

Do You Have God's Holy Spirit?

Years ago, as a young man, I was teaching in an old grammar school in Yorkshire, and each summer, as the sixth form began to take their A level exams, we often had to resort to using an old stone chapel, through the fields near Coley, which had been taken over by the Church of England long ago. Only later did I find that in the 18th century, the building had originally housed a group of dissenters from England's 'official' religion – the Church of England, and actually was then the place of worship of the Church of God.

Why is that significant? John 17:11, *'And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me that they may be one, as we are.'* That small chapel was one link in a chain that stretched right back to the first churches founded by the original apostles, all of them called the 'Church of God', eg. 2 Corinthians 1:1, *'Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, unto the church of God which is at Corinth, with all the saints which are in all Achaia'* and Galatians 1:13, 1 Timothy 3:5, Acts 12:5, etc, etc. Down through the centuries the world may have called these faithful Christians by other names but they themselves, **mindful of Christ's own words about God's name**, referred to their members as the 'Church of God', and strangely, the very first church building that was constructed, was built in England at Glastonbury, and, some claim, by the very hands of Jesus Christ Himself.

But that history is for another time, another article. The reason I mention it is to illustrate that, in normal circumstances, God's Holy Spirit is passed down through the generations, from one true Christian to the next newly baptised member, by the laying on of hands, in *an unbroken chain* within God's true Church. Acts 8:14-17, *'When the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent Peter and John to Samaria. When they arrived, they prayed for the new believers there that they might receive the Holy Spirit, because the Holy Spirit had not yet come on any of them; they had simply been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then Peter and John placed their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.'*

That true church always displays the characteristics we read of throughout the whole of the New Testament, which is why, in the book of Jude, verse 3, we read, *'Beloved, although I was very eager to write to you about our common salvation, I found it necessary to write appealing to you to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints.'* ESV. However, it is obvious from the very next verse, that not all who claim to be Christian ministers have the ability to pass on that which they themselves do not possess, *'For certain people have crept in unnoticed who long ago were designated for this condemnation, ungodly people, who pervert the grace of our God into sensuality and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.'* ESV. They cannot possess it for one simple reason, Acts 5:32, *'And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to them that obey him.'* Without **obedience**, we cannot receive the Holy Spirit!

The evidence is plain in the way in which the vast majority of Christianity today has turned to a perverted grace, so that they are found to be actually worshipping Satan, 2 Corinthians 4:4, *'In whom*

the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, [the true gospel] lest the light of the glorious gospel of the image of God, should shine unto them. Revelation 12:9, *'And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.'*

To find out if you, or your church possess and have the ability to pass on the Holy Spirit, simply remember Jude 3 and Acts 5:32, and compare your beliefs and practices with those you read of in the Churches described in the pages of the New Testament.

Let us notice that evidence, for if you find a discrepancy, it must be at least doubtful that you possess God's Holy Spirit, because the Holy Spirit always leads us into truth, and that truth is the *faith once delivered*, which we read of in the New testament or Covenant, for God does not change, Malachi 3:6, *'For I the LORD do not change; therefore you, O children of Jacob, are not consumed.'*, James 1: *'Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.'* NIV.

Of course the young New Testament Church was so close to the teaching of Jesus Christ that it had not then had *time* to stray. His words still rang clearly in their minds, *"If you love me, keep my commandments"*. The New Testament Church was a commandment keeping church because they knew that God's laws had existed since Creation. For example, Genesis 2:3, *'And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made.'* So came about God's Holy Sabbath Day, thousands of years before Sinai.

Not only did Noah keep God's commandments, Genesis 6:9, *'These are the generations of Noah: Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God'*, but, way back then, he even knew and understood God's laws of clean and unclean animals, Genesis 7:2, *'Of every clean beast thou shalt take to thee by sevens, the male and his female: and of beasts that are not clean by two, the male and his female.'* Even tithing was practised by the patriarchs, Genesis 14:20, *'And blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave him tithes of all,'* and Abraham, long before Sinai, was clearly aware of all of God's laws, Genesis 26:5, *'Because that Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws.'*

Actually, the Bible reveals that all men knew of God's laws. Even the men of Sodom knew they were sinning before the Lord, Genesis 13:13, *'But the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the LORD exceedingly.'* Jew or Gentile, the New Testament church understood that they needed to keep the Commandments, Matthew 19:17, *'And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.'* 1 John 3:4, *'Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.'* There was never any question about their need to continue keeping the Sabbath, and the other Commandments, even if they were Gentiles, Revelation 22:14, *'Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.'*

Not only did the early Church obey Christ's words ; they followed His example whenever there was any doubt at all about doctrine, 1 Peter 2:21, *'For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also*

suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps.’ That meant that the Gentiles also continued to keep the same Holy Days as Jesus Christ, as a careful reading of the New Testament shows, because they understood that those days reveal God’s plan of salvation for *all* of mankind.

Hardly any wonder then, that even after the millennium, God’s word reveals that everyone will still be keeping the seventh day Sabbath and the Holy Days of Leviticus 23, Isaiah 66:22-23, *‘For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the LORD, so shall your seed and your name remain. And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the LORD.’* Zechariah 14:18, *‘And if the family of Egypt go not up, and come not, that have no rain; there shall be the plague, wherewith the LORD will smite the heathen that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles.’*

Jesus Christ’s words can also help us to recognise the true Church today, John 13:35, *‘By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.’* Love is the primary symptom of the presence of God’s Holy Spirit and should be plainly evident within any congregation of God’s people, and in the way in which its ministers gently lead God’s flock. God’s Church is not a physical organisation controlled by men, but rather a spiritual organism. As we approach the end-time, we will see that it is more and more likely that God’s Holy Spirit will not be found in large denominations. Matthew 18:20, *‘For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.’* Luke 12:32, *‘Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.’*

Jesus pictured His Church as a vine. John 15:5, *‘I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.’* All who possess God’s Holy Spirit are connected directly to Jesus Christ, just as the twigs and branches are connected to the trunk, no man intervening. So it is that no-one can disconnect you from Jesus Christ even if you were to be put out of an organisation claiming to be *the one true church*. Actually this would be a characteristic sign of an organisation which has rejected Christ’s plain teaching, Matthew 20:25-27, *‘But Jesus called them to Himself and said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. “It is not this way among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave; just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”*

Such disobedience to Jesus Christ’s words reveals only one thing: the great danger of staying within such a church, 2 Corinthians 6:14, *‘Don’t team up with those who are unbelievers. How can righteousness be a partner with wickedness? How can light live with darkness?’* New Living Translation. Revelation 14:4, *‘These are those who have not been defiled with women, [Apostate Churches] for they are virgins who cleave to the Lamb wherever he goes. These were redeemed from men, the firstfruits to God and to the Lamb.’* To stay in such a Church could result in spiritual adultery and disqualification from the first resurrection.

Christ is the Head of the Church as the husband is the head of the wife, Ephesians 5:23, 31, *'For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. ...For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh.'* Christ cannot tolerate the unfaithfulness of those who look to the words of a man rather than directly to His words. Those who receive God's Holy Spirit are very special to God, who regards them as His jewels, for only God the Father can call us into His Church by granting us the repentance and baptism required to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, Acts 2:38, *'And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.'*

Within God's Church have been set evangelists, pastors and teachers, 'for the edifying of the body of Christ', Ephesians 4:11, *'Now these are the gifts Christ gave to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers.'* New Living Translation. Their task is to instruct God's people in the development of the fruits of the Holy Spirit that they may grow in righteousness, Hebrews 10:24, *'And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works.'* ESV, and 1 Peter 5:2-3, *'shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock.'* ESV.

As we approach the end-time, God has shown us that true ministers of God will become increasingly hard to find, as even His Church becomes polluted, Amos 8:11-12, *'Behold, the days are coming," declares the Lord God, "when I will send a famine on the land— not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord. They shall wander from sea to sea, and from north to east; they shall run to and fro, to seek the word of the Lord, but they shall not find it.'* ESV. Even now, God's Church is gradually being taken over by men who wish to stand in Christ's place in their desire for power, dominion and authority. As a result, many of God's people have fled and become scattered, Ezekiel 34:5 19,21 *'So they were scattered, because there was no shepherd, and they became food for all the wild beasts. My sheep were scattered; they wandered over all the mountains and on every high hill.'And must my sheep eat what you have trodden with your feet, and drink what you have muddied with your feet?' ... Because you push with side and shoulder, and thrust at all the weak with your horns, till you have scattered them abroad.'* ESV.

Today, as we look for the true Church and ministers who can pass on the Holy Spirit, we find that almost all of mainstream Protestant Christianity does not keep or teach God's Commandments. Of those that do very few keep the true seventh day Sabbath and God's Holy Days. Amongst *them*, most have become polluted by the dominion of men. Some of these ministers once had God's Holy Spirit but have quenched it by compromise and disobedience, and so even the gospel of the Kingdom of God they preach has become perverted – no longer a sign we can rely upon to identify the presence of God's Holy Spirit.

Sadly, the acceptance of their dominion results in idolatry in Christ's eyes – His replacement by men. The result is the quenching of the Holy Spirit as we saw in Acts 5:22, which is why the virgins of Matthew 5:1-10 do not all enter into the marriage in heaven, Matthew 25:8,10, *'And the foolish said to the wise, "Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out ...And while they were going to*

buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the marriage feast, and the door was shut.'

Christ expects more of us than acquiescence before evil. In Revelation 3, these Christians and those who falsely believe that they have the Holy Spirit, gain condemnation from Christ, Revelation 3:15-16, *'I know your works: you are neither cold nor hot. Would that you were either cold or hot! So, because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth.'* Spiritually they have become paupers, verse 17, *'For you say, I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing, not realizing that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked.'* But still there is hope, if only they will listen, verse 20, *'Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me.'*

In conclusion, we see the fulfilment of the great falling away from the truth just as was prophesied, 2 Thessalonians 2:3, *'Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except **there come a falling away first**, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition.'* At this stage we see the first part of this prophecy fulfilled – the second part will come later. Nevertheless, God's Church will survive and continue to provide its prophesied witness. Matthew 16:18, *'And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.'* God's Church still exists; still explaining how to receive, preserve and increase God's Holy Spirit.

Wherever it is found, God's Church will be found preaching the identical gospel brought by Jesus Christ; walking faithfully in His example; keeping exactly the same Holy Days; displaying only a desire to serve God's people, its ministry now often unpaid; keeping ALL of His Commandments; baptising by full immersion, and laying on hands, to pass on the vital gift of God's Holy Spirit, just as have done their faithful forebears, for the past 2000 years.

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