

# The Holy Ghost

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From the time of Adam and Eve, the presence and importance of the Holy Ghost (or Holy Spirit as it is commonly referred to by many Christians) has been felt. After Adam and Eve were cast out of the Garden of Eden, the Holy Ghost was given to comfort, help, and guide them and their descendants. After the departure of the Savior from the earth he sent the Holy Ghost as “the comforter” to all who believed on him.

## The mission of the Holy Ghost

The Holy Ghost is a member of the Godhead (1 John 5:7). He is a spirit that has the form and likeness of a man. He can be in only one place at a time, but his influence can be everywhere at the same time. The Holy Ghost is our Heavenly Father’s messenger and is a special gift to us. The mission of the Holy Ghost is to bear witness of the Father and the Son and of the truth of all things (Gospel Principles, 37). The Holy Ghost testifies that Jesus is the Christ, and through the power of the Spirit, we are given guidance and knowledge to live the gospel.

## The Holy Ghost versus the Holy Spirit

The differences between Holy Spirit and Holy Ghost are not theological, but rather a matter of linguistics. The term Holy Ghost appears in the King James Version of the Bible and comes from the traditional English word “gast,” which is taken from German noun “geist.” We can still find the word “gast” in the English words “aghost” and “flabbergasted” which have a similar tone. In later translations of the Bible the word ghost was changed to

spirit to be more in line with the meaning of the day—thus the term Holy Spirit. Oddly enough the word spirit has now taken on multiple meanings, prompting some scholars and theologians to suggest going back to the term Holy Ghost. Returning to the term Holy Ghost can be seen as a characteristic of the restoration of the gospel.

## The Gift of the Holy Ghost

God allows his children to feel and experience the Holy Ghost and gives them the opportunity to possess the “gift of the Holy Ghost” through faith, baptism and confirmation. The gift of the Holy Ghost provides continual guidance and inspiration if one lives the precepts of the gospel in righteousness. Temporary guidance can be obtained through the Holy Ghost without baptism and confirmation; however, such guidance and influence is not made constant until faith and commitment are exercised in their fullness through the receiving of these sacred ordinances.

The gift of the Holy Ghost is given through the laying on of hands by Melchizedek Priesthood. This is called the ordinance of confirmation which takes place following baptism. Although the gift of the Holy Ghost is given, the person receiving the gift must exercise faith, live worthily, desire to receive help and guidance, and learn to feel and heed the promptings of the Holy Ghost to experience the effects of this gift.

The doctrine of the constant companionship of the Holy Ghost can make a huge impact on the lives in which it touches. Many Christians have had experiences where they could feel the presence of the Holy Ghost in their lives and the guidance it provided in leading them closer to Christ; however, when one receives the constant companionship of the Holy Ghost following confirmation they will experience the Holy Ghost as a guiding force, helping them to understand spiritual matters, directing decision making, and revealing the inspiration of the Lord.

This doctrine brings life to the scripture “...know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you...” (1 Cor. 6:19). The difference is dramatic and is one more affirmation of the restoration of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

### The Light of Christ versus the Holy Ghost

In some cases individuals feel the Light of Christ in their lives. John 1:9, speaking of Jesus Christ, states: "That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." The Light of Christ is the godly inspiration that comes forth from God through Christ and gives life and light to all things. When felt, the Light of Christ can influence a child of God for good and prepares them to receive the Holy Ghost. One manifestation of the Light of Christ is one's conscience, which enables man to judge good from evil.

While all people on earth have the ability to feel the Light of Christ, only those who participate in the ordinance of confirmation, through the authority of the Melchizedek Priesthood, receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

### Gifts of the Spirit

The gift of the Holy Ghost can bring peace to our souls and confidence of understanding the deep things of God (1 Corinthians 2:9-12). In addition we can be blessed with the gifts of the spirit for the benefit of ourselves and others in returning back to our heavenly home. These gifts include: The Gift of Tongues; The Gift of Interpretation of Tongues; The Gift of Translation; The Gift of Wisdom; The Gift of Knowledge; The Gift of Teaching Wisdom and Knowledge; The Gift of Knowing That Jesus Christ Is the Son of God; The Gift of Believing the Testimony of Others; The Gift of Prophecy; The Gift of Healing; The Gift of Working Miracles; and The Gift of Faith; (Gospel Principles, 141-147)

Each of us has one or more of these gifts of the Spirit and must learn to recognize, develop, and use these gifts while on the earth. Satan has his own imitations of these gifts and hopes to use them to deceive the children of God. We are called to be wise in our administration of the gifts of the Spirit. Although certain gifts of the Spirit are defined in scripture, there are many others, "endless in number and infinite in variety" (Elder Bruce R. McConkie, *A New Witness for the Articles of Faith*, 1985, 371).

### Conclusion

All Christians are encouraged to listen to the promptings of the Holy Ghost continually, and to allow ourselves to be guided by the Holy Ghost in all we do. Having this emphasis will lead to a greater awareness of the Holy Ghost, augmented by a significantly enhanced understanding of the role of the Holy Ghost in our lives. All too often the Holy Ghost is relegated to being a mystery as part of the Trinity—difficult to access, let alone apply. By accepting the Holy Ghost as a member of the Godhead (in perfect oneness with the Father and the Son), but a separate being with the mission of revealing all truth, one will be able to better understand the role of the Holy Ghost in our lives and help children to do the same.

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