probably in a garden under the trees, Jesus compared the mysterious moving of the wind with the mysterious moving of the Spirit.
- As Nicodemus was a student of the word of God, he probably remembered several Old Testament references of the Holy Spirit being identified with the wind starting in the Garden of Eden when Adam heard the voice of the Lord walking in the garden.
- That sound would most likely be the same movement of the “wind”, the Holy Spirit, moving through the trees.
- God’s presence and moving is always distinct.
- The church always knows when the Spirit of God moves through where they are.

The Holy Spirit is the CONSTANT COMPANION OF CHRISTIANS GUIDING THEM TO A HOLY LIVING

**A.
Without
Him there**

is no sanctification

“This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to

the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Galatians 5:16-25

Being under the Mosaic law is quite different from being led of the Spirit.

The difference can be compared to a magnetic needle built into a compass with a piece of wood cut into the shape of a needle nailed to a post. For a wooden needle to always point north, it would have to be fastened in place.

The magnetic needle on the other hand is always free to move but is always being influenced and drawn to point in the right direction.

The difference can also be compared to a young boy beginning to learn the rules of math with a mathematical genius.

The young learner memorizes mathematical rules and follows those rules to solve problems while the mathematical genius has an intuitiveness about him and can solve problems because he just knows.

The flesh, as Galatians Five so adequately tells, is fully capable of committing all kinds of sins including murder and adultery.

As we are led by the Spirit of God, we are like the magnetic needle in the compass having the Holy Spirit to always point us in the right direction. The more we yield to Him, the more our lives are allowed to be guided into sanctification.

If the Christian continues to allow the flesh to dictate his life, then the influential leadership from the Holy Spirit will not be adhered to and a life of misery and discontent ensues.

He has no power with God and does not know the blessings and the liberty that rest in simply following the leadership of the Holy Spirit.

There will always be a battle between the flesh and the Spirit. Whichever one we yield to is the resulting direction that our lives will take, either to follow God or to move away from Him.

The flesh and the Spirit never agree and they never go in the same direction.

Unrestrained television, uncontrolled Internet and other video means are enemies to a life of love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness and temperance.

Jesus meant for His body, the church, to follow in His footsteps not those of the world.

God's anointing and leadership and His comfort and provisions are of much greater value than anything that the world can provide.

B. Without Him there is no preaching

“And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read. And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written, The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, To preach the acceptable year of the Lord.” Luke 4:16-19

Jesus declares the fact that Isaiah 61:1 (plus Isaiah 42:7 that He added to the reading) were fulfilled in Himself, at that very time.

The Spirit of the Lord was upon Him and the Spirit of the Lord had anointed Him to preach the gospel to the poor.

The Spirit of the Lord had sent Him to heal the brokenhearted. The Spirit of the Lord had sent Jesus to preach deliverance to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind and the Spirit of the Lord had sent Him to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord.

If Jesus declared that He worked and preached under the direction of the Holy Spirit, should not we do the same, especially in the light of Jesus' teachings that the Holy Spirit was sent to us to endue us with power, to guide and to teach?

IV. The Holy Spirit is the Commentator on the Scriptures

“Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.” 2 Peter 1:20-21

There is no way that we can properly understand the Scriptures without guidance from the Holy Spirit. He directed every word of the writing and if the church is to know the Scriptures, she must know the Holy Spirit.

V. The Holy Spirit is the Carrier of Christians to Heaven

“For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit...” 1 Peter 3:18

“But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.” Romans 8:11

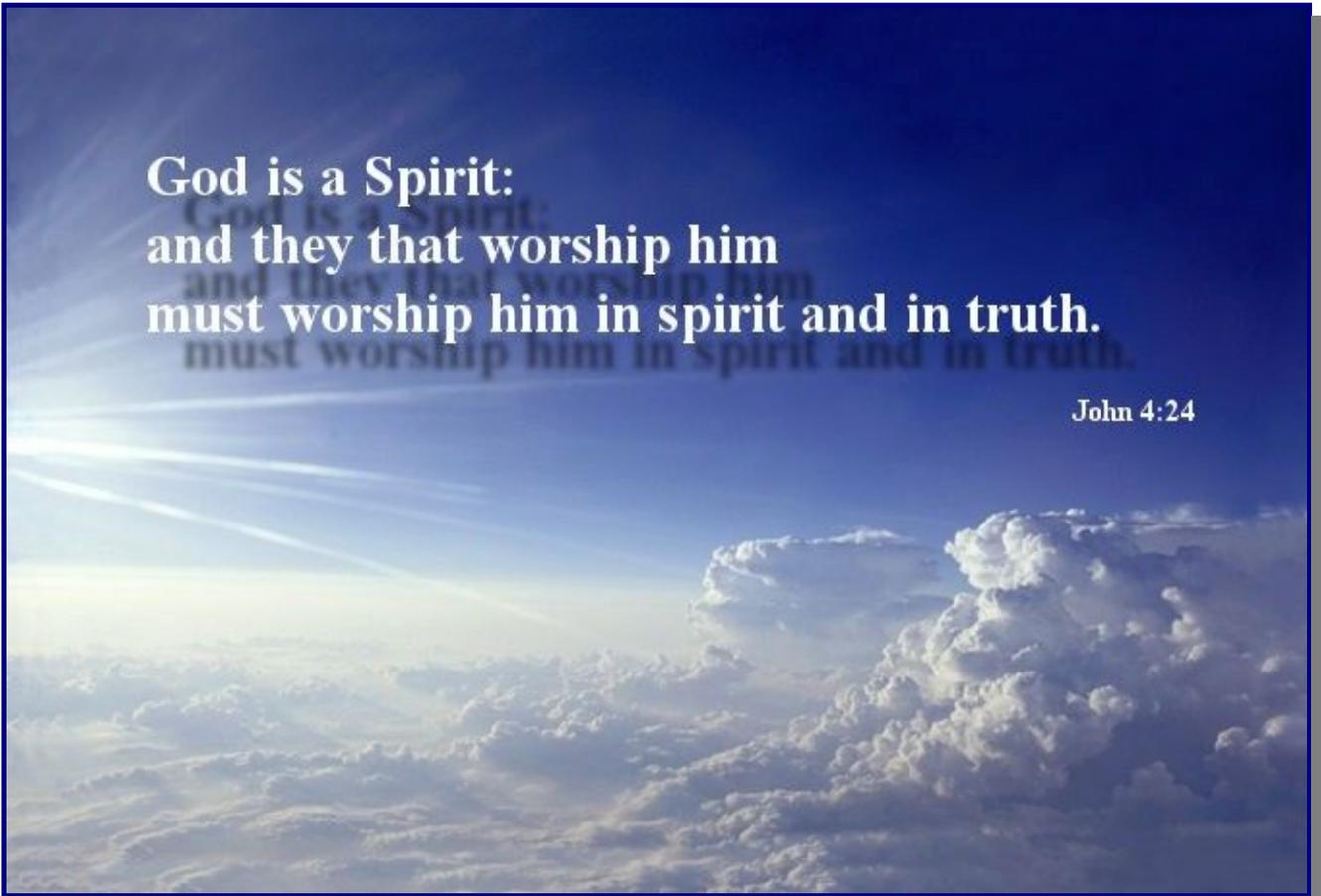
1 Peter 3:18 tells us that the Holy Spirit raised Jesus from the dead and the Holy Spirit according to Romans 8:11 shall quicken our mortal bodies—**IF**—he dwells in us. Not only is the Holy Spirit a guide to our lives while on earth, He is also the means by which our bodies are made alive so as to enter eternity.

VI. **The Holy Spirit is the Communication Link with Heaven**

“Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.” Romans 8:26-27

One final thought is that we, as parts of the body of Christ, are so dependent on the Holy Spirit that we really do not even know how to pray without Him. He helps our infirmities and makes intercession for us to the Father. He helps the church in her weaknesses. In our specific weakness of not knowing how to pray as we ought, Our Heavenly Father knows our hearts and He knows the mind of the Holy Spirit because the Holy Spirit intercedes according to the Father’s will.

I get the mental picture of God gazing at the heart of the praying Christian and at the same time seeing the mind of the Spirit so that the Holy Spirit bends our prayers to meet in the place where the will of God resides. It is the Holy Spirit’s groans that are made in our behalf and it is He that keeps us pointed in the right direction, even in our prayers.



**God is a Spirit:
and they that worship him
must worship him in spirit and in truth.**

John 4:24

PERSONAL EVALUATION AND IDENTIFICATION OF THE PROBLEMS

HOLY SPIRIT AND THE CHURCH

1. Do you believe that the Holy Spirit should control both your behavior and the operation of the church?
2. Do you make a practice of yielding yourself to be completely controlled by the Holy Spirit?
3. Do you make maximum effort to ensure that every event of the church is a spiritual one?
4. Do you spend adequate time praying for Holy Spirit anointed messages rather than seeking a good sermon outline?
5. Do you make a conscientious effort to avoid practices and situations in your personal life that would grieve the Holy Spirit?
6. Do you yield yourself to Holy Spirit control concerning understanding of Scripture?
7. Do you ask the Holy Spirit to give you thoughts and words to pray and to make intercession for you?
8. Do you invite the Holy Spirit into every facet of your life and ministry?

