

# Is this Spirit holy?

**The authentic Christian activity of the Holy Spirit is much superior to the 'miracles' of religion:**

You hear some really weird reports these days of the supposed activity of the Holy Spirit. It makes one wonder if the Holy Spirit as described in the Bible is somehow out-of-date, or devoid of power and initiative, because this modern "spirit" can do all kinds of things the Holy Spirit doesn't do.

It can be called upon at will, for instance, to perform "slayings" and miraculous personal interventions, "healings" and "manifestations," and even spectacular "signs and wonders," providing its mesmerized onlookers with what they're told are "spiritual experiences of God." And in the churches offering such a spirit, people respond by squealing and squirming on the ground and making unintelligible sounds that the churches tell them is the "gift of tongues," or "speaking in tongues," and that it's all the authentic work of the Holy Spirit.

Does it really matter, though, that none of these so-called gifts and manifestations of the spirit can be found in scripture? So long as people enjoy the experience and it satisfies their religious needs, what's the problem? There is a problem, however, with infusing God's holiness with one's own ideas of holiness. The Holy Spirit is holy, and what he inspired in scripture is holy too, so putting one's own ideas and satisfaction above the truth contained in scripture, would hardly be the Spirit's work, would it? And how could it be the Holy Spirit inspiring these activities, when they're not contained in the scripture that the Spirit himself wrote?

It also matters because mixing true holiness with one's own version of holiness diverts genuine seekers after God from an understanding and acceptance of the true Holy Spirit, who is, as Scripture tells us, God.

Even in the less extreme approaches favoured by more "traditional" Christians we hear of amazing feats supposedly performed by the Holy Spirit in the course of their relationship with God. Much is made of so-called "guidance," or "God working things out," and "miraculous intervention" by God bringing about special "blessings" and enhancements in their physical lives. And all of it is credited to the activity of the Holy Spirit, but if asked to validate this belief many would be hard put to come up with any kind of acceptable explanation.

Yet these ideas persist, and people continue to cling to their hopes and beliefs, mistaking them for faith, and as a result never come to a proper understanding of the reality of God's love and grace in Jesus Christ through the communion of the Holy Spirit. Looking for something that God does *not* promise they miss seeing and experiencing the reality of what God *does* promise.

So what does God promise through the work of the Holy Spirit - from scripture?

Jesus gives clear and specific directions as to what the Spirit does. For a start, the Holy Spirit will "convict the world of sin, righteousness and judgment," **John**

**16:8-11.** No mention of slayings and healings. It's the Spirit's job to teach us and bring to memory what Jesus taught us (**John 14:26**), and guide us into all truth (**John 16:13**), not throw people on the floor mouthing gibberish. And why would anyone seek "manifestations of the spirit" when it's the Spirit's job to bring glory to Jesus, not to himself (**John 16:13-15**)? And why would the Spirit perform strange signs and wonders drawing attention to himself when it was the Father's purpose for the Spirit to draw attention to Jesus (**John 15:26**)?

It's interesting to note, then, that Jesus said the world won't accept the Spirit. And the reason for that? Because people have no idea what the Spirit is really all about (**John 14:17**). And yet there are people who think they know the Spirit so well that they can "call down the spirit" to perform at their will, who think they're receiving direct messages from the spirit, and that all their arrogant suppositions are true "spiritual worship."

They may think it's spiritual and think they're calling down a spirit, but according to scripture it certainly isn't the Holy Spirit. No wonder they don't know him!

Does it matter, then, if people dabble in magic and call it holy? Yes, it does matter, because how can God ever become real in our lives if we're treating him as entertainment, or merely as a means to get "spiritual experiences?" It was God's desire to come to us in Jesus, die for our salvation, so that in time we could come to know him for the love and grace that he really is, not be deceived by so-called leaders offering us experiences that reveal nothing about him.

The true Spirit offers us a sound mind, enabling us to come to know God and relate to him as he truly is, not get messed up by religious superstition, false spirituality and manifestations of "spiritual power" promoting emotional abandon and the giving of money to support such juvenile behaviour.

If you find yourself caught up by this "new spirituality" in the name of "revival" or "inner awareness" - or any other "mystery" or spiritual sounding and desirable acquisitions - ask yourself this: After all the hysteria and "worship," what now? Where's it all going? Does it have anything at all to do with salvation, mercy and grace? Does it give you any real knowledge of the true God or why he died for you? And, what's more, does it even mention sin, its consequences and how we may be rescued from them, and what it took to do so?

God's not engaged in satisfying our emotional needs, entertaining us or performing spectacles for us. He's not the least bit interested in our "inner awareness." He's even less interested in hyped-up, hysterical "worship." What he is interested in, and what he would love us to understand, is the truth about him as seen in Jesus Christ, and for us to respond to that.

But that's exactly what the Holy Spirit is given to us for!