

The Holy Spirit (2)

THE BAPTISM AND GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

1. Enduement with Power Promised

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you...” (Acts 1:8).

A promise:

- first given to those disciples who obeyed Jesus and waited in the Upper Room;
- applicable to all Christians - Acts 2:38-39;
- in every generation - “.
- of “power” (δύναμις - *dunamis* = strength, power, ability) - Acts 4:8-14, 33; 9:17-20; 10:46; Romans 15:19; 1 Corinthians 2:4 (cf Micah 3:8);
- to do Jesus works & greater (μείζων - *meizōn* = greater, larger, stronger) - John 14:12.

Also enables:

- ministry in the church - Acts 6:3
- supernatural discernment - Acts 5:1-10

Supernatural power, accompanied in the NT by supernatural manifestations, eg Acts 2:4. Initially evidenced in Acts by speaking in other tongues. Described as a “baptism” (βαπτίζω = *baptizō* = dip, submerge, immerse) seven times in the New Testament, eg Acts 1:5; Matthew 3:11, 12; Luke 3:16.

2. Subsequent to Conversion

“Have you received the Holy Spirit since you believed? (Acts 19:2)

- Disciples - John 15:3, 5 & 20:22 with Acts 1:8
- Paul - Acts 9:9-17
- Samaritan Christians - Acts 8:15-16
- Ephesian Christians - Acts 19:1-6 (21 years after the Day of Pentecost)

In the case of the household of Cornelius (sometimes called the “Gentile Pentecost”), there was no time lapse between the two - Acts 10:43-48.

3. The Initial Evidence

Speaking in unlearned language/s was the initial sign in Acts (2:4; 10:44-46; 19:1-6). Implied in 8:14-19. Pentecostal Christians believe that the initial sign of the baptism in the Holy Spirit is always/usually speaking in tongues.

4. Pre-conditions

- repentance; a clean heart - Acts 2:38; John 14:17
- a seeking heart - Acts 1:4; Luke 11:13; John 7:37
- a right attitude, eg unity among believers on the Day of Pentecost - Acts 1:14

- sometimes imparted with the laying on of hands by other Christians - Acts 8:15
- unified prayer - Acts 4:31
- sometimes spontaneous - Acts 10:45
- faith - Luke 11:13; Galatians 3:14
- individual prayer - Acts 9:19-17
- obedience and submission to the will of God - Acts 5:32
- an attitude of worship - Luke 24:35; Acts 10:46

4. Its Continuous Aspect

Being “filled with the Spirit” is not a climax in and of itself. Ephesians 5:18b refers to being “filled” in the present continuous tense, ie “be being filled”. In Acts, some people were referred to be as being “full of the Holy Spirit” - Acts 6:3; 7:55; 11:24. Others received supplementary fillings, eg Acts 4:31. Remember, the purpose was power for service.

THE GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT

1. The General Nature of the Gifts

Important to distinguish between the gifts and the Giver. The Holy Spirit is the gift of the Father, through Christ - Acts 2:33. He distributes His gifts (*charismata 17 times*) according to the mind of God - 1 Corinthians 12:4, 7, 11.

The gifts of the Holy Spirit are in place to build up the church (individually and corporately). It is therefore important that we focus on the giver, and not the gifts.

2. The Variety of the Gifts

There is no standard order in which the Bible lists or characterizes the gifts of the Holy Spirit. However, some are described as “spiritual gifts” (lit. “spirituals”, cf nine gifts listed in 1 Corinthians 12:8-10), while others are gifts for service and outreach.

- diversities of gifts
- differences of administrations
- differences of operations

Can be grouped and classified as:

▪ *Gifts of Revelation (Knowing)*

- word of wisdom
- word of knowledge
- discernings of spirits

▪ *Gifts of power (Doing)*

- faith
- miracles
- healings

- *Gifts of utterance (Saying)*

- prophecy
- tongues
- interpretation of tongues

- a **The Word of Wisdom**

Supernatural use of God's wisdom, to meet particular situations. In the Bible referred to:

- interpreting dreams - Acts 7:10
- interpreting something - Revelation 13:18; 17:9
- skilful management of affairs - Acts 6:3,15:13-21
- prudence in dealing with those outside of the church - Colossians 4:5
- skill in imparting Christian truth - Colossians 1:28
- knowledge to live uprightly - James 1:5;3:13, 17
- defending Christ's cause - Luke 21:12-15; Acts 4:8-14; 6:10 (even in face of danger)
- interpreting and applying Scripture - Matthew 13:54; Mark 6:12; Acts 6:10
- dispensing justice - 1 Kings 3:16-28; John 8:7
- skill in practical matters - Exodus 31:3
- leadership - Deuteronomy 34:9

Different from human wisdom, learning. A "word" (logos) rather than a skill.

- b **The Word of Knowledge**

Supernatural awareness and utterance of facts, not the normal possession of the user, eg:

- Jesus' awareness of the situations of Nathaniel (John 1:48-50) and the woman at the well - John 4:17, 18, 29
- discernment of sin - Acts 5:1-6
- Paul's foreknowledge about the shipwreck - Acts 27:10
- knowledge of things that belong to God - Romans 11:33
- supernaturally imparted intelligence and understanding - Ephesians 3:19
- knowledge concerning Divine and human duties - Romans 2:20; Colossians 2:3

- c **Faith**

Different from saving faith, or faithfulness (the "fruit" of the Spirit).

Impartation of faith by the Holy Spirit for special circumstances. For example, faith given by the Holy Spirit for protection in times of danger, or for divine provision.

Paul exhibited this gift on a number of occasions (probably in conjunction with other gifts), eg

- smiting Elymas with blindness Acts 13:11
- restoring Eutychus - Acts 20:12
- casting out demon in Philippi - Acts 16:18
- healing the lame man in Lystra - Acts 14:10

d The Gifts of Healings

Note that “gifts” is plural in the Greek text.

Supernatural ability to apply healings in a number of circumstances, or different illnesses/afflictions. Does not make men “healers”- the focus is on Jesus Christ.

Instrumental in attracting people to the Gospel, eg

- healing of lame man at Temple gate in Jerusalem -Acts 3:6
- in Samaria - Acts 8:6,7;
- the healing of Aeneas - 9:35;
- resurrection of Tabitha - Acts 9:40
- resurrection of Eutychus - Acts 20:12
- healing of father of Publius on Malta - 28:8-10

e The Workings of Miracles

Lit. “works of power”. Distinct from gifts of healings.

May be involved in connection with the conflict between God and Satan, eg casting out demons. To demonstrate the power of God, the reality of the Gospel, the preeminence of Christ, eg Acts 19:11, 12; 5:12-15. “Gifts” is plural in the Greek, ie variety of forms or manifestations of the gift.

f Prophecy

Supernaturally inspired utterance (προφητεία - *prophēteia* = *divinely inspired declaration of the purposes of God*), which may involve the future, but also be about current issues, eg Agabus’ prophecies about Paul - Acts 21:10-11, and a great famine - Acts 11:27, 28. Not to be confused with the “office” of prophet (cf Ephesians 4:11, Acts 15:32)

The Bible encourages all to seek the gift of prophecy. There is variety in the expression of the gift, in connection with edification, exhortation and comfort - 1 Corinthians 14:3. Also for teaching - 1 Corinthians 14:31. It is a vehicle the Holy Spirit uses to speak to Christians and to bring people to faith in Christ - 1 Corinthians 14:24. Prophecy must be tested - 1 Corinthians 14:29, but not despised - 1 Thessalonians 5:20.

g Discernings of Spirits

Again, note plural. Bible speaks of three spirits: Spirit of God; spirit of man; Satan & evil spirits. We are surrounded by angels, evil spirits, etc. The gift of discernment (διάκρισις - *diakrīsis* = distinguishing, discerning, judging) is given to help the church discern between good and evil spirits (implying that such discernment requires a gift of God).

Examples of this gift in the New Testament include:

- Jesus cast our demons through the ministry of the Holy Spirit - Matthew 12:28
- the unclean spirit in the slave girl in Philippi - Acts 16:16-18
- the evil spirit at work in Elymas the sorcerer - Acts 13:8-11

h Tongues

Ability to speak in a tongue the user has never learned (may or may not be a human language, cf Acts 2:6-11; 1 Corinthians 13:1; however in documented New Testament cases they were recognised as languages, supernaturally enabled nevertheless; the Greek word means “languages”. 1 Corinthians 13:1 refers to the “tongues of men and of angels”).

Some words may be uttered to God alone - 1 Corinthians 14:2; some may be for the church at large - 1 Corinthians 14:5.

Not all who speak in tongues are exercising the gift of tongues for the church.

i Interpretation of Tongues

Renders understandable utterances in other tongues.

Two meanings: to give a translation; to explain meaning and application.

Tongues and interpretation used together are somewhat equal to prophecy - 1 Corinthians 14:5.

Other Gifts

The gifts of the Holy Spirit to the church are diverse. 1 Corinthians 12:28-3 and Romans 12:4-8 identify gifts of the Spirit over and above those listed in 1 Corinthians 12:8-10:

- ministry (service)
- teaching
- encouraging
- liberal giving
- leadership, ruling
- mercy, compassion
- administrators

Regulation of the Gifts

- The gifts are given for: establishment of the church; edification of the church; service; outreach.

There have been many excesses during the history of the church. The Corinthian Christians to whom Paul wrote his first letter were exercising gifts without a concern for or recognition of the unity of the Body of Christ.

- proportionate value - 1 Corinthians 14:5-19
- edification - the purpose of the gifts is to build up people
- wisdom - “use common sense”
- self-control - those exercising gifts are able to control them - 1 Corinthians 14:32
- orderliness - activity in church to be done decently & in order. 1 Corinthians 14:40
- teachableness - vv 36, 37

Requirements for Receiving the Gifts

- submission to God's Will - what God wants (the gifts are not about status, hierarchy or level of spiritual maturity, but the will of the Holy Spirit)
- holy ambition - desire spiritual gifts - 1 Corinthians 12:31; 14:1. Have a godly focus and aim in mind.
- faith - some churches emphasize "tarrying" for the Holy Spirit to come, but the real issue is faith, knowing it is not us, but the Holy Spirit in us who brings results.
- yieldedness - we are not to quench the working of the Holy Spirit (1 Thessalonians 5:19) through negligence or opposition. Stir up the gifts - 2 Timothy 1:6; 4:14.

Testing the Gifts

The gifts need to be tested as false manifestations do occur; Satan counterfeits the genuine work of God - Matthew 7:23; 2 Thessalonians 2:9; 1 John 4:1. All of the gifts can be copied eg "faith" healers; speaking in tongues in Inuit communities; false prophecies (in Christ's name), witchdoctors casting out demons.

Need to ensure "testing" is not based on misunderstanding of the gifts, fear or interpersonal issues.

Look for:

- loyalty to Christ - an evidence that the person using the gift is doing so under the Holy Spirit's influence. Jesus will be the focus and the desire will be to glorify Him;
- the practical test - look for the evidence/fruit/consistency in the life of the user;
- the doctrinal test - no manifestation will contradict the Scriptures.

THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE CHURCH

"Apart from the Spirit, the Church would not exist". (Holdcroft, p. 70)

The Holy Spirit has come to give the church:"

- birth and members
- power
- comfort and joy
- direction
- unity
- teaching
- ministers
- liberty
- sanctification

The Bible encourages us to claim the power and presence of the Holy Spirit in our personal experience. The key is seeking *Him*.

The Birth of the Church

The Day of Pentecost has been called the “Birthday of the church”. Not because there were no Christians till then (the disciples were effectively Christians, after Jesus’ resurrection) but because Body of Christ did not exist till then apart from the band of Jesus’ followers. The Holy Spirit was “with” and “in” every believer in a new way. Since then He has been the “Administrator of the Church” in the world. It is He who gives “increase” in the work of God - 1 Corinthians 3:7.

Building Up the Church

The Holy Spirit is building a “temple in the Lord” - Ephesians 2:21, 22. He gives the church unity - 2 Corinthians 2:13; Ephesians 4:3. This unity is not the result of organised ecumenism but the work of God.

How does He do it?

(a) Conviction

The first step God takes in bringing a soul back to Himself is conviction. Sin alienates us from God, cuts us off, blinds us; the initiative to come back must therefore come from God. Jesus said the Holy Spirit would convince people of:

- sin - the most fundamental is unbelief, which separates us from God - cf Acts 2:27
- righteousness - the need for a right relationship with God - Jesus Christ was “made” our righteousness - 1 Corinthians 1:30
- judgement - of Satan - Hebrews 2:14, 15; 1 John 3:8; Colossians 2:15; Romans 16:29; and sinners; judgement has been committed to Christ - John 5:22.

Without conviction we do not know we are sinners, needing Christ’s righteousness, and that the world will be judged. When we realise these things, we are drawn to a Saviour.

(b) Regeneration (being born again)

God is not far from any one of us - Acts 17:27; however to have salvation we need to be “born anew” - John 3:3, 6. This is not the work of denominations/man - John 1:13; it is the work of the Holy Spirit - Titus 3:5; Ephesians 2:1.

(c) Assurance

We know we are children of God because of the inward personal assurance of the Holy Spirit. He has sealed us; the “earnest (*arabon*; downpayment, deposit) of our eternal inheritance - 2 Corinthians 1:22; Ephesians 4:30.

- makes our sonship real - Romans 8:15, 16; Galatians 4:6; 1 John 5:6.

(d) Indwelling

“He dwells with you and will be in you” - John 14:16, 17.

When we become Christians:

- the Holy Spirit comes to live inside of us - Romans 8:9
- in the sense of a personal relationship, a union with Christ - 1 Corinthians 6:17,19; 1 John 3:24
- we are the “temples of the Holy Spirit” - 1 Corinthians 6:19
- He comes along side of us - John 14:17
- helps our weaknesses (“infirmities”, including physical/mental) - Romans 8:26, 27

(e) Sanctification

Separation, holiness, making us like Christ; a spiritual experience, not a product of human effort. We are changed “with ever-increasing glory” by the work of the Holy Spirit - 2 Corinthians 3:18; 1 Peter 1:2, 22

The Holy Spirit produces “fruit” in each of us - Galatians 5:22, 23.

This sanctification is both:

- positional (based on the finished work of Christ); and
- progressive, or experiential (the Holy Spirit translating that work into the daily reality).

“The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death” - Romans 8:2. The problems arise when we try to carry out in our own strength what only the Holy Spirit can do - Galatians 3:3.

(f) Empowerment

”Our Gospel came not to you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit...” - 1 Thessalonians 1:5.

Through the Holy Spirit the Christian is given:

- inner strength - Ephesians 3:16
- power for witness - Acts 1:8 (martyros)

Preaching, teaching, witnessing are powerless if the Holy Spirit is “absent”.

The Anointing of the Holy Spirit is Essential

“Now it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ. He anointed us...” - 2 Corinthians 1:21.

Jesus attributed His power and results to the Holy Spirit - Luke 4:18. He promised we would do the things He did (“and greater”). Through this anointing He was able to:

1. Preach the Gospel to the poor. This includes:
 - (a) the poor and feeble of the world;
 - (b) those who have nothing;
 - (c) those who have everything they need but are spiritually poor.

2. Heal the broken-hearted - those whose lives are crushed by problems, have no answers, are in despair, depression.
3. Preach deliverance to the captives - those who are held prisoner by forces stronger than themselves, eg demonic powers, fears, habits, guilt or captivating sins.
4. Recovering of sight to the blind - physical or spiritual blindness
5. Liberty to the bruised- freedom from being crushed, hurt and wounded in body and spirit.

Without the anointing of the Holy Spirit, serving God and living the Christian life is an uphill struggle. Many Christians and churches are not as effective as they could otherwise be because they do all their work for God in their natural ability. Their hearts are sincere, their motives are good, but they lack that anointing that brings life to all they do. Only the anointing of the Holy Spirit can “break the yoke” and secure the right results - Isaiah 10:27.

What Do We Mean by the “Anointing of the Holy Spirit”?

In the times of the Tabernacle in the Old Testament anointing oil (usually olive oil) was applied to the High Priest, other priests, tabernacle furniture. Everything to do with the Tabernacle and the worship and service of God had to be anointed. Without it they were not fit or qualified to be used in God’s service.

For Christians, the “anointing” is an enabling that comes from God. It is by the anointing (consistent with their calling) that people qualify for the work of God. Without the anointing, there are limited results. The anointing separates the true Gospel from all other religion or man-made methods. True preaching and other ministries are anointed ministry. For example, the anointing of the Holy Spirit:

- gives freedom and liberty;
- gives freshness to the spoken Word;
- brings us into closer relationship and deeper consecration;
- causes the fire of God to burn in the message;
- transforms men and women of God acting in His name;
- makes everything else look vain and incomplete;
- is secured by prayer, openness and obedience.

“Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit...” - Acts 4:8

“Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John and realised that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled, and they took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus” - Acts 4:13. The anointing made the Word powerful. It drew and convicted people.

(g) Guidance

Christians need not feel uncertain as to God’s will for their lives. Even mature believers sometimes feel discouraged by circumstances or their inability to discern God’s will in particular situations. However, the same Holy Spirit who directed the early Church has come to guide us - Romans 8:14. We can “rest” in know that.

Since we are human, our prayers for guidance may be affected by our own desires or prejudices. If we walk in daily surrender He will not permit us to stray from the right path; our spirits are attuned to His voice. He will check, correct and direct us as we carry out His will.

Examples in Acts. The Holy Spirit:

- sent Philip to Gaza - Acts 8:26;
- sent Ananias to meet Saul - Acts 9:10
- sent Saul and Barnabas on their first missionary journey - Acts 13:2-4;
- led the church out of cultural bondage - Acts 15:28;
- forbade Paul and his party to take the Gospel into Asia and Bithynia - Acts 16:6,7;
- directed Apollos through Aquilla and Priscilla - Acts 18:26;
- spoke a word of warning to Paul on his way to Jerusalem - Acts 21:10, 11.

As Christians we need to allow the Holy Spirit to lead us - Galatians 5:16, 25. If we do this we will not be continually falling into sin (the "works of the flesh").

We need to be able to distinguish between the revealed will of God and our own desires when we say, "the Lord told me".

The Holy Spirit does not lead us into legalism and form, but liberty - 2 Corinthians 3:17 (as long as things are done "in order" - 1 Corinthians 14:40).

It is important that we "wait" on our ministry and other aspects of Spirit-filled daily living. - Romans 12:7-8. The Holy Spirit will develop and gifts and ministries as we continue to step out (or hold back) by faith in obedience to His voice.

(h) Worship

The Holy Spirit helps us to be true worshippers, not paying lip service (like Israel; see Isaiah 29:13, cf Matthew 15:7-9); John 4:23-24; we worship "by the Spirit of God" - Philippians 3:3 (literal).

Even with the content/style of worship - Ephesians 5:18, 19. Worship without the presence and touch of the Holy Spirit is simply human effort.

(i) Prayer

The Holy Spirit helps us (even when we are weak) to pray the way we should - Ephesians 6:18; Romans 8:26. God knows we are weak when we pray and we often encounter practical and spiritual difficulties in doing so. The Holy Spirit helps us in our weakness and makes up for our deficiencies. This encourages us to yield ourselves to Him and allow Him to pray through us. The more fully we surrender, the more Christ-centred we become and the more truly God is glorified in us.

Praying "in the Spirit" may mean allowing the Holy to guide our thoughts as we pray in our own language/s. It may also involve the use of speaking in tongues, or even involve unspoken cries (inward groans) to God for the need that is on His heart.

If we want our prayer live to be richer, deeper, more meaningful, we need to surrender to the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

(j) Teaching

The Holy Spirit does not bring new teaching, but gives understanding of the meaning and application of Jesus' teaching (John 14:26). How could the disciples remember (and agree) all the things Jesus taught them? They let the Holy Spirit refresh their memory. He teaches us by:

- direct impression - Mark 13:11; 1 John 2:27;
- inner illumination and clarification - 1 Corinthians 2:11;
- the Scriptures - John 14:26;
- human instruments - gives teachers to Church - Acts 20:28; Ephesians 4:8,11, 12. Failure only comes about as a result of the church being man-managed instead of led by the Holy Spirit.

Do we need to be taught by people if we have the Holy Spirit? Yes, because He has given teachers to the church. However, teachers must submit to Him; the church is not the source of revelation (1 Corinthians 2:13). We emphasize being taught by men. Churches want educated, cultured leaders. God can use our education to great advantage, however the most important element is not our learning or experience, but the Holy Spirit's impartation, impact, anointing. No Christian can be "spiritual" (cf Romans 8:66) without the Holy Spirit.

(k) Comfort and Joy

The Holy Spirit gives "comfort" to the church in a hostile, anti-Christian world- Acts 9:31.

Just as Jesus experienced the joy of the Holy Spirit in His ministry, the Bible promises us that the Kingdom of God consists of "righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit" - Romans 14:17. This is a supernatural dimension of joy.

(l) Love

If we are to live in ways that please God it is essential for us to grow in love toward God and man. Many Christians find it difficult to love other people and their love for God waxes and wanes. Romans 5:5 tells us that the love of God is "shed abroad" in our hearts by the Holy Spirit. This love, kindled in us by the Spirit, reaches toward God in commitment, to the Body of Christ in acceptance, and to lost humanity in compassion for their salvation (cf Romans 9:2,3).

(m) Fruit of the Spirit"

The characteristics of the Fruit of the Spirit are produced in our lives as we surrender to His Lordship - Galatians 5:22, 23.

One-by-One

Romans 8 is a good case study of the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the life of the individual believer; mentioned 17 times in 39 verses, eg He:

- (i) has liberated us - vs. 2
- (ii) will resurrect us - v. 11 (new life now and resurrection later on)
- (iii) dwells in us - vs. 9, 11
- (iv) leads us - v. 14
- (v) assures us - v. 16
- (vi) helps us - v. 26

The Holy Spirit has come to have *koinonia*, or fellowship, with us - 2 Corinthians 13:14; Philippians 2:1. "Normal" Christian living therefore involves an ongoing relationship with Him. As a Person He is active on behalf of every believer, to fulfil the work of Jesus Christ in our lives.

A. THE HOLY SPIRIT IN REVIVAL

"The Word of the Lord spread widely and grew in power." - Acts 19:20

"... the Spirit gives life" - John 6:63

The word "revival" (literally meaning "made alive again") is used in many contexts. For Christians, it often creates images of fresh inspiration and the prospect of new spiritual blessing, fervent worship, soul-searching, re-captured first love, repentance from sin and intensified Christian witnessing to the lost. Often after a period of decline or stagnation.

Christian revivals in history have included both an awakening of the church and the conversion of sinners. (More than numerical growth - the cults cite impressive statistics about their progress, so growth alone is not a criterion of blessing from God.)

True revival leaves a deep impression on communities. It changes lifestyles. It heals families and delivers people from sin. It redirects the lives of many; even those who reject the message often feel the impact.

As we serve the Lord we become aware our best efforts are futile apart from the Holy Spirit. Vast amounts of money, skilled promotion, flawless organization leave no permanent spiritual impact. Spiritual "rivers" sometimes flow from unlikely places. Our hands are powerless until the Holy Spirit grants the power - Acts 19:11.

Peter wrote about those who had preached the Gospel, "with the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven" - 1 Peter 1:12: Many activities can be managed by human skill, but the Gospel can be preached effectively only when the preaching and other activities are propelled by the Holy Spirit's might. Look at the signs:

- (i) anointed preaching
 - not merely rhetoric, but the "still small voice" of God speaking to hearts
 - not necessarily eloquence, but depending on the Holy Spirit to teach Truth, eg Apollos- Acts 18:24
 - product of the immersion of the man/woman of God in the Spirit of God; characterised by surrender and holiness from Holy-Spirit touched living - 1 Thessalonians 1:5; 1 Corinthians 2:4
 - focuses people on the cross and resurrection - 1 Corinthians 15:3, 4
 - comes from a holy fire in the man/woman of God - Jeremiah 20:9
 - reliant on the communication of the heart of God to the hearts of people
 - relies on the anointing of the Holy Spirit, to give it life force - Luke 4:18
- (ii) a strong spirit of prayer;
- (iii) dependence on God;
- (iv) love of God's people
- (v) love of genuine individual and corporate worship;
- (vi) a burning desire to witness and win souls;
- (vii) a determination to be separated from the world in lifestyle choices and attitudes.

How does the Holy Spirit bring about revival? What has recent experience taught us?

- supernaturally!
- stirs up Christians to genuine repentance from sin (μετανοέω/metanoēō = lit. “to change one’s mind”, used in relation to turning from sin)
- revives intensity in prayer - Acts 1:13; Ephesians 6:18; Romans 8:26, 27; most great revivals (eg in the in the last two centuries) were characterized by renewed intensity in prayer, in churches, peoples’ lives, workplaces; prayer meetings; in which many spontaneously received the baptism in the Holy Spirit, healings, repentance, salvation;
- generates spiritual hunger, eg for deeper relationship with God, understanding of the Bible; spiritual growth, maturity - Ephesians 3:14-19; 2 Peter 3:18;
- releases the love of Christ in peoples’ lives;
- makes Jesus Christ (his person, compassion, death/ resurrection) more real and personal in peoples’ hearts - John 16:13-15;
- releases great joy in the Body of Christ;
- releases great faith - Jude 20- many revivals have been characterised by healing of the sick, casting out of demons, defeat of ungodly opposition, release of finances for the Work of God, even resurrection of the dead.

Prerequisites/Links:

- correct teaching - less emphasis on human philosophy (Colossians 2:6-10) and more on the great and urgent truths of the Bible; when the Holy Spirit whets our appetites we can say, “For me to live is Christ” - Philippians 1:21;
- “spiritual” leadership;
- deep hunger for God; not understood by unbelievers observing events- John 14:26; 1 Corinthians 2:14;
- (sacrificial) surrender to the purposes of God, cf Luke 24:32;
- prayer;
- confession of sin and repentance (cf 2 Chronicles 7:14);
- right relationship with the Holy Spirit (easy to “grieve” him)
- renunciation of materialism - Acts 4:34, 35; increased (often sacrificial) giving - 2 Corinthians 9:7; for the good of all - 1 Corinthians 12:7;
- missionary zeal- Acts 8:4; reaching the lost - Matthew 5:16; by “ordinary” Christians.

When the influence of God’s Word becomes so mighty that the powers of darkness are forced into retreat we see revival, and not merely a renewed interest in religion.

Recent movements/names linked to “revival”

- Methodist revival (18th century) led by John and Charles Wesley
- [Calvinist](#)/Wesleyan revival, the [Great Awakening](#) (1740s-1750s) led to the creation of the [Congregational](#), [Presbyterian](#), [Baptist](#) and [Methodist](#) churches in North America. Most famous leaders were Jonathan Edwards and Englishman George Whitefield
- evangelical revival movement in America - Charles Finney (1792-1875)
- Welsh revival, from 1904 (had its roots in the Holiness Movement)
- Smith Wigglesworth (1859-1947)
- Azusa Street, Los Angeles (1906)
- Jesus Movement in 1970s

- Charismatic Movement (1960s-1970s) - mainstream (non-Pentecostal) churches that accepted that the baptism in the Holy Spirit is available to Christians today
- Indonesian Revival (1964-1974)
- Argentinean Revival (1982-1997)
- Brownsville Revival (1995-2000)
- Australian Christian Churches
- and many more

The majority of Pentecostal Christians are in the developing world.

B. THE HOLY SPIRIT AND WORLD MISSION

The coming of the Holy Spirit was the key to the expansion of the Christian church and the demonstration of His life-transforming work.

Preaching in the NT resulted in great numbers of people turning to the Lord and the visitation of the Holy Spirit (eg Samaria, Acts 8). This preaching was not carried out by “professionals”, but ordinary men and women who “proclaimed Christ” (Acts 8:15). The ministry of the Gospel in Samaria was Christ-centred, with the conviction that the coming of the Holy Spirit was one of the mighty acts of God, not human institutions.

The early Christians usually had limited wealth, no national support, stately buildings, or media; yet they were aglow with the fullness of the Holy Spirit in their preaching, church life, ministry to others and testimony, even before hostile rulers.

Most revivals have been characterised by increased missionary outreach. The Pentecostal movement has been a missionary movement. C Peter Wagner, a former evangelical missionary in Bolivia, discovered this early in his ministry in Latin America and wrote books on the subject, eg *Look Out- The Pentecostals are Coming*; “*What Are We Missing?*”

Section 14 of the Lausanne Covenant (1974) (most evangelical denominations are signatories) states:

We believe in the power of the Holy Spirit. The Father sent His Spirit to bear witness to His Son; without his witness ours is futile. Conviction of sin, faith in Christ, new birth, and Christian growth are all His work. Further, the Holy Spirit is a missionary Spirit; thus evangelism should arise spontaneously from a Spirit-filled church. A church that is not a missionary church is contradicting itself and quenching the Spirit. Worldwide evangelism will become a realistic possibility only when the Spirit renews the church in truth and wisdom, faith, holiness, love and power. We therefore call upon all Christians to pray for such a visitation of the Spirit of God that all of His fruit may appear in all of His people, and that all of His gifts may enrich the Body of Christ. Only then will the whole church become a fit instrument in His hands, that the whole earth may hear His voice”

The Holy Spirit still gives gifts to members of the Body of Christ for the purpose of building up the Body and reaching out to the world. He uses:

- worship;
- mutual ministry;

- evangelism;
- power encounters;
- spiritual gifts, eg prophecy, word of knowledge.

The Holy Spirit prepares us for mission in different cultures to people of other faiths and ideologies by:

- making us “aware” of the spiritual need of the world around us;
- equipping and empowering us for faithful witness;
- giving us keys to reach into those unique cultures;
- enabling us to make the break from the limits of our own culture (including denominational traditions) and empathize with others;
- preparing hearers to hear and receive the Gospel.

Churches filled with the Holy Spirit will respond joyfully, faithfully, eagerly to the evangelisation of the unreached peoples of the world.

- How do our Christian communities currently measure up against this statement?

The New Testament Pattern

“The Lord’s hand was with them, and a great number of people believed and turned to the Lord” - Acts 11:21.

The New Testament shows us:

- how the Spirit empowered believers to take the Gospel to the ends of the earth- Acts 1:8;
- the first sermon was preached by Peter under the Spirit’s anointing - Acts 2;
- it was at the direction of the Holy Spirit that Peter’s cultural mores were broken down and he went the house of Cornelius - Acts 11:12;
- it was the gift of the Spirit that came on Cornelius and his household that convinced Peter of the validity of his mission to the Gentiles - Acts 11:15-18;
- the Holy Spirit’s call was responsible for the church at Antioch sending out Paul and Barnabas on their first Missionary Journey - Acts 13:1-3;
- He empowered them to perform signs and wonders resulting in the salvation of souls - Acts 13:4-12;
- Paul’s description of these signs and wonders led the Jerusalem Council to a new openness toward Gentile converts - Acts 15;
- the Holy Spirit gave specific direction and restraint to the New Testament apostles (lit. sent ones” = missionaries) -Acts 16:6-10.

The Holy Spirit has a direct role in mission in the following ways:

- (i) He prepares peoples’ hearts for the Word of God- John 16:8; He does not merely accuse them; He brings them to an inescapable sense of guilt so that they seek the forgiveness Christ offers;
- (ii) He calls out and sets apart individuals for the task of mission. While all Christians are “missionaries”, nevertheless the Holy Spirit calls some for specific tasks - Acts 13:2. The sense of the call” of God is a significant factor in raising up missionaries;

- (iii) He empowers believers as witnesses through the baptism in the Holy Spirit- Acts 1:8;
- (iv) He equips believers through supernatural “gifts”, in order to further the work of mission as a demonstration of “power”- 1 Corinthians 12; Ephesians 4;
- (v) He accompanies the declaration of the Gospel with manifest demonstrations of His power - 1 Corinthians 2:4. healings, deliverances, other signs and wonders convince men to let their faith rest on God’s power, not men’s’ wisdom;
- (vi) He gives specific direction for believers in the spread of the Gospel, eg led Philip out of Samaria to the road to Gaza to meet the Ethiopian Eunuch - Acts 8:

Conclusion- The Key to Effectiveness

The world today is in need of a great spiritual awakening. In the West the Christian church is beset by (i) unbelief (ii) irrelevance; (iii) liberalism; (iv) hedonism; (v) materialism; (vi) ecumenism that embraces non-Christian faiths; and (vii) syncretism. However, in large parts of Africa, China and South America (to name a few) there is great growth, much of which goes unreported by the Western media (and is underplayed by conservative Christianity). God is moving, by His Spirit, just as Joel and others prophesied. It is imperative that we be actively involved in that move.

John closed the Revelation with the invitation: “Come”. It is given by the Spirit and the bride - Revelation 22:17. How refreshing to hear the Spirit and the Church speaking with one voice! This is how revival is maintained and touches the world. When the Holy Spirit’s concerns are ours, His life will flow through us. Souls will be gathered in. Our community will be ablaze with the light that shines from Spirit-filled lives. The Word of God will grow mightily and prevail and the world will come to know Jesus Christ.