

THE HOLY SPIRIT

We believe in the Holy Spirit, who Is God.

As a person in the Godhead, the Spirit is co-eternal, co-equal, co-powerful, and co-operative with the Father and the Son (Genesis 1:2; Acts 5:3-4). Jesus said, "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:19 NIV).

The Holy Spirit is a person who teaches (John 14:26), commissions (Acts 13:2-4), directs (Acts 16:6-7), intercedes (Romans 8:26 -27), and feels (Isaiah 63:10; Ephesians 4:30).

We believe that the Holy Spirit was active in the old covenant.

The Spirit of God was active at creation, moving upon the face of the waters (Genesis 1:2) and creating human beings (Job 33:4). After the Fall, the same spirit of God enabled Bezalel to build the tabernacle (Exodus 31:3), and equipped special people to be prophets (Ezekiel 37:1), judges (Judges 3:10), or kings (2 Samuel 23:2). God promised the Israelites that "I will pour out my Spirit on your offspring" (Isaiah 44:3 NIV).

The Holy Spirit was also instrumental in the conception of Jesus (Luke 1:35). The Spirit descended in the form of a dove upon Jesus at his baptism (Luke 3:22) and led him into the wilderness where he was tempted by Satan (Luke 4:1). In the power of that same Spirit (Luke 4:14), the Savior commenced and completed his ministry of reconciliation, casting out demons by the Spirit of God (Matthew 12:28) and promising to send the Counselor, the Spirit of truth (John 15:26).

We believe the Holy Spirit came into the world in a new way on the day of Pentecost.

On the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1), the church was born. A new era of the Holy Spirit was ushered in—the new covenant in which persons are placed by the Holy Spirit through the new birth into the family of God, the body of Christ, the Church. Appearing as "a rushing mighty wind" and "tongues like as of fire" (Acts 2:2-3 KJV), the Holy Spirit embarked upon a new ministry of sanctification. Peter interpreted this event as a fulfillment of Joel's prophecy (Joel 2:28 -32) and of the promise given by his Master (Acts 2:33).

We believe the Holy Spirit can be known and experienced.

In his Pentecost sermon, Peter said, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call" (Acts 2:38 -39 NIV).

At the time Christ is received, the Father and the Son send the Holy Spirit to give spiritual rebirth (John 3:3-6); the washing of regeneration (Titus 3:5-6); the indwelling of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38-39); entrance into the kingdom of God (John 3:3); and immersion into the body of Christ (1

Corinthians 12:13). This is what John the Baptist meant when he said that Jesus "... will baptize with the Holy Spirit" (John 1:33 NIV; also John 1:29-34).

This baptism of the Spirit has been experienced by every Christian. "For we were all baptized by one spirit into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free- and we were all given the one spirit to drink" (1 Corinthians 12:13 NIV).

To bring persons to accept this relationship with God through Christ, the Holy Spirit convicts persons of their sin (John 16:9), Christ's righteousness (John 16:10), and judgment on evil (John 16:11).

We believe the Holy Spirit endows the followers of Christ with the "unity of the Spirit."

The "unity of the Spirit" is a special communion that exists in the fellowship of persons who have received Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord (Ephesians 4:3). In that relationship God's love flows from believer to believer to mold the followers of Christ into a functioning body of love as the family of God, the Church (Ephesians 4:15-16; 1 John 4:13-21).

We believe the Holy Spirit enables believers to grow spiritually.

The Holy Spirit works in the lives of individual members of God's family, giving guidance, instruction, and power for the Christian lifestyle. Jesus said, "... the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you" (John 14:26 NIV).

At work in Christ's followers, the Holy Spirit's power produces life- building fruit that makes them effective witnesses before the watching world (Acts 1:8). "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control" (Galatians 5:22-23 NIV). This fruit is the essential evidence of the presence of the Spirit in the life of the believer (Matthew 7:16). It is the process of sanctification.

We believe the Holy Spirit dispenses spiritual gifts for the up building of the Church.

The Holy Spirit works in the collective body of Christ, the Church. According to his wisdom and will, spiritual gifts are distributed among Christians for the up building of the Church (Romans 12:6-8; 1 Corinthians 12:7-11, 25-30; Ephesians 4:11-13). "The Spirit's presence is shown in some way in each person for the good of all. ... It is one and the same Spirit who does all this; as he wishes, he gives a different gift to each person" (1 Corinthians 12:7, 11 TEV). The Spirit knows what gifts are needed and which persons should receive them. These gifts come as the Holy Spirit chooses, for the good of the Church.

For this reason, the Churches of God encourages its members to exercise faith and submission in discovering the spiritual gifts the Holy Spirit bestows upon each one. We trust the Holy Spirit to know what the Church needs and which members should be used to supply those needs.

One Christian's gifts should not be considered higher or lower than another's. "God has arranged the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be ... so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other" (1 Corinthians 12:18, 25 NIV). "There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men" (1 Corinthians 12:6 NIV).

As Christians discover and exercise their spiritual gifts, "the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work" (Ephesians 4:16 NIV). Thus, the God of all the ages accomplishes his will in history and brings abundant life to his people, "not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit" (Zechariah 4:6 KJV).