

# The Indwelling Spirit

Main article: *The Holy Spirit*

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**Three Aspects of the Indwelling of the Spirit.** Believers at the present time have the Spirit indwelling them in three aspects:

- 1. The Anointing (Unction) of the Spirit** (1 John 2:20; 27; 2 Cor. 1:21). The anointing or unction of the Spirit is the ability of the Spirit of God in the believer to empower them for service, for worship, for direction, and for discernment. When the Spirit of God comes to indwell a person, no matter how young or inexperienced they are, they receive Divine help to discern between truth and error; *"ye have not need that any one should teach you; but as the same unction teaches you as to all things"* (1 John 2:27). This follows what Jesus taught about *"the Comforter, the Holy Spirit... he shall teach you all things, and will bring to your remembrance all the things which I have said to you"* (John 14:26). It is by one Spirit that we have access to the Father in prayer (Eph. 2:18). Furthermore, the Spirit is like a *"fountain of living water"* inside a believer, *"springing up"* in the enjoyment of eternal life (John 4:14), enabling us to worship the Father (Phil. 3:3). The Spirit is also like *"rivers of living water"* flowing out to this world with the refreshing testimony of Christ (John 7:38). In Romans we read that the believer has deliverance from sin through the power of the indwelling Spirit (Rom. 8:2). We also find that the sons of God *"are led by the Spirit of God"*, who guides and direct our steps (Rom. 8:14). In 1 Corinthians we read that the indwelling Spirit is the power for ministry in every member of the body of Christ, enabling each one to do his or her service for the Lord (1 Cor. 12:7-11). It is the Spirit of God that strengthens us daily in the inner man (Eph. 3:16). We could summarize the anointing of the Spirit as that which enables the believer to live for God.
- 2. The Seal of the Spirit** (Eph 1:13; Eph. 4:30; 2 Cor. 1:22). The seal of the Spirit is the assurance and witness that we belong to Christ. The idea of a 'seal' is that of a mark or a brand. Often a person will put a mark on tools or animals that belong to them, to show everyone else whose property they are. That is what the seal is, except it is more for us than for others. The seal of the Spirit is given to the believer so that he or she can have the assurance of their salvation. *"The Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit, that we are children of God"* (Rom 8:16). This is one of the first things the Spirit does upon indwelling a believer. In fact, the moment you

believe "*the glad tidings of your salvation*", you are "*sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise*" (Eph. 1:13). It is as if the Lord is anxious to assure you that you belong to Him! From the moment of salvation onward, the Holy Spirit begins to "*shed abroad*" the love of God in our hearts (Rom. 5:5). A believer will never lose this seal, and it is in view of the final salvation of our bodies; for we "*have been sealed for the day of redemption*" (Eph. 4:30). The seal of the Spirit is not given before salvation; i.e. a quickened soul is not immediately indwelt with the Spirit. The seal is the witness of a completed work of God in the soul. New birth is not the same as salvation. We could summarize the seal of the Spirit as that which: (1) signifies a completed work in the soul, and (2) assures and identifies us as belonging to Christ.

3. **The Earnest of the Spirit** (Eph 1:14; 2 Cor. 1:22; 2 Cor. 5:5; Rom. 8:11). The earnest of the Spirit is the guarantee and foretaste in advance of our full portion in Christ. This is evident from the very word "earnest", which refers to the down payment money a person might pay for something they intend to take possession of. For example, if you intend to buy a \$300,000 home in a few months, you would pay a certain percentage down, perhaps 10% or \$30,000, on the home, up front, to show the seller you are serious about your intention. Why is this necessary? The believer in Christ has two inheritances. First, we have a spiritual inheritance "*reserved in heaven for you*" (1 Peter 1:4). Paul teaches in Ephesians that we are actually already "*seated in heavenly places in Christ Jesus*" (Eph. 2:6), and therefore we already have access by faith to this heavenly, spiritual inheritance. It is the Spirit who allows us to enjoy those heavenly things right now, "*all spiritual blessings in heavenly places*" (Eph. 1:3). Secondly, we have a future, material inheritance that we will possess when Christ appears to possess what belongs to Him; "*in whom also we have obtained an inheritance*" (Eph. 1:11). There is coming a glorious day when the Spirit of God will be poured out on this world for blessing, when the redeeming or "setting free" will take place (Eph. 1:14), and the curse be lifted. That day is not here yet, but we have the very same Spirit within us, allowing us to share in the joy beforehand! The earnest works to keep us from settling for the things of this earth; we have something far better! The Spirit of God is the earnest in two ways: (1) to give us a *foretaste* of heaven before we get there, and (2) to *guarantee* that we will get there, then go on to reign with Christ and share all that He possesses! We could summarize the earnest of the Spirit as that which gives the believer the *enjoyment* of present blessings in Christ, and the *guarantee* of future blessings with Christ.

**Illustration of Anointing, Seal & Earnest.** One day, a man sees by the roadside some weak and sickly sheep for sale. Out of pity, he buys the sheep and brings them home to his farm. The first thing he does once the transaction is complete is put his mark on them by branding. That is like the *Seal of the Spirit*; it marks us out as belonging to God. The second thing he does is administer proper nutrition and veterinary care, and soon sense and strength return to the sheep! That is like the *Anointing of the Spirit*; it enables the believer to live for God. Finally, the man has a field of sweet clover that he plans to let them enjoy on the following day, but because it is evening time, they won't be put out to pasture until the morning. So he tells his farm hand to gather several armfuls of the clover from the field and bring it into the barn for the sheep to enjoy. They do not have the field itself yet, but they are enjoying its sweetness ahead of time. That is like the *Earnest of the Spirit*, which gives us a foretaste of heaven, and a guarantee of future glory with Christ!

**Jesus Sealed and Anointed, but not Baptized, with the Spirit.** We read of Jesus "*sealed with the Spirit*" (John 6:27) and believers "*sealed*" as well. We read that "*God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power*" (Acts 10:38) and we also read of believers "*anointed*" with the Spirit. However, there is an important difference. We are sealed in view of the work of Christ, but He was sealed as a witness of His own perfection. We are anointed for direction and discernment, but Jesus lacked neither, before the Spirit descended on Him. The term "baptized with the Spirit" is never applied to Jesus. He was baptized with water, but not with the Spirit. Why? The Baptism of the Spirit formed a new vessel of testimony here in this world (i.e. the Church). It would be inconceivable to speak of Christ as anything less than a perfect testimony before His water baptism.