

The Holy Spirit - Deeper Dive - 3/26/20

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A. The Trinity - Father, Son and Holy Spirit

The whole idea of the "trinity" is that God is one but revealed and experienced in three persons. "Three persons" refers to the Father, Son or Jesus, and the Holy Spirit. They are all God. They are all equally God. They have all existed for eternity. So God is one in his essential being, but his divine essence exists in three forms of a Person and God is fully in each Person.

However, the word "trinity" is not in the Bible. It was first used by Tertullian (He died around 220 AD.). Here are the basic components or aspects of the theological idea of the trinity:

1. God is One - Monotheism

- Deut. 6:4 (The Shema).
- James 2:19 - *You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that—and shudder.*

2. God is Three Persons

"Person" comes from the Latin word that means, "mask" or "role". Roman actors wore different masks to identify different characters, thus ultimately meaning "a role that someone is playing." Think of God as one actor or being, playing three roles as three actors or persons at different times for different reasons.

a. Old Testament indicators

- The plural use of pronouns and verbs - "elohim" in Genesis 1:1. "Let us make man..." in Genesis 1:26. "Who will go for us?" in Isaiah 6:8.

b. New Testament references

- The presence of three the three persons of the trinity at Jesus' baptism - Matthew 3:16, 17
- We are commanded to baptize in the name of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit - Matthew 28:18
- Paul's benediction to his letter - 2 Corinthians 13:14 - *May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.*
- Galatians 4:6 - *Because you are his sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, "Abba, Father."*

c. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit - Each is God

● Jesus is God

Philippians 2:6-8 - *Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking*

the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross!

Colossians 2:9 - *For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form.*

- **The Holy Spirit is God**

1 Corinthians 2:10-12 - He is called the Spirit of God.

Romans 8:9-11 - He is called the Spirit of Christ. The Spirit raised Jesus from the dead. That means the Holy Spirit had to be God as only God could raise the dead.

Acts 5:3-5 - Peter said Ananias lied to the Holy Spirit (vs. 3) then said he lied to God (vs. 4). The ideas are parallel - Holy Spirit = God.

Ephesians 4:30 - The Holy Spirit of God

1 Corinthians 3:16 - You are God's temple - God's Spirit lives in you.

Genesis 1:2 - The Spirit of God was a part of creation.

3. The trinity is a mystery.

The concept is not fully comprehensible as God is not fully comprehensible (Isaiah 55:8,9). That does not mean we cannot know God well or personally; but as limited humans, we cannot fathom all there is about God.

B. Receiving of the Holy Spirit

When does one get the Holy Spirit? How does one get the Holy Spirit? What is the baptism of the Holy Spirit?

1. Receiving the Holy Spirit.

We receive the Holy Spirit as a one time **initial experience** at conversion - Ephesians 1:13, 14 - *13 And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, 14 who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of his glory.*

One receives the Holy Spirit at the beginning of the Christian walk. It is a one-time experience, not two or more different experiences! There are endless debates as to the exact moment a person is "in Christ". The Bible does not intend to state an "exact" universal time when one gets salvation and the Holy Spirit, as the moment of salvation is not precisely defined.

2. The Baptism of the Holy Spirit

Pentecostal doctrine/theology teaches one receives the Holy Spirit twice or "in stages" and refers to the second stage or reception as the "baptism of the Holy Spirit."

This does not appear to be a major question in Christianity for the first 1800 years. Baptism of the Holy Spirit was historically the one time reception of the Holy Spirit at conversion. The Pentecostal movement became strong around the turn of the previous

century (1906 - The Azusa Street Revival) and brought a new meaning to the baptism of the Holy Spirit. The Pentecostal arguments include:

- Jesus' disciples were born-again believers before Pentecost. In John 20:22 they received the Holy Spirit. This was the 1st partial reception of the Holy Spirit.
- Disciples were to wait for the power of the Holy Spirit in Jerusalem (Acts 1:4) where they were "baptized into the Holy Spirit" (vs. 5). This happened on Pentecost. Tongues are the usual "sign" of this Holy Spirit baptism.
- Christians today should follow this pattern.
- Support also found in Acts 8, 10, 19 where God gave the Holy Spirit at a different time than conversion. However, each was a very special circumstance. See below under "Additional Information on the Baptism of the Holy Spirit."

The predominant view through Christian history has been this. No one can be a Christian without the Holy Spirit. See Romans 8:9 - *You, however, are not in the realm of the flesh but are in the realm of the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, they do not belong to Christ.*

When and how does one get the Holy Spirit? The focus here is on the **normative experience** in the Bible. When one accepts Christ (Terms also used are believes, confesses, repents and is baptized - Acts 2:38, Titus 3:5; John 3:5), he also receives the Holy Spirit. When one enters a covenant relationship with Jesus, he is saved, receives forgiveness and the promise of the Holy Spirit. This is the biblical norm.

When does a new convert need the Holy Spirit, at the time of conversion or later? At the point of conversion! God never planned for new believers to have to wait for a second baptism of the Holy Spirit. There is no waiting for God's indwelling presence!

The "gift" (singular) of the Holy Spirit is the same thing as the "baptism" of the Holy Spirit. It is the initial and universal gift and blessing of God for all. We get the full Holy Spirit at the time of conversion. The gift of the Holy Spirit is never a process, but a one-time event!

Now, being "filled" with the Holy Spirit is a process that must go on after receiving the gift. The biblical "norm" is one gift and one baptism of the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 4:5 - one baptism; Titus 3:5; Acts 2:38).

How do we explain the contemporary experience of the "second baptism of the Holy Spirit" in Pentecostal groups? Here are some options often spoken about:

- The Holy Spirit will "fill" a person who seeks to be filled. This may be a filling, rather than baptism. The believer may be more open during this time in a service that encourages what they call a "second blessing."
- But what about the "experience" of Pentecostals who get a "second dose" of the Holy Spirit? This "experience" is not the norm of Scripture. There are both positive and negative explanations proposed of this "experience:"

- o Positive explanations - This is actually a first time conversion or a renewed or deeper experience of God or openness to God in a deeper way, etc.
- o Negative explanations - This is a psychological reaction or a response to social/emotional pressure. Some wrongly suggest this is a demonic occurrence.

Additional Information on Baptism of the Holy Spirit

There are seven uses of “baptism of the Holy Spirit” in the New Testament (all have the same meaning). The first six are all in reference to Jesus baptizing with the Holy Spirit.

#1-4 = John the Baptist refers to Jesus. John the Baptist “only” baptized with water, Jesus will baptize with the Holy Spirit (Matthew 3:11; Mk. 1:8; Lk. 3:16; John 1:33).

#5 = Jesus quotes John (Acts 1:5).

#6 = Peter quotes Jesus who quotes John (Acts 11:16)

#7 = Paul in 1 Corinthians 12:13 focuses on unity (“all”, “one”). 1 Corinthians 12:12-14 - *Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many.* ALL Christians have ONE Spirit (singular) thus stressing unity and yet there are different gifts (plural) creating diversity. Baptism of the Holy Spirit is a common experience of all Christians.

There are the three “exceptions,” or “out of the norm” passages regarding the idea of a second baptism of the Holy Spirit or getting the Holy Spirit out of one’s initial conversion. All these situations occurred to convince others of God’s work.

1. Acts 8:5-17 - The Samaritans.

This was an unusual, specific one-time situation and not the norm. Why did the apostles in Jerusalem send Peter and John to Samaria? These Samaritans were the first converts outside Jerusalem who were non-Jews or a first time situation. Samaritans were hated enemies of Jews and the first non-Jews to become Christians. This was a very dangerous and potentially divisive issue for the new church. So, God withheld the Holy Spirit until apostles could be a witness. There was no question in vs. 14 that the Samaritans believed; the issue was about the kind of people who had believed that would be accepted by the church! Nothing is said that Phillip improperly taught them, or that they had a faulty or incomplete faith.

This was not a normal pattern and not repeated, but an exception to help confirm and convince the acceptance of Samaritans as following Jesus. God used the Holy Spirit to deal with the challenge of a growing cross-cultural multiracial church.

2. Acts 10 - Cornelius (a Gentile).

This is the next unusual situation. Cornelius got the Holy Spirit BEFORE baptism! Why? The church was presented with another unusual first time situation even harder than dealing with the Samaritans. Cornelius is a Gentile - a group even more disliked by the Jews than the Samaritans were! The Holy Spirit came was given before baptism to convince Peter that God had accepted Gentiles and the gift of the Holy Spirit was proof

to a Jew - Peter. This situation actually contradicts the Pentecostal position as he got the baptism of the Holy Spirit (tongues) before water baptism.

The acceptance of Gentiles into the church (as we see later in the controversy in Acts 15 and in many of Paul's letters) was a very potentially explosive situation and God used an unusual sign to convince the church.

3. Acts 19:1-7 - John's Baptism.

The Ephesians had received John's Baptism but not baptism into Christ. This is another unusual, specific first time and one-time problem. Why did Paul ask if the disciples at Ephesus had received the Holy Spirit? Something alerted him that these "disciples" were in partial error or missing something.

1. They had never heard of the Holy Spirit therefore they couldn't have been fully or correctly taught.
2. Paul's second question was about baptism. If they didn't know about the Holy Spirit, then maybe their baptism was incorrect, as the Holy Spirit and baptism were normally connected. "John's baptism" was given in preparation for Jesus and it was a baptism only for repentance of sin, not for faith in Christ.
3. They needed to be pointed to Jesus, hence their re-baptism into the "name of Jesus." John's baptism was only a preparation for the coming of Jesus.
4. They received the Holy Spirit after being baptized into Jesus. There is no salvation without Jesus and no Holy Spirit without Jesus, even if they desired to do well and had repented.

This was not a case of them receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit after John's baptism because they were not fully converted or because they needed a second empowering of the Holy Spirit.

C. Gifts of Spirit

To make a supernatural difference, we need supernatural power or what the Bible calls spiritual gifts. Spiritual gifts are supernatural abilities determined and given by the Holy Spirit to serve others for their good beyond our natural abilities.

1. 1 Corinthians 12:4-11 - Key Principles

Vs. 4 - *"There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them."* Paul lists some of the different gifts later in chapter 12 and elsewhere. They are listed below in number "4.". The principle: the Spirit gives different kinds of gifts to believers.

Vs. 5 - *"There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord."* Not only are there different gifts, but different ministries or ways of using those gifts. The principle: even if a person has the same gift, the way in which a person uses that gift and serves maybe different.

Vs. 6 - *"There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work."* The word "working" means effect or result. The principle: the same gift in the same ministry will have a different effect on those being served.

The summary of v. 4-6 is that each believer is uniquely gifted to serve and minister in unique ways.

Vs. 7 - *“Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.”* Here is the principle of the purpose of spiritual gifts - for the good of others. They are never primarily for our own benefit.

Vs. 11 - *“All these (gifts) are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he distributes them to each one, just as he determines.”* The principle here is that the Holy Spirit is the source of all gifts and he alone decides who gets what gift. We can ask for a gift, but the Holy Spirit makes the decision based on what is best for the Body of Christ. The Holy Spirit determines 1) Which gifts he gives, 2) When, 3) How, 4) Whether he gives the same gift for one's entire life or changes the gift or gift mix, 5) Whether one gets one or more gifts. Never be jealous of spiritual gifts others have! Spirit wisely determines what gifts you have or I have and the gift you have is the gift God wants you to have.

Note also that every believer is gifted in some way - Romans 12:6a; 1 Corinthians 1:4-9; 12:7,11, 12, 18; Ephesians 4:7, 8; 1 Peter. 4:10, 11.

2. Gifts vs. talents - spiritual vs. natural abilities

Natural gifts are given to all at birth. Spiritual gifts are given to believers when born again. Every human is given “natural” abilities like athletic ability, or math or science aptitude. Others are given the talent to create something out of wood or metal. Others have mechanical or organizational skills. Some have the ability to sing or play an instrument. God uses these talents to help others. But they alone lack the supernatural power to do the supernatural work of God in spiritual service. Talents help but can't bring spiritual growth, transformation, encouragement or spiritual life to others. However, sometimes talents and gifts work together, but not always.

3. How to Discover Your Gift(s)

How do we know/discover what spiritual gifts the Holy Spirit has given us? There are spiritual gifts tests. Please note that I don't necessarily agree or support the exact gifts identified in these tests as some are roles, not gifts. Nor do I agree with their exact definition. Some “tests” leave out some miraculous gifts while others include them. But these are some good tools to use to at least identify possible gifts the Holy Spirit might have given you.

- https://spiritualgiftsdiscovery.com/assessment-login/?invite=k_55aadec4b5b30
- <https://www.sdrock.com/giftstest/>
- <https://www.lifeway.com/en/articles/women-leadership-spiritual-gifts-growth-service>
- <https://giftstest.com/>

But consider this. There is not one New Testament verse about how to discover your spiritual gift. Did God forget this important detail? Why didn't the Bible give us a way to identify our gifts?

This issue is not included in our Bible because the early church lived in community. The believers knew each other well. They watched each other serve & observed what gift(s) were being used. Gifts are discovered in the context of 1) Actual service & 2) Feedback we get from others who watch us & served by us.

If you want to know your gift(s), start by serving. Trial & error is okay! I tried serving primarily using the gift of mercy but it was clear to all I didn't have that gift. If you have a gift, you & others will observe if you're effective or not in helping others. Ask & invite others to give feedback.

4. Gifts in the New Testament

Gifts listed in the Bible with a near-universal agreement and little dispute among theologians:

- teaching
- faith
- helps/serving
- administration/guidance
- encouragement
- giving
- leadership
- mercy

Gifts listed in the Bible that can be controversial, disputed or their nature debated (see some definitions of these below):

- tongues
- interpretation of tongues
- discernment of spirits
- miracles
- healings
- knowledge
- wisdom
- prophecy

5. Commands - All believers are to obey the commands of the New Testament. Some commands are also the same as or parallel the spiritual gifts. Obeying these commands may not be the focus of one's primary ministry that utilizes a particular gift set. People with the gift by the same name as a command often help those without that gift to learn to obey as opportunities present themselves. People with the gift associated with a command can be examples to those who don't have the gift in learning how to obey. One's ministry is based on one's giftedness. However, all followers of Jesus must obey these commands when the situation demands it or presents the need. Here are some examples of commands that apply to all:

- Serve one another
- Encourage one another

- Be merciful
- Give generously
- Have faith

D. Miraculous Gifts - Tongues, prophecy, etc.

1. Not everyone has miraculous gifts.

My personal story is that I have in the past begged God through prolonged prayer to get the gift of tongues. God did not give me that gift. The Holy Spirit had other plans and gave me the gifts of leadership, teaching/prophesy and encouragement. Michael Goodwin who shares in the Deeper Dive teaching was given the gift of tongues and other gifts as well.

2. Unity

The introduction to Pantano's [belief statement](#) declares that *"In essentials unity, in non-essentials liberty, in all things love."* This reflects our heart and belief at Pantano Christian Church. We are a non-denominational church that seeks unity in Christ, based on the essential truths of Scripture while allowing for diversity, differences, and even disagreements over non-essential doctrines. There are strong differences of opinion over whether the miraculous or sign gifts still exist or even about their exact nature. However, the six belief statements of our church reflect our corporate essentials and upon which we base our unity in Christ. We all believe much more than these statements and we encourage those who are part of Pantano Christian Church to vigorously search the scriptures and discuss "non-essential" although important doctrines, while not making those views a test of fellowship. The miraculous or sign gifts fall in the "non-essential" category over which we will not judge others or divide over.

So at Pantano, we focus on the theological majors, not the minors. We can disagree without division.

3. Love

The three main chapters that discuss spiritual gifts are Romans 12:3-8 and 1 Corinthians 12 and 14. What is interesting is that the theme of love is also very strong and connected to spiritual gifts. See Romans 12:9-21 is about love. 1 Corinthians 13 is the "love chapter" but in between the chapters on spiritual gifts. This is no coincidence. When it comes to the use of spiritual gifts, love must reign supreme. If gifts are used without love, they can be dangerous (See 1 Corinthians 13:1-3, 13).

4. A Basic Understanding of Signs, Wonders and Miraculous gifts

There is no clear scriptural teaching that any of the miraculous gifts ceased at the death of the apostles. The key question is about their purpose. The focus of the miraculous gifts was to gain the attention of non-believers (1 Corinthians 14:22) who value such signs. Signs point people to God. Not all cultures and people will believe signs - see 1 Corinthians 1:22 where Paul indicates that signs appeal to Jews more than Gentiles (who value wisdom). Miraculous gifts must function in a subservient manner to the already revealed Word of God.

5. Specific Miraculous Gift Definitions

- **DISCERNMENT:** The gift of discernment is the divine ability to spiritually identify falsehood, to distinguish between right and wrong motives and the spiritual forces at work in situations.
- **HEALINGS:** The gift of healing is the divine ability to act as an intermediary in faith, prayer, and by the laying-on of hands for the healing of physical, mental and spiritual sickness.
- **WORD OF KNOWLEDGE:** The gift of knowledge is the divine ability to bring biblical truth to a situation and is often accompanied by a word from God.
- **MIRACLES:** Literally the workings of powers (double plural). Likely means that these gifts were diverse and were not permanently available at the will of the gifted believer, but instead were bestowed at various times and circumstances. The gift of miracles is the supernatural ability to alter the natural outcomes of life in a supernatural way through prayer, faith, and divine direction.
- **PROPHECY:** The gift of prophecy is the supernatural ability to communicate God's truth and heart in a way that calls people to a right relationship with God. It is used to edify the church.
- **TONGUES (and Interpretation):** This can be the supernatural gift of being able to speak a language that was not learned (Acts 2). It is also experienced as the ability to pray in an unknown language to glorify and commune with God. The gift of tongues is often accompanied by interpretation and should be used appropriately.
- **WORD OF WISDOM:** The gift of wisdom is the divine ability to understand and to bring clarity to situations and circumstances often through applying the truths of Scripture in practical ways. The use of this gift not only imparts truth and understanding to believers but invokes a response of holiness and worship lived out in the world and amongst God's people. Wisdom doesn't end with knowledge but is expressed in transformed hearts and lives.