

What It Means to Be ‘Filled with the Holy Spirit’

Contents

<i>What It Means to Be 'Filled with the Holy Spirit'</i>	5
<i>Preface</i>	5
<i>Definition</i>	5
<i>God Allowed for Fallibility in His Creation</i>	6
Humanity Needs to Ascertain What Is the Will of God.....	6
Only Angels and Mankind Are Accountable for Their Actions	7
Mankind Is Responsible for Keeping the Earth Inhabitable	8
<i>How to Receive the Holy Spirit</i>	9
What Evidence Is There of the Spirit's Presence?.....	9
Worship and Service	10
What Is Worship and Service?	11
<i>Can a Person Who Has the Holy Spirit Be Lost?</i>	12
How Can a Spirit-Filled Vessel Be Demolished?	14

What It Means to Be ‘Filled with the Holy Spirit’

Preface

What we will be dealing with in this discourse is neither world-shaking, epiphanic nor a revelation from God. Before you raise your eyebrows in disapproval, read further: It has been observed that we don’t get *revelations* from God today; we get *illumination* on what has already been revealed. I tend to agree with that.

Now concerning illuminations, 1) there are those we do not receive instantaneously; they come gradually over months and years of praying and studying; and 2) there are illuminations that flash in your consciousness – at the end of months and years of praying and studying. Although in the latter instance the illuminations may seem to be instantaneous, they are actually the culmination of much time spent in reading the Word and waiting in the presence of God.

Of course we would never say that God cannot open up a passage of scripture or grant a new insight on His ways of operating to a newly saved person. What we are talking about here is the norm, how God usually gives us fresh insights into His Word and will.

With these thoughts in mind, let us try to ascertain What It Means to Be ‘Filled with the Holy Spirit.’

Definition

Being filled with, or having the Holy Spirit “within” you means primarily that the Holy Spirit has entered your essential (psychic) Self and possesses what we call your heart; He possesses the real YOU. At this stage of mankind’s development the physical body is a part of our Self, e.g., the hormones produced by various organs of the body directly affect our moods and personality. Therefore we may say, by a somewhat tenuous extrapolation, the Holy Spirit inhabits our physical body also.

But dwelling in the physical body is not the Holy Spirit’s prime objective: We will not always be encumbered with this

frail, corruptible body; consequently its inhabitation, such as it is, by the Holy Spirit is only temporary, while the Holy Spirit’s residency within us (our true self) is permanent. *He will never leave us unless we request Him to do so by our consistent sinning and refusal to heed His entreaties and warnings.* I personally can say He has never left me yet despite some foolish and foolhardy actions in my past. I do not intend to presume on His mercy any further.

Now the question is this: Should I – or you who have made some ill-advised moves in your own past – dare to embark on a life of sin because God has graciously forgiven us up to now? That would be a very dangerous thing to do. God’s goodness and mercy are not intended to encourage us to sin. Far from it. They are meant to lead us to repentance; and repentance is a complete repudiation of the sin that once ensnared us.

God Allowed for Fallibility in His Creation

Although there is no allowance for error in God’s plan for His Creation, He has placed, by deliberate design, certain fallible or less than perfect entities in Creation. But they were all along a part of the overall inerrant plan. The fallible entities, of which angels and men are a large part, cannot last forever; that is the nature of their fallibility. Angels and men have already given proof of their inherent fallibility and soon any of those beings that allowed themselves to be changed and thrust out of the will of God will be swept out of Creation in the same way a person sweeps dirt and clutter out of a room - into “outer darkness,” a limbo of nothingness.

Then, in line with the foolproof plan of God, there will remain only perfect entities, and God’s entire Creation will be a perfect one. There will be no negatives of any kind in the new perfect Creation because it will go in accordance with the perfect will of God that God envisioned from an eternity ago.

Humanity Needs to Ascertain What Is the Will of God

Some persons without the Spirit of God have a limited detailed knowledge of God. In saying “a limited detailed

knowledge of God” we are referring to data about the nature, other than moral, of God. This would pertain to His structure and lack of origin and His will and other like things. For instance, if scientists could ever determine the Cause of the universe, they would be close on the trail of the origin of God. But they don’t subscribe to there being a God. We know that God was the Cause, but, knowing what little we do of God, we are convinced He has no origin. This is difficult for the human mind to assimilate, but it is true.

But even some of the more knowledgeable Christians, those who have the Spirit within them and are led by Him, have trouble ascertaining what God’s will is.

The Will of God is a complex and abstract concept. “Will of God” is too general for the human mind: it needs specificity. For instance, there is 1) the will of God for all Creation; 2) there is the will of God for Earth, 3) the will of God for mankind in general, 4) the will of God for sinners and 5) the will of God for His people. Then there is the will of God for the individual person. When we add these specifics to the abstract concept – and learn what they entail – the will of God becomes a little more tangible, a more structured concept, one we can handle.

Inasmuch as this is a simple brief discourse, we cannot deal with the full scope of the will of God other than to say in passing that one who is filled with the Spirit will seek to do God’s will. That would entail being led by the Spirit. It is simple scriptural logic.

Only Angels and Mankind Are Accountable for Their Actions

Before proceeding further with our thesis on What It Means to Be ‘Filled with the Holy Spirit,’ we need to make the following point:

There are two rational groups of creatures in all the universe: angels and men. Regarding angels, they comprise two subgroups: the good and the wicked angels. I must admit that I am largely ignorant of what will be the final specific state of the

good angels. The wicked ones, as we have seen, will be swept out of Creation into the limbo of nothingness and eternal torment.

As for mankind, those who persisted in their wicked ways will suffer the same fate as the wicked angels. That will leave the righteous men and women who have been winnowed and sifted and culled out from among the wicked and who will "shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. (Mat. 13.43) We, the children of God, will enter into our rest and enjoy a perpetual Sabbath. But this Sabbath/rest will be like no other: we shall rest while at the same time we will be occupied with the King's business. We shall be like jewels in the crown of the Great King. We are the ones for whom He has been preparing a place, a city, a mansion that is so glorious it is indescribable in human terms.

Mankind Is Responsible for Keeping the Earth Inhabitable

As our advances in technology have increased, the harmful effects on the earth's atmosphere have grown apace. But as the harm to the atmosphere grew, so did our ability to monitor those effects. Now we have the knowledge of what we are doing and we also know how to stop or even reverse the effects, but – we simply haven't the will to sacrifice our breakneck pace and take on the corollary inconveniences in order to survive. Our unwillingness to let go of the amenities of life will catch up with us one day.

I am not so naive as to believe that I, in one relatively brief dissertation, could adequately cover the wide-ranging subject of angels, devils, mankind and the inherent fallibility of these three creatures. I have not come even close to it nor is that the objective of this writing. You can get more in the way of technical data on any one of the three – angels, devils or men – from any number of more voluminous works than mine.

But an exhaustive knowledge of a subject is certainly not the premise from which I launch any writing effort. Yes, there is a moderate bit of knowledge here – but it is only that: moderate.

Lest we get sidetracked, bear in mind that we are discussing what it means to receive the Holy Spirit. In the process I am endeavoring to point out to you the significant fact that in all of this inconceivably immense universe in which mankind lives, there are essentially only the angels (good and evil), and mankind. Of these three groups only man has yet to determine his fate – and the time is fast running out for man to exercise his option. If he wants to be spared the torment of hell, he must receive the Holy Spirit into his heart and life.

How to Receive the Holy Spirit

Joel 2:28-29 is one of the numerous prophecies in the Old Testament concerning the New Testament Church:

“28 And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions:
29 And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit.”

Joel’s prophecy is informative and exciting, but he does not tell us how we are to receive the promised Holy Spirit. So we shall have to go to the actual account of the birth of the Church, at which time men and women who were not considered to be prophets or kings received the Spirit. This was highly unusual. Before then the “anointing” (the pouring of oil by a person designated by God on the head of another person designated by God for the honor) was primarily reserved by God for one who filled one of the two offices named above. The act symbolized the Spirit’s coming upon the honoree. Today all may receive the Holy Spirit simply by a living faith in Jesus Christ.

What Evidence Is There of the Spirit’s Presence?

There is one sure way to tell if you have the Holy Spirit: Do you have the fruit of the Spirit? None of us can of himself change his nature. God alone can do it for us when we believe from the heart and give all we have to God. If you fail to see a

change in your way of acting and thinking, you need to go back to God; you evidently did not come **believing**. You did not have the **living faith** that produces the fruit and, incidentally, also causes you to do works of righteousness.

The fruit nor the works save us: they are a result of our being already saved. Paul tells us what the fruit of the Spirit is:

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.” Gal 5:22-23

Not very many people naturally possess a disposition that embraces all of these qualities. In fact, the believer has to constantly read the Word of God and pray in order to live a life that is continually pleasing to God. We are not born angels; we are naturally children of wrath and only God can give us the new birth that will change our ways and our thinking.

“Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.” Mat 7:16-20

If you fail to bear fruit, you are not a child of God. You may work miracles and speak in tongues, but you do not belong to God if you bear no fruit. And you will certainly do righteous works. As Jesus said,

“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.” Mat 5:16

Worship and Service

All the lives of those who are filled and led by the Spirit of God consist of two basic things - Worship and Service. The one

who is anointed by God (the one who is filled with the Spirit of Almighty God) is, by that divine act, designated for worship and service. He is set aside for God’s personal use; he is *sanctified*, which means to be set aside for a special use.

What Is Worship and Service?

Worship and Service, each, is composed of specific elements as shown in the outline below:

- **Worship**
 - Prayer
 - Meditation/Communion
 - Assembly Worship (church services)
- **Service**
 - Employing One’s Spiritual Gift
 - Witnessing
 - Verbal
 - Nonverbal
 - Evangelizing

Breaking the scheme down even further, each of the subheadings under Worship and Service may be said to consist of Privilege, Opportunity and Desire – POD. For example, prayer has the three elements of Privilege, Opportunity and Desire. Specifically they are: 1) the overall privilege that is there for everyone to pray; 2) the specific opportunity to pray, that is, to set aside a time to pray in your busy schedule; and 3) the desire to pray, which comes from God alone.

The Privilege is always there, also the Desire. Although you may not feel inclined to pray at a particular moment, you are, as a follower of Christ, always anxious for God to hear your prayers. We have the desire to pray – it is simply that, for the present, some carnal pleasure comes before the desire to pray despite there being an opportunity to do so. Of course that is a situation that is inconsistent for the avowed follower of Christ to be in.

Jesus raised a powerful prayer (John 17) that has had its dynamic effect throughout the ages, reaching back in time and pushing forward in that medium until it has embraced all persons of faith. If we can “name it and claim it,” – a rather dubious assertion – how much more can the Son of God claim the answer to His prayers uttered in faith to His Father? They have been answered; they are being answered; they shall be answered: Our salvation and our joy and peace depend on that special prayer Jesus made to the Father.

Our Master prayed long and often. Surely we, the Master’s woefully weak disciples, should want to pray; even when the desire, for the moment, is not a consuming passion.

On closer study, you will see that what we have noted about prayer (Privilege, Opportunity and Desire) is true of all the other subheadings.

Can a Person Who Has the Holy Spirit Be Lost?

In a word, Yes. But of course the full answer is not that simple. God does not summarily cast you into the fire of hell because you displeased Him once – or twice – or more. He will not let you go to hell without entreating you and pursuing you to the very portals of that damned place. We have an example of how the love of God operates in the history of His dealings with the Israelites of old. Not once, not twice, not thrice, but many times God pled with Israel to turn from their wicked ways.

Did they listen to Him? Well, not once, not twice, not thrice, but many, many times they turned to God when they were in serious trouble and He delivered them every time. *But after each display of divine mercy, the Israelites “went a whoring” after the gods of wood and stone that could never in a lifetime of sinning deliver the Israelites from their foes.* When their sins had finally reached the height of heaven itself, God’s righteousness could no longer tolerate the stench of their presumptuousness. He gave them over to their sins and their enemies. The Northern Kingdom (Israel) fell in 721 B.C.. and the Southern Kingdom

(Judah) succumbed to its enemies in 600 B.C. (The exact dates are uncertain.)

There is, within the being of God, a variety of traits or attributes such as love, mercy, righteousness, justice and longsuffering (great patience). Some of these traits seem to be contrary to one another. For instance, love seems to be the opposite of righteousness, and mercy antithetical to justice. In our finite human understanding they are diametrically opposed to one another, but God is not finite; He is not limited in any way such as we are.

God is, at one and the same time,

Love, which is

“A driving Force that seeks the well-being of the one who is loved in spite of all obstacles. It requires a need in the one loved that must be filled at all costs by the one who loves.”

He is

Righteousness, which indicates

a strict adherence to what is right.

He is a God of

Mercy, connoting a

“Lenience not justly required or expected; grace (unmerited divine favor); an adjusting of a situation so that it is tolerable.”

And He is certainly a

Just God, which indicates

an “eye-for-eye” balancing. See Ex. 21.22-25.

These traits coexist naturally and easily within God; they are a part of Him.

When a person sins (and we were all born in sin), the justice and righteousness of God are there to avenge all unrighteousness, but they wait, at the urgent behest of love and

mercy, to give the fallen sinner a chance to turn from his sinful ways. Times without number they have waited in individual instances in individual lives and they have pled and entreated for fallen men and women to turn at the reproof of God.

God does not plead only with the out-and-out sinner; He implores His own children when they have erred in their ways, to turn back to Him.

How Can a Spirit-Filled Vessel Be Demolished?

We have not yet fully addressed the possibility of a Spirit-filled person's going to hell. At first glance it would seem impossible, but God nowhere in the Scripture guarantees heaven to those who were once baptized into the Spirit.. This is what He said, "For as many as are **led by the Spirit of God**, they are the sons of God." Rom 8:14. It would appear, then, that the person who has the Spirit within and does not follow the leading of the Spirit – he or she is not a son or daughter of God. They do not belong to God, and if they are none of His, they cannot enter the Kingdom at the last day.

We have an example in the Israelites that should warn us that a number of glorious experiences with God in the past does not assure our entrance into the Kingdom of God at the last day. Our glorious experiences cannot assure us salvation any more than the Israelites' frequent exposures to the glory of God guaranteed them entrance into the Promised Land.

Paul warned the Israelites against that type of complacency (1Co 10:1-5):

- “1 Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea;
- 2 And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea;
- 3 And did all eat the same spiritual meat;
- 4 And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ.

5 But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness.”

In verses 1 – 4 He compares their experiences in the wilderness to 1) our New Testament experiences of being baptized (vv 1, 2), 2) eating or spiritually ingesting the Word of God and 3) drinking or partaking of His Spirit (vv 3, 4). He concludes the comparison by saying that, as their experiences (as glorious as they were) did not guarantee the Israelites entrance into the Promised Land, our similar apparent relationship with God will not assure us a place in the Kingdom of God.

Let’s reason a bit further:

- Jesus’ death on the cross did not seal the salvation of the world. It only made salvation available to the whole world. Consider this:
- Jesus died for the whole world, but not all the world will be saved; only those who **believe in Jesus**.
- Jesus cried, “Father, forgive them,” but not all were forgiven, only those who eventually **believed in Him**, thus causing them to repent of their wicked deeds.
- James tells us that faith without works is dead (Jas. 2.20-26) and, again, Paul states that they who are led by the Spirit of God, **which attests to their living faith or belief**, are the sons of God. Of course, to be led by the Spirit a person must have the Spirit within himself.

The conclusion is that...

- Faith is the only way to make salvation effective in our individual lives. (John 3.18, 36)

It is incontestable that to be saved and to escape the wrath of God at the Last Day, we must be filled with the Spirit of God. It is also quite clear that being filled does not of itself guarantee

our salvation. We have to be led by the Spirit. Obviously we cannot follow God from afar and claim to be led by Him. We have to stay right on the heels of divinity to assure ourselves of being led and of escaping the final, fiery wrath of God.

What I say to you, I say to myself: It is too late in the day to "play church." We have come too far, suffered too much to let this great salvation slip through our fingers. Let's be *filled* with the Spirit and *led* by the Spirit, which will be evidenced by our fruit of righteousness and the righteous works we do. Then we can approach that Day without fear and in full assurance of faith.

