

The Spirit Still Speaks

If the gifts of the Spirit were active in the early church, should we not expect them in God's last-day church? Paul thanked God for the Corinthian believers, *"even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you, so that you come short in no gift, eagerly waiting for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ"* (1 Corinthians 1:6–7). As we near Christ's return, Revelation 12:17 describes His final people as those who *"keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ."* God's last-day church is to bear not only the written testimony of Scripture but also the living witness of those transformed by His Spirit.

But how can we know if that testimony is genuine? Scripture gives us the tools. "Do not believe every spirit," John warns, *"but test the spirits... because many false prophets have gone out into the world"* (1 John 4:1). The test is not charisma or popularity, but faithfulness to God's Word and the fruit of one's life. Jesus said, *"By their fruits you will know them"* (Matthew 7:20). A true testimony of Christ will exalt His character, uphold His commandments, and draw people to repentance and obedience—not to self or error.

Paul adds, *"Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise prophecies. Test all things; hold fast what is good"* (1 Thessalonians 5:19–21). In other words, we are not to dismiss spiritual gifts just because they can be misused or imitated. Instead, we are called to test them—carefully, biblically, prayerfully—and hold fast to what is truly from God.

If the Spirit is indeed being poured out in these final days as Scripture promises, then we must be watchful, not only against deception, but also against disbelief. We must be willing to test with honesty and humility—knowing that when the Spirit speaks, it will always be in harmony with the written Word, and it will always glorify Jesus Christ, not man.

An Instrument of God?

Ellen G. White (1827–1915) was a key figure in the early Seventh-day Adventist movement. As a young woman, she was deeply convicted of Christ's soon return and became part of the Millerite revival in the 1840s. Shortly after the Great Disappointment of 1844, at the age of 17, she received her first vision – a message of encouragement and hope. Over the next 70 years, she received more than 2,000 visions and dreams, offering counsel, correction, and encouragement to the believers and leaders.

Her prolific writings include guidance on health, education, family life, and evangelism. Her central focus, though, was on the teachings of Scripture and the life of Christ. Among her most influential books are *Steps to Christ*, *The Desire of Ages*, and *The Great Controversy*. Throughout her life, she consistently pointed readers back to the Bible, declaring it to be the final authority in all matters of faith and practice.

Ellen White never claimed infallibility and urged believers to test her writings by the Word of God. Her counsel remains, not as a substitute for Scripture, but as a help in understanding and applying its principles. Read it prayerfully, and see whether the fruits bear witness that her message is truly from God.

ANCIENT WORLDS *of the* BIBLE

Study Guide 16

by Pastor Daniel McFeeters

Promise of the Spirit

You can watch all the videos. You can flip through the photos. You can hear the stories. But none of it compares to being there. If you've ever journeyed through the Holy Land, you know what I mean. There's something different about standing in the places where the Bible happened. The sound of Hebrew prayers in the streets of Jerusalem. The smell of fresh bread in a Galilean market. The chill of dawn on the Mount of Olives. You don't just see the stories—you feel them. You taste them. You live them.

And that's how it is with God. Reading the Bible is essential. Studying the stories, the prophecies, the doctrines—they lay a solid foundation. But head knowledge alone is not enough. You weren't made just to learn about God. You were made to know Him. Really know Him.

That's why David could write: *"Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good; Blessed is the man who trusts in Him!"* — Psalm 34:8

"Taste and see" is the language of experience. It's more than just knowledge, it's an encounter. This is the very purpose for which Jesus promised to send the Holy Spirit: so that we would not be left with mere memories of the past, or secondhand knowledge of God, but with a living connection to Him now.

As we wrap up our journey together, we explore a promise that reaches far beyond any temple or holy site—a promise that lives in the hearts of believers today: the promise of the Spirit. Who is this Spirit Jesus spoke of? What does He do in the life of a believer? Does He still manifest gifts through the church today—even the gift of prophecy? And how can we discern His voice in a world filled with counterfeits?

Let's discover what it means to truly experience God through His Spirit.

The Spirit Poured Out

Centuries before the upper room shook with wind and flame, God spoke through the prophet Isaiah: *“I will pour water on him who is thirsty, And floods on the dry ground; will pour My Spirit on your descendants, And My blessing on your offspring;”* — Isaiah 44:3

This was a divine promise. Just as parched land comes to life under a fresh rain, God promised to revive His people by pouring out His Spirit upon them. The longing for God’s presence—often elusive in times of rebellion and exile—would one day be satisfied in abundance.

Jesus echoed this promise when He told His disciples: *“It is to your advantage that I go away... if I go, I will send Him to you.”* — John 16:7

Far from abandoning His followers, Jesus was preparing them for something even greater. He spoke of the Holy Spirit as a Comforter, a Teacher, and a Guide into all truth (John 14:26; 16:13). But the Spirit would not only dwell *with* them—He would dwell *in* them (John 14:17). The God who had once led Israel in a pillar of fire now promised to lead from within. And He did.

When the day of Pentecost arrived, the Spirit was poured out in power (Acts 2:1–4). Peter declared that this outpouring was the fulfillment of Joel’s prophecy: *“in the last days...I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh;... your sons and daughters shall prophesy.”* — Acts 2:17

The Holy Spirit transformed ordinary men and women into bold, Spirit-empowered witnesses. In Acts 4:31, after the disciples prayed, *“they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness.”* Peter, once afraid to admit knowing Christ, stood before thousands and declared, *“God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.”* (Acts 2:36). Stephen, *“full of the Holy Spirit,”* spoke truth even as he was stoned (Acts 7:55–60). This courage was evidence of the Holy Spirit’s divine presence.

The Spirit also brought unity and spiritual gifts to the body of Christ. Paul wrote, *“But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all”* (1 Corinthians 12:7). Among these gifts, prophecy was especially important—not simply to predict the future, but to edify, exhort, and comfort the church (1 Corinthians 14:3). The prophetic voice called out sin (Acts 11:27–30), strengthened the church (Acts 15:32), and helped clarify God’s will in critical moments (Acts 13:1–3).

The church was sustained by divine guidance. *“They continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship... and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles”* (Acts 2:42–43). The Holy Spirit was not an accessory to their mission—it was the power and presence that defined their identity (Romans 8:14; Galatians 5:25).

Questions for Reflection & Discussion

SCRIPTURE: *“Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise prophecies. Test all things; hold fast what is good.”* — 1 Thessalonians 5:19-21

REFLECTION: With so much deception in the last days, why would God encourage believers to look for prophecy—messages from the Holy Spirit—rather than relying strictly on the Bible alone?

EXPERIENCE: Can you recall a time when you sensed the Holy Spirit speaking to your heart—through a sermon, a passage of Scripture, a prayer, a book, or a personal conviction? What fruit did it bear in your life?

QUESTION: The Bible promises that the gift of prophecy will be active in God’s last-day people. Why do you think many Christians today are skeptical of this gift?

QUESTION: How can we distinguish between a true and false manifestation of the prophetic gift?

QUESTION: Have you ever explored the writings of Ellen G. White for yourself? What would it look like to “test” her writings as Scripture commands—carefully, prayerfully, and in light of the Bible?

RESPONSE: Will you take time to read a chapter from Steps to Christ or Desire of Ages this week? As you read, pray that the Holy Spirit will guide you into truth and deepen your relationship with Christ. Ask God to help you discern whether this voice points you to His Word and to a life of holiness.

More resources at www.pastordaniel.net/ancientworlds0425
Written by Pastor Daniel McFeeters with assistance from
tools powered by AI.

