

What is a Christian? Receiving the Holy Spirit

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[0 : 00] In Acts chapter 2, the Spirit came like there was a rushing wind, so you get the wind and the tongues of fire on the heads of the heads of the disciples.

! Anybody find that reference? There were 70 people who received the Spirit in the time of Moses. And there was one person who wasn't in the right place but still received the Spirit. And my question is, was that an example of fire?

I think we're still waiting for anybody who can find the actual place.

Am I telling you wrong by saying it's in numbers? I thought it was in numbers. 19 is it?

[1 : 43] I don't think so. I'm doing the wrong thing by saying numbers. I thought it was in numbers. I think it's definitely in numbers. You mean the 70 elders and the two who come out?

Yes. I'm going to look it up on my phone. Done? I'm going to look it up on my phone.

Done? I'm going to look it up on my phone. So we're in numbers 11 and we're on verse 24, 25.

So that was correct at numbers 11.

Is it fire? No. It says the Lord came down in the clouds and spoke with him.

[3 : 05] I've got some of the power of the Spirit that was on him, which seems a bit of an unlikely translation. But anyway, that's what NLV says. And put it on the 70 elders.

When the Spirit rested on them, they prophesied, but bid not do so again. So the evidence seems to be prophesying rather than fire. Okay, so definitely wind.

In Hebrew, ruach, which means wind or spirit. In Greek, it's nevma, from which we get pneumatic.

In other words, a pneumatic tire is a tire filled with air.

Nevma, wind or spirit. And then, as Steve says, another elemental idea of fire.

And all those three things have in common that they are non-personal. So if that was all the scriptures said about the Spirit, then the Jehovah's Witnesses might be right.

[4 : 16] Because the Jehovah's Witnesses, who deny the Trinity, say that the Spirit is simply a force, not a person.

So a bit like electricity. You wouldn't say electricity was a person. It has the power to zap you and illuminate you.

But it's not a person. It's a thing. And if you go through John's Gospel, which might be worth pulling this particular thread, we find that the Spirit is, you know, there is a doctrine of the Spirit.

And as we go through, it sort of unfolds. So I might miss out one or two by accident. But I think I'm correct in saying that at least one of the first...

Where is it? Behold the Son of the Lamb of God. Yeah. Okay. John, let's pull this thread for a little bit.

[5 : 27] John chapter 1, verse 32. Then I... John gave this testimony. I saw the Spirit come down from heaven as a dove.

Again, it's not a person. That's an animal. As a dove and remain on him. And the remaining is a key word for John because it's abiding.

The 70 who received the Spirit back in numbers, it was a temporary thing. But here we're told that the Spirit is a permanent thing in the life of Jesus.

I myself did not know him, but the one who sent me to baptize with water told me, The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is the one who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.

I have seen and testified that this is God's chosen one. So the first chapter or couple of chapters of John's Gospel, there's a whole cluster of Christological titles.

[6 : 33] Bang, bang, bang, bang, bang. People are saying things which describe the person and work of Christ and a whole torrent of them. And that doesn't get repeated later on.

It's more as if John is saying, here is my thesis. Here is the Christology that I'm going to teach you. I'll lay it out first and then we'll go through more slowly in detail, sort of building up the case that the things that were said are correct.

And in one verse where we were, 33 and 34, The one on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is the one who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.

So it's just a little sentence, but if I may, let me just sort of comment on it. So there's a human being and the Spirit comes upon him and abides on him.

And then this person is the one who baptizes with the Spirit. So I'm going to make a couple of little jumps.

[7 : 54] So one thing I'm going to say is baptize. I'm going to say baptize means do something with a large amount of liquid.

So baptize could mean you like a bath that you plunge yourself into, or it could mean like a shower or a torrent or a waterfall where a large amount of liquid comes over you.

I notice some very, in some Baptist opinions that would be slightly heresy because it opens the door to people being baptized by having water poured on top of them rather than going down into.

But anyway, let's be friends about that. If that is correct, that baptize means do something with a lot of liquid. This brings this text into line with the texts which talk about the pouring out of the Spirit.

So the Joel text, in the last days I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh. Your whatever it was, young men shall see dreams, your old men shall prophesy, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah.

[9 : 10] That's what Peter quotes on the day of Pentecost where the Spirit is poured out. So I think it's a very attractive thing to make this verse link up with all those Old Testament references to the pouring out of the Spirit.

Let's see if we can find that. The one that Peter quotes, I believe, is from Joel. Let's see if we can find Joel and then let's see if we can find the reference.

So finding Joel is your first challenge. And it's on page 914. And then we're looking at chapter 2 around about verse 28.

So let's just delve into this a little bit for a moment or two. Joel chapter 2, verse 28.

Could somebody read that for us? Where's the microphone gone? Would somebody read verse 28 to verse 32? So those four verses. And afterwards, I will pour out my Spirit on all people.

[10 : 28] Your sons and daughters will prophesy. Your old men will dream dreams. Your young men will see visions.

Even on my servants. Both men and women. I will pour out my Spirit in those days. I will show wonders in the heavens and on the earth.

blood and fire and billows of smoke. The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood.

Before the coming of the great dreadful day of the Lord. And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.

For on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, there will be deliverance as the Lord has said.

[11 : 34] Even among the survivors whom the Lord calls. Thank you very much. Well done. So that, Joel, is one of the references to the pouring out of the Spirit in the last days.

I've got an afterwards. We can take that in the last days. So you have the time of the Old Testament up to the coming of Christ.

In which the Spirit is active, but the Spirit is not poured out. In the sense that the Spirit is poured out subsequently. And in these last days, the Spirit is poured out.

And there's an effect in terms of speaking the word of God. So people are enabled. People at large are enabled to speak the word of God.

So it's not just evangelists. And it's not just Anglican ministers who are allowed to pronounce the promises of the gospel. Did you know that in the Anglican Church, only a consecrated Anglican minister can make the promises of the gospel?

[12 : 45] Because I remember Daniel saying he got into trouble by the communion saying the promises of the gospel. And he was told off because only the Anglican minister can do that. Seems to be a bit of a nonsense, doesn't it?

Pardon? Whoever believes in the Lord Jesus will be saved. You could ask Daniel for a bit more detail on it.

But there are the comfortable words that are said. Anyway, let's not go down there. But here is the pouring out of the Spirit.

And the promise that those who call on the name of the Lord will be saved. And there's other things that happen as well to do with the end of the world. And they're all sort of compressed into one recipe.

But my question is, who pours out the Spirit? I'm going to ask from Joel.

[13:44] And Joel, who pours out the Spirit? I heard the answer from over here. The Lord. The Lord. Meaning the Lord. Which Lord? The Lord God.

The Lord God. The Lord God pours out the Spirit. And when I do this in my SGP lectures, I say, Only God can pour out God.

So, isn't this a testimony to the divinity of this man? The Spirit abides on him. And he pours out the Spirit.

And if he were not divine, that would be blasphemous. And my little anecdote about this is, Do any of you remember Rodney Howard Brown?

I believe it was an American evangelist. God's bartender, he was referred to. Because it was said of him that he could pour out the Spirit on people.

[14:46] Which to my mind is blasphemous. Because who would dare to say, I can pour out God? But here is this man, Jesus, the Christ.

And it is said of him that he pours out God. And I think that is a huge statement about the person of Jesus. The man on whom the Spirit descends and the man who pours out the Spirit.

So, we just stopped on that. And we can go a little bit further. Because I think the relationship between Jesus and the Spirit is a fascinating subject, which is not very much talked about or thought about.

So, we've looked in chapter 3 about the work of the Spirit. And as we've seen, it doesn't actually say fire. It just says wind and water.

And the John chapter 1 reference of pouring out puts us in mind of water. If we, where would we go next to find a reference to the Spirit?

[15:59] I'm just wondering, yes. In John chapter 4, which is the Samaritan, the woman at the well in Samaria. Fascinating interchange between this woman.

You had Jesus talking to Nicodemus, this very polite, well brought up, theologically astute, you know, top person.

And Jesus talks to her. And then the Samaritan woman, who, in whatever view you take of her, she's certainly not an MP. And she's rather an outcast, isn't she?

But she has this wonderful conversation with Jesus where she doesn't give an inch, really. But she just gives as good as she gets. And you have this wonderful interchange between them.

And Jesus says in chapter 4 verse 10, If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him.

[17:05] And he would have given you living water. Now the living water does, I don't think the living water gets defined in chapter 4. But we know from later on, when Jesus talks about living water, do we know what he's talking about?

Not himself. The Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit. So it's interesting to preserve this distinction. He doesn't say, come to me, I am living water. He does say, come to me, I am the bread of life.

But he says, I will give living water. If you knew the gift of God, you would have asked and he would have given you living water. The water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life.

And as I say, I don't think the Spirit is specifically mentioned. I don't think the Spirit is specifically mentioned. But a very interesting detail that when the woman goes off to talk to her fellow villagers, it says, chapter 4 verse 28, Leaving her water jar, she went back to the town.

And interestingly, she came out for water. Jesus has told her about living water. And having heard about that, she leaves her water jar behind. Because she's sort of lost interest in that.

[18:31] It's an interesting little detail, isn't it? It's mentioned in verse 23. Is that right? Yes, thank you. The true worship is to worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth.

Thank you very much. Yes. Absolutely. Well said. Thank you for that. Yeah. She asks the question about worship, doesn't she?

Do we worship on this mountain or that mountain? And the answer is, it's not a question of localization geographically. Because true worship will be, and I think this is another Henna diadis, in the Father, that true worshipers will worship the Father.

This is verse 23. This is verse 23. So my NIV says, in the Spirit and in truth. As if it's two separate things. The original says, in Spirit and truth.

Which sort of ties them together. It makes you wonder whether, like it's the watery spirit in chapter 3, this is the true spirit. The spirit of truth, as it were, in verse 23 of chapter 4.

[19 : 42] So thank you for that. God is spirit and those who worship him must worship in spirit and in truth. So let's just pull this thread a little bit further.

I'm thinking that certainly one important reference to the Spirit is in John 7, verse 37 to 39.

So could somebody read us this? Maybe somebody else have a go. Maybe Julia, she's always good. So this is John 7, 37 to 39.

On the last and greatest day of the festival, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them.

By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time, the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified.

[21 : 05] Thank you very much. There's a wonderful text. The context of it is the Feast of Tabernacles, which apparently from rabbinic writings was a stupendous festival of lighting lamps and pouring of water.

And the rabbi said, let's see if I can get this quote right. Whoever has not seen the joy of the water pouring festival and the light festival has not known joy.

In other words, if you haven't been there, you haven't lived. And you can imagine this stupendous meeting where everybody is there and there's lights lit up and water pouring and everybody is in a rejoicing mood.

And Jesus stands up on the last and greatest day of the feast and says in a loud voice, if you're thirsty, come to me and drink.

Whoever believes in me, as scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within him. And Jesus is sort of making this almost outrageous claim that all this elaborate festival, that Jesus beats it flat because he is the fulfillment of it all.

[22 : 32] If you want light, as Jesus is going on to say, he's the light. And if you want water, he's the one who gives the living water. I mean, just imagine the effect on people of Jesus sort of standing up and saying that and everybody going, wow, wow.

Now, let's just pull this a little bit further. What does Jesus say in terms of a timeline regarding the spirit?

That the comforter will come when he goes. Thank you very much. Yes, the comforter will come when he goes. So if this is the Old Testament heading into the New Testament, there's a certain time before which the spirit was not yet given.

What it actually says in the original is the spirit was not. So the translators add in the word given to make sense of the sentence. The spirit was not given.

But after the spirit is poured out, who receives the spirit according to Jesus?

[23 : 42] The people. Sorry? The people. People. Yeah, which people? The people. The people. The people. The people. Those that believe in him. Those that believe in him.

Yeah, it's interesting. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Absolutely. Yes. Absolutely. Yes. Absolutely. Yes. By the spirit we cry, Abba Father.

We receive the spirit of adoption. That's right. Yes. Yes. In the Old Testament, the times when the spirit was active.

Right. But I think it's by contrast, this is the age of the spirit. And I think it's just worth pointing out that it doesn't say those who are Pentecostals will receive the spirit.

[24 : 53] Or those who are charismatics will receive the spirit. It says those who are believers will receive the spirit. Excuse me. I think it's very important to hold that, that it is, the spirit comes to believers.

And any idea that you could be a believer and in some substantial sense not receive the spirit in this day and age is a mischievous falsehood.

I know there's more that could be said about the unfolding of the, of salvation history. But in this day and age, we who believe receive the spirit.

So there's something else there. I don't want to, I mean I could talk about this for a long time, but let's, let's go on to around about John 13 and 14.

And just bearing in mind, have we come across any text yet which definitely says the spirit is a person?

[26 : 00] And I think the answer is no. Because again, we've had that the spirit was not yet given. And it's, who is thirsty, let him come to me and drink rivers of living water.

The water is impersonal. It's only when we get to John 13, 14, 15 that we are told that in the absence of Jesus, there will be this marvelous provision of a personal presence, a personal divine presence to be with believing people.

Now, yes, thank you. Let's, I don't, I haven't got these outlined in my new Bible the way I had in my old Bible, but I think in chapter 14, we could look at verses 15 to 21.

And perhaps somebody else could read John 14, 15 to 21. If you love me, keep my commands. And I will ask the Father and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever. The spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him because it neither sees him nor knows him, but you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you.

[27 : 35] I will not leave you or as orphans, I will come to you for long that the world will not see me anymore, but you will see me.

Because I live, you also will live. On that day, you will realize that I am in my Father and you are in me and I am in you.

Was it you? One more, please. Okay, sorry. Whoever has my commands and keeps them is the one who lives, who loves me.

The one who loves me will be loved by my Father and I too will love them and show myself to them. Thank you. I think probably it says him, doesn't it?

The one who loves me, the one who loves me will be loved by my Father and I too will love him and show myself to him. It's just making it personal. And Ivy tries to make it gender neutral by saying them.

[28 : 33] Yeah. Yeah. Now this is a step change, isn't it? Because I will ask the Father and he will give you another parakletos, advocate, counselor, comforter.

This has to be personal. Because you can't possibly say electricity is my counselor. Or electricity is my comforter.

Or electricity is my advocate. These are all personal functions. And it's in these chapters that the personhood of the Spirit comes across.

And in A Grief Observed, C.S. Lewis talks about what it is to have lost his wife. And he says, I've got the things that she left behind.

I've got her hairbrush. I've got her clothes in the wardrobe. I've got her diary. I've got her. I've got her. I've got her. I've got her.

[29 : 45] I've got her. She is absent. And Jesus says, in some supernatural way, you will not just be left with things.

You will be left with a person. And that person will be so, what shall I say, so real? Or so, his ministry will be such that you could almost say that I am there myself.

So you have this wonderful text which says, the one who loves me will be loved by my Father. I too will love him and show myself to him or her.

That when the Spirit comes, we have the impression of Jesus himself being with us. And I would dare to say that is the experience of every Christian.

I mean, in varying different intensity and to varying different degrees. But if you're a Christian and you're praying to the Lord, do we have a sense that we're praying to somebody who's actually there?

[31 : 02] Rather than we're just praying to empty air and we've got no sense that anybody's actually listening. It's not that Christ is physically present with us.

We're, we'll be present with the Lord when we're absent from the body. Absent with the body, present with the Lord. But there is a sense of a personal presence with us.

I will ask the Father, he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever. There is a divine presence with believing people.

And the divine presence is an advocate. So we need the advocacy, the comfort, the counsel of the Holy Spirit.

Do we not, to encourage us to, he will lead you into all truth. Yes, it's the work of the Spirit to take the things of Christ and to make them real, applicable, valuable, appreciated, impactful to us.

[32 : 18] And that is a wonderful ministry, is it not? Okay, let's use the microphone because it's a little bit easier.

We're around Jesus and the Father, they will come and make their home with us. Yes. With us as individuals. So, you know, I guess that is something of the Spirit being within us.

And also, yeah, revealing the Son and the Father who are all in us, I guess.

I don't really, I do get that because I do feel that the Lord does make his home with each of us. Yes. I feel that. Yes.

Oh, I feel it, I know that. But, I don't feel it always. But, you know, so, I guess that's the Holy Spirit's work as well, giving us that realisation of that.

[33 : 31] Yes. Yes. Yes. Yeah, that's right. It's very hard. I mean, we can't be too triumphalistic about it. The Spirit dwells within us, but so does sin.

And the Spirit doesn't drive out our sin and our sin doesn't drive out the Spirit. We're still in this sort of tension and a mixture. I guess that mixture shows itself in our thinking and in our feeling and in our experience.

We're sort of halfway between heaven and earth, aren't we? It's like you said in Romans, you think, I try and do the things that I don't want to do. Yes.

And the things I want to do, I don't do. Yes. And that is that sort of, that just gives you another witness of the Holy Spirit. Yes. And you sort of lean and be, you start leaning to the right, leaning of the Spirit.

But you're always told that. Yeah, that's right. It's a tug of war, isn't it? Yes. The flesh lusteth against the Spirit and the Spirit, does it say lusteth against the flesh or something like that?

[34 : 35] Yeah. I mean, there's a lot of things that could be said to describe that experience.

Because it isn't just straightforward that we're always filled with the Spirit in some indisputable and overwhelming sense.

But at least we're not the people that we were. We're born again by the Spirit, aren't we? Not the people that we were. And it makes me think that God, I mean, I don't know what you think about this, that to God the idea of person is a really important thing.

What's a really difficult thing to do is to change a person's thinking, to change a person's attitude.

Now, have you ever tried to do that with somebody who's locked into a particular way of thinking, a particular way of responding?

It's really difficult to change a person's thinking. But when the Spirit comes, He changes us deep down, doesn't He? And we start to think things that we never thought. And we start to be inclined towards things we were never inclined to before.

We start to be open to things that we were never open to before. We start to change to become the sort of person that we would never have become before. And even though that's a deep work and a long-term work, it is a miraculous work.

[35 : 53] And that's what He's doing in us. Does that make sense? Is that sort of answer to what we find in ourselves happening? Yeah. Let's have the microphone to our Sima.

I just want to say the scripture, I will not leave you as orphans. Yes. I will come to you.

It's so, so comforting that the Lord is gone, but He said, I will not leave you as orphans. Yeah. It's precious.

It is, isn't it? It is a precious thing. You could just draw it out a little bit and say, what is an orphan?

It's somebody who doesn't have a father or a mother. And what does the Spirit do?

He makes sure, specifically, that we have a father. He's the spirit of adoption. And by the Spirit, we cry, Abba, Father. And that is not the cry of an orphan. That is a cry of a child.

[36 : 58] Yeah. So that links up with the way Paul puts it about the spirit of adoption. By the Spirit, we cry, Abba, Father. And the way Jesus is putting it here, I will not leave you as orphans, i.e., you will have a father.

And you will know you have a father. And you will instinctively be able to cry, Abba, Father. Even if we're saying, Abba, Father, I made a right mess of all this. We're still calling on God as our Father. Sort of intuitively. Yeah. Jerusalem above, which is our mother. That's what it says, doesn't it?

I wouldn't go... But, yeah. Paul says how I... Doesn't he say something like how I'm in pain as a woman is in travail or childbirth or something, until Christ is formed within you.

So he sort of looks with a fatherly eye and, in a sense, with a motherly eye on Christian churches. Yeah. I wouldn't...

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