

THE MANIFESTATION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

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Is the Holy Spirit present in this service? If your answer to that is yes, my question is, “How do you know that?” I suspect that if we took a survey, we would find that believers would give a wide variety of answers to that question.

For example, in the days when evangelistic crusades were common occurrences, seeing a stream of people flood forward, believers would say it was a sign of the work of the Holy Spirit. Pentecostals would say that a sure sign of the manifestation of the Holy Spirit is speaking in tongues, being slain in the Spirit, or healings.

Let me ask the question another way. Suppose no one came forward, no one spoke in tongues, no one was slain in the Spirit, and no one was healed. Would that mean that the Holy Spirit was not present? What is the manifestation of the Holy Spirit?

Paul says, “The manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all” (1 Cor. 12:7). In this passage, Paul is talking about the manifestation of the Holy Spirit in an assembly of believers. Other passages indicate that the Holy Spirit works in different ways on different types of individuals. What is the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of an unbeliever? What is the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of a believer? What is the work of the Holy Spirit in an assembly of believers, which is the subject of 1 Corinthians 12:7.

Unbelievers

Conviction Jesus says, “And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment” (Jn. 16:8). The Greek word translated “convict” means “to expose, convict, convince.” Apart from the work of the Holy Spirit, people do not really know the truth about sin, righteousness, or judgment.

The Holy Spirit convicts the world “of sin because they do not believe in Me” (Jn. 16:9). The world does not believe; they are in sin. So the Holy Spirit convinces them they are sinners. The Holy Spirit convicts the world “of righteousness because I go to My Father and you see Me no more” (Jn. 16:10). The Holy Spirit convicts the world of their need of righteousness and of the nature of righteousness. The Holy Spirit convicts the world “of judgment because the ruler of this world is judged” (Jn. 16:11). The Holy Spirit will convince men of judgment to come.

The convicting work of the Holy Spirit is different than the convicting work of conscience. The conscience convicts people based on what they have been taught the Holy Spirit convinces people of the truthfulness of God’s Word. The conscience convicts and condemns. The Holy Spirit convicts and convinces.

Of course, for all of this to work, believers must speak. It is then that the Holy Spirit works (Jn. 15:26-27).

Enlightenment Unbelievers are blind (2 Cor. 4:5); they do not understand spiritual truth. Jesus said, “Therefore I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand” (Mt. 13:13). Based on their

rejection of His teaching (13:12), Jesus speaks in parables. In other words, Jesus hides the truth from those who reject the truth. Earlier Jesus said, “I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from *the* wise and prudent and have revealed them to babes” (11:25). The wise are those so wise in their own eyes they think they know all the answers and will not listen to the Lord. Jonathan Swift said, “There is none so blind as they that won’t see.” (Mt. 13:14-15 is a quotation from Isa. 6:9-10).

It is the Holy Spirit who opens their eyes. When Jesus asked Peter, “Who do you say that I am?” Simon Peter answered and said, ‘You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.’ Jesus answered and said to him, ‘Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed *this* to you, but My Father who is in heaven’” (Mt. 16:15-17). God may have used a human instrument, but it was God who illuminated Peter. Peter’s conclusion about Christ was not a secondhand opinion just learned from other people. God Himself revealed it to Peter.

Resistance Unbelievers can resist the convicting and enlightening work of the Holy Spirit. Stephen told the religious leaders of his day, “*You* stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears! You always resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers *did*, so *do* you” (Acts 7:51). They were stiff-necked, like an ox refusing to receive a yoke. They were uncircumcised, that is, they heard and thought like Gentiles. In the Old Testament, circumcision was used metaphorically of the cutting away of the pride and sinfulness of the heart (Lev. 26:41; Deut. 10:16; Jer. 4:4). “Their ears did not hear the truth, the heart did not receive the truth, and their necks did not bow to the truth” (Wiersbe).

Believers

Enlightenment Paul says, “Therefore I also after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him” (Eph. 1:15-17). Paul’s petition is that God the Father may give them understanding. Only that is not the way he says it. The text reads, “The spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him.” No one can obtain a spirit of wisdom and revelation apart from the Holy Spirit (Isa. 11:2). Thus, the spirit of wisdom and revelation is a gift of the Holy Spirit (Jn. 14:26). The Spirit of God gives the spirit of understanding of God. Paul continues, “The eyes of your understanding being enlightened” (Eph. 1:18a). Paul’s prayer is for deeper understanding.

What are these things he desires us to understand concerning God’s ways and works? Beginning in the middle of verse 18, Paul explains the specifics. He says, “that you may know what is the hope of His calling” (Eph. 1:18b). The second specific is, “What are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints” (Eph. 1:18c). Ephesians 1:14 speaks of the believer’s inheritance; this verse speaks of God’s inheritance. Our inheritance is “reserved in heaven” (1 Pet. 1:4). God’s inheritance is “in the saints” (Hodge; Pentecost). Think of it. God inherits us! Paul prays that you understand that you are God’s glorious, rich inheritance. You’re valuable! A mechanic can take material worth a few dollars and make an article worth hundreds. That’s skill. Longfellow could take a worthless piece of paper, write a poem on it and make it worth thousands of dollars. That’s genius. Rockefeller could sign his name to a check and make it worth millions. That’s capital.

God can take a worthless, sinful life, clean it up by the blood of Christ, put His Holy Spirit in it and make it not only a blessing to humanity but an eternal trophy of His grace. That's salvation. The third specific is, "What is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe according to the working of His mighty power" (Eph. 1:19). Paul's prayer is that they might apprehend just how great God's power is in believers.

After last week's sermon, someone in the congregation texted me: "I must tell you the message yesterday was a real revelation. Never heard of such teaching about the Lord's Supper. Wow. What a blessing."

Enablement Paul says, "For this reason, I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. From whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man" (Eph. 3:14-16). This prayer is for power. As in Ephesians 1:19, Paul piles one word on top of another to emphasize the

The result of this prayer is that the inner man might be empowered by the Holy Spirit, is "that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith" (Eph. 3:17a). A congressman once voted in favor of a measure he personally felt was wrong. He did so for the sake of expediency, even though his better judgment and the dictates of his conscience told him he was making a mistake. Later, a friend voiced a keen disappointment at the position he had taken. The lawmaker responded, "It really was not right for me to support that bill, but you have no idea how much pressure was brought to bear upon us." "Pressure?" said the friend, "But Congressman, where were your inside braces?" Believers who are walking in faith, love the Lord and are obeying His Word have inner strength, inner braces.

Grieve Believers can grieve the Holy Spirit. Paul says, "And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you are sealed for the day of redemption" (Eph. 4:30). The context indicates that sin grieves the Holy Spirit. Paul groups five vicious sins together and exhorts believers to get rid of them: "Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice" (Eph. 4:31). Bitterness is resentment, the hard-hearted attitude that does not want reconciliation (Robinson). Wrath is hot temper, passion. It is an outburst of anger (Pentecost). Anger is a deep-seated, settled feeling of hostility (Pentecost). Clamor is loud, boisterous talking. Evil speaking is slander, speaking that which is not true and damaging to another's reputation. Malice is a desire to injure.

The Holy Spirit sealed us (Eph. 1:13), and even though we grieve Him, the seal is not broken, for He has sealed us for the day when Christ returns to redeem our bodies.

Congregation

A Word of Wisdom "For to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit" (1 Cor. 12:8a). The spiritual gift of a word of wisdom is the special supernatural ability given to a believer by the Holy Spirit to speak wisdom (Hodge). This is the ability to see things as they are from God's point of view and communicate that to others for their profit.

A Word of Knowledge "To another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit" (1 Cor. 12:8b). The spiritual gift of a word of knowledge is the special supernatural ability given to a believer by the Holy Spirit to speak knowledge, the knowledge God has

revealed in His Word (13:2; Hodges). It is the ability to comprehend and systematize, as well as speak doctrine, concepts, and ideas of the Word. The gifted theologian

Faith “To another faith by the same Spirit” (1 Cor. 12:9a). The gift of faith is the special supernatural ability given by the Holy Spirit to enable the believer to believe God to do extraordinary things (13:2) in the face of enormous obstacles. George Mueller

The Gift of Healing “To another, gifts of healings by the same Spirit” (1 Cor. 12:9b). The gifts of healing is the special supernatural ability to perform miraculous healings of disease. If the plural indicates repeated healings, each one is viewed as a gift (Hodges). This gift is called a confirming sign (Mark 16:17-20). There is evidence that the confirming signs have ceased (Heb. 2:3-4). The gift of healing does not exist today, although God does heal.

Working of Miracles “To another the working of miracles” (1 Cor. 12:10a). The gift of miracles is the Spirit-given ability to perform miraculous things. Calvin suggested that the smiting of Elymas with blindness (Acts 13:11) was an example of this gift. There is evidence that this gift, too, has ceased (cf. above on the gift of healing). That does not mean that God does not work miracles in answer to prayer.

Prophecy “To another prophecy” (1 Cor. 12:10b). A prophet in the Old Testament was an individual who received direct revelation from God and proclaimed it to the people (Num. 12:6-8). The revelation may or may not have been a prediction of the future. Although the prophet must be able to predict, and the test of a prophet is that *all* of his predictions come to pass (Deut. 18:15-22), if one does not receive *direct* revelation from God and does not at least on occasion predict, he is not a prophet. Thus, the gift of prophecy is the special ability to receive and relate revelation from God, including predicting the future.

There are only a few illustrations of prophecy in the New Testament (cf. Acts 11:28, 21:11). The ones that are recorded reveal that the revelations did not deal with universal truth as much as it did specific information for special circumstances. The specific examples involved prediction (cf. Acts 11:27-28, 15:32, 21:10). Perhaps prophecy is the ability to receive revelation for individuals rather than wisdom and knowledge for everyone. There is evidence that the gift of prophecy has ceased (Eph. 2:20).

Discerning of Spirits “To another discerning of spirits” (1 Cor. 12:10c). The gift of the discerning of spirits is the God-given ability to discern whether or not something said is of the Holy Spirit (Acts 16:16-18; Robertson and Plummer). A TV ad pictures a man who has the ability to discern between margarine and butter. He can tell which one is the real thing and which one is the phony. He has the gift of discerning butter. Some believers have the gift of discerning of spirits.

Kinds of Tongues “To another, different kinds of tongues” (1 Cor. 12:10d). The Greek word translated “tongues” means “languages.” The only passage in the New Testament that describes tongues supports that conclusion (Acts 2:6-11). The gift of tongues is the supernatural ability to speak a known human language unknown to the speaker (Hodge). The evidence is that this gift, and therefore the next, has ceased.

Interpretation of Tongues “To another the interpretation of tongues” (1 Cor. 12:10e). The gift of the interpretation of tongues is the special ability to understand and explain what was said in the gift of tongues, that is, interpret a foreign language (Hodge).

Paul concludes this list of gifts by observing, “But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills” (1 Cor. 12:11). Though

there is a variety of gifts, all are given by the same Holy Spirit who sovereignly gives gifts to individual believers as He wills. The giver chooses the gift, not the receiver. The Holy Spirit is said to do what was earlier in this passage said to be the work of God (12:6). The gifts are all given to profit believers.

Quench Believers can quench the Holy Spirit. Paul says, “Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise prophecies” (1 Thess. 5:19-20). The Greek word translated “quench” means “to extinguish, to put out.” In other words, Paul is saying, “Do not prohibit the free exercise of spiritual gifts in the assembly.”

The early church had an open service climaxed by the Lord’s Table. At this open meeting, any male in the congregation could stand and speak. This is when the men would exercise their spiritual gifts, like exhortation, prophecy, tongues or interpretation of tongues. Evidently, this had been abused at Thessalonica and some had prohibited the free exercise of spiritual gifts. Paul is saying, “Do not do that. Let the gifted ones speak.”

Paul further commands, “Do not despise prophecies” (1 Thess. 5:20). The Greek word translated “despised” means “to treat with contempt.” Prophecy, of course, was one of the spiritual gifts. It was the ability to receive a message from God and communicate it to others. Evidently, there were those in the congregation at Thessalonica who were treating prophesying with contempt. Perhaps some of the prophets were telling them to go to work and not be lazy.

Summary: The Holy Spirit is manifest in different ways to different groups of people. He convicts and enlightens unbelievers, but they can resist him. He enlightens and empowers believers, but they can grieve him. It can give a congregation spiritual gifts, but they can quench those gifts.

The subject of the manifestation of the Holy Spirit has deeply interested me for many years. I want to know that the Lord is here and that He is working. How do I know that?

I learned a long time ago that if a church talks about the Holy Spirit all the time, He is probably not involved as much as they think He is. Jesus said, “However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak. And He will tell you things to come.. He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you. All things that the Father has are Mine. Therefore I said that He will take of Mine and declare it to you” (Jn. 16:12-15). Where there is the Holy Spirit, there is the truth of the Word of God and there is much said about the Son of God.

I also learned a long time ago that neither the size of the crowd nor the enthusiasm the of the crowd does not necessarily have anything to do with the Holy Spirit. He can be present in a small crowd anymore often is not speaks in a still small voice.

Well, how do we know that Holy Spirit is here? He gives spiritual gifts to profit people, which means when a spiritual gift like teaching is exercise and people are convicted, enlightened, and empowered, you can be sure the Holy Spirit was present because those things do not get done without Him. He is here. He is at work. We must make sure that we do not grieve to resist Him, grieve Him or quench Him.