The Holy Spirit

— Part 2 —

- How the Holy Spirit Operates Today
- The World Cannot Receive the Holy Spirit

In this lesson, we will continue our study regarding the "***Holy Spirit***" (part 2).

Last week, we explored the Holy Spirit's divine nature and His role in man's redemption—from convicting the world of sin, to revealing and confirming the inspired Word. But the question often arises: What about today?

In a world full of emotional claims, spiritual confusion, and doctrinal error, we must ask
—How does the Holy Spirit, truly operate in the life of a Christian, today?

This lesson, grounded only in Scripture, will address:

- How the Spirit leads Christians—without signs or feelings.
  Including What the "Gift of the Holy Spirit" truly is.
- And Why the world cannot receive the Spirit of Truth.

But first, we'll explore…

I. How the Holy Spirit Operates Today

…in our present time—not through signs and wonders, but through the enduring Word He revealed.

We've seen how the Holy Spirit worked in the first century:

- He convicted men through truth,
- He revealed the gospel to the apostles,
- He confirmed their message with miracles.

But now that the Word is fully revealed and written,
how does the Holy Spirit operate in our lives today?

We'll begin by exploring…

A. What Is the "Gift of the Holy Spirit"? (Acts 2:38)

This phrase is often misunderstood. Let's first see what the passage says.

On the day of Pentecost, Peter responds to the people who ask, what they must do to be saved:

- "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you
  in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins,
  and ye shall receive the **GIFT** of the Holy Spirit." (Acts 2:38)

The "**gift**" promised here, is **connected** to repentance and baptism.
It is not the Spirit Himself, taking possession of a person in some mystical way,
but the blessings the Spirit gives—namely, forgiveness and new life.

Let's support that, with how the word "gift" is used elsewhere in Scripture.
Jesus refers to salvation as a "gift" when speaking to the woman at the well.

- "Jesus answered and said unto her,
  If thou knewest the **GIFT** of God, and Who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink;
  thou wouldest have asked of Him, and He would have **Given** thee living water." (Jn.4:10)

The gift of God is not God Himself—but what He gives—in this case, living water (which is salvation).

Paul speaks of sin's consequences, and the hope God provides.

- He said, "For the wages of sin is death;
  but the **GIFT** of God, **IS** eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord." (Rom.6:23)

Again, the gift is not the person of God—it is eternal life, which He offers through Christ.

The same is true for the gift of the Holy Spirit.
It is what the Spirit provides—salvation, peace, and new life.

Let's reinforce that with,

B. A Parallel Passage

In the very next chapter, Peter preaches again to a similar audience in the same city,
and the message is almost identical.

- He said, "Repent ye therefore, and be converted (or be baptized),
  that your sins may be blotted out (or remission),
  when the **Times of REFRESHING** (or gift), shall come from the presence of the Lord." (Acts 3:19)

The "**Gift of the Holy Spirit**" (from Acts 2:38) **=** "**Times of refreshing**" (from Acts 3:19)

Both are blessings given, as a result of repentance and conversion.
The gift is not the Spirit Himself, but the refreshing, joyful state of salvation He provides.

After being baptized, the eunuch demonstrates this same gift.

- The Bible says, "And when they were come up out of the water,
  the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw Him no more:
  and he went on his way **REJOICING**." (Acts 8:39)

The eunuch rejoiced, because he had received forgiveness and salvation—the gift promised in Acts 2:38.

Now that we understand what the gift includes—blessings of salvation
—let's turn to what it means to walk in that gift, after salvation.

C. Christians Are Led by the Spirit of God

- "For as many as are **Led** by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." (Rom.8:14)

Being led by the Spirit, is proof of sonship. But **how are we led?**
We'll see it's not by mystical whispers, but by the Word, which the Spirit revealed.

Paul explains how the Spirit works in our lives, through the Word.

- "Let the **Word** of Christ, **DWELL** in you richly, in all wisdom;
  teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs,
  singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord." (Col.3:16)

When the Word of Christ dwells in us,
we are being led by the Spirit, because the Spirit revealed that Word.

The psalmist expresses how God's Word gives direction:

- "Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." (Psa.119:105)

God's Word is our guide—illuminating the right path.
To follow His Word, is to walk by the leading of His Spirit.

Paul contrasts the flesh and the Spirit, calling Christians to live by the Spirit's direction.

- He said, "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...
  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**." (Gal.5:16–18, 22–25)

To "**walk** in the Spirit" means to live according to the Spirit's revealed instruction.
The "**fruit** of the Spirit" is the result of obeying that instruction.

We've just seen how the Spirit leads us through the Word.
To solidify this truth, let's explore…

D. The Indwelling of the Spirit — What Does It Mean?

Many sincere people today believe the Holy Spirit "indwells" them in a mystical, emotional, or bodily way.
But does Scripture support that view? **How does He "dwell" in us?**

The Bible uses the word "dwell" to describe a relationship
—a spiritual presence based on obedience to the Word.

It is not a physical or emotional sensation, but a spiritual reality based on our fellowship with God.

- John writes, "He that keepeth His commandments **DWELLETH** in Him, and He in him.
  And hereby we know, that He abideth in us, by the Spirit which He hath **GIVEN** us." (1Jn.3:24)

To dwell in God—and have God dwell in us—is tied directly to keeping His commandments.

- Jesus adds, "The **Words** that I speak unto you, they are **Spirit**, and they are **Life**." (Jn.6:63)

So, when His words dwell in us, the Spirit dwells in us.
The indwelling is not mystical, but the effect of God's Word living in us, shaping our thoughts, actions, and faith.

There is no example in Scripture of the Spirit indwelling someone, apart from the Word or without obedience.
When the Word controls your mind and choices, the Spirit dwells in you.
The Spirit's presence is not a feeling—but a life shaped by revealed truth.

How can we have confidence that we're children of God?
The next point will show that…

E. The Spirit Bears Witness with Our Spirit

…to assure us, of our standing with God.

Paul gives assurance to believers who obey the gospel.

- He said, "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:
  And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ..." (Rom.8:16–17)

The Holy Spirit "bears witness" with our spirit
—meaning, He testifies in agreement with our obedience to the gospel.

Let's explain this with four examples.

1. The Holy Spirit says: **Believe**
   - "...if ye believe NOT that I AM, ye shall die in your sins." (Jn.8:24; Heb.11:6)
     - If I obey in Belief, The Spirit and I agree.
     - If I do Not Obey, my spirit does not agree with His.

2. The Holy Spirit says: **Repent**
   - "God now commandeth all men every where to repent." (Acts 17:30; Example: Matt.21:28-30; Eph.4:28; Jn.8:11)
     - If I Obey in Repentance of current and past sins, our spirits bear the same testimony.
     - If I do Not Obey, there is no shared witness.

3. The Holy Spirit says: **Confess Christ**
   - "Whosoever shall confess Me before men, him will I confess also before my Father." (Matt.10:32; Example: Acts 8:37)
     - If I Obey in confession of Christ, The Spirit confirms my standing.
     - If I do Not Obey, I break agreement with Him.

4. The Holy Spirit says: **Be baptized for the remission of sins** (Acts 2:38; Mk.16:16; Rom.6:3-4; Gal.3:26-27)
     - If I Obey in water immersion or baptism, The Spirit affirms I am a child of God.
     - If I do Not Obey, The Spirit cannot testify that I am saved.

Agreement requires obedience to what the Spirit revealed.
If I act outside of His revealed Word, then the Spirit cannot confirm that I am IN Christ
—because we are not bearing the same testimony.

To walk in agreement with the Spirit, is to submit to the truth He revealed
—and only then, can we be assured that we are children of God

Before we close this section, let's address a frequently misunderstood subject:

F. The Baptism of the Holy Spirit

Is it for Christians today?
Many today claim the "baptism of the Holy Spirit" is something all believers should seek.
But let's examine what Scripture actually teaches.

Speaking directly to His apostles.
- Jesus said, "ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Spirit 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." (Acts 1:8)

The promise of power was specifically to the apostles, to equip them as witnesses.
We've seen in the previous lesson (part 1 of this subject) that the Holy Spirit came on the apostles with visible, supernatural signs (read again Acts 2:1–4)

This baptism of the Spirit was unique—never repeated for all believers.
It served to launch the gospel and confirm the apostles' authority.

Paul, writing much later, says:

- "One Lord, one faith, one baptism." (Eph.4:5)

By the time Paul wrote Ephesians, there was only one baptism
—and that is water baptism, not Holy Spirit baptism.

Holy Spirit baptism was a specific promise, for a specific purpose, NOT a command for all Christians.

Now that we've learned how the Spirit works in Christians today—by His Word and not by miracles
—we'll conclude by considering the warning of Jesus:

II. The World Cannot Receive the Holy Spirit

Jesus made this sobering statement: the Holy Spirit is not accessible to the world.
Only those who obey Christ and separate themselves from the world, can receive Him.

From Jn.14:15-17, Jesus speaks to His disciples about the coming Comforter.

- He said, "If ye love Me, keep My commandments.
  And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter (Jesus being the first comforter),
  that He may abide with you for ever; 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." (that's Jn.14:15–17)

The world cannot receive the Holy Spirit, because it does not know or obey God.
Only those who keep the commandments of Christ, can receive the Spirit and the blessings He brings.

- Many "profess that they know God; but in works they deny Him…" (Titus 1:16)

Jesus explains the difference between His followers and the world.

- He said, "If ye were of the world, the world would love his own:
  but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world,
  therefore the world hateth you." (Jn.15:19; 1Cor.2:14)

Christians are called out of the world.

The Spirit is given to those who are no longer part of the world, but part of the kingdom of Christ (His church).
Paul encourages believers to remain grounded in the teachings of Christ.

- He said, "Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom;
  teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs,
  singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.
  And whatsoever ye **Do** in **Word** (that is, Teaching) or **Deed** (that is, Practices),
  Do ALL in the **Name** (or Authority) of the Lord Jesus,
  giving thanks to God and the Father by Him." (Col.3:16–17)

Those who receive the Holy Spirit, let the Word of Christ dwell richly within them.
Every action and word, is governed by obedience to the authority of Christ.

John warns against stepping outside the doctrine of Christ.

- He said, "Whosoever **TRANSGRESSETH**, and abideth **NOT** in the doctrine of Christ, hath **NOT** God.
  He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son." (2 John 9)

To "**abide**" in the teaching of Christ, is to have fellowship with God.
The Spirit is not given to those, who step outside of that doctrine.

The most important question for you and me is this:
Have we responded to the message, the Holy Spirit revealed?

He revealed the Word of God, and that Word produces faith:

- "So then **Faith** cometh by hearing, and **Hearing** by the **Word of God**." (Rom.10:17)

Faith doesn't come through feelings or visions—it comes through hearing the Word, which the Spirit revealed.

- "But without faith it is impossible to please Him: for he that cometh to God, must believe that He IS, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him." (Heb.11:6)

One cannot please God unless they believe, and one cannot believe unless they hear.
The Spirit revealed all, that we must hear.

Now that you've heard—what will you do?
Let's remember the steps the Spirit revealed:

Believe in Jesus Christ

- "...if ye believe not that I AM, ye shall die in your sins." (Jn.8:24)

Repent of Sin

- "God... now commandeth all men every where to repent." (Acts 17:30)

Confess Christ Publicly

- "Whosoever shall confess Me before men,
  him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven." (Matt.10:32)

Be Baptized for the Remission of Sins

- "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved..." (Mk.16:16)
- "Repent and be baptized... for the remission of sins." (Acts 2:38)

Each of these steps, was revealed by the Holy Spirit—recorded in the Word of God.
If we obey them, we receive the gift of the Holy Spirit and are added to the body of Christ (Acts 2:47, 41).

III. Final Thoughts

Have you submitted your life, to the guidance of the Holy Spirit—by obeying the Word, He revealed?

If you haven't yet, the Bible says:

- You are still in sin (Rom.3:23)
- You are NOT righteous (1Jn.3:7)
- You are NOT ready for judgment (Acts 17:31)
- And you have NOT received the Spirit of Truth (Jn.14:17)

May God help us to change that today!

- Obey the Gospel.
- Be baptized into Christ.
- Walk by the Spirit—not by the flesh.
- Let the Word of God dwell richly in you, and live by the Spirit's guidance.

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