

The Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is:

- God (**Gen. 1:2; Acts 5:3-4**)
- The Comforter (**Jn. 16:7 KJV**)
- The Counselor (**Jn. 16:12-15**)
- The Empowerer (**Acts 1:8**)
- The Sealer (**Eph. 1:13-14**)
- A Person (**Rev. 22:17**)
- The Convictor (**Jn. 16:8**)
- The Teacher (**Jn. 14:26**)
- The Presence of Jesus in the here and now (**Matt. 28:20**)

The Holy Spirit is not:

- a mystical fog (**Isa. 11:2**)
- a spirit of fear (**Rom. 8:15; 2 Tim. 1:7**)
- an impersonal power source to make meetings better (**Jn. 15:26**)
- Casper the Friendly Ghost (**Acts 5:1-11**)
- A power to be used for your own selfish gain (**Acts 8:9-25**)

The Holy Spirit is described as:

- a dove (**Matt. 3:17; Luke 3:22**)
- wind (**Jn. 3:8; Acts 2:2**)
- oil (**Heb. 1:9**)
- fire (**Matt. 3:11**)
- water (**Jn. 7:37-39**)
- wine (**Acts 2:13**)
- a "down payment" guaranteeing our salvation (**2 Cor. 1:21-22**)
- a sensitive entity that can be quenched or grieved because of sin (**Eph. 4:29-30; 1 Thess. 5:18-19**)

You receive the Holy Spirit upon accepting Jesus...

The Holy Spirit seals you -- He puts the imprint of God upon you, securing your salvation and depositing in you various gifts and revelations of Jesus Christ. These are a down payment for everything you will receive when you are raised from the dead (**Eph. 1:13-14**). You know you are "sealed" in the Holy Spirit when you exhibit faith in Jesus and a love for other Christians (**Eph. 1:15**).

But there is more...

The baptism or infilling of the Holy Spirit is more than a one-time experience. In the early church, the same disciples:

- received the Holy Spirit when Jesus breathed on them (**Jn. 20:22**)
- were filled with the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost (**Acts 2:4**)
- were filled with the Holy Spirit after prayer (**Acts 4:31**)

*Paul viewed the baptism of the Holy Spirit as a necessary qualification for walking out the Christian life. He commands the Ephesian Christians to be filled with the Holy Spirit (**Eph. 5:18**).

What does the Baptism of the Holy Spirit do?

- He forms Christ's character you (**Isa. 11:1-5; Gal. 5:22-23**)
- He clothes you with Christ's power to do the works that Christ did, and even greater ones (**Isa. 61:1-3**)
- He increases your faith (**Jude 20**)
- He enables you to pray...
 - continually (**1 Thess. 5:17**)
 - when you don't know what to pray (**Rom. 8:26-27**)
- He allows you to receive spiritual gifts (**1 Cor. Chapters 12-14**)
- He allows you to operate in specialized spiritual functions (**Rom. 12:4-8; 1 Cor. 12:27-31; Eph. 4:11-13**)
- He fulfills the prophecy of **Joel 2:28-32 (see Acts 2:16-21)**

How did the first Christians receive the Holy Spirit?

In the New Testament, it never happened the same way twice:

- Jesus received the Holy Spirit as a dove descending on Him, and heard the voice of God declaring His favor on Him (**Matt. 3:16-17**).
- The first Christians were filled with the Holy Spirit as they waited on the Lord in prayer and worship. They did this in accordance with Jesus' instructions (**Luke 24:49; Acts 1:8**).
- A blinded and humbled Saul was filled with the Holy Spirit when Ananias laid his hands on him. Saul received back his sight, arose, and was baptized (**Acts 9:17, 19**). Saul later became Paul.
- Cornelius' household spontaneously received the gift of the Holy Spirit when Peter preached the gospel to them. They received the Holy Spirit before they were baptized in water (**Acts 10:44-48**).
- Peter and John laid their hands on believers who had been baptized but had not yet received the Holy Spirit. For these Christians, getting saved and receiving the Holy Spirit were two separate experiences (**Acts 8:14-17; note verse 16**).
- Paul laid his hands on men who had just been saved, and they received the gift of the Holy Spirit. These men told Paul, "We have not even heard whether there is a Holy Spirit" (**Acts 19:1-7**).

Though the manner was different, each person receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit manifested at least one of five things:

- **Boldness**: the ability to do the will of the Lord in the face of fear (**Acts 4:31**)
- **Joy**: real joy based on a knowledge of God, not on feelings or circumstances (**Acts 13:52**)
- **Tongues**: other languages, both natural and supernatural in dialect (**Acts 2:4-11; Acts 10:46; 1 Cor. 14:2**)
- **Supernatural power**: the ability to do the miraculous works of Christ (**Acts 4:33-35; Mk. 16:17-18**)
- **Prophecy**: speaking the thoughts of God in love (**Acts 19:6; 1 Cor. 14:3**)

How do I receive the Holy Spirit?

- Cultivate a hunger and thirst for righteousness (**Matt. 5:6**)
- Cultivate an eager desire for spiritual gifts (**1 Cor. 14:1**)
- Confess your sins and drop every wall of fear (**Rom. 8:15; 2 Tim. 1:6-7**)
- Have someone lay hands on you and pray (**Acts 8:17; Acts 19:6; 2 Tim. 1:6**)
- Trust that God eagerly desires to give you the Holy Spirit when you ask Him (**Lk. 11:9-13**)
- Ask and receive (**Matt. 7:7-11**)
- Look to God and begin with praise and thanksgiving (**Eph. 5:18-20**)
- You receive the Holy Spirit by faith, just as you walk with the Lord by faith (**Gal. 3:2, 14; Rom. 1:17**)

*As a general rule, the Holy Spirit will not forcibly compel you to do anything. You have to eagerly desire to be filled with the Holy Spirit. As the Holy Spirit responds to your hunger, you respond to His presence in faith and with a sincere heart.