



# GOOD NEWS

for the unsaved WORLD!

(#35)

Modern perceptions of the "Holy Spirit" (and how he works), contrasted to what we find in Scripture.



## Back then

- ❖ People were being saved.
- ❖ The church was growing.
- ❖ God was accomplishing great things.

**In the book of Acts:**

**Common factors** or patterns seemed to be present.

**THE PEOPLE WERE:**

- ✓ Focusing on the Bible.
- ✓ Focusing on prayer.

**GOD WAS:**

- ✓ Sending the Holy Spirit.

**RESULT?**

- ✓ Amazing things were happening!

## Today


Most church-goers have their own "steps" that lead to nowhere.

**PEOPLE ARE:**

- ✓ Having "religious experiences" and calling it the "Holy Spirit."
- ✓ Making "decisions for salvation" without repentance.

**RESULT?**

- ✓ "Church-goers" with no moral/spiritual changes in their lives.
- ✓ Minimal focus on the Bible and prayer.
- ✓ Talk about spiritual growth, but not doing the things that make it possible.



### TYPICAL MODERN-DAY CHURCH-GOERS

① **LITTLE INTEREST IN THE PURSUIT OF "FOLLOWING JESUS."**

- ✓ **They do not study Scripture with the intent of submitting to what it says.** (Prefer to submit Scripture to *their* own views.)
- ✓ **They have a minimal focus on prayer that is based on Scripture.** (Try to manipulate God into giving them what *they* want.)
- ✓ **They are not interested in the discipline and training that makes spiritual growth possible.** (Prefer drama, emotional experiences, sensationalism.)
- ✓ **They shrink back from persecution or discomfort caused by following Jesus.** (Prefer comfortable living.)

### TYPICAL MODERN-DAY CHURCH-GOERS

② **IF THEY TELL OTHERS ABOUT JESUS...**


- ✓ **They modify** the Good News, to make it less offensive, and more appealing to those who *don't* want to repent of their sin.
- ✓ **They ignore** God's sovereignty, which guarantees that *only* the undistorted Good News, as described in the Bible, will save people.

**CONSTANT THEME:**  
**NOT following Jesus the way it is described in the book of Acts.**

**QUESTION:** IF we follow Jesus the *exact same way* they did in the book of Acts, ...  
 ↓  
 THEN will we get the *same* results?

+ + NOT NECESSARILY + +

- **YES**, the Holy Spirit can do as he pleases...
- **BUT...**
  - ✓ The Holy Spirit doesn't always choose to save *thousands* of people at one time.
  - ✓ He can choose to save only *a few...* or even *nobody*. (God will still be honored by our trust and obedience.)

 **WE NEED TO REALIZE:** The mere presence of "decisions" does NOT prove that the Holy Spirit is at work.

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Fakes can manipulate people, play on emotions, distort the Good News, and use all sorts of persuasive techniques to generate "decisions"...

The people may become religious, but they will still be *unsaved*.

JUST LIKE IN JESUS' DAY

"Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You travel over land and sea to win a single convert, and when he becomes one, you make him twice as much a son of hell as you are."  
 Matthew 23:15 (NIV)

**YES:** Fakes *do* get "results."  
**YES:** People will be deceived into thinking they're saved (though they *aren't*).

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fakes may even do miraculous things... *but that isn't "proof" that they are from God.*

... the work of Satan displayed in all kinds of counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders, ...  
 2 Thes. 2:9b (NIV)

Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, didn't we prophesy in your name? Didn't we force out demons and do many miracles by the power and authority of your name?' Then I will tell them publicly, 'I've never known you. Get away from me, you evil people.'  
 Matthew 7:22-23 (GW)


 **IN CONTRAST:** If we make ourselves available for the Holy Spirit to work as *he* pleases\* ...

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We will *know* that our efforts are not in vain, *regardless of visible results.*

Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, be steadfast, immovable, always excelling in the Lord's work, because you know that *your labor in the Lord is not in vain.*  
 1 Cor. 15:58 (CSB)

\* (We make ourselves available by doing those things we already learned about in the book of Acts.)

 **BY OUR EFFORT (empowered by God):  
 GOD WILL BE GLORIFIED.**

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① Perhaps *many* people will be saved.

Those who believed what Peter said were baptized and added to the church—about three thousand in all.  
 Acts 2:41 (NLT)

② Perhaps *some* to be saved through the efforts of many.


My job [= Paul] was to plant the seed in your hearts, and Apollos watered it, but it was God, not we, who made it grow.  
 1 Cor. 3:6 (NLT)

③ Perhaps *few* or *none* will be saved. We may seem to be a *failure* ... just like many of God's prophets.

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My people come to you, as they usually do, and sit before you to listen to your words, but they do not put them into practice. With their mouths they express devotion, but their hearts are greedy for unjust gain.  
 Indeed, to them you are nothing more than one who sings love songs with a beautiful voice and plays an instrument well, for they hear your words but do not put them into practice.  
 Ezekiel 33:31-32 (NIV)

[ LIKE A TYPICAL CHURCH-GOER ]

 **BUT IN ALL 3 OF THESE CASES, WE WILL BE PLEASING TO GOD!**

**G E N U I N E**

**IF WE FAITHFULLY TRUST AND OBEY GOD,**

**REGARDLESS OF VISIBLE RESULTS,**

**GOD WILL BE HONORED BY OUR LIVES!**

**IN ACTS:**

**OUR GOAL**

**WE HAVE SEEN:**

**Past**

- How God's people prepared themselves to be a people who the Holy Spirit could work mightily through.

**Present**

**Now:**

- We want to find out what happened when the Holy Spirit did work mightily through them.

**IN ACTS:**

**REMEMBER THE SPIRIT'S METHOD OF WORKING**

**THE SPIRIT'S FOCUS:**

- The Holy Spirit does not try to draw attention to himself.
- Though we may know when the Spirit is at work, he tends to work "behind the scenes," with the goal of directing people's attention to Jesus, and to godly living.

**DO YOU WANT THE SPIRIT IN YOUR LIFE?**

- Don't become preoccupied with trying to "get the Spirit."
- Rather, preoccupy yourself with holiness and godly living! (The Spirit will take care of the rest!)

**IN ACTS:**

**WHAT WILL WE SEE?**

**SOME THINGS OCCURRED SOMETIMES:**

- There were spectacular events... but not always.
- There was persecution... but not always.
- There were fakes who needed opposed ... but not always.

**SOME THINGS WERE A NORMAL OCCURRENCE:**

- There were expressions of love for God and neighbor.

**G E N U I N E**

**Love for God and neighbor – a normal occurrence among God's people.**  
(Illustrated by this description of the early church.)

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

Acts 2:42-47 (NIV)

**THIS WEEK...**

**AS WE CONSIDER THE SPIRIT'S WORKING IN OUR LIVES:**

**FOCUS:** NOT ON THE SPIRIT,  
BUT ON THE GODLY FRUIT THAT THE SPIRIT BRINGS INTO THE LIVES OF GOD'S PEOPLE!

But the **fruit of the Spirit** is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

Galatians 5:22-23a (ISV)

(When we are willing to do these, we know that the Spirit is present.)

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