

Introduction

We will follow God's direction to Ezekiel to examine the different scriptures: "Take thee one stick, and write upon it, For Judah, and for the children of Israel his companions: then take another stick, and write upon it, For Joseph, the stick of Ephraim, and *for* all the house of Israel his companions: And join them one to another into one stick; and they shall become one in thine hand" (Ezekiel 37:16-17; also 1 Nephi 13:24 2 Nephi 3:12; 29:6-8). While the prophet Joseph Smith's enlarged scripture canon is usually consistent with biblical teachings, a closer look shows that restored text often demonstrates more breadth and depth than the Bible. Both the Book of Mormon and the Doctrine and Covenants explore untraditional territory, yet more often than not, within the bounds of King James Version (KJV) vocabulary (i.e. Holy Spirit of Promise, calling and election made sure, Godhead, atonement, etc.).

Pneumatology=The Study of the Holy Spirit

The study of the Spirit is called "pneumatology." It covers everything in between a spiritual witness of right from wrong, identifying truth, and personal inspiration, born of the Spirit, baptism by fire, the gift of the Holy Ghost, workings of the comforter, fruits and gifts of the Spirit, and the sealing of the Holy Spirit of Promise. In this handout we will only have time to look at the first half of these and save the others for another week.

Before we compare the Spirit in the Book of Mormon and Doctrine and Covenants with the Bible, it's interesting to see how Joseph's religious peers and other Christian traditions taught on the workings of the Spirit—or inspiration. It is helpful to point out their shared doctrines of the Holy Spirit. They all believed in the same Bible and shared biblical thought.

- First, they believed that God's Spirit took part in creating the earth and humanity.
- Second, they understood that the Spirit assisted in applying the atonement or cleansing of sins.
- Third, they also all warned against false spirits and the dangers of being deceived by satanic influences.
- Fourth, they felt the Lord's Spirit could commune with humanity, even though they differed on *how* that communication occurred. Prayer was the avenue to receiving the Spirit, "the great gift of God."³⁹

If we look at a broader sphere, we see many different ideas formed by other Christian faith traditions.

The Spirit in the Trinity:

Roman Catholic: The Holy Ghost forms an integral part of the mystery of the Holy Trinity: "In no other subject is the danger of erring so great, or the progress so difficult, or the fruit of a careful study so appreciable" (St. Augustine). Essential dogma:

- The Holy Ghost is the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity.
- Though really distinct, as a Person, from the Father and the Son, He is consubstantial [*sic*] (of one essence or substance) with Them; being God like Them, He possesses with Them one and the same Divine Essence or Nature.
- He proceeds, not by way of generation, but by way of spiration [*sic*], from the Father and the Son together, as from a single principle.

Then a list of erroneous and heretical doctrines follows: <https://www.newadvent.org/cathen/07409a.htm>. They seem to be more worried about the nature of the personage than the influence and workings of the Spirit. This link lists the early church father's perspective if you are interested.

Orthodox Traditions: The separation between the western and eastern Christianity stemmed from the Catholic addition that the Spirit came from both the Father and the Son (*filioque*). Orthodox Christians see that as heresy—but still hold to the Trinity. They also claim: "The Christian Church lives by the Holy Spirit. The Spirit alone is the guarantee of God's Kingdom on earth. He is the sole guarantee that God's life and truth and love are with men. Only by the Holy Spirit can man and the world fulfill that for which they were created by God. All of God's actions toward man and the world—in creation, salvation and final glorification—are from the Father through the Son (Word) in the Holy Spirit

Protestant Christianity:

The concept of the trinity was so ingrained in their thought that a definition was not needed—but when it was attempted, as it is not in the Bible, various ministers relied on the early Christian creeds to explain it. Charles Hodge described the Spirit as the "Mysterious constitution of the Godhead."⁴⁰ Elsewhere he apologized: "When we consider the incomprehensible nature of the Godhead, the mysterious character of the doctrine of the Trinity, the exceeding complexity and difficulty of the problem, [we must refer to] the church creeds on the subject."⁴¹

³⁹ Finney, *Autobiography*, 279; *Revivals*, 51.

⁴⁰ Charles Hodge, "Christianity without Christ," *Presbyterian Quarterly and Princeton Review* 18.5 (Apr 1876): 352-362.

⁴¹ Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, 1.478.

Other biblical reformers, like Alexander Campbell, did not like to use the word “trinity,” because it was not in the Bible. However, as I carefully studied his theology, I noticed that Campbell still upheld the definition of the trinity, just not its name. Most Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Lutherans, Baptists, Methodist, and Evangelicals strongly uphold it.

Only a few 19th C. American faiths denounced the trinity: the Deists, Unitarians, Universalists, Jehovah Witnesses, and The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day-Saints.

Restored Thought:

Completely opposed to their views, the Prophet Joseph rejected the doctrine and philosophy of a trinity. It had no part in his vocabulary or thoughts—nowhere in his sermons, personal writings, or history did he mention the word “trinity.” The restored doctrine on the Godhead disconnected the Saints from traditional Christianity. This split from traditional thought did not develop over time or as a reaction against trinitarian philosophy; rather Smith’s first vision at age fourteen grounded him with his own distinct view of the Godhead when he saw the Father and Son before him as two separate persons. No one else in his generation taught that the Godhead consisted of three separate beings of purified matter, being completely unified in their purpose to exalt humanity.

The Prophet did not believe in a Trinity that was ontologically one but viewed the Spirit in a Godhead of three separate personages. He also taught that obedient, baptized church members could enjoy the constant companionship of the Spirit, termed: “the Gift of the Holy Ghost.” Joseph used this idiom to refer to a special gift received via an ordinance administered through the laying on of hands by those who held a special “Melchizedek priesthood” or apostolic authority. By placing these three elements of pneumatology side by side, one sees the contrast between Smith’s ideas and those of his contemporaries and can isolate where their ideas converge and/or clash.

Gift of the Holy Ghost

19th C. Protestant Christianity:

The biblical phrase “Gift of the Holy Ghost” (Acts 2:38, 10:45) or Holy Spirit is used by most Christians. However, none of them that I have found differentiated between the “Gift of the Holy Ghost” and the presence of the Spirit. Many, like Alexander Campbell, emphasized “the Holy Spirit [is] given to every man to improve.”⁴² In his mind, “the Gift of the Holy Ghost” is part of the “gifts of the Spirit.” Many believed the “gift of the Holy Ghost” was a divine offering associated with the biblical apostles alone. The Gift of the Holy Ghost is sometimes seen as a special anointing exclusively held by Christ and his apostles and honored it as a strictly biblical phenomenon.

The most influential theologian of the nineteenth century, Charles Hodge, identified the “Gift of the Holy Ghost” as a “characteristic blessing of the Messianic period.”⁴³ For him, Christ’s death secured the Gift of the Holy Ghost; and Christ alone offered the Gift of the Holy Ghost to His chosen children.⁴⁴ He attributed the “Gift of the Holy Ghost” as the power that rendered the apostles “infallible in the communication of the truth.”⁴⁵ He extended the influence of the Spirit—to some degree at least—to those modern Christians “elected to salvation.”⁴⁶ He reserved the title “Gift of the Holy Ghost” for biblical characters, but spoke of the influence or “gift of the Spirit” available to all the elect. For Hodge, one might know that one was ‘elect’ if one felt God’s gift of the Holy Spirit. This gift, however, was not affiliated with an ordination, and he described it as feeling the comfort or influence of the Spirit.

According to the *Westminster Confession*, one of the first fruits of the Spirit given to the elect was “to make them willing and able to believe.”⁴⁷ Hodge upheld that the elect received this “gift of the Spirit to bring them to faith and

⁴² Alexander Campbell, *Christian Baptist*, 103. Interestingly, the Book of Mormon and D&C repeat this same biblical phrase three times—but with an exactly opposite interpretation. (Moroni 7:16: “. . . the Spirit of Christ is given to every man . . .” and D&C, 46:11, 16: “all have not every gift given unto them; for there are many gifts, and to every man is given a gift by the Spirit of God. . . .The manifestations of the Spirit may be given to every man to profit withal.”) Campbell rejected a modern application, while Smith heralded one.

⁴³ Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, 1.493: “The Gift of the Holy Ghost is everywhere represented as the characteristic blessing of the Messianic period.”

⁴⁴ Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, 2.572: “He must have some one to appear before God in his stead to make expiation for sin, and to secure for him, independently of his own subjective state, the full pardon of all his offences, and the gift of the Holy Ghost.”

⁴⁵ Charles Hodge, *An Exposition of the Second Epistle to the Corinthians* (New York: Robert Carter, 1862), 291.

⁴⁶ Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, 1.399: “God foresaw who would repent and believe, if they received the knowledge of the Gospel and the gift of the Spirit, and these He elected to salvation.” Also 1.543; 2.572; and *Essays and Reviews*, 190.

⁴⁷ *Westminster Confession* 7.3 “. . . promising to give unto all those that are ordained unto life, his Holy Spirit, to make them willing and able to believe.” A similar promise is given again in 9.3: “The Holy Spirit, whom the Father is ever willing to give to all who ask him . . . and persuades and enables them to embrace Jesus Christ by faith.”

repentance” as a gift from God, not a choice by humanity. Only God’s elect or “sheep” were given the Holy Spirit, which blessed them to believe.⁴⁸

The “father of Revivals,” Charles Finney, grasped the gift of the Holy Ghost as the Spirit’s personal inspiration in the modern world. He quoted Acts 2:38: “Ye shall receive the Gift of the Holy Ghost” and suggested that the passage “strongly impl[ies] that there is a certain connection of some sort between coming to Christ, receiving Christ, etc., and eternal life,” but elaborated no further.⁴⁹ Most ministers made no distinction between the “Gift of the Holy Ghost” and Paul’s gifts of the Spirit. Finney encouraged his audience to seek the gift of God’s Spirit as an achievable goal. These theologians never identified “the Gift of the Holy Ghost” from Acts 2:38 and 10:45 as a specific apostolic gift associated with the “laying on of hands” and the Holy Ghost working together.

Restored Thought:

In contrast to his peers, the Prophet Joseph Smith referred to the “Gift of the Holy Ghost” as a title for an essential ordinance, which, like baptism, was a prerequisite for salvation. It was not the same as the gifts of the Spirit, or the inspiration of the Spirit, but rather a unique blessing associated with a priesthood endowment. Smith designated “*the Gift of the Holy Ghost*,” above and beyond the witness and working of the Spirit, as one of the unique dimensions of his restoration. For him, the Spirit always testified to truth, inspiring and directing sincere believers; while the “Gift of the Holy Ghost” was a special gift conferred, in response to a person’s willingness to be baptized, through the “laying on of hands” by men holding the Melchizedek priesthood. The Prophet Joseph explained:

We believe that the holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, and that holy men in these days speak by the same principle; we believe in its being a comforter and a witness bearer, that it brings things past to our remembrance, leads us into all truth, and shows us of things to come; we believe that "no man can know that Jesus is the Christ, but by the Holy Ghost." We believe in it [this Gift of the Holy Ghost] in all its fullness, and power, and greatness, and glory; but whilst we do this, we believe in it rationally, consistently, and scripturally, and not according to the wild vagaries, foolish notions and traditions of men.⁵⁰

The Prophet Joseph also insisted on close timing between baptism and receiving the ordinance of the Gift of the Holy Ghost.⁵¹ The timing was imperative to complete cleansing as he argued that the Gift of the Holy Ghost was the key to the cleansing baptism by fire.

Bible and Modern Revelation on the Holy Spirit

Right from the start of the restoration, References to the Holy Spirit tumble out of almost every one of Joseph’s early documents. D&C 5, 6, 8, 9, and 11 act as a handbook on how the Spirit’s inspiration works. Joseph’s initial fascination with the Spirit did not wane throughout his life. His writings and sermons on the Spirit demonstrate this was a favorite, well understood subject to the young prophet. The very first reference to the Spirit in restored scripture was mentioned in a revelation to Martin Harris and the next three were answering Oliver Cowdery’s questions. The Lord clarifies what the Spirit meant, how to obtain it, and what it was not. This is significant because the topic of revelation was the most frequently debated and written about religious issue in the early 19th Century (with the trinity and depravity of man following in popularity).

The following five examples compare biblical and restored scripture:

- 1). **Born Again & Spirit:** The Bible states that one must be born again, but the Doctrine and Covenants goes further to explain the role of the Spirit in the process of a rebirth. Even though both texts focus on the same promise of the Spirit, Joseph explains that belief will foster that witness of the Spirit. The elusive statement in John leaves Nicodemus confused, while Joseph’s explanation helps the reader see the connection between applied faith in the words of God and a resultant manifestation of the Spirit.

John 3:5-8

Except a man be **born of water and of the Spirit**, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. . . . Ye must be born again . . . so is everyone that is **born of the Spirit**.

D&C 5:16

Behold, whosoever *believeth on my words, them will I visit with the manifestation of my Spirit*; and they shall be **born of me, even of water and of the Spirit** (emphasis added).

⁴⁸ Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, 2.261. Hodge taught that the elect are those whom “God has promised to give his Spirit in order that they may believe” (2.363).

⁴⁹ Finney, *Systematic Theology*, 529.

⁵⁰ Smith, *History*, 5.25-26. For a continuation of the citation and further evidence see page 271.

⁵¹ Joseph Smith was more like the Eastern churches who followed the patristic practice of allowing confirmation immediately after baptism. Hillerbrand, *Encyclopedia of Protestantism*, 1.165.

- 2). **Natural Man & Spirit:** While the wording in 1 Corinthians is similar, Paul’s passage offers less instruction on how to receive the intervention of the Spirit.

1 Corinthians 2:14

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.

Mosiah 3:19

The **natural man** is an enemy to God, and has been from the Fall of Adam, and will be, forever and ever, unless he **yields** to the enticings of the **Holy Spirit**, and **putteth off the natural man and becometh a saint** through the **atonement of Christ** the Lord, and becometh as a **child**, submissive, meek, humble, patient, full of love, willing to submit to all things which the Lord seeth fit to inflict upon him, even as a child doth submit to his father.

Although the Bible uses similar wording to the Book of Mormon, a close look shows Mormon’s emphasis on the gift of discernment to judge righteously through the guidance of the Spirit:

Lev 19:15

Ye shall do no unrighteousness in **judgment**: thou shalt not respect the person of the poor, nor honour the person of the mighty: but in righteousness shalt thou judge thy neighbour.

John 1:9

The true Light, which **lighteth every man** that cometh into the world.

John 7:24

Judge not according to the appearance, but **judge righteous judgment**.

Matt 7:2

For with what **judgment ye judge**, ye shall be **judged**

Moro 7:6-19

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. For behold, the **Spirit of Christ** is given to **every man**, that he may know good from evil; wherefore, I show unto you the way to **judge**; for every thing which inviteth to do good, and to persuade to believe in Christ, is sent forth by the power and gift of Christ; 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 . . . **the light by which ye may judge, which light is the light of Christ**, see that ye do not judge wrongfully; for with that same judgment which ye judge ye shall also be judged. Wherefore, I beseech of 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.

- 4). **“Filled with the Spirit”** The Book of Mormon also favors this phrase with 7 references, while the other books cite it only once each (Eph 5:18; Ex 28:3; D&C 27:7). In the OT and D&C, it describes those chosen by God; and in Ephesians it is juxtaposed with being drunk. But the Book of Mormon describes one “filled with the Spirit,” when the recipient “began to prophesy” (1 Nephi 5:17; 2 Nephi 25:4), or “came forth . . . rejoicing” (Mosiah 18:14), or “being **filled with the Spirit of God** . . . perceived the thoughts of the king” (Alma 18:16). Elsewhere the Holy Spirit works powerfully on those called to repent so that they experience physical manifestations, “my father did speak . . . with power, being **filled with the Spirit**, until their frames did shake before him” (1 Nephi 2:14). When an entire group receives an outpouring of Spirit, the text describes “behold, they were **filled with the Spirit**; and they did cry out with one voice, and gave glory to Jesus” (3 Nephi 20:9).
- 5). **Power of the Holy Ghost:** Modern scripture emphatically associates power with the Holy Ghost. We find the phrase “power of the Holy Ghost” 30 times compared to a single appearance in the Bible. 1 Nephi 3:20 uses a unique expression, “Spirit and power of God,” to describe the strong interaction between God’s Spirit and his prophets: “that we may preserve unto them the words which have been spoken by the mouth of all the holy prophets, which have been delivered unto them by the **Spirit and power of God**, since the world began, even down unto this present time.”

The Bible associates the “Spirit” or “Holy Ghost” with “power” ten times. Looking for the same pattern we find “power” associated with God’s Spirit in The Book of Mormon (a book one third the length of the Bible) 57 times — a rate 17 times more frequent than the Bible. The D&C continues with 35 uses (or 26 times the concentration of the Bible). The Holy Spirit represents power in many ways also in modern scripture and its numerical prominence is evidence of the theological weight given by Joseph to this connection.