

The Holy Ghost

The Spirit of God

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The Holy Ghost

Blessed are they who shall believe on me and again, more blessed are they who shall believe on your words, when ye shall testify that ye have seen me and that I am. Yea, blessed are they who shall believe on your words, and come down into the depth of humility, and be baptized in my name; for they shall be visited with fire and the Holy Ghost, and shall receive a remission of their sins.

Matthew 5:3-4

In the previous chapters we have briefly discussed the Holy Ghost, also referred to as the Spirit of God, and His importance in our life. However, what exactly is the Spirit of God? The 1828 Webster's Dictionary defines the word spirit as "primarily, wind; *air in motion*; hence, breath. All *bodies* have spirits and pneumatical parts within them." In contrast, the Spirit of God as defined by the Scriptures is the Spirit of truth, which is the knowledge of things as they were, as they are, and as they are to come.¹ In other words, we could perhaps define the Spirit of God, as God's will in motion. Thus, as it is God's will to bring all souls unto Him through repentance and belief in the Lord Jesus Christ, the Spirit of God testifies of the truth of God to the inner man. "This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the *Spirit is truth.*"²

Jesus told the disciples in the fifth chapter of Matthew that if they believed in His name, and would humble themselves and be baptized by the water and the Spirit, they would receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. Moreover, we know that baptism is also a covenant with God so that we might become His sons and daughters. "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption; whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself *beareth witness with our spirit*, that we are the children of God... Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities; for we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the *will of God.*"³ Please read the following Scripture from 1 Corinthians 2:9-16:

2:9 But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. **2:10** But God ***hath revealed them*** unto us by his Spirit; for the **Spirit searcheth all things**, yea, the deep things of God. **2:11** For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, ***except*** he has the Spirit of God.

¹ DC 90:4b

² 1 John 5:6

³ Romans 8:14-16 and 26-27

2:12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are **freely** given to us of God. **2:13** Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the **Holy Ghost teacheth**; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. **2:14** But the natural man receiveth **not** the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are **spiritually discerned**. **2:15** But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man. **2:16** For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ.

It is by the Spirit and the will of God that we learn the things of God, even the deep things, and we cannot do so unless we have the gift of the Holy Ghost dwelling within us, which thing we receive through the baptism of the Spirit. [For more on baptism by the Holy Ghost, read **Chapter Two**]. “And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him; but ye know him; for he *dwelleth with you*, and shall be *in you*.⁴” It is important to understand however that all men are given a portion of that Spirit at birth. Through this chapter, the reader will hopefully gain a greater understanding of the gift and workings of the Holy Ghost.

The Spirit of Christ

On July 4, 1776, the Continental Congress issued the Declaration of Independence, which officially separated the thirteen American colonies from Great Britain. The Declaration famously states:

When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation. We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.

The fore fathers of the United States said simply that by the nature of God, our Creator, every person has certain rights that they are entitled too. In other words, these rights are not written rules or laws, but are plainly self-evident. Everyone ought to have life, liberty, and the freedom to pursue happiness. Yet these are not the only rights that we are entitled to and that are self-evident.

How do we know that it is wrong to steal, to lie, or to commit murder? Is it because the justice system states these actions are illegal, or were they wrong even before they were written down on paper and instituted into law? Even young children understand that it is wrong to lie to their parents. For many people, the knowledge of what is right and what is wrong is instilled in them at an early age, and this knowledge is similar for many people who span across several generations, different religious upbringings, and ethnicities. Is this knowledge of good and evil simply a set of unwritten moral and ethical laws or is it something more? [Read more about good and evil in **Chapter Thirteen**]

⁴ John 14:15-16

The Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (RLDS) believes that the knowledge of right and wrong goes beyond a set of moral laws, and is what most people refer to as our conscience. The 1828 Webster’s Dictionary defines conscience as “internal or self-knowledge, or judgment of right and wrong; or the faculty, power or principle within us, which decides on the lawfulness or unlawfulness of our own actions and affections, and instantly approves or condemns them...the moral sense...considered as an original faculty of our nature.”

The certain unalienable rights which were self-evident to our fore fathers are still self-evident today, and they have been from the very beginning. How is this possible? How can people separated by time and culture have a similar conscience? The answer is simple; it is because we all have one Creator, whom when He created us, gave us life by the power of His Spirit and His Son, Jesus Christ. “But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him.”⁵

The Scriptures teach us that every man that enters into this world is given a portion of the Spirit of God. God told Enoch in Genesis that, “inasmuch as ye were born into the world by water and blood, and the spirit, which I have made, and so become of dust a living soul.”⁶ Thus, without a portion of the Spirit of God, nothing could have life. The Doctrine and Covenants, which is a record of revelations from the Lord in the latter days, explains that without Jesus Christ, who is the light and life of the world, nothing could abound [to understand why we believe in the Doctrine and Covenants, please read **Chapter Nineteen**]. “Then shall ye know that ye have seen me [Jesus Christ], that I am, and that I am the true light that is in you, and that you are in me, otherwise ye could not abound.”⁷ When seeking for truth, it is important for the reader to take all things in prayer before God and ask Him in faith believing if these things are true and He *will* answer you.⁸ Please read from Doctrine and Covenants 90:1d-g:

90:1d And he [John the Baptist] bore record saying, I saw his glory that he was in the beginning before the world was; therefore, in the beginning the Word was; for he was the Word, even the messenger of salvation, the light and the Redeemer of the world; **90:1e** the **Spirit of truth**, who came into the world because the world was made by him; and in him was the life of men and the light of men. **90:1f** The worlds were made by him. Men were made by him. All things were made by him, and through him, and of him. **90:1g** And I, John, bear record that I beheld his glory, as the glory of the Only Begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth; even the Spirit of truth which came and dwelt in the flesh, and dwelt among us.⁹

In the first and second chapters of Genesis, God created the body of man after the image of both Him and His Only Begotten Son, and formed man from the dust of the ground. After which, God gave man a portion of His Spirit, just as God told Enoch, and then man became a living soul. We learn that both “the

⁵ 1 Corinthians 8:6

⁶ Genesis 6:61

⁷ DC 85:12f

⁸ Remember to read James 1:5-7

⁹ 1 John 5:7 – There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word [Jesus], and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one [in purpose].

spirit and the body is the soul of man.¹⁰ Each person has been created with a portion of the Spirit of God, which not only gives our soul life, but also forms our conscience. Please read from Genesis 2:8, Genesis 6:64, and Moroni 7:13-15; 18:

2:8 And I, the Lord God, formed man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a **living soul**; the first flesh upon the earth, the first man also;

6:64 Therefore it is given to ***abide in you***, the record of heaven, the Comforter, the peaceable things of immortal glory, the truth of all things, that which ***quickeneth*** all things which maketh ***alive*** all things, that which knoweth all things, and hath all power according to wisdom, mercy, truth, justice and judgment.

7:13 For behold, my brethren, it is given unto you to judge, that ye may know good from evil; and the way to judge is as plain, that ye may know with a perfect knowledge, as the daylight is from the dark night. **7:14** For behold, the **Spirit of Christ is given to *every man***, that they may **know good *from* evil**; wherefore I shew unto you the way to judge: for everything which inviteth to do good, and to persuade to believe in Christ, is sent forth by the power and gift of Christ; **7:15** Wherefore ye may know with a perfect knowledge, it is of God; but whatsoever thing persuadeth men to do evil, and believe not in Christ, and deny him, and serve not God, then ye may know with a perfect knowledge it is of the devil, **7:18** Wherefore I beseech you, brethren, that ye should **search *diligently in the light of Christ***, that ye may know good from evil; and if ye will lay hold upon every good thing, and condemn it not, ye certainly will be a child of Christ.

Through the power of the Spirit of Christ all mankind has life, and by the Spirit of Christ every man may know good from evil. If we listen and hearken to that still small voice, search diligently in the light, and hold fast to every good gift, we have the promise that we *will* become a child of Jesus Christ. [Chapter Four will explain more on how the Holy Ghost works within our hearts and minds, while Chapter Eighteen will touch on the still small voice of God.]

The Spirit of God and the Holy Ghost

If we are all born with a portion of the Spirit of God, then what exactly is the Holy Ghost? Are they separate entities, or are they two terms that mean the same thing? The answer is that the Spirit of God and the Holy Ghost are the same entity, and in fact, the Holy Ghost is known by several names, such as the Comforter, the Spirit of Truth, and the Holy Spirit of Promise. The following was taken and reformatted from the work done by Brother Chet Reynolds, an elder in the RLDS Church:

We have all heard the phrase “Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,” but do we understand exactly what is meant by the Holy Ghost? Lets find out.

The Holy Ghost = the Comforter

Reference	Scriptures
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¹⁰ DC 85:4a

John 14:26	The Comforter, <i>which is the Holy Ghost</i> , whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.
John 16:7	It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.
Moroni 8:29	And the first fruits of repentance is baptism; and baptism comes by faith, unto the fulfilling the commandments; and the fulfilling the commandments brings remission of sins; and the remission of sins brings meekness, and lowliness of heart; and because of meekness and lowliness of heart, comes the visitation of the Holy Ghost, which Comforter fills with hope and perfect love, which love endures by diligence unto prayer, until the end shall come, when all the saints shall dwell with God.
DC 34:5a	Wherefore watch over him that his faith fail not, and it shall be given by the Comforter, the Holy Ghost , that knows all things;
DC 35:1b	... and you shall receive my Spirit, the Holy Ghost, <i>even</i> the Comforter , which shall teach you the peaceable things of the kingdom;
DC 39:2b	And this is my gospel: repentance and baptism by water, and then comes the baptism of fire and the Holy Ghost, <i>even</i> the Comforter , which shows all things, and teaches the peaceable things of the kingdom.

The Holy Ghost = the Comforter = the Spirit of truth

Reference	Scriptures
John 14:16-17	And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter , that he may abide with you forever; <i>Even</i> the Spirit of truth ; whom the world cannot receive, because it sees him not, neither knows him; but you know him; for he dwells with you, and shall be in you.
John 15:26	But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, <i>even</i> the Spirit of truth , which proceeds from the Father, he shall testify of me;
John 16:13	When he, the Spirit of truth , is come, he will guide you into all truth ; for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak; and he will show you things to come.

The Holy Ghost = the Comforter = the Spirit of truth = the Holy Spirit

Reference	Scriptures
Genesis 7:13	And he gave unto me a commandment that I should baptize in the name of the Father and the Son, ... and the Holy Spirit , which bears record of the Father and the Son.
Genesis 7:33	And Enoch beheld angels descending out of heaven, bearing testimony of the Father and Son ; and the Holy Spirit fell on many, and they were caught up by the powers of heaven into Zion.
DC 53:2b	Take upon you my ordinances, even that of an elder, to preach faith and repentance, and remission of sins, according to my word, and the reception of the Holy Spirit by the laying on of hands.
DC 55:1b	... after you have been baptized by water, ... you shall have a remission of your sins, and a reception of the Holy Spirit , by the laying on of hands.
DC 76:5a-e	...and receive the Holy Spirit by the laying on of the hands of him who is ordained and sealed unto this power; and who overcome by faith, and are sealed by that Holy Spirit

of promise, which the Father sheds forth upon all those who are just and true...

Holy Ghost = Comforter = Spirit of truth = Holy Spirit = Holy Spirit of Promise

Reference	Scriptures
1 John 3:9	Whosoever is born of God does not continue in sin; for the Spirit of God remains in him; and he cannot continue in sin, because he is born of God, having received that holy Spirit of promise . (received at baptism)
DC 85:1c	Wherefore I now send upon you another Comforter , even upon you, my friends, that it may abide in your hearts, even the Holy Spirit of promise , which other Comforter is the same that I promised unto my disciples, as is recorded in the testimony of John.

Jesus used all of these names interchangeably, therefore they all speak of the same entity. Notice also that in most cases he used the personal pronoun which means the third part of the Trinity is a "personage," not an "it!"

While these names are used interchangeably throughout the Scriptures, the Holy Ghost is perhaps the name that is the best known and recognized. In part, this is because the Holy Ghost is the name that is mentioned most often in the Bible, but also because it is the name that most people associate with the Holy Trinity, which is God, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost.

Interestingly though, the term "Holy Trinity" is not found in the Scriptures. Instead, apostle Paul used the term "Godhead" to describe the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, saying, "For in him [Jesus Christ] dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.¹¹" In other words, in Jesus Christ dwelt the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. For in Jesus dwelt the love of God, He was the Son, and we read in Hebrews, "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who *through the eternal Spirit* offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?¹²"

Jesus testified on many occasions, "I and my Father are one."¹³ However, this does not mean that they were one entity, but that they were completely one in purpose, just as Jesus prayed for the disciples "that they *also may be one in us*; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be *one, even as we are one*.¹⁴" He did not mean that all mankind would become one gigantic mass, but that we would become one in purpose as God and Jesus Christ are one in purpose. Both John the Beloved and the Prophet Nephi from the Book of Mormon described the Holy Ghost as part of the Godhead. Please read the following from 1 John 5:5-7 and 2 Nephi 13:32:

5:5 Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God? **5:6**
This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and

¹¹ Colossians 2:9

¹² Hebrews 9:14

¹³ John 10:30

¹⁴ John 17:21-22

blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth. **5:7** For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and **these three are one**.

13:32 And now behold, this is the doctrine of Christ, and the only and true doctrine of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, **which is one God**, without end. Amen

The Holy Ghost is one portion of the Godhead, and He testifies of the truth of the Son of God to all those that receive Him, as John said, “And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth.” The record of heaven described in the sixth chapter of Genesis, and the Spirit of truth that Jesus spoke of, is the witness of the Holy Ghost who testifies of the Father and the Son. Jesus told the people in the Book of Mormon that the Holy Ghost bears record of both God the Father and Christ the Son. He also preached how we receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. Please read the following from 3 Nephi 5:21-25; 32-38:

5:21 And the Lord said unto him, I give unto you power that ye shall baptize this people, when I am again ascended into heaven. **5:22** And again the Lord called others, and said unto them likewise; and he gave unto them power to baptize. **5:23** And he said unto them, On this wise shall ye baptize; and there shall be **no disputations** among you. **5:24** Verily I say unto you, that whoso repenteth of his sins through your words, and desireth to be baptized in my name, on this wise shall ye baptize them: Behold, ye shall go down and stand in the water, and in my name shall ye baptize them. **5:25** And now behold, these are the words which ye shall say, calling them by name, saying: Having **authority** given me of Jesus Christ, I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

5:32 Behold, verily, verily I say unto you, I will declare unto you my doctrine. And this is my doctrine, and it is the doctrine which the Father hath given unto me; **5:33** And I bear record of the Father, and the Father beareth record of me, and the **Holy Ghost beareth record of the Father and me**, and I bear record that the Father commandeth all men, everywhere, to repent and believe in me; **5:34** And whoso believeth in me, **and** is baptized, the same shall be saved; and they are they who shall **inherit the kingdom of God**. **5:35** And whoso believeth not in me, and is not baptized, shall be damned. **5:36** Verily, verily I say unto you, that this is my doctrine; and I bear record of it from the Father; and whoso believeth in me, believeth in the Father also; **5:37** And unto him will the Father bear record of me; for he will **visit him with fire and with the Holy Ghost**; **5:38** And thus will the Father bear record of me; and the **Holy Ghost will bear record unto him of the Father and me**; for the Father, and I, and the Holy Ghost, **are one**.

The Gift of the Holy Ghost

In the chapter on baptism, the reader learned how mankind can receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. We have learned also that the Spirit is the motion of God’s divine will which testifies to the inner man. However, what exactly is the purpose of the Holy Ghost? First and foremost the Holy Ghost is a gift which God has given to all mankind that we might have a knowledge of the Father, and predominately

that He so loved the world that He sent His Only Begotten Son to suffer the death of the cross and to rise again that we might have everlasting life if we keep His commandments.

It is important to understand that the knowledge of all truth, or the knowledge of things as they are, as they were, and as they are to come, can only be discerned by the power of the Holy Ghost, as mentioned previously in Paul's first epistle to the Corinthians. "For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, *except* he has the Spirit of God... Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed; and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, *but by the Holy Ghost*.¹⁵"

In Matthew, chapter sixteen, Jesus asked the disciples, "Whom do men say that I, the son of Man am?" The disciples answered him and said, "Some say John the Baptist; some Elias; and others say Jeremias; or one of the prophets." Jesus replied by saying, "But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona; for flesh and blood *hath not* revealed this unto thee, *but my Father* who is in heaven.¹⁶" It was only through the Holy Ghost, who testifies of both the Father and the Son, that Peter was able to discern that Jesus was the Christ. Is there any gift of the world that could be greater than receiving a perfect knowledge that Jesus is and that God, the Father, sent Him to be the atonement for all those who will believe on His name and repent? "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent."¹⁷ Please read from Alma 3:73-84:

3:73 For I am called to speak after this manner, according to the holy order of God, which is in Christ Jesus: **3:74** Yea, I am commanded to stand and testify unto this people the things which have been spoken by our fathers, concerning the things which are to come. **3:75** And this is not all. Do ye not suppose that I know of these things *myself*?

3:76 Behold, I testify unto you, that I do know that these things whereof I have spoken, are true. **3:77** And how do ye suppose that I know of their surety? **3:78** Behold, I say unto you, They are **made known unto me *by* the Holy Spirit of God**. **3:79** Behold, I have fasted and prayed many days, that I might know these things of myself. **3:80** And now I do know of myself that they are true; for the Lord God hath made them manifest unto me *by his Holy Spirit*; and this is the spirit of revelation which is in me.

3:81 And moreover, I say unto you, that as it has thus been revealed unto me, that the words which have been spoken by our fathers, are true, **3:82** Even so according to the spirit of prophecy, which is in me, which is also by the **manifestation of the Spirit of God**, I say unto you, that I know of myself that whatsoever I shall say unto you concerning that which is to come, is true, **3:83** And I say unto you, that I *know* that Jesus Christ shall come; yea, the Son, the only begotten of the Father, full of grace, and mercy, and truth. **3:84** And behold, it is he that cometh

¹⁵ 1 Corinthians 2:11 and 12:3

¹⁶ Matthew 16:14-18

¹⁷ John 17:3

to take away the sins of the world; yea, the sins of every man who steadfastly believeth on his name.

Through the power of the Holy Ghost, mankind is able to receive the gift of revelation that Jesus Christ was crucified for the sins of the world, but this is not all. Through the gift of the Spirit men are able to be instruments in the hands of God, to know the mind and will of God, and to help build up and establish the Kingdom of God on the earth. Apostle Paul explained some of the gifts of the Holy Ghost in 1 Corinthians 12:3-11, while the Lord further expounded upon this subject in Doctrine and Covenants 46:4-7:

12:3 Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed; and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost. **12:4** Now there are *diversities* of gifts, ***but the same Spirit***. **12:5** And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. **12:6** And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. **12:7** But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to ***every man*** to profit withal. **12:8** For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; **12:9** To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; **12:10** To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues; **12:11** But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.

46:4a Wherefore, beware, lest ye are deceived, and that ye may not be deceived, seek ye earnestly the best gifts, always remembering for ***what they are given***; **46:4b** for verily I say unto you, They are given for the **benefit of those who love me and keep all my commandments**, and him that seeketh so to do, that ***all*** may be benefited, that seeketh or that asketh of me, that asketh and not for a sign that he may consume it upon his lusts.

46:5a And again, verily I say unto you, I would that ye should always remember, and always retain in your minds what those gifts are, that are given unto the church, for all have not every gift given unto them; **46:5b** for there are many gifts, and to ***every man*** is given a gift by the Spirit of God: **46:5c** to some it is given one, and to some is given another, that all may be profited thereby; **46:5d** to some it is **given by the Holy Ghost to know that Jesus Christ is the Son of God**, and that he was crucified for the sins of the world; **46:5e** to others it is given to ***believe on their words***, that they also might have eternal life, if they continue faithful.

46:6a And again, to some it is given by the Holy Ghost to know the differences of administration, as it will be pleasing unto the same Lord, according as the Lord will, suiting his mercies according to the conditions of the children of men. **46:6b** And again, it is given by the Holy Ghost to some to know the diversities of operations, whether it be of God, that the manifestations of the Spirit may be given to every man to profit withal.

46:7a And again, verily I say unto you, To some it is given, by the Spirit of God, the word of wisdom; **46:7b** to another it is given the word of knowledge, that all may be taught to be wise

and to have knowledge. **46:7c** And again, to some it is given to have faith to be healed, and to others it is given to have faith to heal. **46:7d** And again, to some it is given the workings of miracles; and to others it is given to prophesy, and to others the discerning of spirits. **46:7e** And again, it is given to some to speak with tongues, and to another it is given the interpretation of tongues: **46:7f** and all these gifts come from God, for the benefit of the children of God.

Throughout the Scriptures, we read about the mighty witness that the Holy Ghost gives and how the Holy Ghost enlightens and strengthens the hearts of those who believe in Jesus, just as Peter was able to know that Jesus was the Son of God. The Scriptures are filled with testimonies of those who believed and were able to do many wonderful works by the power of the Holy Ghost, such as Enoch moving mountains, Moses parting the Red Sea, Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead, et cetera. There are also testimonies of those who were able to cast out devils, heal the sick, and soften the hearts of mankind.¹⁸ It is important for the reader to understand that these miracles are not done because of men, but because of faith and the Spirit of God that abides inside of men. Remember, the gifts of the Spirit “are given for the benefit of those who love me and keep all my commandments, and him that seeketh so to do, that all may be benefited.”

By the power of the Holy Spirit we are able to know all the mysteries of God. The prophet Nephi from the Book of Mormon was allowed to see everything from the foundation of the world, to the end thereof, saying, “I, Nephi, was desirous also that I might see, and hear, and know of these things, by the *power* of the Holy Ghost, which is the gift of God unto all those who diligently seek him...And the mysteries of God shall be unfolded unto them by the *power* of the Holy Ghost.¹⁹” Therefore, if the reader is desirous to know of the truth of the Book of Mormon as well as the Doctrine and Covenants, all that the Lord requires is to ask in faith believing, and the truth *will* be made manifest by the power of the Holy Spirit of God.

The Workings of the Holy Ghost within the Soul

At this point, the reader may be asking how does the Holy Ghost work upon us and within us? Does the Holy Spirit only work upon those who have been baptized? The answer to the latter question is no. If the reader will recall, every person born into this world is given a portion of the Spirit of God within him or her, which helps to make up the soul. The Spirit of God may work upon any person depending on how we live and how we respond to the prompting of the Holy Spirit. For an example, think about how our conscience works while reading the following testimony:

When I was little, I really wanted to learn how to play the piano like my dad. However, learning how to play the piano required lots of practice, and I hated to practice. It took away from the time that I could be doing other things, and I especially hated to practice during the summer when school was out. I clearly remember that one day my mom asked me if I had practiced the piano for that day, which I hadn't, but I told her that I had. As far as I can recall, this might have been the very first time that I had lied to my mom in such a way, and I felt absolutely horrible

¹⁸ Mark 16:15-19

¹⁹ 1 Nephi 3:26; 30

about it. Nonetheless, as time passed, I continued to lie and my lies even expanded to other things, not just about piano practice. I came to realize that the more I lied, the less guilty I felt. Every time I disobeyed my parents or didn't listen to my conscience, my conscience grew quieter until I had completely buried it and I couldn't hear it anymore.

Unfortunately, we sometimes do the same thing with the Spirit of God. When we don't listen to the voice of the Lord, which is that prompting of the Holy Ghost, then it becomes almost dormant inside of us. However, the opposite is also true. As we listen to that still small voice²⁰ and open our heart to the power of the Holy Ghost, that Spirit of God grows within us just as Alma explained in Alma, chapter sixteen.

In the sixteenth chapter of Alma, Alma preached to the people on how faith can become a perfect knowledge [the difference between faith and a perfect knowledge will be discussed in **Chapter Five**], and by this same illustration, we can learn how the Holy Ghost works within both those who have and those who have not been baptized, and how both can come to the knowledge of the truth of Jesus Christ. Alma begins by explaining how faith is not having a perfect knowledge, but that through the exercising of our faith we can obtain a perfect knowledge, which revelation comes through the power of the Holy Ghost. Please read the following passage of Scripture from Alma 16:152-172:

16:152 Now we will compare the word unto a seed. **16:153** Now if ye give place, that a seed may be planted in your heart, behold, if it be a true seed, or a good seed, if ye do not cast it out by **your unbelief**, that ye will resist the Spirit of the Lord, behold, it will begin to **swell** within your breasts; **16:154** And when you feel those swelling motions, ye will begin to say within yourselves, It must needs be that this is a good seed, or that the word is good, for it beginneth to **enlarge my soul**; yea, it beginneth to **enlighten my understanding**; yea, and it beginneth to be **delicious to me**.

16:155 Now behold, would not this increase your faith? I say unto you, Yea; nevertheless it hath not grown up to a perfect knowledge. **16:156** But behold, as the seed swelleth, and sprouteth, and beginneth to grow, then ye must needs say, that the seed is good; for behold **it swelleth, and sprouteth, and beginneth to grow**. **16:157** And now behold, will not this strengthen your faith? Yea, it will strengthen your faith, for ye will say, I know that this is a good seed, for behold, it sprouteth and beginneth to grow.

16:158 And now behold, are ye sure that this is a good seed? I say unto you, Yea; for every seed bringeth forth unto its **own likeness**; therefore, if a seed groweth, it is good, but if it groweth not, behold, it is not good; therefore it is cast away. **16:159** And now, behold, because ye have tried the experiment, and planted the seed, and it swelleth, and sprouteth, and beginneth to grow, ye must needs know that the seed is good.

16:160 And now behold, is your knowledge perfect? Yea, your knowledge is perfect in that thing, and your faith is dormant; **16:161** And this because you know; for ye know that the word

²⁰ Learn more about the still small voice in **Chapter Eighteen**

hath, and ye also know that it hath sprouted up, that your understanding doth begin to be enlightened ***swelled your souls***, and your mind doth begin to expand. **16:162** O then, is not this real? I say unto you, Yea; because it is light; and whatsoever is light, is good, because it is discernible; therefore ye must know that it is good. **16:163** And now behold, after ye have tasted this light, is your knowledge perfect? Behold, I say unto you, Nay; neither must ye lay aside your faith, for ye have only exercised your faith to plant the seed, that ye might try the experiment, to know if the seed was good.

16:164 And behold, as the tree beginneth to grow, ye will say, let us ***nourish it with great care***, that it may get root, that it may grow up and bring forth fruit unto us. **16:165** And now behold, if ye nourish it with much care, it will get root, and grow up, and bring forth fruit. **16:166** But if ye ***neglect*** the tree, and take no thought for its nourishment, behold, it will not get any root; and when the heat of the sun cometh and scorcheth it, because it hath no root, it withers away, and ye pluck it up and cast it out.

16:167 Now this is not because the seed was not good, neither is it because the fruit thereof would not be desirable. **16:168** But it is because **your ground is barren, and ye will not nourish the tree**; therefore ye can not have the fruit thereof. **16:169** And thus it is if ye will not nourish the word, looking forward with an eye of faith to the fruit thereof, ye can ***never*** pluck of the fruit of the tree of life.

16:170 But if ye will nourish the word, yea, nourish the tree as it beginneth to grow, by your faith with great diligence, and with patience, looking forward to the fruit thereof, it shall take root; and behold, it shall be a tree springing up unto everlasting life; **16:171** And because of your diligence, and your faith, and your patience with the word, in nourishing it, that it may take root in you, behold, by and by, ye shall pluck the fruit thereof, which is most precious, which is sweet above all that is sweet, and which is white above all that is white; yea, and pure above all that is pure; **16:172** And ye shall feast upon this fruit, even until ye are filled, that ye hunger not, neither shall ye thirst.

By experimenting on the word of Christ, or anything for that matter, we plant a seed within us. If we nourish the seed by study and prayer, and if it were a good seed, then it will grow and enlighten our understanding, and this is how the Holy Ghost works within us. The swelling motion, or the burning, within our hearts that sprouts up and grows is the working of the Spirit of God that witnesses to us of light and truth. The same thing occurred with two of the disciples on the way to Emmaus after Jesus appeared to them following His resurrection. Interestingly, these two men were not able to recognize Jesus at the first, but after He broke bread with them, their spiritual eyes were opened. “And their eyes were *opened*, and they *knew* him; and he was taken up out of their sight. And they said one to another, Did not our ***hearts burn within us***, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the Scriptures?²¹” Jesus also explained the swelling of the soul in the Doctrine and Covenants 9:3:

²¹ Luke 24:30-31

9:3a Behold, you have not understood; you have supposed that I would give it unto you, when you took no thought, save it was to ask me; **9:3b** but, behold, I say unto you, that you must study it out in your mind; **9:3c** then you must ask me if it be right, and if it is right, I will cause that your ***bosom shall burn within you***; therefore, you shall feel that it is right; **9:3d** but if it be not right, you shall have no such feelings, but you shall have ***a stupor of thought***, that shall cause you to forget the thing which is wrong;

Likewise, Alma explained that if the seed is bad, or in other words not true or not right, then the seed will not grow within us and it will not bring forth good fruit just as Jesus explained to the disciples, “For a good tree bringeth *not* forth corrupt fruit; neither doth a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit; For every tree is known by *his own fruit*. For of thorns men do not gather figs, nor of a bramble bush gather they grapes. A good man out of the good treasure of his heart, bringeth forth that which is good. And an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart, bringeth forth that which is evil; for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh.²²” In other words, we have the assurance that a seed will grow to its own likeness. Just as a watermelon seed does not grow up to become a pumpkin, a good seed, which can only come from God, will not bring forth bad fruit.

In Galatians, chapter five, Paul taught how an individual can discern a good seed from a bad one by explaining that our flesh and the Spirit are at war with one another. “For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other; so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.²³” Paul described the differences between the flesh and the Spirit by explaining the different fruits that they bring. “Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these, adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like; of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance; against such there is no law.²⁴” It is precisely through these works that we can better discern between the Spirit of God and the spirit of the devil as well as the spirit of man, as only the Holy Ghost will bring love, joy, peace, etc. to fill our souls and our minds, and it is by these fruits that we will know whether the seed is good or whether it is bad.

Further, similar to a tree or plant, if it is not planted in good ground and does not receive nourishment, then the sun will scorch it. If we do not plant the word in a humble and penitent heart, and if we do not thirst and seek after truth, then when we experience trials or tribulations the word of truth will be destroyed. “But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word and readily with joy receiveth it, yet he *hath not root in himself*, and endureth but for a while; for when *tribulation or persecution ariseth* because of the word, by and by *he is offended*.²⁵” However, if we do plant the seed in good ground and do nourish it, then it will grow to bring forth good fruit, meaning the seed will grow into truth. In knowing Jesus is the Christ, we receive the most precious fruit that is sweet

²² Luke 6:43-45

²³ Galatians 5:17

²⁴ Galatians 5:19-23

²⁵ Matthew 13:1

about all that is sweet, white about all that is white, and pure above all that is pure, which is our everlasting salvation and the gift of eternal life.

Conclusion

It is our hope and prayer that the reader might seek the truth of the things not only written in this chapter, but the others as well in order to know whether they are true or false, and to come to a greater understanding of the workings of the Holy Ghost. If the reader will experiment on these words as Alma explained and exercise a particle of faith, then the Spirit of God will lead them to the truth. Thank you and God bless.