

The Holy Spirit

This is a brief, bulleted summary of the more extensive commentary that follows. Please read and consider this material in full, searching the Scriptures referenced and others that may apply to these matters before formulating questions and responses. In the interest of promoting the unity of the Body of Christ, we welcome constructive communication based on the authority and supremacy of the Word of God in these and all other matters of Christian life, doctrine, and practice.

Why is paper on the Holy Spirit necessary?

- To briefly present and clarify what we believe the Scriptures teach about the Holy Spirit.
- To help eliminate confusion and division in the Body of Christ regarding the nature, purpose, and work of the Holy Spirit.
- To encourage Steele Creek Church of Charlotte and the Church at large toward an increased understanding of and conscious relationship with the Holy Spirit.

Who is the Holy Spirit?

- He is a person.
- He is not a created being, but has always existed, and was present at creation.
- He is God, one of three distinct persons of the singular Godhead- the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit

What is the nature of the Holy Spirit's activity among us?

- For believers in Jesus Christ, some of His roles are:
 - Counselor/Comforter after Jesus' ascension
 - Equipping and empowering as witnesses for Jesus and as Kingdom servants
 - "Sealing" believers – acting as an inward sign that we belong to Christ
- For unbelievers (the world) -He convicts of sin, righteousness, and judgement

In the New Testament, who received the Holy Spirit?

- The disciples in the upper room, at Pentecost
- All who believed in Jesus (Jews, Samaritans, Gentiles)

Who can receive the Holy Spirit today?

- All who trust Jesus by faith for salvation receive the Holy Spirit; He comes to dwell within the believer.

What is the difference between the "baptism" and "filling" of the Holy Spirit?

- The "baptism of the Spirit" takes place at conversion; it is a single event. The Holy Spirit comes to seal and indwell the believer when they are saved. Believers are not commanded to "be baptized in the Spirit."
- "Filling" with the Spirit is a continuous, ongoing yielding to the influence and control of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer. Believers are commanded to "be filled with the Spirit."
- The primary manifestation of the indwelling and filling of the Holy Spirit is fruit of the Spirit, (Galatians 5) NOT spiritual gifts.

How does the baptism or filling of the Spirit relate to speaking in tongues?

- In the early church, speaking in tongues is often (but not always) mentioned when believers are said to have received the Holy Spirit.

- This served to demonstrate to Jewish Christians that Samaritans and Gentiles were also being saved and given the Spirit.
- Today, the gift of tongues is not the exclusive proof of the baptism or filling of the Spirit, however the gift of tongues is manifested in the Church today, as are all the gifts. The primary function of tongues is in prayer and praise to God.

The Holy Spirit

Why is a paper on the Holy Spirit necessary?

Much has been said and written about the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity. Jesus called Him the "Comforter" and "Helper," sent to unify and empower God's people to be His witnesses and to serve Him effectively. He was not sent to bring confusion, however differences in terminology and understanding of the Holy Spirit have caused debate and division in the Church.

This paper is not meant to be an exhaustive study of the Holy Spirit. Rather we hope to clearly and as simply as possible set forth what we believe the Scriptures teach about Him, His activity, His baptism & filling, and His fruit & gifts in a believer. In doing so, we also hope to urge Steele Creek Church of Charlotte and the Church at large toward an increased understanding of and conscious relationship with the Holy Spirit.

Paul the Apostle said regarding our understanding of spiritual things *"For now we see in a mirror, dimly..."* (1 Corinthians 13:12). We do not claim a perfect or complete understanding in these matters, but we believe that Scripture does speak clearly about the Person and work of the Holy Spirit. We pray that He will use these comments to help Christians understand and apply these principles to a life of communion with, worship of, and service to our Lord.

Who is the Holy Spirit?

The Holy Spirit is not a created being; He has always existed and will always exist. In the very beginning, the Holy Spirit is part of the creation picture; He had already existed eternally before creation took place. Genesis 1:2 mentions the Spirit of God who hovered *"over the face of the waters"* when God created the heavens and the earth. When God speaks about the creation of man in Genesis 1:26, He says *"...let Us make man in Our own image, according to Our likeness..."* implying a plurality of persons comprising the Godhead. Genesis 3:22 gives us a brief "conversation" between the members of the Godhead regarding Adam and Eve's punishment for sinning. In Matthew 28:19-20, Jesus presents the three persons of the Godhead "side by side" as He sends the apostles out to make disciples *"...baptizing them [new disciples] in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."* The Holy Spirit speaks (Acts 13:2), intercedes for us (Romans 8:26), and teaches us (John 14:26). He has a will (1 Corinthians 12:11) and He expresses personal emotions such as grief (Ephesians 4:30).

The Bible not only teaches us that the Holy Spirit is a person, but that He is God. In Acts 5:3-4, the apostle Peter asks a man caught in dishonesty *"...why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit...?"* and tells him *"You have not lied to men but to God."* 2 Corinthians 3:18 speaks of the "Spirit of the Lord" (NKJV) or "The Lord, the Spirit" (NASB, others) translating the Greek word "kurios" - one of the titles given to God, from a root which means "supreme." Neither Jesus, the Father, or the Holy Spirit are "a god," nor are they three separate Gods. God is one God (Deuteronomy 6:4) eternally existing in three persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Note the following additional references which present three distinct and individual Persons of the Trinity:

- Matthew 3:16-17 *"When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and*

alighting upon Him. And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

- John 14:26 (Jesus speaking) *"But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you."*
- 1 John 5:6-11 *"This is He who came by water and blood--Jesus Christ; not only by water, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit who bears witness, because the Spirit is truth. For there are three that bear witness in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness on earth: the Spirit, the water, and the blood; and these three agree as one. If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater; for this is the witness of God which He has testified of His Son. He who believes in the Son of God has the witness in himself; he who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed the testimony that God has given of His Son. And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son"*

We may also look to the inspiration of scripture for further evidence that the Holy Spirit is God. In 2 Timothy 3:16 we read that *"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God"* and in 2 Peter 1:21 we read *"For prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit."* Is there a contradiction as to who inspired the writing of the Bible? Not at all, because the Holy Spirit is God. This is why Scripture can refer to both God and the Holy Spirit as having inspired its writing: God and the Holy Spirit are One.

Though the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are co-equal, they fulfill different functions in relation to God's people and to the world. Jesus came to glorify the Father while He was physically on earth, and similarly the Holy Spirit was sent to glorify Jesus and speak His words to believers after Jesus ascended to heaven (John 16:13-14). When Jesus is magnified and worshipped, we know the Holy Spirit is accomplishing His goal. He directs our attention to Jesus, on whom our focus should remain.

The Holy Spirit was present and active on earth at creation, through the Old Testament times, and while Jesus was physically here. We see Him sovereignly empowering specific individuals among God's people at different times and for particular purposes, but He had never lived in them permanently. This is what is so remarkable about Jesus' declaration to His disciples in John 14:17 that the Holy Spirit dwelt *"with"* them, but would eventually dwell *"in"* them. This is a new relationship between God and His people, realized through the baptism of the Holy Spirit. God Himself, in the person of the Holy Spirit, comes to live inside us and act through us. This widespread availability of the Holy Spirit was prophetically foretold in Joel 2:28-9. In the gospels, (Matthew 3:11, Mark 1:8, Luke 3:16, & John 1:33) John the Baptist declared that he baptized people with water but that Jesus would baptize with the Holy Spirit. Jesus promised that He would give the Holy Spirit to anyone who believed in Him, and that *"out of his heart will flow rivers of living water"* (John 7:37-39). Again, after He rose from the dead, He promised the Holy Spirit to his disciples in Acts 1:5-8. The fulfillment of these prophecies is initially recorded for us in Acts 2:16-21, and continues until today.

What is the nature of the Holy Spirit's activity among us?

There are many functions that the Holy Spirit performs in the believer. Jesus knew that after He ascended, His disciples would desperately need help in honoring Him, living holy lives, and carrying out the tasks He had set for them to do. He promised them *"I will not leave you as orphans"* (John 14:18). Because the Holy Spirit was given, the New Testament disciples and Christians through the ages have become *"temples"* of the Holy Spirit—earthly places where God lives and manifests (makes known,

shows, reveals) His presence. The apostle Paul regarded this as an elementary doctrine of the Christian faith. His tone is one of chiding the Corinthian church in 1 Corinthians 6:19 as he reminds them *“Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own?”*

The Holy Spirit also has a significant role to play in relation to the world. He opens men’s eyes to their true spiritual state, and motivates them toward a right relationship with God. He also demonstrates righteousness to the world: Jesus’ ascension into heaven makes it clear that to enter heaven, we must possess His righteousness. This righteousness comes only as a gift, from Him, through His sacrifice! Furthermore, when we are controlled by the Holy Spirit within us, we display Christ’s righteousness to the world. What a privilege! Finally, the Holy Spirit is at work to remind the world of the judgement that took place against Satan when Jesus was crucified. This same judgement awaits those who refuse Jesus as their Savior.

Specific roles for the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer

Various translations of John 16:7 show Jesus describing the Holy Spirit as the **“Counselor”** (NIV) or **“Comforter.”** Either of these words embodies functions for the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer that are supported elsewhere in Scripture. As **“Counselor”** He guides us into the truth, teaching us what to do and what to avoid. We see Him in this role confirming matters of church doctrine and practice in Acts 15:28, when the elders of Jerusalem write to Gentile Christians: *“...For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things...”* In Acts 16:6-7, the Holy Spirit directs Paul and Timothy’s activity as missionaries by forbidding them to speak in certain areas.

As **“Comforter”** He consoled and encouraged the disciples after Jesus’ death, burial, resurrection, and ascension. During the time of the early church, the Holy Spirit ministered to Christians after a period of intense persecution: *“Then the churches throughout all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria had peace and were edified. And walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, they were multiplied”* (Acts 9:31). 2 Corinthians 1:3-4 praises God for being the *“...God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our tribulation...”* This comforting is the Holy Spirit at work.

The Holy Spirit also **equips and empowers believers as witnesses** for our Lord Jesus Christ. In Acts 1:8, Jesus told them *“...you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.”* The early church needed supernatural boldness to share the gospel regardless of their fears or difficult circumstances; supernatural ability to know what to say and when to say it; and supernatural direction with empowerment from the Holy Spirit to back up what they said by miraculous demonstrations of God’s power. We need that same Holy Spirit power today, because the work of sharing the gospel is still going on, as is opposition from every quarter! There are people in our lives, in our neighborhoods, and in other nations who have not heard the Gospel, so we are to be His witnesses within our circle of acquaintances, in our local communities, in our country, and to the uttermost parts of the world. To be effective witnesses and accomplish the Great Commission, we must receive power and boldness from the Father. God did not give the early church (or us) *“... a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.”* (2 Timothy 1:7)

Ephesians 1:13 and 4:30 speak of the Holy Spirit as **“sealing”** believers in Jesus. The word in these passages for **“seal”** (Greek: sphragizo) means a sign that confirms and authenticates an agreement or document. The Holy Spirit within us is evidence to us and to the world that we have been redeemed and belong to Christ. His presence prompts us to be confident that we will live with Him in glory when He returns. Once the Jewish people traced their genealogical lineage back to Abraham. They demonstrated that they were God’s chosen people by the outward sign of circumcision. For us, the indwelling Holy

Spirit now acts as an inward spiritual sign of our birth into God's family through the blood of Jesus. Praise God!

Another role of the Holy Spirit is to bring **conviction**. When Jesus spoke to His disciples about what the Spirit would do, He said this: *"And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they do not believe in Me; of righteousness, because I go to My Father and you see Me no more; of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged."* (John 16:8-11). Notice that it is the Holy Spirit's role, not ours, to make men understand that their unbelief is sin against God. The Holy Spirit demonstrates righteousness to the world through us: though Jesus is no longer on the earth, we are made *"the righteousness of God in Him"* (2 Corinthians 5:21) and are indwelt by the Holy Spirit at the moment of salvation. When we are controlled by the Holy Spirit within us, we display Christ's righteousness to the world. What a privilege! Finally, the Holy Spirit is at work to remind the world of the judgement that is coming against Satan and those who refuse Jesus as their Savior.

The overriding purpose of the Holy Spirit is to bring glory to God, (John 16:14) however His activity is also of great benefit to us. In John 17:23, as Jesus prays for the unity of the disciples, we see an association between Jesus being "in them" and their being perfected in unity. Because the Holy Spirit (who is also referred to as the "Spirit of Christ" – Philippians 1:19) dwells within believers, they are able to demonstrate the unity of the Father and the Son. The Spirit enables the Church to be unified as a testimony to a lost world, powerfully declaring that the Father has sent the Son. Jesus really is who He claims to be! Paul emphasizes the unifying role of the Holy Spirit in many of his letters to the churches, remarking on the newly possible (in Christ!) unity between Jews and Gentiles in passages such as Ephesians 2:11-22. He speaks of the "dividing wall" being broken down and Jewish and Gentile believers having access to God Himself through "one Spirit," and again in Ephesians 4:3-4 *"...keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit..."*

In the New Testament, who received the Holy Spirit?

Most of the first Christians were Jews in Jerusalem and surrounding areas who encountered Jesus and His disciples first-hand. Unfortunately the leaders and priests of Israel, along with most of the people, rejected Jesus as Messiah. God then began to offer salvation and the gift of the Holy Spirit to "Gentiles." This term means anyone who is not Jewish by birth -not able to trace their ancestral heritage back through Jacob to Abraham. For thousands of years, God's favor and protection rested exclusively on the Jews. God's presence was with them in the tabernacle and then in Solomon's temple; He gave them the Law and showed them how to sacrifice to Him. These sacrifices symbolically represented Jesus, the promised Messiah, who would offer Himself as one final, permanent sacrifice to atone for their sins. Not only was the Messiah promised to these people, but they were also to enjoy the privileges and blessings of being part of God's family, His "chosen people."

Having been promised these blessings for so long, many Jews who recognized Jesus as the true Messiah still expected that salvation belonged only to them as a nation. They saw Jesus and accepted Him as their Messiah, the "promised one", and after obeying His pre-ascension instruction to remain in Jerusalem, they received the Holy Spirit in a dramatic and powerful way, which was also part of God's promise to His people. Joel 2:27-29 says *"Then you shall know that I am in the midst of Israel: I am the Lord your God And there is no other. My people shall never be put to shame. "And it shall come to pass afterward That I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, Your old men shall dream dreams, Your young men shall see visions. And also on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days."* Despite the mention of "all flesh" in this passage, early Jewish believers still thought of themselves in exclusive terms, and did not consider the possibility that God might have plans for the rest of humanity as well. They would have to hear and see something miraculous to believe that

others might be saved as they were (This was especially true regarding Samaritans, who were “half-breed” descendants of Jews who had intermarried with Gentiles. In Jewish society Samaritans and Gentiles were both considered “dogs” –almost sub-human).

Something miraculous is exactly what happened. The gospel and this new relationship with the Holy Spirit began to spread. Salvation was offered to and received first by many Jews in Jerusalem and throughout Judea. Unfortunately the majority of Jews, particularly those corrupted by the power and influence they enjoyed as “spiritual” and political leaders, considered Jesus, His teachings, and His followers a threat to their cozy relationship with the occupying Roman Empire. He also threatened their concept of what it meant to be a Jew, one of God’s “chosen people.” Just as they had crucified Jesus, they began to persecute His followers. When the leaders and officials of the Jewish people rejected Jesus, God began to offer salvation to the rest of the world. In Acts 8:14-17 we see the Samaritans receive salvation by faith, and they also received the Holy Spirit by the laying on of hands by Peter and John. Approximately 10 years later, a Roman centurion named Cornelius and his household were saved as Peter preached. Acts 10:44-46 says “...*the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard the word. And those of the circumcision who believed [Jewish Christians from Jerusalem] were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also. For they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God...*” To the Jewish believers, this was surprising but convincing evidence that Gentiles were also to be brought into God’s family. In Acts 11, Peter addressed the concerns of the Jewish believers at Jerusalem, who thought that Peter had become ritually unclean according to Jewish law by visiting a Gentile’s home and eating with him. Peter defended what had happened by declaring that God had granted the Gentiles the same gift of the Holy Spirit (and salvation) that God gave them (the Jews) when they believed on the Lord Jesus Christ. The Jews finally realized that God was saving the Gentiles by faith in Jesus, just as He was saving them.

The baptism of the Holy Spirit was and still is given at conversion to every believer to bring them into the body of Christ and empower them to be witnesses for Him. That is what happened to the Samaritans and Gentiles. The walls of separation had fallen down and they were all baptized with the Holy Spirit into one body, the Body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:13). Approximately 25 years after Pentecost, Paul ran into some disciples in Ephesus who had not even heard that there was a Holy Spirit (Acts 19). The Holy Spirit had not yet come inside them, because they had been baptized only with the baptism of John. When they understood that the baptism of John was of repentance in anticipation of the Messiah and that Jesus was the Messiah they were anticipating, they were baptized immediately in Jesus’ name and received the Holy Spirit through the laying on of hands by Paul.

Who can receive the Holy Spirit today?

The gift of the Holy Spirit is available to anyone who asks the Father by faith (Luke 11:13). He is a “good gift” that our Heavenly Father is eager to bless us with! As we read the book of Acts, we can see the progression of the gospel and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in precisely the manner that Jesus commanded in Acts 1:8, where the disciples were told to be “...*witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.*” This didn’t happen in a matter of hours, or even days -it took years! Today, people receive salvation and the Holy Spirit through faith (Galatians 3:14, Ephesians 1:13-14) and He comes to live inside, or “indwell” the believer (1 Corinthians 6:19).

At the point of faith, a person repents of sin, places their faith in Christ alone, and is baptized with the Holy Spirit by Jesus. At that moment they become a member of Christ’s own Body, the Church. It may be helpful to recognize that the meaning of the Greek word “baptidzo” implies that baptism means both “entering into” and also “being entered by” something. Just as we are “*in Christ*” (Romans 8:1) and Christ is “*in you*” (Romans 8:10), when a person is saved, they are “baptized in” the Spirit, and the Spirit also

enters to dwell within them. Galatians 5 teaches that we live and should walk *"in the Spirit"* and 2 Timothy 1:14 speaks of *"the Holy Spirit who dwells in us."*

This baptism and indwelling of the Holy is a single event that takes place at salvation. Believers are then commanded by scripture to demonstrate this inward, spiritual baptism by the outward act of being baptized in water (Matthew 28:19). The fact that believers are baptized with the Holy Spirit is a demonstration of God's goodness to us; the indwelling Spirit is a sign to us and to the world that we are members of His family who are cleansed and righteous in His sight. It is also a demonstration, every time someone is saved, that Jesus is who He says He is: the promised Messiah. When John the Baptist spoke of the coming Messiah in Matthew 3:11, he said *"...I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire."*

The progress of the gospel continues to this day. It went from Jerusalem, to Judea, to Samaria... it has come to us; and will eventually go to every other part of the world. Jesus declared that He is the way, the truth, and the life (John 14:6). If you are aware that you are being drawn to the truth of Jesus Christ and you have not placed your faith in Him for your salvation, please pause right now, and ask Jesus to save you from your sin. He will do it if you ask by faith with a humble and repentant heart, and He will give you the gift of the Holy Spirit. Thank You Lord for Your awesome love and grace!

What is the difference between "baptism" and "filling" with the Holy Spirit?

It is unfortunate that these terms have themselves added to the confusion surrounding this issue. Before we even attempt to clarify what we believe the scripture teaches, it should be said that whatever a Christian may believe about the manner or time of the baptism and filling of the Holy Spirit, the most important things to determine are: **"Does the Holy Spirit live within me?"** and **"Am I controlled by Him?"**

Our understanding of the Scriptures is that there is one baptism of the Holy Spirit and unlimited opportunities for continual filling with the Holy Spirit. When a person accepts Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior by faith, he or she will be baptized with the Holy Spirit into the body of Jesus Christ. In receiving Christ as our life, we are by faith submitting to Him and asking for the gift of the Holy Spirit according to the example of Luke 11:9-13. The Holy Spirit will indwell the believer and there will be manifestations (evidence that is plain to see) of a new life in Christ. We should not always look for spiritual gifts first in a new believer, but we should expect to see boldness to testify of Jesus accompanied by the "fruit of the Spirit." In Galatians 5:22, Paul says that the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self control. When we see a person who is exhibiting these characteristics along with the boldness to witness for Christ (Acts 1:8, Acts 4, Ephesians 6:19-20), we can be confident that they have been saved and baptized with the Holy Spirit. We believe the scriptures teach that baptism with the Holy Spirit is a single event, for every believer, at the moment they place their faith in Jesus and are saved.

Paul commands in Ephesians 5:18 *"do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation [a foolish waste of time] but be filled with the Spirit."* The words "be filled" are in the present-progressive tense, which indicates being continually filled with the Spirit; translating this phrase as "be being filled" conveys the thought of the original Greek more accurately. Please note that this is a command, not a suggestion. Notice also that there is no Scriptural command for believers to be baptized with or in the Spirit. This fact alone indicates that Spirit baptism is concurrent with salvation, not a subsequent event which we need to pursue and covet. Even though a person is baptized in the Spirit at conversion, he or she is commanded to be continually filled with (or controlled by) the Spirit. **Filling with the Holy Spirit should be continuous, ongoing, as we yield our selves and our lives to His influence and control.** If someone is a Christian, there is no question that the Holy Spirit lives within them (1 Corinthians 3:16). The question is

how much does the Holy Spirit have of the individual Christian on a daily basis?

How complete is our surrender to Him? Are there areas in which we retain control, thinking that we know better than God? Are there decisions that we feel we can make "on our own?" Are there things that we are trying to do for Him, just because it seems like a "good idea," that He may not have called or empowered us to do? Are we willing to apply His word to our lives, and depend on Him? Are we hoping to see His glory manifest in grand displays of power while we are unwilling to serve Him with consistent, "small," practical obedience?

Being full of the Spirit of God is being empty of the things that we want for ourselves, and full of the things God wants for Himself. It is being weak in our flesh, and powerful in Him. It is losing the life we live for our own sakes, and finding the true life that is lived for His sake. It is being like Jesus in suffering and the death of our flesh, so that we can be filled with power and eternal life in the spiritual. It is giving up the grandiose and spectacular so that we can be filled with the simple... and the simple becomes not "grand" but glorious, not "spectacular" but eternal. Is this true of us? Do we really want it to be true? How much of US does the Holy Spirit have?

If you have placed your faith in Christ alone for your salvation, you can be assured that you are the temple of God and that the Holy Spirit dwells in you (1 Cor.3:16). You have all of Him, and there is no "more" of Him that you need. Rather, He wants all of you, so that you can be filled with Him! As John the Baptist said "*He must increase, but I must decrease.*" (John 3:30) When we don't allow the Holy Spirit to control our life, we feel powerless and may even begin to doubt our salvation. We don't always "feel" saved. Thank God that our salvation is not based on our feelings but upon the finished work of Christ on the cross. Even though that is true, Christians should, more often than not, feel and experience the joy of salvation. When we don't, it becomes evident that we have reverted back to the tactics of the flesh even though the Holy Spirit is inside. That is why Paul is commanding believers to continually stay filled or under the control of the Holy Spirit. Surrender your thoughts, attitude, and behavior to His control and you will experience His joy and peace. Our filling with the Holy Spirit depends upon our obedience to Him (Acts 5:32). As we stay submitted to Him daily, we stay constantly filled. It is in the context of surrender and dependence that we bear the fruit of the Spirit, hear God's voice, and receive the guidance and power that we need for ministry!

There are doctrines in some circles of Christianity which make it difficult for lost people to come to our Lord for salvation by requiring specific gifts (usually speaking in tongues) to "prove" that a person is saved and has received the Holy Spirit. New believers and even older Christians can become confused by teaching that promotes a complicated (and often unbiblical) mix of doctrines about what it means to be saved, receive the Holy Spirit and His gifts, water baptism, etc. There are Christians who try to get other people to duplicate their own experience, methods, or spiritual journey. People don't need human pressure; they need Jesus! Simply invite them into a relationship with Him and allow God to do the rest. If their salvation is genuine, there will be manifestations: power & boldness to witness, fruit of the Spirit, and gifts of the Spirit. Not all will have the same gifts but all should have boldness and all should be bearing the same kind of fruit! As we witness, bear fruit and use our gifts for the good of all people, many will be drawn to the Subject of our witness, the Source of the fruit, the Giver of the gifts: Jesus Christ.

How does the baptism of the Holy Spirit relate to speaking in tongues?

As we have said, there are doctrines being promoted in modern Christianity which teach that speaking in tongues is the definitive result or sign of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. This sign did accompany the Spirit baptism on several occasions in the early days of the Church: at Pentecost in Jerusalem in Acts 2, among the Gentiles in Acts 10, to the disciples in Ephesus in Acts 19. Speaking in tongues showed Jewish and Gentile believers alike that without a doubt, the walls of separation between Jew, Samaritan and Gentile had fallen, and that they had all been baptized by one Spirit into one Body, which we know as the

Church. It is important to note that the book of Acts is a historical account of the birth of the Church and its early growth. While we may confidently glean examples and application for doctrine and practice from this book, its purpose and language are primarily historical.

We should not confuse people by equating speaking in tongues with the baptism of the Holy Spirit. This places people under extreme pressure to receive a spiritual gift (that God may or may not have for them) in order to “prove” their salvation or their baptism in the Spirit. The gift of tongues was used by God in the early church as a “sign,” proving to Jewish Christians in Jerusalem (who didn’t believe that the Samaritans or Gentiles could be saved) that these poorly regarded peoples were in fact being grafted into the Body of Christ (Romans 11:18-19, Acts 11:15-18). As Christians, these Gentiles and Samaritans were becoming co-heirs with the Jews to the promises God made to Abraham and David, among others.

The gift of tongues is still available today, but it is not needed to serve this particular purpose, instead its purpose is speaking to, praying to, and blessing God and as a sign to unbelievers (1 Corinthians 14). We don’t need sign gifts to prove that the gospel is available to everyone; the fact that people all over the world are coming to know Jesus as their Savior readily demonstrates this! The Jews tended to think that God’s promises were exclusively to them as a nation, but God’s mercy and the availability of the gift of the Holy Spirit extends to all people.

Though tongues are not the exclusive proof of someone’s salvation or their reception of the Holy Spirit, the gift of tongues and all the other gifts of the Holy Spirit are available today and can be given by the Holy Spirit at conversion (1 Corinthians 12:13) or at anytime He wills (1 Corinthians 12:11). These gifts are to be used to glorify Christ, edify (or “build up”) the Church, and testify to the presence of God among His people (1 Corinthians 14:22-25). They are essential in every believer’s service to the Kingdom of God after salvation. We are to desire and ask by faith for spiritual gifts, be content with the gifts God gives us, and use all of our gifts, talents, and resources to glorify Him and edify other people. God decides which gift or gifts that a believer receives (1 Corinthians 12:11). This should take pressure off every believer to acquire a specific gift of their (or someone else’s) choosing. Such tactics have their root in the flesh, not in the Holy Spirit! We are to fervently seek and then accept the gift or gifts that He has for us; using them to fulfill the ministry that He has already ordained for us to walk in (Ephesians 2:10). Every believer will receive at least one gift and it is to be used for the good of all (1 Corinthians 12:7).

We must not compare, envy, label, or divide the body of Christ over spiritual gifts! We will not all receive the same gifts, but that is what makes us a diverse, yet complete body. Some in the church today will use the book of Acts to “prove” that the sign of salvation and the reception of the Holy Spirit for all believers is speaking in tongues. This teaching has caused much confusion and pain in the church and is a result of not understanding the progression of the gift of the Holy Spirit that Scripture indicates. The Bible is very clear that not all of us will speak in tongues, nor will we all interpret tongues, nor will we all have the gift of healing or teaching etc. (1 Corinthians 12:29-30). When the Bible says that not everyone will speak in tongues, then they won’t, regardless of men’s teaching. We are called to praise God in whatever tongue or language He makes available to us! **(Please see our paper on 1 Cor. 14, tongues and prophecy for additional discussion of this passage)**

Believe and ask by faith for the gift or gifts He has for you; accept what He gives you; use them for His glory and for the edification of the church. Spiritual gifts should edify and unify the Body of Christ, never bring division. They won’t divide the Body if they are used in love and for the encouragement of others! In Acts 2, three thousand people received salvation and the Holy Spirit through Peter’s message, yet there is no mention of speaking in tongues or any other sign gifts being expressed through them. In this passage, signs and wonders were being expressed only through the apostles (v 43). However it is worth noticing that though there is no mention of sign gifts, there was an abundance of spiritual fruit; manifestations of the baptism of the Holy Spirit being exhibited through the new believers. They loved each other, they fellowshiped, studied, prayed, and took communion together. They lived life together and made sure no one had need, and they praised God daily with their church family. They were united

and empowered by the Holy Spirit to be God's witnesses and they spoke the word of God with boldness (Acts 4:31). We should follow their example!

We cannot continue to "prop up" churches through the use of clever techniques, programs, human ingenuity, or fleshly appeals. The work of the Church must be accomplished by and in the Holy Spirit for lasting results. When we become "people of the Spirit" our lives, marriages, families, churches, and communities will reflect God's glory! In Zechariah 4:6 the Lord is very clear about how His temple will be built: "*Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,' Says the Lord of hosts.*" The Lord spoke this word regarding the rebuilding of the Old Testament temple, which had been destroyed. The same is true of His people, who are individually temples of the Holy Spirit and are collectively being built together into a place for God to dwell (Ephesians 2:20-22).

In Summary

The Holy Spirit is a person. We refer to Him as the "third person of the Trinity." He was "with" God's people in the Old Testament and while Jesus was on earth. A new relationship with the Holy Spirit became available after Jesus ascended to Heaven, whereby the Holy Spirit dwells within (or "indwells") all Christians. The Father has given Jesus the authority to baptize believers with the Holy Spirit into the body of Christ at conversion (1 Corinthians 12:13); the Holy Spirit now lives in us. All believers from all nations have become ONE BODY (Ephesians 4:4) in Christ. The following scriptures shows us the progression of the gift of the Holy Spirit and our new relationship with Him, from promise to fulfillment (John 1:33, John 7:37-39, John 14:15-18, John 20:22, Acts 2:1-4, 1 Corinthians 12:13). We see the progression of Holy Spirit being given to Jew, Samaritans, and Gentiles in the book of Acts (Acts 2:1-4,40-47, Acts 8:14-17, Acts 10: 44-48, Acts 19: 1-9). There is one Spirit baptism (Ephesians 4:5) and there should be a continual filling of the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 5:18). Spirit baptism empowers the believer to be a witness for God; the continued filling of the Spirit makes sure we remain empowered as His witnesses.

All who are baptized and filled with the Holy Spirit display outward manifestations of this inward, spiritual reality; primarily boldness in witness and then the fruit and gifts of the Spirit. Every believer will receive at least one spiritual gift. We will not receive the same gifts, but we should all demonstrate boldness to witness for Christ and bear the fruit of the Spirit. When the Holy Spirit indwells a believer at salvation, that person gets ALL of the Holy Spirit- there is not any "more" of Him to receive (2 Peter 1:3, Colossians 2:10). We are never commanded in Scripture to get "more of God" or "more of the Holy Spirit" through another baptism. We received all of Him at salvation, so we can not get any more of Him and He can never get any closer to us than he is right now. We do not have to call on Christ or the Holy Spirit to "come down on" us or "get closer to" us. He lives in us! We can't get any closer than that!

If we are distant from God, it is we who have distanced ourselves from Him, not He from us. He will never leave us or forsake us (Hebrews 13:5). As Christians we have all of Him! We are commanded to be continually filled (by the Holy Spirit who already lives in us. As with every other aspect of the Christian life, this subject comes down to **Submission** and **Faith!** We cannot receive the Holy Spirit, His power, His fruit, or His gifts through fleshly effort of by means of some "spiritual" formula. We must not create "classes" within the Body of Christ based on a hierarchy of gifts, or divisions between those who have and those who do not have a particular gift. The very nature of a gift means that it is not earned or deserved; only received. It is by submitting our will to God and placing our faith in Christ that we receive the gift of the Holy Spirit (and salvation), and it is by staying submitted that we are controlled by the Holy Spirit. **One baptism, many and continual fillings, all received and maintained by submission and faith!** May He have all of us, as we stay filled with the Holy Spirit through our daily surrender unto Him. Use us Lord for Your glory!