

GOD IN US PREVENT SIN
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We hear a lot of theories about the Holy Ghost, what it is and how we get it. We hear it named as the Holy Spirit, being born again, or the new birth experience. What does God have to say about this Incarnation of Himself?

We know it is a tremendous gift that has been promised to us. Acts 2:39 contains no restrictions upon who can receive it. After Jesus died on the cross, the temple veil was torn in two. From then on, anyone could come into contact with the presence of God, not just the high priest. But God wanted to not only be near us, but in us. Jesus called the form of God that would live inside us, the Comforter. He said in John 14:26, it would come “in my name” and would “teach us all things” and help us remember all Jesus taught us. Having God within helps us understand the scriptures authored by God. Luke 12:12 and 1 Corinthians 3:3 tell us it also helps us to be witnesses and understand God’s desires for our lives. It is His law written in our hearts and it makes us living epistles. We “know” what to say and do, and when others look at us, they see Jesus and His gospel through us. Simon the sorcerer found in Acts 8:20 that this gift cannot be purchased.

Since many have questioned whether receiving the Holy Ghost is necessary for salvation, let us seek God’s opinion on this. 2 Timothy 3:5 warns us to turn away from those who have a form of godliness, but deny its power. Romans 8:9 bluntly states that if God’s Spirit is not inside of us, we do not belong to God. Acts 1:2 informs us after Jesus was no longer with His disciples, He continued to instruct them through the Holy Ghost. If they were receiving guidance from God, it is logical to look to Peter’s response when the crowd asked him what they had to do to make up for their sin. Especially since it was Peter to whom Jesus gave the keys to the kingdom, or the way to unlock salvation. Peter’s instructions in Acts 2:38, in response to the question, “What must we do?” included the receiving of the Holy Ghost. It was something his listeners needed to receive, or take from the giver. John 14:16-18 leaves no doubt the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, would be Jesus, coming back in another form to dwell inside of His followers. What true disciple of Jesus Christ would refuse Him entry? John 7:39 makes it clear those who “believe” on Jesus should receive the gift of His Spirit within them. Belief is tied to receiving the Holy Ghost. If we “believe,” we take another step beyond the initial steps of repentance and baptism. Those who wanted to be disciples of John were baptized by John. According to Acts 1:5, God baptizes with the Holy Ghost.

In the midst of confusing claims about the Holy Spirit, the Word of God lets us know what happens and how we can know for sure we have received this gift. Acts 2:38 indicates the Spirit is usually given after baptism, yet some, like those in Acts 10:47, receive this gift beforehand. How did Peter, in this instance, know those he was about to baptize had already received the gift? He had conclusive evidence, having heard them speak in another tongues. The initial evidence of receiving the Holy Ghost is shown repeatedly in scriptures as speaking in a language we do not know. Why tongues? If we can yield God control of that part of us, we have yielded control of everything in our lives to God. The tongue is called the hardest thing to tame. Examples of tongues being evidence of God inside are found in Acts 2:4, Acts 10:44-46, and Acts 19:6. Tongues are an outward sign of an internal change.

Why do some say the Holy Ghost is unnecessary or is no longer given when untold millions have recently received it? Perhaps they are unwilling to submit to God totally in order to accept it. Those who deny its existence are those who have never received it. It is similar to someone who has never tasted of chocolate, denying its existence. Perhaps this is why we are told to taste and see that the Lord is good.

There are many reasons to seek and to accept this gift. Isaiah 28:11-12 calls it a rest, wherein the weary find refreshing. In one sense, having the Spirit within allows us to rest from trying to reason out how to live right. The Spirit within instructs us how to live holy, working through our spirits and according to Romans 9:1, through our conscience. 1 Corinthians 2:12-13 tells us the Holy Ghost helps us discern spiritual truth by letting us compare what we hear to the Spirit of truth residing inside us. Romans 14:17 indicates

righteousness [right living] peace and joy also come with the Holy Ghost. Romans 15:13 adds to this by indicating we can abound in hope because of this gift. In 2 Timothy 1:14, we are told the Holy Ghost is able to keep us in the truth. "That good thing which was committed unto thee keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us." Titus 3:2-5 says we are continually changed by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost. Thessalonians 1:5-8 informs us the Holy Ghost within is confirmation that what the gospel offers, a relationship with God, is for real. Finally, continual renewing of the Holy Ghost builds up our faith, according to Jude 1:20.

With so much scripture indicating its necessity and with so many benefits derived from it, why would we refuse such a gift? All it requires is submitting our will to God, our lives to God, and our bodies, every part of them, to God. Oh yes, it also requires believing.