

### ... The Holy Spirit has a key role in what God's people say

[JESUS, TO HIS DISCIPLES:] You will be brought before governors and kings because of me, to testify to them and to the gentiles. <sup>19</sup>When they hand you over, don't worry about how you are to speak or what you are to say, because *in that hour what you are to say will be given to you*. <sup>20</sup>*It won't be you speaking, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you.* [MATTHEW 10:18-20](#) ISV

When they [the believers] had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken, and *they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak the word of God courageously.* [ACTS 4:31](#) NET

*Pray for persecuted Christians*

## CHAPTER 17

# Keys to God's Interaction

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## I. Basics

This section looks at some basic factors underlying God's interaction with his people. They show that God's relationship with his people is not an aloof, impersonal one – far from it. God is always with his people and they can actually know him. Complementary to this is God's great love and steadfast faithfulness towards his people. Undergirding all God's interaction with his people is his truly amazing grace.

### God Is Always with His People

#### God and Jesus Christ are always with their people

[GOD:] *Just as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you or forsake you.* JOSHUA 1:5B ESV

[JESUS:] *And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.* MATTHEW 28:20B NET

Note that most of what this and the following chapters in *Part D. God and His Own People* say about God is also applicable to Jesus Christ.

#### God is with his people wherever they go . . .

Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for *the LORD your God is with you wherever you go.* JOSHUA 1:9B ESV

#### . . . God also goes before his people

*The LORD himself will go before you.* He will be with you; he will not leave you or forget you. Don't be afraid and don't worry. DEUTERONOMY 31:8 NCV™

#### God is with his people in trouble – and sees them through it

God is our refuge and strength, *an ever-present help in times of trouble.* PSALMS 46:1 GW

[GOD:] *When you pass through the waters, I am with you; when you pass through the streams, they will not overwhelm you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not harm you.* ISAIAH 43:2 NET

#### The Holy Spirit makes God's people holy

[PETER, TO BELIEVERS:] God the Father decided to choose you as his people, and *his Spirit has made you holy.* 1 PETER 1:2A CEV

#### The Holy Spirit produces spiritual "fruit" in God's people

But *the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.* Against such things there is no law. GALATIANS 5:22-23 NET

### The Holy Spirit Helps God's People

#### The Holy Spirit helps each believer

[PAUL, TO BELIEVERS:] In the same way, *the Spirit helps us in our weakness, for we do not know how we should pray, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with inexpressible groanings.* ROMANS 8:26 NET

[JESUS, TO HIS DISCIPLES:] I will ask the Father, and *he will give you another Helper to be with you forever—<sup>17</sup>the Spirit of truth.* JOHN 14:16-17A NCV™

#### The Holy Spirit leads God's people

*Those who are led by God's Spirit are God's children.* ROMANS 8:14 GNT

The Holy Spirit may lead a person by an inner conviction or sense of assurance, by circumstances, or even by a discernible revelation. (Giving such a revelation to a person with a prophetic spiritual gift is one way the Holy Spirit leads and directs Christian groups.)

#### The Holy Spirit empowers God's people to do God's work . . .

[JESUS, TO HIS DISCIPLES:] *But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the farthest parts of the earth.* ACTS 1:8 NET

Through the Holy Spirit the disciples would receive "power (ability, efficiency, and might)" (AMP), enabling them to witness for Christ far and wide.

## God Works in His People through the Holy Spirit

### God saves his people through the Holy Spirit

[PAUL, TO BELIEVERS:] *God chose you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth.*

2 THESSALONIANS 2:13B NET

### God teaches his people through the Holy Spirit

[PAUL, TO BELIEVERS:] But just as it is written, “Things that no eye has seen, or ear heard, or mind imagined, are the things God has prepared for those who love him.” <sup>10</sup>*God has revealed these to us by the Spirit.* For the Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God.

1 CORINTHIANS 2:9-10 NET

### God works through his people by the Holy Spirit

[GOD, TO ZERUBBABEL WHO WAS A LEADER OF THE JEWS:] ‘Not by strength and not by power, *but by my Spirit,*’ says the LORD who rules over all.” <sup>7</sup>*“What are you, you great mountain? Because of Zerubbabel you will become a level plain! And he will bring forth the temple capstone with shoutings of ‘Grace! Grace!’ because of this.”*

ZECHARIAH 4:6B-7 NET

God would accomplish the work he was doing through Zerubbabel by his Spirit. Mountainous problems would be overcome and Zerubbabel would “bring forth the temple capstone” (v. 7b) signifying the completion of the work (the rebuilding of the temple).

## The Holy Spirit Renews God’s People

### The Holy Spirit brings spiritual life

[JESUS:] *The Spirit is the one who gives life;* human nature is of no help! *The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life.*

JOHN 6:63 NET

Particularly in light of the verse’s first clause, the final statement may indicate that the words Jesus spoke were from (cf. CEV) or spoken through the Holy Spirit. As such they are words that the Holy Spirit uses to produce life – when people live according to them.

## God Knows His People

### God and Jesus Christ know their people

The LORD said to Moses, “I will do this thing also that you have requested, for you have found favor in my sight, and *I know you by name.*”

EXODUS 33:17 NET

[JESUS, SPEAKING OF HIMSELF AS “THE GOOD SHEPHERD”:] *He calls his own sheep by name* and leads them out. ... <sup>14</sup>“I am the good shepherd. *I know my own and my own know me* – ...

JOHN 10:3B, 14 NET

In Exodus 33:17, “I know you by name” indicates: intimate knowledge – “I know you very well” (GNT, NCV); and a personal relationship – “I know you personally” (AMP); “you are my friend” (NLT, cf. CEV). A similar comment could probably be made regarding the like expression in John 10:3b.

### God and Jesus know all their people’s needs and troubles

Do not be like them, for *your Father knows what you need before you ask him.*

MATTHEW 6:8 NET

[JESUS CHRIST, TO THE CHURCH IN EPHESUS:] *I know the distress you are suffering and your poverty* (but you are rich). *I also know the slander against you* by those who call themselves Jews and really are not, but are a synagogue of Satan.

REVELATION 2:9 NET

## God Loves and Is Faithful to His People

### God loves his people greatly

[DAVID, TO GOD:] You are good to us and forgiving, *full of constant love for all who pray to you.*

PSALMS 86:5 GNT

Wicked people have many troubles, but *the LORD’s love surrounds those who trust him.*

PSALMS 32:10 NCV™

### God’s love is with his people always

[GOD, SPEAKING OF DAVID:] *My steadfast love I will keep for him forever, and my covenant will stand firm for him.*

PSALMS 89:28 ESV

God’s love is “steadfast” – constant and reliable.

### God is faithful to his people

*The LORD always proves faithful and reliable to those who follow the demands of his covenant.* PSALMS 25:10 NET

### God faithfully keeps his promises to his people

*Not one of the LORD's faithful promises to the family of Israel was left unfulfilled; every one was realized.* JOSHUA 21:45 NET

## God Shows Grace to His People

What God does for his people is based on his "grace" – his free and undeserved favour. God's grace in the believer's salvation is discussed earlier (cf. *We are justified and made righteous by God's grace, through Jesus Christ – not by law*, p. 114; *We are saved by God's grace rather than by works*, p. 115). This section speaks of the ongoing role of God's grace in his people's lives.

### God shows much grace towards his people

[PAUL, TO THE CORINTHIANS:] And in their [needy believers'] prayers on your behalf they long for you because of *the extraordinary grace God has shown to you.* 2 CORINTHIANS 9:14 NET

Here Paul speaks of God's grace in moving the Corinthians to generously give towards supporting needy believers.

### By grace God's people are given spiritual blessings

*Out of the fullness of his [Christ's] grace he has blessed us all, giving us one blessing after another.* JOHN 1:16 GNT

### By grace God's people are strengthened

[THE WRITER, TO BELIEVERS:] Do not let all kinds of strange teachings lead you from the right way. *It is good to receive inner strength from God's grace*, and not by obeying rules about foods; those who obey these rules have not been helped by them. HEBREWS 13:9 GNT

*Pray for persecuted Christians*

## II. God's Holy Spirit in His People

God's incomparable gift of his Holy Spirit is critical to God's relationship with each of his people – including God's work in and through them. In part at least, this is due to the Holy Spirit being the prime means by which God renews and helps believers.

### God Gives the Holy Spirit to His People

#### God gives his people his Holy Spirit, to live in them

[PAUL, TO BELIEVERS:] And hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts through *the Holy Spirit who was given to us.* ROMANS 5:5 NET

[PAUL, TO TIMOTHY:] Protect that good thing [the truth] entrusted to you, through *the Holy Spirit who lives within us.* 2 TIMOTHY 1:14 NET

#### Having the Holy Spirit shows a person is one of God's people . . .

[PAUL, TO BELIEVERS:] For you did not receive the spirit of slavery leading again to fear, but *you received the Spirit of adoption, by whom we cry, "Abba, Father."*<sup>16</sup>*The Spirit himself bears witness to our spirit that we are God's children.* ROMANS 8:15-16 NET

The Spirit testifies to believers that they are God's children (v. 16). Accordingly, by the Spirit they call God "Abba" or Father (v. 15).

#### . . . Having the Holy Spirit indicates that God lives in a person

[JOHN, TO BELIEVERS:] Now *by this we know that God resides in us: by the Spirit he has given us.* 1 JOHN 3:24B NET

Having the Spirit of God verifies that God himself lives in us.

#### The Holy Spirit is God's seal, guaranteeing what is to come

[PAUL, TO BELIEVERS:] *When you believed in him you were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, <sup>14</sup>who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of God's own possession*, to his praise and glory.

EPHESIANS 1:13B-14 ISV

God's "own possession" refers to believers, who have been marked as such by being given the Holy Spirit.